

Derek Jarman and Prospect Cottage:
Painting, Ephemera and the Queer Archive

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Declaration

I, Will Ballantyne-Reid, confirm that the work presented in my thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

Situating Derek Jarman's painting practice within theories of temporality, ephemerality and the queer archive, this thesis considers how this work can be interpreted within contemporary remembrance of Jarman as well as within the active (and ongoing) visual legacies of HIV-AIDS. This follows ArtFund's high-profile 2020 campaign to #SaveProspectCottage (Jarman's former home in Dungeness), renewed access to his paintings following a 2018 legal settlement, and a selection of recent exhibitions (2019–24) seeking to re-evaluate his work in the public imagination.

Chapter I focuses on two painting series created in Jarman's final years – 'Queer' and 'Evil Queen' – to reflect on how these representations of queer life and politics can be interpreted through the ephemeral networks of his artistic practice, personal life and activism.

Chapter II examines Jarman's 'black paintings' in light of the specific temporality conjured as a result of his HIV diagnosis and relocation to Prospect Cottage. This includes placing his relationship to ephemera in dialogue with the work of David Wojnarowicz, to interrogate the importance of affective encounters and activation in each artist's legacy and memory.

Chapter III challenges what might fall within the remit of Jarman's expansive painting practice through analysis of several Super 8 films made for Pet Shop Boys. Placed in dialogue with selected black paintings, as well as the photography of Sunil Gupta, I highlight the enduring effect of the works' ephemeral and affective underpinnings to reflect on issues of queer testimony, urbanity, pop culture, gentrification and national identity.

Chapter IV analyses the 'AIDS Paintings' and 'Dungeness Landscapes' created by Jarman between 1991 and 1992, as they remain in situ in the sitting room at Prospect Cottage. By considering not just the works themselves but their composition in space, I reflect specifically on their lingering centrality within Prospect Cottage and its preservation/re-presentation of Jarman's legacy.

Impact Statement

By utilising Derek Jarman's painting to consider artistic response to the AIDS epidemic in the UK – from its outbreak in the 1980s, through to its contemporary legacies in the present day – my thesis explores how pandemic cultures, queer communities, and artist-activists are publicly historicised and memorialised. In the case of HIV-AIDS, and queer histories in general, this is especially urgent due to the frequent erasure of histories and testimonies pertaining to marginalised groups – particularly the Person With AIDS (PWA). As such, an essential output of my research has been (and will continue to be) public engagement and programming.

In April 2022, this involved giving a lecture at Manchester Art Gallery as part of a day-long public symposium for the closing of 'Derek Jarman PROTEST!', a major retrospective that toured from the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin. Soon after, I published an article in Still Point journal (online). I also curated an exhibition on masculinities and the queer body, inspired by the history of Soho (where Jarman also lived and worked) at House of St Barnabas in London. In June 2022, I presented my research as a public lecture at the museum Lafayette Anticipations in Paris. That autumn I curated an exhibition on the theme of queer urbanities at Cromwell Place in London, programming public tours and performance.

In February 2023, I travelled to New York where I undertook research visits at Visual AIDS and NYU Fales Library. As part of this trip, I presented at Printed Matter – a non-profit organisation and arts space – as part of a panel discussion on queer histories and archives. That summer, I undertook a Research and Development visit to Prospect Cottage and engaged with the team from Creative Folkestone, who now operate public access and programming around Jarman's former home. In October 2023, I chaired a panel discussion as part of the exhibition 'Gardening on Borrowed Time' at Studio West gallery in London, which was directly influenced by Jarman's practice.

In April 2024, I co-chaired a panel at Bristol University entitled 'A Day With(out) AIDS', as part of the Association for Art History's annual conference. This was an important opportunity to share research and dialogue with key colleagues within the field of AIDS scholarship and across art history, in order to reflect on how research into the legacies of HIV-AIDS might develop how we

think about queerness, artist-archives, memorialisation, and pandemic cultures. This summer, I spoke at the V&A Museum in London as part of a public event dedicated to untold queer histories.

In January 2025, I undertook a writing residency at La Becque in Switzerland (an art foundation with an annual program themed around Jarman's work) in order to develop my thesis into a book project that combines my art historical research with oral histories and creative non-fiction. In this format, I hope to make my research as accessible as possible to readers outside of academia.

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Introduction: #SaveProspectCottage

What isn't an archive these days? Where did it all begin, when will it end? In these memory-obsessed times – haunted by the demands of history, overwhelmed by the dizzying possibilities of new technologies – the archive presents itself as the ultimate horizon of experience. Ethically charged, politically saturated, such a horizon would seem to be all the more inescapable for remaining undefined.¹

¹ Rebecca Comay, "Introduction", in *Lost in the Archives* (Toronto: Alphabet City Media, 2002), 12.

i. “Space to paint”: the radical potential of re-situating Jarman’s painting today

The British artist Derek Jarman (1942–1994) is best known as an experimental filmmaker and gay rights activist, and still relatively little remembered as a painter. Yet in his final interview, Jarman explained that “I’m not actually fighting the illness, I just fight for the space to paint.”² This thesis considers how Jarman’s painting might be reevaluated and re-situated within his wide-ranging creative practice, evolving artistic legacy, and the complicated memorial terrain of HIV-AIDS and its visual cultures. I specifically focus on the years following Jarman’s diagnosis with HIV in 1986, through to his death in 1994. This period encompasses Jarman’s move to Prospect Cottage (his home in Dungeness) and a critical creative moment in which he returned to painting – and specifically, the identity of ‘painter’ – with a renewed vigour and frenetic productivity. This period also includes a landmark exhibition of his paintings – ‘Queer’ – at Manchester Art Gallery in 1992, which included forty-four new oil paintings and travelled to Rome and Potsdam the following year, as well as another entitled ‘Evil Queen’ at the Whitworth Art Gallery in 1994, occurring just a few months after Jarman’s death and featuring fifteen of the seventeen paintings from his final series of the same name.³

As I detail in this introduction, I interrogate Jarman’s work during this period (and his legacy beyond) with an integrated methodology that combines theoretical frameworks related to the archive, ephemera, temporality, memory, and affect. My thesis is specifically anchored in the expanded field of queer studies, by which I facilitate a reflection on the varied ways in which these frameworks connect to, and shape, an understanding of the cultural legacies of HIV-AIDS and a contemporary interpretation of Jarman’s paintings. Whilst my thesis actively prioritises Jarman’s painting, and this critical period of both his creative and physical life, I also seek to incorporate the expansive and unboundaried approach with which he, himself, navigated his artistic output and activism. Jarman was a maverick and multi-hyphenate creative, prolifically ricocheting between the media of film, writing, collage, gardening, activism, and, of course, painting. It is in this spirit that I approach his work in my thesis; that is, with an appreciation for expansive definitions, for

² Derek Jarman, in his final interview with Gerard Raymond, published as “Fade to Blue” in *Genre*, no. 19 (June 1994): 47.

³ *Ataxia – AIDS Is Fun* (1993) was being shown at the Tate at the time of the ‘Evil Queen’ exhibition, and *Impotent* (1993) couldn’t be lent at such short notice. As described by Mark Jordan in the exhibition’s accompanying booklet *Derek Jarman – Evil Queen: The Last Paintings* (Manchester / London: Whitworth Art Gallery and University of Manchester in collaboration with Richard Salmon Ltd., 1993), 8.

atemporality, for experimental throughlines, ephemera and anecdotal material, and for interstices that might guide new interpretations of Jarman's wider practice and his painting's place within it.

My research has taken place during a period of burgeoning public and institutional interest in Jarman's life and practice. On 1 April 2020, Art Fund's director Stephen Deuchar announced that an international appeal to prevent the private sale of Prospect Cottage had successfully reached its £3.5 million target in only ten weeks, following the charity's largest ever crowdfunding campaign and over 8,000 donations by members of the public.⁴ The successful outcome of this campaign followed months of significant press coverage and promotion by many of Jarman's most recognisable collaborators, as well as a range of rewards including a badge and set of stickers designed by Jeremy Deller (for £25), a print by Michael Craig-Martin (for £100), and a limited edition print by Tacita Dean (for £1,000), who was a close friend of Keith Collins – Jarman's long-term companion and beneficiary of the Derek Jarman Estate. Prior to his death in 2018, Collins had self-appointed his own trustees and urged that they "put Prospect in safe hands."⁵ Art Fund noted in their press statement that "before [their] appeal, Prospect Cottage had been at risk of being sold privately, its contents dispersed, and artistic legacy lost"⁶.

Instead, some of the most significant and vulnerable contents of Jarman's archives at Prospect Cottage – including sketchbooks, letters, drawings, photographs, and ephemera – have been acquired by Tate on permanent loan, with a view to making them publicly accessible. It is in this vein that my thesis is anchored in theories of the (queer) archive, and in scholarship pertaining to ephemera, memorial cultures, and the affective legacies of HIV-AIDS as manifest through unusual (or unseen) object-collections, and assembled personal artefacts. This campaign, alongside increased access to Jarman's painting following the 2018 settlement of a legal dispute between his former art dealer and Collins, has coincided with a number of exhibitions and publications seeking to reevaluate – and reconjure – Derek Jarman's practice in the public imagination. As an extraordinary distillation of Jarman's creative endeavours, and as a vital terminal in the real life and creative output of the artist, Prospect Cottage becomes a critical – and yet complicated – departure point for efforts to reflect upon the artist's multimedia practice as well as its implications in terms of memory, preservation, and legacy in relation to Jarman's work.

⁴ Art Fund press release, "Derek Jarman's Prospect Cottage saved for the nation", 1 April 2020. <https://www.artfund.org/blog/2020/04/01/derek-jarmans-prospect-cottage-saved>.

⁵ Gareth Harris, "Artists rally to save Prospect Cottage, the house of late filmmaker Derek Jarman", *The Art Newspaper*, 22 January 2020, <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2020/01/22/artists-rally-to-save-prospect-cottage-the-house-of-late-filmmaker-derek-jarman>.

⁶ Art Fund press release.

I specifically reevaluate Jarman's painting in light of this resurgence of his work, aiming to establish how his paintings both echo and embody the complexity of creative response to HIV-AIDS as well as the complications of a queer archive. That is, to acknowledge the archive as a complex and contested territory – subject to object hierarchies, institutional (and often binary) categorisation, and complications of identity, affect, ownership, provenance. My own use of the term 'archive' seeks to operate in these expanded terms, encompassing not only Jarman's multivalent practice and legacy but the various efforts, agents, and outlets by which this is upheld. The body of work he left behind spans multiple media including: film (feature films, Super 8, film libraries, and associated physical reels, props, and costumes); writing (published books, actual journals, as well as workbooks and sketchbooks); audio (film soundtracks, recorded interviews); works on paper (sketches, set designs, and collage); his garden and its associated documentation both written and photographic); and his painting. At the current time, these materials are held separately across a range of locations including institutional archives at Tate and the British Film Institute (BFI), a private storage facility belonging to Amanda Wilkinson Gallery, and Prospect Cottage itself. Until recent years much of Jarman's work was even more scattered, existing in a dislocation between his formal bequest, bureaucratic limbo, and the loving hands of former collaborators.⁷

To visit one of the institutionally-held archives of Jarman's materials (e.g. at Tate or the BFI), is to quickly understand that his life and practice cannot be contained, or fully represented, within an archival box or yellowing folder. My thesis employs the framework of the 'queer archive' as a strategy to gauge, explain, and to remediate this dissonance. Refusing to enforce boundaries of time, space, or categorisation on Jarman's multi-dimensional body of work, I instead embrace its dislocations and displacements as part of the story it has to tell, and as part of his own particular testimony of queer life and his legacy as a PWA. I approach individual works and paintings (and series of paintings) as if they were archive boxes in themselves, using contemporary art historical analysis to sift through their references, records, and resonances. In this way, I cultivate a nuanced assessment of how Jarman's paintings might reach across the symbolic landscape of his work – forging connections between the various channels of his practice, personal history, public profile,

⁷ I refer, here, to the aforementioned legal dispute between Keith Collins and Richard Salmon, but also wish to highlight the efforts of one such former collaborator, James Mackay, who was bequeathed Jarman's Super 8 films and worked with great dedication, over a number of years, to painstakingly preserve them for future audiences. I explore Jarman's work with Super 8 in Chapter 3. See also: James Mackay, *Derek Jarman Super 8* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014).

and activist activity. Within this framework, and so connected to notions of a queer temporality (non-linear, amorphous, flawed), we may perceive Jarman's painting as a way of "making relations with the past, relations that form parts of our subjectivities and communities; it is about making affective connections, that is, across time."⁸ This is an integrative and inclusive research mode, and one I believe to be demanded of contemporary scholars working with materials of the HIV-AIDS crisis, as I will emphasise throughout this thesis.

ii. A digital Dungeness: public engagement, archive activation, and contemporary Jarmania

As I am writing this introduction, the world marks the 30th anniversary of Derek Jarman's death on 19 February 1994. On social media, tributes pour in from all sides – from queer peers, working artists, galleries, fans, and British institutions such as Tate. Jarman is frequently referred to as a 'queer saint' – his martyrdom more potent and popularly-known than ever before.⁹ Creative Folkestone, an arts council that now manages Prospect Cottage and its residency programme, broadcast a livestream of the sunset over the cottage on the digital platform YouTube. In the comments section, viewers post a stream of their own ephemeral encounters with Jarman and his legacy:

Hello from Australia <3 [user: radioShirley]

[..]

Hello from Montreal, Canada. Thank you for honouring Derek Jarman in this way, that allows us to accompany the tribute even from afar. [user: Kathleen Vaughan]

[..]

I saw Derek Jarman during Pride sitting in Soho Square, unfortunately my camera's battery needed replacing, when I returned from Jessops photography shop he was gone. [user: Anthony Jones]

[..]

Derek once told me that he. Had 27 hours of Dungeness sunsets on video tape and that he was hoping that Channel 4 would reintroduce the Interlude! [user: Michel La Rue]

⁸ Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 11-12.

⁹ Jarman subtitled his book *At Your Own Risk* (1992) as 'A Saint's Testament' (London: Vintage, 1993), featuring his famous 'canonisation' in 1991 by queer activist group 'The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence' whilst living with HIV. The ceremony took place in Dungeness, and was the subject of a documentary in 2021 – *Saintmaking* – directed by Marco Alessi and released by *The Guardian* on 22 September 2021: <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2021/sep/22/saintmaking-the-canonisation-of-derek-jarman-by-queer-nuns>.

These comments (and many more) appear in real-time alongside the video stream, which transitions between wide-angle views of the cottage exterior, close-ups of its famous garden, and the expansive skies overhead turning pink though darkening purple, shot through with darting trails of cloud. Occasionally, the camera cuts to an interior view – taking the viewer inside this sacred domestic, into encounters with details of Jarman’s furniture, through doorways, and the glimmering surface of his work bench. As the tribute streams in real-time, we can observe the unique temporality of Prospect Cottage (and by association, its archive) being translated and transposed for the digital realm (and its *own* virtual archive / record), in turn triggering (and simultaneously activated by) the affective encounters and ephemeral networks of Jarman’s art and activism and those touched by its ever-widening orbit – even, and perhaps especially, thirty years after his passing. This inter-activation of space and temporality, archive, memory, and affective legacy, reflects the integrated methodology required for my own research and its engagement with the tangled public and private networks of HIV-AIDS remembrance, and Jarman’s contemporary legacy. During the writing of my thesis, I have keenly observed and absorbed the exponential growth of these networks – archival, affective, ephemeral – as a result of increased access, critical discourse, and public attention relating to Jarman’s work.

Prior to the outstanding success of the Art Fund campaign, Jarman was the subject of a major solo retrospective exhibition in 2019 – ‘Derek Jarman: PROTEST!’ – at the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin.¹⁰ This was reprised at Manchester Art Gallery in December 2021 and intended to travel to the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven in 2024 (although this instalment would be cancelled during the writing of my thesis.) This exhibition focussed on the full gamut of Jarman’s multimedia output – from early experiments with Super 8 film and cinematic and theatrical design projects to his later activities as a memoirist and writer, gardener and gay activist. Yet its overlap with the Art Fund campaign, alongside closures and interruptions to its tour schedule stemming from the outbreak of COVID-19 in February 2020, meant that its nuanced re-evaluation of the multiplicity of Jarman’s practice was arguably overshadowed by the epic and emotive urgency of #SaveProspectCottage with its significant target, ten week deadline, and high profile.

¹⁰ His first institutional retrospective since 2008.

In July 2020, the Garden Museum opened ‘My Garden’s Boundaries Are The Horizon’ – including painting loans from the Keith Collins Will Memorial Trust, but centred upon a life-size reconstruction of Prospect Cottage complete with shingle garden and illusionary digital-printed walls reflecting the landscape of Dungeness, even mirroring the real cottage back at its uncanny simulation. The exhibition designer, Jeremy Herbert, installed an overhead light-box to ensure a specific colour temperature matching that of Dungeness, and two tonnes of shingle were imported from a local quarry – with Herbert noting how “the feeling of it underfoot was so evocative.”¹¹ A similarly life-size replica of Prospect Cottage has existed at La Becque artist residency in Switzerland since 2019, developed alongside a garden and ongoing arts programme dedicated to Jarman.¹² Opening in November 2021, ‘Derek Jarman’s Modern Nature’ at John Hansard Gallery was curated by the writer Philip Hoare and wide-ranging in its scope – combining Jarman’s work across multiple decades and disciplines alongside that by both early twentieth-century and contemporary artists. It also saw the museum’s exterior topped by a two-way window graphic that presented Prospect Cottage at a striking scale, almost spectral, or mirage-like.

The phenomenological evocation of these exhibitions reflects an affective conditioning that profoundly alters our perception of – and relationship to – Jarman’s legacy and archive, with Prospect Cottage becoming the “floating signifier” described by Jack Halberstam in his modelling of a queer archive that is “not simply a repository; it is also a theory of cultural relevance, a construction of collective memory, and a complex record of queer activity”.¹³ The primacy of Prospect Cottage and its contents within recent efforts to restore and represent Jarman’s work to a contemporary public – not only as a physical structure and project, but as a nexus for the various channels of his practice as an artist, filmmaker, gardener, public figure, writer, and diarist – guides me towards an understanding of his work via the archive own’s curious ecology, whereby even the aforementioned artwork-rewards from the Art Fund campaign (and the YouTube tribute for his 30th death anniversary) become part of a living archive of his cultural resurgence. A key theoretical framework for my thesis is archive theory, a conceptual thread that allows for a reevaluation of Jarman’s painting as it relates to notions of embodiment, testimony, and affective transmission – and to the Prospect Cottage archive itself.

¹¹ Blog post, “Derek Jarman: My Garden’s Boundaries are the Horizon wins Exhibition of the Year!”, Garden Museum, July 9 2021. <https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/derek-jarman-my-gardens-boundaries-are-the-horizon-wins-exhibition-of-the-year/>

¹² La Becque, “Modern Nature: An Homage to Derek Jarman Part One” (2019), <https://labecque.ch/en/modern-nature-an-homage-to-derek-jarman-part-one>.

¹³ Jack Halberstam, “Queer Temporality & Postmodern Geographies”, from *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005), 169.

This framework is developed upon foundational texts concerning the archive and its recurring instrumentalisation as a tool to consolidate power relations, social order, and institutional (arguably heteronormative) norms; this includes the work of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, as well as Hal Foster's work on the archival mode or "impulse" within contemporary visual culture.¹⁴ From this foundation, and its outline of the archive as an apparatus of normative power, I incorporate the work of scholars who have sought to explore the potential in archival disruptions. Critically, this includes notions of an alternative, affective, and even 'queer' archive – such as Ann Cvetkovich's "archive of feelings", or Halberstam's aforementioned "complex record".¹⁵ When I consider Jarman's painting alongside works by the late American artist and activist David Wojnarowicz, I look to the radical work of Marvin J. Taylor at the Downtown Archive at the Fales Library and Special Collections of New York University (NYU) in New York – informed by the analysis of archival scholars such as Lisa Darms.¹⁶ Working closely with the ephemera of queer artists, many of whom died as a result of HIV-AIDS, Taylor advocates for expansive and alternative archival practices and has been described as "the man who taught us how to file a leather jacket."¹⁷ It is with a view to establishing my own alternative practices for re-evaluating and re-situating Jarman's painting within his wider practice, archive, and legacy, that I reflect on and extend such scholarship to include the work of Marika Cifor on AIDS archives in the digital age, as well as Sarah Schulman on activist communities and the impact of gentrification upon the material and cultural legacies of the AIDS crisis.¹⁸

Such a reading allows me not only to situate Jarman's painting within his various modes, but better consider how it relates to the afterlife of his work, and the complications of his legacy amidst this moment of 'Jarmania'.¹⁹ As Ernst van Alphen establishes, "archives are no longer considered to be passive guardians of an inherited legacy but instead active agents that shape personal identity and

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994); Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976); Foster, "An Archival Impulse", 3-22.

¹⁵ Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Halberstam, *In a Queer Time*.

¹⁶ Lisa Darms, "The Archival Object: A Memoir of Disintegration", *Archivaria* 67 (Spring 2009): 143–155, <https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13212>.

¹⁷ Marvin J. Taylor and Julie Ault, "Active Recollection, Marvin J. Taylor in conversation with Julie Ault" (New York: Whitney Museum, 2014), 5, http://whitney.org/file_columns/0005/5248/ault_taylor_final.pdf. This reference to the 'leather jacket' evokes David Wojnarowicz's iconic (and infamous) leather jacket emblazoned on the reverse with the text "IF I DIE OF AIDS – FORGET BURIAL – JUST DUMP MY BODY ON THE STEPS OF THE F.D.A.", worn during ACT UP! protests in New York in 1988.

¹⁸ Marika Cifor, *Viral Cultures: Activist Archiving in the Age of AIDS* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2022); Sarah Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination* (California: University of California Press, 2013).

¹⁹ The term 'Jarmania' was popularised following Tilda Swinton's keynote speech 'Letter to an Angel', presented as part of "In the Spirit of Derek Jarman", a Vertigo Magazine event at the Edinburgh film festival, 17 August 2002. An abridged version was published in The Guardian on the same date. Later, this was incorporated into Isaac Julien's documentary film *Derek* (2008).

social and cultural memory.”²⁰ Just as the integrity and significance of the Prospect Cottage archive is contingent on its remaining together and being perceived as a ‘whole’ – the sole ‘organising principle’ being that of Jarman himself, functioning as artist-archivist via his activities as a collector of objects, documentarian, and diarist – my thesis situates his painting within Jarman’s wider archive function, as essential to maintaining the integrity of his practice and our contemporary efforts to re-present it.²¹

There can be no question that preserving Prospect Cottage and its contents plays an essential role of in the protection of Jarman’s legacy but the viral success of the Art Fund campaign raises many questions regarding the archive’s afterlife and affective engagement, whereby “memory is not something found and collected in the archives, but something that is made in the archive, and continually re-made.”²² Catherine Silverstone’s analysis of Jarman’s death and legacy echoes this notion of an archival (re)construction, gesturing towards the many complications – and the complicity – inherent in how we memorialise his art and activism. She writes that “efforts to establish legacy reveal it as a task with no end [...] shadowed by disappearance, [it] both indexes and is determined by shifts in cultures of public memory and technology.”²³ By offering a critical analysis of Jarman’s cultural ‘reconjuring’ as mediated by our renewed access to, and exhibition of, his paintings, my thesis is guided by how these works might facilitate a more nuanced understanding of this shifting archival territory as it pertains not only to Jarman but to the wider cultural memory of the HIV-AIDS epidemic.²⁴

iii. AIDS as a methodology: ephemeral archives, hauntologies, and temporalities

My thesis traces the ephemeral networks and affective transmissions of Jarman’s painting, situating (and specifically, integrating) this body of work within his wider practice and the emergent landscape of his archive and legacy. This endeavour requires an integrated methodology, and my

²⁰ Ernst van Alphen, “Staging the Archive: Ydessa Hendeles and Hanne Darboven”, *Journal of Taipei Fine Arts Museum* 28 (2014): 109, <https://www.tfam.museum/file/bookstore/71/20150701155415268795.pdf>.

²¹ The notion of the ‘organising principle’ in relation to the artist-archive is informed by the work of Darms, “Archival Object”, 154.

²² van Alphen, “Staging the Archive,” 111.

²³ Catherine Silverstone, “Remembering Derek Jarman: Death, Legacy, and Friendship”, *Shakespeare Bulletin* 32, no. 3 (2014): 453, <https://doi.org/10.1353/shb.2014.0045>.

²⁴ Silverstone, “Remembering Derek Jarman”, 463. Echoing my own reference to this ‘reconjuring’ – as it connects to notions of memory, affect, and queer temporality – Silverstone cites Isaac Julien’s description of his documentary *Derek* – and the accompanying exhibition ‘Derek Jarman: Brutal Beauty’ (Serpentine Galleries, 2008) – as “an invocation, a summoning of the dead. But if we wish to summon Jarman back to life, it is not to romanticise the past, but to hold a mirror up to the present.”

use of archive theory is in dialogue with notions of remembrance, ephemerality, and temporality. Critical to my thesis is the notion of AIDS time – a concept that, in my research, is heavily influenced by Marika Cifor’s aforementioned and recent publication *Viral Cultures: Activist Archiving in the Age of AIDS*, and her delineation of temporal registers relating to epidemic versus endemic time.²⁵ Cifor perceives AIDS, specifically in its epidemic register, as reflected in a temporality that is sped-up, urgent, and unrelenting. This is a temporality that sought to directly respond to the impact – and imminence – by which HIV-AIDS curtailed and corrupted creative lives into premature ‘lateness’ and death. This temporality arguably underpins the legacies of the AIDS crisis (both artistic, and personal) and the close connection this epidemic continues to maintain with the rhythm and resistance of ephemera and the queer archive.

This is something I witnessed first hand during my primary research not only at Tate Britain and the BFI National Archive but also in New York, in the archives of David Wojnarowicz at the Downtown Collection of the Fales Library at NYU, and at Visual AIDS – an organisation involved with the archives and collections of hundreds of artists affected by HIV-AIDS, both living and dead. It is a commonality of AIDS archives (and research) that works were often ‘saved’ from the ‘dustbins of history’ in the face of relatives, peers, and social systems that either actively disregarded or were blindly unaware to the significance of artworks, objects, and ephemera left behind by the Person With AIDS (PWA).²⁶ This epidemic register prioritises the ephemera that Halberstam perceives as central to the queer archive, which often centres materials otherwise excluded or exorcised from the traditional archive: concert fliers, gig tickets, notebook entries, found objects, personal detritus, and other evidence of a life lived off-record.²⁷ It is a register that reflects a specific ‘queer’ temporality that resonates throughout my thesis. In my own analysis, I link Jarman’s paintings to his description of cruising encounters – with lube and condoms, anecdotally accounted for – as well as the friendship, collaborations, and other social-exchanges that guided his artistic production (especially as his body deteriorated during the period on which I focus, from his diagnosis with HIV in 1986 through to his death in 1994.)

Like the archive itself, the notion of ‘temporality’ is something that shape-shifts and evolves as it recurs throughout my thesis – expansive, affective, and extending across different registers of

²⁵ Cifor, *Viral Cultures*.

²⁶ In Chapter III, I cite Fiona Anderson’s similar invocation of this phrasing in “Please Help Yourself: Queer Preservation and the Uses of the Past”, *Third Text* 35, no. 1 (2021): 53-79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2020.1861866>.

²⁷ Halberstam, “Queer Temporality”, 169.

subject, place, time period, and political context, as well as (ephemeral) encounters both physical and on-line. Furthermore, there are multiple temporalities simultaneously at play throughout my research. In Chapter I, I read Jarman's 'Queer' and 'Evil Queen' paintings against the specific temporality of Britain in the late 1980s to early 1990s, under the politics of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative party and Section 28 – a legislative decree that sought to prohibit the “promotion of homosexuality” by local authorities, implemented in 1988 and lasting until 2000 (in Scotland) and 2003 (in England). This guides an analysis of homophobia and cultural shame, and the creative reckoning inherent within Jarman's paintings as well as the alternative modes of living sought out by LGBT+ communities at this time (cruising, communal living, sexual freedoms, and decentralised modes of artistic production). In Chapter II, I consider Jarman's black paintings as reflecting a “viral temporality” – drawing on Cifor's notion of epidemic time to consider how his production of these works reflects the urgency of his diagnosis, its bodily effects, and its fracturing of certain temporal, emotional, and bodily vectors. In this way, the works become a vehicle for processes of time-capture, transference, and embodiment. In this chapter, I also connect Jarman to the similarly expansive practice and politics of David Wojnarowicz – the artist, activist, writer, and filmmaker – whilst engaging the context of New York (and the USA) during the period 1985-1992, critical to any research on the AIDS crisis. I also connect both artists via the memorial, archival, activist, and affective resonances of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, which contains tributes to both men. This provides a way to think through the legacy of the AIDS epidemic as a temporality unto itself – or rather, a multitude of temporalities that extend across multiple decades into our present and future.

In establishing my own framework for writing on the AIDS crisis, and Jarman's experience of his diagnosis and illness, I have been greatly informed by Tim Lawrence's research on the “problem of representation” surrounding the epidemic and its legacies today.²⁸ Crucially, Lawrence discusses the stakes of ‘lateness’ in approaching the PWA artist, and its disruptive potential when considering AIDS' ever-changing – and *delayed* – legacies. This is a key thematic within Chapter III, where I consider contemporary legacies of HIV-AIDS via the Queer Britain museum in King's Cross, and King's Cross itself as a case study for examining the shifting temporalities of queer life and community. Building on the work of London-based urban historian Ben Campkin, and Sarah Schulman's work on the gentrification of AIDS legacies in New York, I consider a series of film

²⁸ Tim Lawrence, “AIDS, the Problem of Representation, and Plurality in Derek Jarman's *Blue*”, *Social Text* 52/53: Queer Transexions of Race, Nation, and Gender (1997): 241-64, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/466743>.

works created by Jarman in and around the area for the electronic music group Pet Shop Boys in 1987, alongside a work – *Will You Dance With Me?* (1984, released 2014) created in the now-closed East London nightclub Benjy's. This analysis considers not only the effect of the AIDS crisis on disrupting queer spaces and communities in London, but the aggressive economic policies of Thatcherite Britain, the infamous King's Cross fire of 1987, and the lasting impact of redevelopment schemes across the city and its nightlife scene. I extend these temporal questions, and the temporality of this urban space itself, from Jarman's own lifetime to the present via the inclusion of a photo series entitled 'From Here To Eternity' (1999) by artist Sunil Gupta, who survives with HIV today.

Early on in Chapter I, I make reference to Elizabeth Freeman's description of 'queer hauntology', and this idea of ghostliness – that is, the haunting or spectral – permeates my own thesis.²⁹ Crucial to my analysis is an assessment of fleeting encounters and the 'traces' (of queer life, or public sex) described by José Esteban Muñoz.³⁰ This notion of the "ephemeral trace" – that is, an affective mark-making – recurs in my reference to Sara Ahmed and her description of the various ways in which objects, through affective encounters, may acquire an emotional and memorial 'stickiness'.³¹ In my focus on Jarman's paintings, I trace the ways in which this feels especially pertinent in the heavy, sticky impasto of his oil paintings – created with an urgent and even 'epidemic' ferocity during these late years of 1986-1994, often by multiple hands engaged in a social bond of collaboration and care. I use these theories to think through the importance, as I perceive it, of ephemera – and ephemeral networks, to again cite Cvetkovich – in upholding Jarman's painting as it relates to a central pillar of Jarman's artistic practice, and legacy. In my own research, as for others working on Jarman, this is often centred on his own diary entries and the extensive journals he maintained – both published in his lifetime, and written with a view to be made public. Combined with my own primary research through visits to Prospect Cottage as well as further scholarship into his processes and a theoretical framework extending from theories of the queer archive and AIDS crisis, I formulate an interpretation of his paintings that centres the testimony of the PWA. This is to reflect on not only the subject's urgent concerns and accumulation of objects and symbols, but on the affective registers of our contemporary engagement and the complexity of our interpretation in the contemporary sphere (that is, the 'endemic time' of today, when treatment

²⁹ Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 3.

³⁰ José Esteban Muñoz, "Ghosts of public sex: utopian longings, queer memories" in *Policing Public Sex: queer politics and the future of AIDS activism*, ed. Ephen Glenn Colter et al. (Boston: South End Press, 1996), 367.

³¹ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 11.

for HIV-AIDS is not only medically available but culturally and sociologically impactful, if not curative.)

My theoretical framework also draws from the field of disability studies, enabling a new interpretation of Jarman's experience of illness and physical deterioration – one that also connects to notions of temporality and embodiment. Scholars such as Lisa Cartwright use disability studies to link affect with stigma, whilst Karoline Feyertag reads dizziness and physical incapacity as a form of queerness and resistance to normative function / order. This framework informs my analysis of Jarman's 'Queer' and 'Evil Queen' paintings, which not only incorporate the slurs and public shame ensured by the LGBT+ (and PWA) communities amidst Section 28 and the AIDS crisis, but directly invoke the phenomenological and affective experience of his disease symptoms and illness. This is visible in the scrawling impasto forms of paintings such as the aforementioned *Ataxia – AIDS Is Fun* (1993), [fig.18], as well as in *Dizzy Bitch* (1993), [fig.16], and in the fractured glass and shattering surfaces of his black paintings (returning me often to Jarman's own description of his life "in fragments, smashed in pieces so fine I doubt I will ever re-assemble them.")³² The intersectionality and innovation of disability studies – and specifically, cripistemologies – drives my discussion of temporalities to include notions of 'crip-time' and 'chronic time', by which the temporality of Jarman's late period may encounter, encompass, and embody the specific implications of his illness. Crucially, cripistemologies – and the crip archive – allows me to "weave together archival, historical, theoretical, and personal narratives [...] to highlight the multiple systems that produce absences, omissions and perspectives in documentation."³³ This speaks to an essential concern of my thesis, and of the various theoretical modes by which I reassess and reevaluate Jarman's painting as it connects to his practice, archive, and legacy, as well as its re-conjuring in the public memory of the present moment.

It has likewise been important to establish the landscape of AIDS scholarship within which I situate my thesis. Beyond Jarman's own collected journals and their eviscerating account of life as gay man and then PWA in Britain during the period of his lifetime and illness, my research has been both impacted and informed by the writings of many different scholars. In examining the context of Thatcherite Britain and Section 28 as context for my analysis of homophobia and media imaginaries

³² Jarman, *Kicking The Pricks*, 235.

³³ Gracen Brilmyer, "Towards Sickness: Developing a Critical Disability Archival Methodology", *Journal of Feminist Scholarship* 17 (Fall 2020): 28, <https://doi.org/10.23860/jfs.2020.17.03>.

in Chapter I, I draw on works such as Simon Watney's *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS and The Media* – published in 1997.³⁴ Watney's "The Spectacle of AIDS" is an important and memorable contribution to a special issue of *October* journal dedicated to the AIDS crisis (Vol. 43, AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism (Winter 1987)), edited by Douglas Crimp and compiled at the height of the epidemic.³⁵ The contemporaneity of this journal's publication to the production of Jarman's own paintings is essential, not only in reflecting an activist concern and exposure within the academic space, but for echoing certain discussions that infuse my own art historical analysis of Jarman's works: the place of shame, media imaginaries of gay men, sexual freedom and oppressions, the representation of HIV-AIDS and the PWA, and in turn the specific 'temporality' of this period. Alongside Watney, my work on the AIDS crisis as experienced in the British context has been informed by the work of Jim Ellis on AIDS and Thatcherite Britain, alongside writings by Paul Baker, Mark Turner, Robert Mills, Fiona Anderson, and Sunil Gupta. More widely, I have also been guided by recent publications within the field including the work of Theo Gordon, João Florêncio, Marika Cifor's aforementioned book, and the important *We Are Having This Conversation Now*, by activist-theorists Alexandra Juhasz and Theodore (Ted) Kerr.³⁶ This last book challenged and expanded my thinking about AIDS memorial cultures, and the specific complexity of how we remember, who gets remembered, and why? All of these questions are essential underpinnings of my thesis, and my reckoning with the specific shape and profile of Jarman's artistic, activist, and AIDS legacy.

The inclusion of the AIDS Memorial Quilt amongst the artworks in my thesis centres a significant challenge to the accepted patterns – and recognition – of AIDS memorial legacies, both in the US and the UK, online and off-line. Central to this reflection is a profound reckoning with more generalised theories of memorial cultures. In Chapter I, I consider the archival and cultural implications of institutions' contemporary positioning of Jarman's work – specifically focussing on the active engagement of contemporary viewers in an affective encounter with his paintings and wider practice. In Chapter II, I investigate this impulse by analysing his black paintings with theories of the relic, reliquary, and the archival acceptance of ephemeral collections such as that of David Wojnarowicz. In Chapter III, I expand this by connecting the visual culture of AIDS legacies to James E. Young's notion of the "counter-memorial" – by which we may better interpret and

³⁴ Simon Watney, *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS and The Media*, 3rd ed. (London: Cassell, 1997).

³⁵ Simon Watney, "The Spectacle of AIDS", *October* Vol. 43, AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism (Winter 1987): 71-86, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3397565>.

³⁶ Alexandra Juhasz and Theodore Kerr, "How to Have an AIDS Memorial in an Epidemic", in *We Are Having This Conversation Now: the times of AIDS cultural production* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021).

incorporate the ‘queer archive’ into our understanding of the AIDS epidemic in contemporary culture, urban space, and new institutional praxis.³⁷ In Chapter IV, I specifically read this notion of memorial culture against the renovated, re-opened, and revealed space of Prospect Cottage itself. Following a campaign of preservation, what are the stakes of memory and remembering? What does it mean to revisit, to recall? What can preservation and protection present to us in the contemporary/future? My thesis seeks to probe these questions by situating Jarman’s painting within a wider view of his legacy, to “collate its different signs” (as Foster describes the archival mode), and to remember this cornerstone of Jarman’s practice (and artistic identity) as a nexus not just for his creative expression, but for the ephemeral networks of his art, activism, and emotional life.

iv. (Re)evaluation and exhibition encounters: an evolving literature and legacy

Until the catalogue for ‘Derek Jarman: PROTEST!’ in 2019, which provides an unprecedentedly comprehensive overview of Jarman’s practice with short essays from a range of contributors, scholarship on Jarman’s painting remained limited. This aspect of his work has often been overlooked or only afforded cursory reference when compared with his more notable work as a filmmaker and as an activist. In 1996, only two years after Jarman’s death, two key texts were published on his practice: Michael O’Pray’s *Derek Jarman: Dreams of England*, and Roger Wollen’s edited collection *Derek Jarman: A Portrait*.³⁸ Wollen’s book coincided with a retrospective at the Barbican (then Barbican Art Gallery) in the same year, variously referred to as ‘Derek Jarman: A Portrait’, ‘Derek Jarman: Artist, Film-maker, Designer’, and ‘Derek Jarman: A Retrospective’.³⁹ This exhibition was researched by Wollen and designed by Peter Fillingham, who will appear in Chapter I for his role as Jarman’s painting assistant towards the end of his life. O’Pray’s book – the title of which references Jarman’s notable feature film *The Last of England* (1987) – is structured in a chronological order, with an apparent focus on Jarman’s evolution as a filmmaker. The second chapter, ‘Painting & Design’, would appear to acknowledge Jarman’s

³⁷ James E. Young, “The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today”, *Critical Inquiry* 18:2 (Winter 1992): 267-296, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343784>.

³⁸ Michael O’Pray, *Derek Jarman: Dreams of England* (Middlesex: Garden House Press, 1996); Roger Wollen, ed., *Derek Jarman: A Portrait* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996).

³⁹ Regarding the variations in the title of Jarman’s retrospective at the Barbican in 1996, these are cited from: Wollen himself (in the accompanying book), 7; Tony Peake in his biography of Jarman, 573; and from Spike Magazine’s 1996 review (<https://spikemagazine.com/0896jarm/>), as well as a Sotheby’s provenance report from 2004, for the painting *Cool Waters* (1967), [fig.120], <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2004/20th-century-british-and-irish-art-i04141/lot.106.html>, accessed 21 Feb 2024.

painting practice and yet its subheading – ‘1963-1970’ – demarcates a remarkably brief period in Jarman’s creative development, segueing into a chapter on his home movies and experiments in Super 8. The implication seems to be that his early paintings were a testing ground (albeit a formative one) for his move into filmmaking. Although O’Pray includes colour illustrations of works from Jarman’s later ‘Evil Queen’ and black tar paintings, the last two chapters of the book (covering the period 1987-1994) are structured around his late films – ‘Black – The Garden, Edward II’ and ‘Colour – Wittgenstein, Blue’ – with only the briefest, occasional reference to the fact that he returned to painting during these years.

Poignantly, O’Pray ends his book with a scene following the purchase of *Ataxia – AIDS Is Fun* (1993) [fig.18], by Tate (then The Tate Gallery):

The dinner they gave in his honour was a high point of his life and career. As many of his friends knew, he had always been a painter who made films rather than the other way around. The success of his painting perhaps meant more to him in the long run than that of his films, though it was the films that filled the life he lived. He died having achieved all he had wanted. A remarkable life.⁴⁰

O’Pray’s reference to the way in which Jarman’s close friends understood the importance of his identity as a painter echoes my own emphasis on an understanding of his paintings that is centred on the ephemeral networks of his life. Throughout these chapters, I explore and expand these networks through close analysis of his social and sexual lives, his activist activities, his domestic environments and participation in urban encounters and nightlife, and via the interplay of his public and private personae. In Wollen’s literary ‘portrait’ of Jarman, made up of contributions from various authors, much more attention is paid to Jarman’s painting practice – specifically, in a chapter by Stuart Morgan entitled ‘Borrowed Time’.⁴¹ Yet, this analysis of Jarman’s work on his ‘Queer’ and ‘Evil Queen’ paintings is a brief interlude – a short essay of only seven pages. Instead, the book conveys the expansive nature of Jarman’s wider practice, with chapters on his gardening, stage design, and a familiar emphasis on the seemingly primary output of his film. This notion of Jarman’s painting as a secondary output, as if enjoyed as a private passion or hobby, is one that seems to reoccur in the existing scholarship on his work, despite the frequency with which he publicly exhibited his paintings during his life (and especially in the years following his diagnosis.) My thesis seeks to reorient our understanding (and as I perceive it, our *hierarchy*) of Jarman’s

⁴⁰ O’Pray, *Derek Jarman: Dreams of England*, 207.

⁴¹ Stuart Morgan, in Wollen, *Derek Jarman: A Portrait*, 113-120.

multivalent creative practice, anchoring his contemporary legacy in his identity as a painter – an identity that, as O’Pray acknowledges, was of great personal significance to him.

1999 saw the publication of Tony Peake’s *Derek Jarman: A Biography*, an extensively detailed and essential record of Jarman’s personal and creative life.⁴² This was followed in 2004 by the publication of Steven Dillon’s *Derek Jarman and Lyric Film: The Mirror and the Sea*, which closely considered all eleven of his feature films within a framework of queer theory – an important underpinning for my own thesis, albeit in terms of the queer archive, which is the grounding of my first chapter and continues to structure my research throughout.⁴³ Likewise, Rowland Wymer’s *Derek Jarman* (2005), from a ‘British Film Makers’ series published by Manchester University Press, reflected a similar focus on Jarman’s film work, with each chapter dedicated to a different feature film alongside an introduction and a primary chapter documenting his early experiments in home movies and Super 8.⁴⁴ Niall Richardson’s *The Queer Cinema of Derek Jarman* followed in 2008, incorporating a similar framework of queer theory whilst highlighting specific film works including *Caravaggio* (1986), *Edward II* (1991), and *Blue* (1993).⁴⁵ In this way, Richardson similarly concentrates on the period that coincided with Jarman’s diagnosis and subsequent experience of HIV-AIDS (that is, his experience as a PWA).

Yet, Jarman’s paintings remain an afterthought or accomplice to his testimony of the epidemic and his own illness – something that my own thesis seeks to dramatically redress. Martin Frey’s *Derek Jarman – Moving Pictures of a Painter*, published in the original German in 2009 (and not translated into English until 2016), seems to encourage the reader towards reflecting on the resonance – and relation – between Jarman’s identities as a filmmaker and as a painter.⁴⁶ Frey’s study is almost experimental in its approach, combining scholarly analysis with intermittent diagrams, graphs, lists, and cross-comparisons. In a chapter of particularly close analysis of Jarman’s own painting – ‘Go West! Influences from Painting and Literature’ – Frey makes a compelling case for the influence of Rauschenberg on Jarman’s work, dividing his painting practice and its methods into various categories:

The colours black and gold as well as the application of elements like bitumen/tar, gold leaf and gold dust

⁴² Tony Peake, *Derek Jarman: A Biography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

⁴³ Steven Dillon, *Derek Jarman and Lyric Film: The Mirror and the Sea* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).

⁴⁴ Rowland Wymer, *Derek Jarman* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

⁴⁵ Niall Richardson, *The Queer Cinema of Derek Jarman: Critical and Cultural Readings* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009).

⁴⁶ Martin Frey, *Derek Jarman – Moving Pictures of a Painter* (Tennessee: INGRAM Content Group Inc., 2016).

[..]

Text – autonomous characters, words and sentences inscribed into the painted surface of the work

[..]

Objets trouvés: The use of everyday found objects, such as newspapers, labels, (post) cards, various textile or metal goods, etc.

[..]

Collages

[..]

Newspapers – integrated in two different forms

[..]

Combines

[..]

Assemblages – a further development of the collaging combines

[..]

Action Painting⁴⁷

This intensive tracing of influence and reference extends to the work of Allen Ginsberg and the Beat poets, Jackson Pollock (see: action painting), David Hockney, and of course the indisputable impact of Yves Klein upon Jarman's artistic practice – a key relationship, expounded by Jarman himself, and explored in the final of my own thesis. Yet, Frey's discussion of Jarman's painting is fundamentally grounded in the realm of Jarman's film.

Derek Jarman's Angelic Conversations by Jim Ellis, published in 2009, also focusses on Jarman's filmic output and yet provides an important framework for the relationship between Jarman's creative practice and his activist politics – specifically regarding the context of Thatcherite Britain as a cradle for mainstream rhetoric surrounding the outbreak of HIV-AIDS in the UK.⁴⁸ This context – and Jarman's reaction to it – is critical to my own analysis, and something I directly trace through the paintings he created in the period following his diagnosis in 1987. It is a thematic underpinning of Chapter I, which considers tabloid media and the power of the archive as cultural ledger, and continues throughout my thesis – examined through lenses of protest, policing, public humiliation and punishment (Chapter II), urban space, gentrification, and individualist economics

⁴⁷ Frey, *Derek Jarman – Moving Pictures*, 59.

⁴⁸ Jim Ellis, *Derek Jarman's Angelic Conversations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

(Chapter III). Ellis also provides an important analysis of ‘time’ in Jarman’s work, which I will expand upon below in my discussion of how theories of temporality have shaped my thesis.

The publication of Michael Charlesworth’s *Derek Jarman* in 2011 – as part of the ‘Critical Lives’ series by Reaktion Books – provided an important overview of Jarman’s practice and is structured as a critical biography, which is to say that it incorporates art historical analysis (distinguishing it from Peake’s authorised biography of Jarman’s life.)⁴⁹ Within this survey of Jarman’s creative output – extending from film and stage design, to his work in pop music and at Prospect Cottage – Charlesworth closely examines his painting, including the ‘GBH’, ‘Queer’, and ‘Evil Queen’ series. This was followed in 2024 by the recent publication of *Derek Jarman’s Visionary Arts*, where Charlesworth focusses specifically on Jarman’s painting and theories of land and depth connected to Jungian and post-Jungian psychology.⁵⁰ This study represents an important landmark in the scholarship on Jarman’s painting, affirming that renewed access and attention to this aspect of his practice warrants new frameworks for interpretation. Whilst Charlesworth’s framework (land, depth, and psychology) is significantly different to my own (AIDS, ephemera, and the queer archive), I believe we both aim to reevaluate Jarman’s painting as a distinct body of work whilst simultaneously recognising its interconnectedness with the various channels of his practice.

By focussing on the ‘late period’ of his diagnosis and illness, my thesis specifically considers his painting as it relates to testimony, a specific temporality, and to legacy (and the archive.) These thematics are reflected in the structure of my own thesis, which moves between past (historical analysis) and present (analysis of contemporary exhibitions and re-presentations of Jarman’s work), intermixing and explicating Jarman’s ephemeral networks as they relate to his activism, ephemera, and estate. This structure is also guided by theories of the queer archive (amorphous, and unruly), of AIDS “epidemic time” and its temporal disorientations (sped up, slowed down), and by notions of crip-time as it relates to chronic illness. I believe that this structure also chimes with the spirit of Jarman, himself, and his own anachronistic and aggregative attitude – bending, queering, and remixing his research in order to form original analysis of the historical moment or material at hand. Recent publications echo this approach, notably *Derek Jarman’s Medieval Modern* by Robert Mills (2018) and *Luminous Presence: Derek Jarman’s Life-Writing* (2021) by Alexandra Parsons.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Michael Charlesworth, *Critical Lives: Derek Jarman* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).

⁵⁰ Michael Charlesworth, *Derek Jarman’s Visionary Arts* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024).

⁵¹ Robert Mills, *Derek Jarman’s Medieval Modern* (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2018); Alexandra Parsons, *Luminous Presence: Derek Jarman’s Life-Writing* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021).

Although neither of these publications focus on Jarman's painting, both engage with the slipperiness of his approach to time – that is, to temporality – and to his idiosyncratic relationship with history, legacy, and reference.

Parsons' engagement with Jarman's 'life-writing' reflects a contemporary interest in his published journals that has grown exponentially with the burgeoning Jarmania of recent years. This can be closely associated with the increased frequency of institutional exhibitions and retrospectives of his work – at which, almost without exception, copies of his own texts such as *Modern Nature* (a journal of the years 1989-1990), and *Smiling In Slow Motion* (1991-1994) can be found within the gift shop. Both texts were reissued by Penguin in 2018 along with *Kicking the Pricks* (1987), followed by *Chroma* (1993) and *At Your Own Risk: A Saint's Testament* (1993) in 2019, prior to the 'Derek Jarman: PROTEST!' exhibition at IMMA. This was followed by the republication of *Dancing Ledge* (1984) in 2022. Such recent exhibitions – and the negotiation they represent between Jarman's work, public engagement, and the legacies of HIV-AIDS – have been a guiding framework, and essential primary research, throughout the writing of my own thesis. Their representation of Jarman's creative output – and oft-unprecedented inclusion of paintings formerly held in private collections or in storage – has provided a key focus for my own analysis, allowing me to incorporate my own affective engagement with these works, alongside phenomenological and anecdotal evidence. Moreover, these exhibitions have mostly been accompanied by extensive catalogues (or other materials) that allow for an additional frame of reference in terms of critiquing institutional response to – and reconjuring of – Jarman's artistic testimony.

v. Chapter summaries

In Chapter I, I focus on the two painting series – 'Queer' and 'Evil Queen' – that Jarman created in the final years of his life. The selected works from these series are put into dialogue with two of Jarman's own Super 8 films – *Death Dance* (1973) and *Studio Bankside* (1971) – to reflect on how thematics of queer life, morbidity, and communality unfold across time and the ephemeral networks of his own personal life. To interrogate the politics of his paintings, which vehemently reject shame and institutional homophobia under Section 28, I include tabloid material and contemporary accounts from the period. I also make reference to Jarman's journals of cruising on Hampstead Heath, his own activism, and even one of his 'black paintings', *Smashing Times*, created in 1987. In

each instance I investigate the multiple signifiers, symbolic gestures, and vast array of references Jarman regularly assembled at frenetic pace. These are affective networks of information, emotion, and ephemera. Invoking Hal Foster's "archival mode", I take Jarman's lead by probing his unique artistic testimony so as "to ascertain what might remain for the present": interpreting its "different signs", its affective networks, and the multiple temporalities in play (past/present, life/death, day/night, before/after illness, public/private.)⁵²

In Chapter II, I focus more closely on Jarman's 'black paintings' to consider how they reflect his move to Prospect Cottage and the specific temporality conjured by his relocation there following his diagnosis with HIV. This extends not only to the symbols and ephemeral objects accumulated in their canvases, but also to Jarman's process and the specific speed and intensity of their production. Again, I read the paintings against Jarman's own journal entries relating to their creation – but find that certain thematics, symbols, and associations reoccur across his early and contemporaneous film works, as well as within his own garden in Dungeness, and his activist activities. Crucially, I bring Jarman – and his specific relationship to ephemera, assemblage, and object-collection – into dialogue with David Wojnarowicz and this artist's private 'Magic Box', a personal archive recovered from a posthumous storage facility and acquired by Fales Library in 1997. This comparison enables me to interrogate the importance of affective encounters (and engagement) in the legacy and memory of these two men – arguably two of the most-remembered artists to have died of HIV-AIDS during its epidemic period. I also trace this affective engagement through the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt – a well-known and extremely recognisable memorial tribute to those lost to HIV-AIDS, although one that (like the queer archive) is beset with tensions and complexities.

In Chapter III, I challenge myself – and the reader – to consider what might fall within the 'remit' of Jarman's painting, embracing an approach that matches his expansive creative vision. This involves close analysis of a series of filmic 'Projections' he made for Pet Shop Boys – to be 'exhibited' as projected instalments during their live tour. Filmed on Super 8 and blown-up to 70, 65, or 35mm, Jarman described how this medium provided him with "a palette like a painter [...] like stained glass [...] [with] wonderful colours."⁵³ It is partly in this vein that I find the works so compelling to think about as an extension of Jarman's 'paintings' during this period, affirming his own psychic

⁵² Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse", *October* 110 (Autumn 2004): 21.

⁵³ Derek Jarman, *Kicking The Pricks* (London: Vintage, 1996), 185.

identification not only with the medium of painting but with *being* ‘a painter’. Placed in dialogue with selected black paintings, as well as the photography of Sunil Gupta, I also highlight the enduring effect of the works’ ephemeral and affective underpinnings to reflect on issues of queer testimony, urbanity, pop culture, and national identity (that is, a specifically British and heteronormative identity) during this period.

Finally, in Chapter IV I present an analysis of a series of ‘AIDS Paintings’ and ‘Dungeness Landscapes’ created by Jarman between 1991 and 1992 – drawing on my own affective encounter with Prospect Cottage, as part of Creative Folkestone’s Research & Development programme. Whilst a selection of these works are included in Michael Charlesworth’s *Critical Lives* edition, I present an overview of these paintings as they remain in situ in the sitting room at Prospect Cottage – twenty-three in total, hung one upon another in orderly rows that dominate three walls of the space. By considering not just the works themselves, but their composition in space, I reflect specifically on their lingering centrality within the hauntological echo of Prospect Cottage and its preservation/re-presentation of Jarman’s legacy to the public. Again engaging the spirit of (a)temporality and expansive anachronism in Jarman’s own practice, and that of the queer archive, I also make reference to his *GBH* series (1983-84) as well as three paintings from a series created in 1967 (and exhibited that year in ‘Young Contemporaries’ at the (then) Tate Gallery.) Whereas previous chapters focus on Jarman’s direct invocation and reference to contemporaneous politics, his own activism, and of course his illness, crucial to Chapter IV is an interrogation of abstraction in Jarman’s paintings – and in his final, monochromatic film *Blue* (1993) – as an essential and affective mode within his artistic testimony as a PWA.

My thesis seeks to recognise the remedial and radical potentiality in re-assessing *how* we remember, using an integrated methodology that incorporates individual and collective testimonies of HIV-AIDS, private and public remembrance, and (queer) temporalities spanning past and present. In this way, I propose a holistic interpretation of Jarman’s painting that collapses archival, ephemeral, and memorial boundaries, and represents an analysis specific to contemporary art historical legacies of HIV-AIDS. On 12 June 2024, the artist Anya Gallacio won a competition to create a permanent AIDS memorial in London, following a £130,000 funding pledge by the current Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. This initiative, AIDS Memory UK, is spearheaded by the HIV-positive writer and curator Ash Kotak after almost a decade of campaigning. The charity’s slogan is “Remembrance,

Resonance & Resilience”⁵⁴. It is clear that the memory culture(s) and affective legacies of HIV-AIDS – in London, in the UK, and at large – remain complex, contested, and constant, even 30 years after Jarman’s death. The complications of ‘remembering’ AIDS demand us to remain active, to engage, and to acknowledge that “The Aids Crisis Is Not Over.”⁵⁵ Despite advances in treatment and prevention, the United Nations Global AIDS Update for 2023 estimated that, globally, there are still over 39 million people living with HIV.⁵⁶ In imagining a memorial for those lost, including Jarman himself, we must reckon with the tangle of contradictions, conventions, redactions, omissions, and inherent complexities by which our culture ‘remembers’ (and *fails* to remember) in the first place. This echoes the corrective – and curative – labour of the queer archive itself, and of many queer scholars, writers, curators, and artists endeavouring to remediate our deeply-entrenched modes of public record and representation. By approaching Jarman’s paintings and carefully re-situating their vital testimony within his wider practice, expansive legacy, and the ephemeral networks of his lived experience and memory, I seek to make my own contribution to these efforts.

⁵⁴ AIDS Memory UK, homepage, <https://aidsmemory.uk>.

⁵⁵ I invoke, here, a frequently-reproduced poster slogan made popular by activist organisation ACT UP!

⁵⁶ *The path that ends AIDS: UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2023* (Geneva: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2023), 6.

Chapter I

Pariah: painting 'Queer', 'Evil Queen', and ephemeral networks

i. Dead Soul's Whisper: institutional affect and queer hauntology

I saw this. This is the present in which my friends were lost. They died in these headlines. Between cups of sugary tea. Which blood? Which books? What revenge? What vice? What virtue?¹

In December 2021, I visited 'Dead Soul's Whisper' at Le Crédac in Paris – an institutional retrospective of Jarman's work curated by Claire Le Restif. The exhibition took place across three rooms in a converted industrial building in Ivry-sur-Seine and focused specifically on two bodies of work Jarman produced between his move to Prospect Cottage in 1987 following his HIV diagnosis in 1986, and his death in 1994: the 'Queer' series, produced in 1992 at a London studio, and a series of assemblage-paintings set within black tar, all produced in Dungeness. To assess the totemic function of Prospect Cottage, as a signifier of Jarman's late period within posthumous public endeavours to present and preserve his work, is to contend with the specific complexity of documenting or conjuring queer experience at the time of the AIDS crisis and (in the UK) Section 28. This context underscores the archive's cultural relevance today, influencing not only the creation of Prospect Cottage but its psychic and physical reproduction – as an artist's studio and queer domestic, as an ecological site and a place of pilgrimage, as a national treasure now 'saved' by the public and as a simulation.

My reevaluation of Jarman's painting seeks to establish how these works both echo and embody the complicated terrain of creative response to HIV-AIDS, and of the archive itself. That is, to acknowledge the archive as a complex and contested territory – subject to object hierarchies, institutional (and often binary) categorisation, and complications of identity, affect, ownership, provenance. Hal Foster's seminal work on the archival mode in contemporary art describes "a will to relate – to probe a misplaced past, to collate its different signs (sometimes pragmatically, sometimes parodistically), to ascertain what might remain for the present."² In this chapter, I examine a selection of the paintings from Jarman's 'Queer' series (1992) against this theoretical framework in order to cultivate a nuanced assessment of how these works might reach across the

¹ Derek Jarman, *Queer* (Manchester: Manchester City Art Galleries, in association with Richard Salmon, 1992).

² Foster, "An Archival Impulse", 21.

symbolic landscape of his work – forging connections between the various channels of his practice, personal history, public profile, and activist activity. Through visual analysis, I will consider how Jarman’s manipulation of formal elements – including the use of ephemera, found objects, and text – constitute a process of archival embodiment and reflect the “complex record of queer activity” as described by Halberstam, relating to the distortion (and so, the queering) of time and space triggered by the AIDS epidemic as well as its impact on queer communities, affective implications, and transformation of socio-sexual subjectivities.³

At Le Crédac, a total of 71 works from these two series – divided across two wings of the gallery spaces so as to be categorised by style – were interspersed with three early Super 8 films created between 1972 and 1976, whilst the centre’s ‘Crédakino’ (a cinema space curated to compliment the exhibition programme) played Jarman’s final film *Blue* (1993). Throughout the exhibition, the spectral presence of Prospect Cottage was not physically represented but instead embodied by the paintings. As Le Restif notes, “if [Prospect Cottage is] not really exhibited in the exhibition, it is nevertheless omnipresent”, a spectrality that brings to mind Elizabeth Freeman’s notion of the “queer hauntological exercise” in the paintings which, as signifiers of Jarman’s late period, are presented as inextricable from his HIV diagnosis and move to Prospect Cottage.⁴ This notion of hauntology was first employed by Jacques Derrida, whose description of ‘archive fever’ informed my evaluation of our contemporary ‘Jarmania’ in the introduction. Derrida proposes hauntology as a framework by which to interpret a post-modern state of being whereby the subject is “neither living or dead, present or absent” – immediately resonant with the self-consciousness of Jarman’s ‘Queer’ paintings as existing between diagnosis and death, and with Le Crédac’s reconjuring of his presence (and concurrent reaffirmation of his absence).⁵ In the exhibition’s first room, which focused on Jarman’s ‘Queer’ series (1992), many of the largest works appeared totem-like, not hung on the gallery walls but suspended, upright and erect on industrial metal frames from ceiling to floor [fig.1]. These were displayed alongside Jarman’s early black-and-white Super 8 film *Death Dance* (1973), a ghostly, collaborative invocation of the *danse macabre* filmed in the back lot of his studio-home at Butler’s Wharf – a site of communality and queer ‘idiosyncrasy’ that I will go on to explore as both connected to, and conjured by, these ‘Queer’ paintings. In the film, a group of four young men – made up of Jarman’s friends and frequent collaborators, including Gerald Incandela and

³ Halberstam, “Queer Temporality”, 169.

⁴ Exhibition booklet, *Dead Soul’s Whisper (1986-1993) Derek Jarman*, Le Crédac (2021).

⁵ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 3.

⁵ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 51.

Christopher Hobbs – stand athletic and nude, holding round mirrors that dazzle as they catch the light so as to appear orb-like in their hands [fig.2]. One by one, the skeleton-masked figure of Death – robed in brilliant white – lays its hands on each of the men’s bodies, leaving them collapsed on the ground [fig.3]. Suspended alongside the ‘Queer’ paintings and their direct invocation of Jarman’s illness and looming death, *Death Dance* flickered before the viewer with an eerie prescience – the grain of the Super 8 adding to its mythic, visionary quality. It is in this way that the ‘Dead Soul’s Whisper’ of the exhibition’s title – taken from one of Jarman’s Black Tar paintings on display [fig.4] – resounded throughout the various rooms of Le Crédac, circling through these selected early films and later works so as to consolidate and emphasise the tragedy of his premature late period.

In Jose Esteban Muñoz’s “Ghosts of Public Sex: Utopian Longings, Queer Memories”, he invokes Derrida’s hauntology as a “conceptual tool” by which to consider “a familiar yet other-worldly affective function that leaves a certain ephemeral trace, the appearance of which I am calling *the production of ghosts*.”⁶ In analysing Jarman’s ‘Queer’ paintings and their exhibition at Le Crédac, I wish to evaluate this affective function as it connects to questions of presence / absence (memory), ephemera (traces), and spectrality (that is, temporality). Within this analysis, the queer archive provides a framework – or, a “structure of feeling” – by which these questions (and the multiple affective / subjective positions of the artist, the institution, and the academy) connect to the present – “a process of relating the continuity of social formations within a work of art”.⁷ Freeman writes that a “stubborn lingering of pastness [...] is a hallmark of queer affect”, and in considering the psychic inextricability of time (Jarman’s late period) and place (Prospect Cottage) within the curatorial treatment and phenomenological experience of Jarman’s work at Le Crédac, I question how the wider affective conditioning of his legacy becomes bound into institutional re-presentations of his work.⁸ Moreover, I am interested in how this constitutes a ‘queering’ of the archive / estate by speaking so directly to the artist’s emotional life, *feelings*, embodiment, and resistance to archival categorisation or object hierarchies. The italicisation of *feelings* notes my reference to Ann Cvetkovich’s seminal work on this term, which greatly informs my own thoughts on affect and the queer archive and reoccurs in this essay.⁹ If, as Cvetkovich observes, the affective impulse is generative of “imaginative archives”, or ‘archive trouble’, how might we better relate the affective implications of our remembrance to its impact on institutional re-presentations of artist-archives and

⁶ Muñoz, “Ghosts of public sex”, 367.

⁷ Muñoz, “Ghosts of public sex”, 363. Muñoz draws this notion of a “structure of feeling” from the work of Raymond Williams.

⁸ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 8.

⁹ Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*.

their complex legacies?¹⁰ By establishing how Jarman's painting exists in this affective and imaginative space, we may more closely observe how he seeks to transform and 'trouble' his own testimony of HIV-AIDS – allowing us to better interpret not only his own multimedia practice and its afterlives, but the wider visual legacies of the AIDS epidemic.

ii. “The imperfect translation”: testimony as a collaborative process

By investigating what I refer to as this affective conditioning, I wish to consider how the representation of these paintings is both shaped by, and shapes, the transmission of Jarman's testimony as a PWA and the tragedies of both his premature death and the AIDS crisis at large. This requires an analysis of the phenomenological experience of the works. That is, how we (the viewer) are oriented in relation to the paintings – not only physically, but psychically (and so, emotionally). Sara Ahmed describes how “the attribution of feeling to an object [...] is an effect of the encounter, which moves the subject away from the object. Emotions involve such affective forms of reorientation.”¹¹ In Ahmed's estimation, this affective attribution stems from “a reading of contact”, which identifies the object in relation to the feeling – “(I feel afraid because you are fearsome)”.¹² This *emotional* reading echoes the affective function recognised by Muñoz as at once esoteric and embodied. The affective encounter is viscerally felt despite its ephemeral coding or “other-worldly” constitution.¹³ In my reading of these paintings, I seek to establish how Jarman uses the direct invocation of HIV-AIDS – through form, colour, and the incorporation of text – to produce “a reading of contact” that embodies and externalises the experience of the PWA in order to reorients the subject (the viewer) towards the realities of the virus and its associated impact, grief, and stigma. How does our experience of these ‘Queer’ paintings – these dense, impasto slabs of erratically-etched oil paint infused with the artist's rage and grief – allow for the direct transmission of his testimony as a PWA, and as a dying man? Furthermore, how might we acknowledge – and better navigate – the tensions inherent in such a reading of Jarman's work, and the implications for the re-presentation of such testimony in the institutional space? In the context of disability studies, Lisa Cartwright describes affect as “a complicated intersubjective dynamic that is not generally in the control of the person whose affect is being “felt,” interpreted, or narrated by another [...] Affect

¹⁰ Ann Cvetkovich, “Photographing Objects as Queer Archival Practice”, in *Feeling Photography*, eds. Elspeth Brown and Thy Phu (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 281.

¹¹ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 8.

¹² Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 8.

¹³ Muñoz, “Ghosts of public sex”, 367.

thus can bear a close relationship to stigma.”¹⁴ I believe there is value in extending such a reading to my own writing on chronic illness and specifically HIV – a condition, and subjectivity, frequently underpinned by stigma, socio-political power dynamics, and shame (identified by Silvan Tomkins as one of “the nine categories of affect”).¹⁵ Nonetheless, Cartwright perceives that this “shame holds a transformative potential that can be worked through even in its indirect or subtle forms to enable expression and identity.”¹⁶ It is in the spirit of acknowledging this complicated inter-subjectivity – that is, bearing witness to (re-presenting) the affective conditions of Jarman’s work, and reproducing them – that I seek to reevaluate his ‘Queer’ paintings.

The ‘Queer’ paintings predominantly feature a ground of photocopied tabloid newsprint, painted over so as to at once obscure and highlight headlines that directly record the vitriolic media rhetoric surrounding the epidemic and the PWA (Person With AIDS). Using a sgraffito technique befitting the agitation and angst of Jarman’s own activist work, this top layer of oil paint is often inscribed with text relating to the virus itself, invoking queer socio-sexual practices, HIV-AIDS activist slogans, and the proliferation of harmful media imaginaries bolstered by Section 28. Exhibited back-to-back, the viewer could experience the painted protrusions of their surface in the round, or how the light illuminated Jarman’s textual interventions and tabloid ground, coated in rabbit skin glue. The thickness of the impasto surface is important; as Ahmed perceives, “a mark on the surface (‘to leave an impression’) [...] allows us to associate the experience of having an emotion with the very affect of one surface upon another, an affect that leaves its mark or trace.”¹⁷ To observe the paintings’ paint-splattered sides, marked with studio and warehouse notes on the frames, we might imagine the physicality of their production. The curator, Le Restif, described how “it is both [Jarman’s] political and artistic position that this project wishes to salute”, expounding that “this exhibition format in tribute to Derek Jarman is primarily artistic, but it can also be considered a memorial.”¹⁸ That the exhibition’s curation served this memorial function – and was so directly informed by Jarman’s personal politics, creative strategies, and death – speaks immediately to an affective position. That is to say, it seeks to produce the “affective connections” described by Dinshaw and Silverstone as generated by our attempts “to touch on the dead [...] to know those who are no longer living” – recalling Derrida’s hauntology and the ghosts described by Muñoz.¹⁹

¹⁴ Lisa Cartwright, “Affect”, in *Keywords for Disability Studies*, eds. Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss and David Serlin (New York: NYU Press, 2015), 32.

¹⁵ Cartwright, 31.

¹⁶ Cartwright, 31.

¹⁷ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 6.

¹⁸ Exhibition booklet, Le Crédac (2021).

¹⁹ Dinshaw, 11-12; Silverstone, 460.

In terms of perceiving the phenomenological impact of this curatorial memorial function as a guiding principle for the physical presentation of Jarman's paintings, I am influenced by Ahmed's description of how "looking back is what keeps open the possibility of going astray. We look back, we go behind; we conjure what is missing [...] This backward glance also means an openness to the future, as the imperfect translation of what is behind us."²⁰ In the context of any retrospective, we – the institution, and the viewer – are arguably always "looking back." Yet there is a distinction made by Le Restif's exhibition format – artistic, affective, elegiac – that seems to deliberately engage a phenomenological queerness in order to incorporate and so respond to Jarman's own queerness and, in this particular case, his 'Queer' paintings. Silverstone questions what is at stake in how we remember Jarman – or a "piece" of Jarman – gesturing towards his desire "to just disappear completely", despite the ways in which he memorialised and frequently meditated upon his own death within the "non-evanescent media" of his film and writing – even participating in the filming of his own video-obituary.²¹ By considering Jarman's use of materials within the context of contemporaneous queer subjecthood (and sub-culture), I seek to locate this contradictory impulse within these paintings, and to situate them within a wider archival project – directly recording a specifically queer testimony of the AIDS crisis through processes of incorporation (the use of ephemeral materials, appropriation of tabloid sensationalism, and invocation of text-speak/slang) and embodiment (conjuring the psychic and physical 'failure' of the queer body or PWA through processes of collaborative working, sgraffito, and abstraction/'mess'.)

Jarman wrote directly of the testimonial function of his work, remarking that he "had to write of a sad time as a witness."²² Examining the framework of Halberstam's queer time and the wider complications of the 'queer archive' alongside Jarman's subjective and material invocation of media imaginaries surrounding the PWA, these paintings may be interpreted with reference to what Lisa Darms perceives as the process by which "traces of a lived past" are impressed upon objects, turning the archive into a point of connection between "the actual and the imagined, lived experience and its remembered (or forgotten) images."²³ This is arguably the same hauntological space described by Derrida and expanded by Muñoz and Freeman. The paintings in the 'Queer' series were created over the course of two months, following an invitation to exhibit at Manchester

²⁰ Sara Ahmed, "Orientations: Towards a Queer Phenomenology", *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12, no.4 (2006): 570, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/202832>.

²¹ Silverstone, 450, 456, 461.

²² Derek Jarman, *At Your Own Risk: A Saint's Testament*, ed. Michael Christie, 1992 (London: Vintage, 1993), 134.

²³ Darms, "The Archival Object", 151.

Art Gallery in 1992, and Jarman was assisted by Piers Clemett and Peter Fillingham [fig.5] – producing seventeen paintings in less than fourteen days.²⁴ The archive is a project cultivated and upheld by multiple parties and this collaborative mode can be explored alongside Halberstam’s description of the queer archive as a “collective memory” – a collectivity that implicitly complicates traditional notions of provenance and authorship. Hal Foster identifies these complications as inherent within the contemporary archival impulse, framing a collaborative project by Pierre Huyghe and Philippe Parenno within Nicolas Bourriaud’s rubric of “post-production”, whereby the artwork becomes a “chain” of projects – “a dynamic structure that produce[s] forms that are part of it.”²⁵ As a repeated site of production and collaboration across the many channels of his multidisciplinary practice, Prospect Cottage (and its archive) embodies such a dynamic structure. Jarman’s wider oeuvre also reflects this destabilising and often open source approach, with the recycling of collaborators, object-props, and media across various projects mirroring a chain-like structure.

Approaching Jarman’s use of Super 8, Mark Turner describes how his navigation of networks outside of mainstream distribution or ownership represented “a kind of refusal to engage fully in the systems of capital that controlled cultural production and consumption.”²⁶ Though partly necessitated by Jarman’s physical limitations as a result of AIDS, the collective mode of these paintings feels similarly counter-cultural and implicitly queer – underscoring a communality important to the social and sexual experience of not only Jarman but the wider gay liberation movement, and at odds with the prevailing individualism of contemporaneous Britain whereby Margaret Thatcher declared there was “no such thing as society, only individual men and women.”²⁷ Ahmed speaks of a circularity whereby it is the object of emotion that is shared and reproduced – not the emotion itself. In the context of this collaborative production, and of our retrospective consumption of Jarman’s painting, this circularity is particularly resonant. In 1993, a year after the production of the ‘Queer’ paintings, Richard Salmon would facilitate a similar studio arrangement for the completion of Jarman’s final body of paintings – the ‘Evil Queen’ series, produced for an exhibition at Manchester’s Whitworth Art Gallery and explored in depth in the final section of this chapter. By this point in his illness, Jarman was repeatedly in and out of hospital, almost blind, and

²⁴ Joanna Shepard, “Painting on Borrowed Time: Jarman’s Media and Techniques”, in *Derek Jarman: PROTEST!*, eds. Seán Kissane and Karim Rehmani-White (London: Thames and Hudson, 2020), 96.

²⁵ Foster, “An Archival Impulse”, 4.

²⁶ Mark W. Turner, “Derek Jarman in the Docklands: The Last of England and Thatcher’s London” in *Taking Place: Location and the Moving Image*, eds. J.D. Rhodes & Elena Gorfinkel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 83.

²⁷ Turner, “Derek Jarman in the Docklands”, 87.

had deteriorated physically to the extent that he couldn't make the paintings himself. Crucially, he would not live to see these final works on display when the exhibition opened in September 1994. In both instances, this mode of production disrupts the institutional order of the archive and its expectations of artist-authorship, instead creating space for more affective interpretations elucidated by theories of a queer archive; "they are recalcitrantly material, fragmentary rather than fungible, and as such they call out for human interpretation, not machinic reprocessing."²⁸ In this way, they generate the circularity described by Ahmed, forming chain-like networks of emotional (affective) resonance – replicated and reiterated by their re-presentation in the institutional space, and reinterpretation by the contemporary viewer. This disruption of archival order and linearity, by which the works inhabit an interpretive, affective – imaginative – space, echoes Cvetkovich's description of a queer 'trouble' in the archival orbit, but it also speaks to notions of idiosyncrasy in the construction (and reconstruction) of queer life, which I will go on to explore in the next section.

iii. *KY*: idiosyncrasy and a queer "way of life"

Exhibited together at Le Crédac on one wall and so appearing as a triptych, *KY*, *Poofs*, and *Priest* are three works from the 'Queer' series. Each work was produced in 'medium-sized format', measuring at 101.5 x 61 cm, and each invokes a specific aspect of the media's demonisation of queer activity both before and after the outbreak of AIDS.²⁹ Moreover, each of the three works invoke a thematic from Jarman's own queer praxis, both personal and professional. In considering this dual function, we may again refer to Halberstam's proposition that the complexity (and perhaps, the *unstable* nature) of the queer archive reflects a specific conflation of the social and personal within queer experience. *KY*, 1992 [fig.6], scrawled in large, red painted letters against a background of black paint on newsprint, scored into with frenetic cuts, references a brand of (sexual) lubricant that was, and remains, well-recognised. In this work, it functions as a totem of queer sexual activity – one that exists across Jarman's oeuvre. The brand is documented in Jarman's first film – the 6-minute Super 8 short, *Studio Bankside* (1971) – a record of his living and work space at 13 Bankside, one of three different warehouse spaces he occupied besides the River Thames between 1969 and 1979. Jarman wrote that these warehouse spaces "allowed me to slip quietly away... and establish my own idiosyncratic mode of living."³⁰ In a shot of the space's

²⁸ Foster, "An Archival Impulse", 5.

²⁹ As described in the exhibition booklet at Le Crédac (2021).

³⁰ Derek Jarman, *Dancing Ledge*, ed. Shaun Allen (1984; repr. London: Quartet Books, 1991), 96.

interior, we see a tube of KY lubricant amidst Jarman's personal belongings [fig.7] – an expanse of domestic ephemera, typical of Jarman's wide-ranging aesthetic interests and later style, that situates such “markers of nascent gay lib” alongside found objects and plants, a stream of Jarman's own guests, and – through his window – the shifting landscape beyond the boundaries of his domestic realm.³¹ Both these inside and outside shots connect Jarman's personal record to a specific time and place, bridging personal ephemera, social activity, and a spatial awareness of one's own subjecthood. The film is also connected to a queer temporality through the quotidian objects of daily (and domestic) life, which take on an affective potential when connected to the wider socio-politics of queer identity. These ephemeral remnants recall the traces described by Darms or Muñoz, and as Ahmed describes, “such objects become sticky, or saturated with affect, as sites of personal and social tension.”³² This is an affective potential also mirrored in contemporary theories of the artist-as-archivist, in which Hal Foster identifies a “desire to turn belatedness into becomingness, to recoup failed visions in art, literature, philosophy, and everyday life into possible scenarios of alternative kinds of social relations, to transform the no-place of the archive into the no-place of utopia.”³³ This notion of the ‘no-place’ echoes my earlier discussion of the liminal space negotiated by Cvetkovich's ‘imaginative’ archive, and the shifting temporality/terrain of queer remembrance as signalled by Silverstone. Jarman's prioritising of his own ephemera and personal realm, and its transfiguration through film, painting, and the Prospect Cottage project, not only adheres to this archival impulse but affirms its testimony to alternate sexual relations, communality, and social change – all tenets of the gay liberation movement.³⁴

Approaching queer object-collections, Cvetkovich describes how “to love the wrong kind of objects is to be queer (as is perhaps an over-attachment to objects in the first place)”.³⁵ Jarman seems to revel in this kind of ‘wrong’, actively accumulating and celebrating such objects not only in his painting but in his personal life, domestic space, and even in his writing. KY is also memorably central to an episode from *Smiling in Slow Motion*, Jarman's published journals from 1991-1994, where he recalls:

(Tuesday 9 July 1991)

³¹ Ed Halter, “Home Movies: Ed Halter on Derek Jarman's Super 8 Films”, *Artforum* Vol. 47 No. 8 (April 2009), <https://www.artforum.com/print/200904/derek-jarman-22300>.

³² Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 11.

³³ Foster, “An Archival Impulse”, 22.

³⁴ Lucy Robinson, “Gay liberation 1969–73: praxis, protest and performance” in *Gay men and the Left in post-war Britain: How the personal got political*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 65-92.

³⁵ Cvetkovich, “Photographing Objects”, 278.

Caught a cab at 9.30 to the Heath. Very hot, met Julian. HB had sabotaged my armoury – KY replaced with a tube of Deep Heat and my bottle of poppers filled with perfume.³⁶

The ‘Heath’ refers to Hampstead Heath, a sprawling parkland in North London with a long (and still active) history of gay cruising for sexual partners. Jarman wrote – and spoke – extensively of his experiences of Hampstead Heath, and the relationships (both platonic and sexual) that he would form with men he met amidst its ancient greenery.³⁷ In this extract from his journals, he describes how HB (Keith Collins, referred to in shorthand for “Hinney Beast”), replaces his KY lubricant with Deep Heat – an emulsion cream treatment for muscular pain, which creates a heat sensation when applied to the skin.³⁸ Jarman’s use of the term “armoury” is at once comic and revealing. It speaks not only to the chance element, risk, and necessary preparation inherent in the act of cruising, but to the weaponisation of casual sex essential to both the gay liberation movement and the radically altered landscape of sexual freedoms after the outbreak of HIV-AIDS. In outlining the ‘complex record’ of the queer archive (and as such, queer time), Halberstam writes that “if we try to think about queerness as an outcome of strange temporalities, imaginative life schedules, and eccentric economic practices, we detach queerness from sexual identity and come closer to understanding Foucault’s comment in ‘Friendship as a Way of Life’ that “homosexuality threatens people as a ‘way of life’ rather than as a way of having sex.”³⁹ Jarman’s invocation of KY complicates this notion of detaching queerness from sexual identity in that it speaks directly to the sexual act and, as referred to above, to the symbolic landscape of the gay liberation movement and its championing of sexual freedom, social casualness, and the materials by which this freedom / physicality was facilitated.

Yet, we may certainly frame this object-symbol against the (queer person’s) “idiosyncratic mode of living” as directly referred to by Jarman and in fact, Foucault’s original text outlines how this ‘idiosyncrasy’ underpins the project of gay liberation – the psychic and physical potential of homosocial activity “outside of institutional relations, family, profession, and obligatory camaraderie”.⁴⁰ This is echoed in Hal Foster’s description of the artist-archivist mode as “an idiosyncratic probing” – especially pertinent to the queer archive, which destabilises the

³⁶ Derek Jarman, *Smiling in Slow Motion*, ed. Keith Collins (London: Century, 2000), 32.

³⁷ This is recorded throughout Jarman’s diaries but notably discussed in Jarman’s BBC *Face To Face* interview with Sir Jeremy Isaacs, dir. Janet Fraser-Crook, ed. Janice Hadlow (1993), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rnDr-xW5uo.

³⁸ Sabine Durrant, “How We Met: Derek Jarman and Kevin Collins”, *The Independent*, January 17 1993, <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/etcetera-how-we-met-derek-jarman-and-kevin-collins-1479042.html>.

³⁹ Halberstam, “Queer Temporality”, 1.

⁴⁰ Jarman, *Dancing Ledge*, 96.

⁴¹ Michel Foucault, “Friendship as a Way of Life” in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow; trans. Robert Hurley and others (New York: New Press, 1997), 136.

institutional order of archival conventions (and coding) with its same affective impulses, resistance to object-hierarchies, and privileging of ephemera.⁴¹ Foucault describes the “affective intensities” of the homosexual ‘mode’, noting how “institutional codes can’t validate these relations with multiple intensities, variable colours, imperceptible movements and changing forms. These relations short-circuit it and introduce love where there’s supposed to be only law, rule, or habit.”⁴² This subversion is not only embodied by the collaborative production of the ‘Queer’ paintings, but by their collision of the mundane traces (tabloid newspaper, found objects – in this case, the titular lubricant) with the subjective and affective intensities of the PWA. The painting *KY* can be interpreted as shedding light on how the AIDS crisis inverted and distorted such symbols of gay liberation and everyday life. The perceived alterity of queer sexual activity transformed into a terror that encroached on the queer ‘way of life’ at all levels, so that such *idiosyncrasies* became charged as symptomatic of moral failure, social sickness, and/or divine retribution. This notion of idiosyncrasy highlights Jarman’s affective interventions as an abstracting – distorting – force. This relates back to my earlier description of how affect and ‘trouble’ have been connected within the archival framework, and the ways in which Jarman’s testimony engages this ‘trouble’ as a mode of representing the difficulty of queer life and representation both under Section 28, and after the outbreak of HIV-AIDS.⁴³ Crucially, I want to consider how this affective, abstractive ‘trouble’ serves not to hinder our interpretation of Jarman’s subjective testimony but to expand our understanding of the physical, psychic, and socio-political precarities of this queer temporality.

iv. *Poofs* and *Priest(s)*: media imaginaries and the problem of representation

In the context of the AIDS crisis, abstraction resonates not only with a queer navigation of society, visibility, and recognisability (embodiment) but with notions of lateness, disease, and death (disembodiment). When the AIDS crisis first entered into the public consciousness in 1981-1982 – only to be provisionally labelled as Gay-Related Immune Deficiency (GRID) – it triggered a proliferation of media imaginaries, both pre-existing and newly-conjured, that sought to frame the epidemic as a ‘gay plague’. This media rhetoric capitalised on and compounded contemporaneous political efforts to further stigmatise and outlaw homosexuality under Section 28, extending to the perceived link between HIV-AIDS and gay sexual practices. This included the imagined

⁴¹ Foster, “An Archival Impulse”, 3.

⁴² Foucault, “Friendship as a Way of Life”, 137.

⁴³ Cvetkovich, “Photographing Objects”, 281.

promiscuity and related uncleanness (moral and literal) of marginalised communities, the perception of homosexuality as moral transgression, and the perceived threat of HIV-AIDS to the notion of the heteronormative nuclear family. Simon Watney has described this widespread moral panic aimed at gay men and their *imagined* lifestyle as “the corporal punishment of the ‘homosexual body’, identified as the enigmatic and indecent source of an incomprehensible, voluntary resistance to the unquestionable governance of marriage, parenthood, and property.”⁴⁴ In *Poofs*, 1992, [fig.8], Jarman incorporates this landscape of socio-political demonisation of the gay ‘way of life’ by loudly appropriating the slur of ‘poof’ in bold lettering, marked via sgraffito into the oil-painted surface of the work, which is again set upon a grounding of photocopied tabloid newsprint.

As if in acknowledgement of its emotional charge – and even as a playful, winking gesture towards the viewer – the word ‘poofs’ is almost imperceptible amidst the darkened surface of Jarman’s canvas, with aggressive gashes in the black background revealing glimpses of the tabloid ground below. Yet, as the viewer’s eye attempts to make out the headlines of the newsprint below, it is the word ‘poofs’ that comes into focus. Again, it is as if this text element is merely a trace, albeit a menacing one (even speaking to the notion of being haunted / the hauntological.) Phenomenologically, we might align this experience with that of the contemporary queer subject and especially the PWA. The specific details of the newsprint become almost interchangeable, but it is the vitriolic, slurring tone of the media coverage that resounds and pulls focus. POOFS. Peter Tatchell, whose own collection of tabloid coverage provided the source material for the tabloid ground of Jarman’s paintings, describes how:

the 1980s and 90s were a very heady, intoxicating and exhilarating period of queer activism. This was an era when parliament refused to even debate gay issues, let alone repeal homophobic laws. It was a time when tabloid headlines screamed things like ‘Poofs in the pulpit!’, an attack on gay clergy, and ‘Poofers on parade’, an attack on the campaign to end the ban on gay people serving in the armed forces.⁴⁵

Returning to Cvetkovich’s affective ‘trouble’, we can recognise the consciously troubling, incendiary impact of Jarman’s reclamation of this slur in the contemporary context.⁴⁶ His incorporation of this pejorative, and of such a personal archive – that of his friend and fellow

⁴⁴ Simon Watney, “The Spectacle of AIDS”, *October* Vol. 43, AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism (Winter 1987): 83.

⁴⁵ This detail of Tatchell’s tabloid archive providing Jarman’s source material comes from Shepard, “Painting on Borrowed Time”, 96; Tatchell’s account is drawn from an interview with Joseph Burnett, “‘The Gentle Revolutionary’: Peter Tatchell Remembers Derek Jarman”, *The Quietus* (March 3rd, 2014), <https://thequietus.com/articles/14622-peter-tatchell-derek-jarman-interview>.

⁴⁶ Cvetkovich, “Photographing Objects”, 281.

activist, Tatchell – elaborates the affective underpinnings of the painting. In this way, Jarman’s work not only reveals itself once again as a record for contemporary language, politics, and media imaginaries, but as a portal for the affective resonances of his experience as an HIV-positive artist and activist.

Declan Long describes how “words in Jarman’s late paintings are not stable, either in their appearance—set within stormy compositions, the letters are incomplete, overlapping, only just legible—or in their meanings.”⁴⁷ In *Tragedy* [fig.9], a strikingly monochromatic red canvas set towards the far side of the first room at Le Crédac, the painting’s title is marked into its surface in fragile, finely-rendered scratches. Set atop a tabloid ground reporting of “LESBIAN TEACHER HORROR” and amidst the wider sgraffito of the canvas, the artist’s titular inscription pushes the boundaries of legibility, barely visible. The interplay of these painting layers and their implicated events or subjects again echoes Muñoz and the ‘production of ghosts’.⁴⁸ The notion of instability – and illegibility – also gestures towards the ‘trouble’ of Jarman’s affective testimony and the abstraction generated by his transmission of queer subjectivity, an ‘emotional memory’ described by Cvetkovich as conditioned by “the idiosyncrasies of the psyche” and so resisting interpretation and “the coherence of narrative” to instead appear “fragmented and ostensibly arbitrary”.⁴⁹ This, in turn, echoes Foucault’s description of idiosyncrasy in queer life as I explored above, but also resonates with Jarman’s experience of his fracturing self after diagnosis with HIV, writing that “my world is in fragments, smashed in pieces so fine I doubt I will ever re-assemble them.”⁵⁰ This reflects the specific breakdown of subjecthood and figurative representation in the case of the PWA, referred to by Douglas Crimp as requiring a “a critical rethinking of all of culture: of language and representation, of science and medicine, of health and illness, of sex and death, of the public and private realm”.⁵¹ As such, we may relate Jarman’s abstraction to the fragmentation and incoherence of queer life (and bodies) at this time.

This is well-represented by *Negative Image* (1992) [fig.10], another work from the ‘Queer’ series also exhibited in the first room at Le Crédac, in which Jarman mimics the crisis’ flurry of

⁴⁷ Declan Long, “CLOSE-UP: NAKED EYE – Declan Long on Derek Jarman’s *Fuck Me Blind*, 1993”, *Artforum* Vol. 58 No.3 (November 2019), <https://www.artforum.com/print/201909/declan-long-on-derek-jarman-s-fuck-me-blind-1993-81074>.

⁴⁸ Muñoz, “Ghosts of public sex”, 367.

⁴⁹ Ann Cvetkovich, “In the Archives of Lesbian Feelings: Documentary and Popular Culture”, *Camera Obscura* 49, Volume 17, Number 1 (2002): 110, https://doi.org/10.1215/02705346-17-1_49-107.

⁵⁰ Derek Jarman, *Kicking The Pricks*, 235.

⁵¹ Douglas Crimp, “Introduction”, *October* Vol. 43, AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism (Winter 1987): 15, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3397562>.

information and text (both factual and fictional) – political slogans, medical jargon, warnings, headlines, slurs – through the layering of diaristic text elements in painted, capitalised scrawl [sic]:

(FOR YOU)

I'M ILL TODAY

MY BODY

ACHES (POSITIVE)

I – SWEATS – YOU

FUCKING TOXIC

NEVER MORE

To again invoke Ahmed, the painting is 'sticky' with affect – almost suffocating in its rage and in its physical signifiers: the aching body, sweat-sodden bedsheets, and the perceived 'toxicity' conferred by the subject's HIV status ('POSITIVE'). It is also distinctly Jarman in its reference to Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* (1845), which documents a distraught lover's nightmarish descent into madness as witnessed by a doom-filled Raven that speaks only "NEVERMORE".⁵²

Seemingly corresponding and yet in contrast, the large-scale canvas of *Positive* [fig.11] – suspended on its metallic girders – offers only a single word – the titular 'POSITIVE', inverted so as to appear upside down upon the background of oil paint in impasto swathes of black, green, pink, blue, and violet. The word alone can be read as a reference to Jarman and other PWA's HIV-positive status but, in its inversion, Jarman opens up wider interpretations connected to the identity of the PWA, the personal realities and political fictions HIV, and the distortions – or inversions – enacted by the moral, medical and media apparatus of the 'heterosoc' establishment. The notion of testing 'positive' is itself an inversion within the experience of illness, warping our understanding of what it is 'to be positive' – or 'a positive person' – and wrapping it up in the moment of diagnosis, that generative event in the experience of the PWA. In his journals, Jarman describes his own experience of diagnosis:

When the doctor first told me I was HIV positive, I think she was more upset than me. It didn't sink in at first – that took two weeks. I thought: this is not true, then I realised the enormity. I had been pushed into yet another corner, this time for keeps. [...] I walked down Charing Cross road in the sunlight, everyone was so blissfully unaware.⁵³

⁵² Edgar Allan Poe, "The Raven", *Edgar Allan Poe: Complete Tales and Poems*, (Edison, New Jersey: Castle Books, 2002), 773.

⁵³ Derek Jarman, *Modern Nature: The Journals of Derek Jarman* (London: Vintage Classic, 2018), 151.

The painting mimics this experience of HIV diagnosis as simultaneously establishing and erasing the PWA – both marking out and minoritising the subject, “pushed into yet another corner.” As Muñoz observes, ephemera represent “a modality of anti-rigour and anti-evidence [...] a mode of proofing and producing arguments often worked by minoritarian culture and criticism makers.”⁵⁴ It is from this marginalised position that the ephemeral becomes a key tenet of recording (and so, archiving) the experience of AIDS.

In Cvetkovich’s analysis of the archives of lesbians involved in the New York chapter of activist group ACT UP, she writes of wanting to approximate “the more ephemeral network of friendships and publics that accompanied its vast archive of graphics, documentaries, and papers.”⁵⁵ Though Jarman was producing his work in a very different context of HIV-AIDS activism, similar ephemeral networks can be traced through the ‘Queer’ paintings: a bridging of personal friendships and social networks, political affiliations and shared sexualities, state institutions and public imaginaries, melded together by the affective treatment of Jarman’s painterly hand.⁵⁶ In this way, I seek to affirm the critical significance of Jarman’s painterly testimony of the AIDS epidemic by reading it within the framework of the queer archive. In *True Blue* [fig.12], shown near the entrance of the exhibition, Jarman sustains his critique of the contemporaneous Conservative (historically “Blue”) government and the hypocrisy of its attacks on the gay community. Into the surface layer of malignant black paint, Jarman has used a cloth to rub a circle of exposed ground, revealing a headline of pasted tabloid newsprint that reads “THE NIGHT I MET MP IN GAY CLUB”. On the surface of the painting, Jarman has carved the words “QUEER TORY” in heavy, angled, scrawl struck through with red oil paint, whilst the words “TRUE”, “TRUE BLUE”, and “NIGHT” emerge from the top corner in more spindly handwriting, appearing white through their superficial indentation into the black paint. A gluttonous smear of blue paint at the top of the work harkens again to the “blue” traditionally associated with the Conservative party, often the colour of ties worn by the party’s political members and ministerial candidates (or the blue suits of Margaret Thatcher.)

⁵⁴ Muñoz, “Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts”, *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 8, no. 2 (1996):10, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07407709608571228>.

⁵⁵ Ann Cvetkovich, “Legacies of Trauma, Legacies of Activism: ACT UP’s Lesbians”, in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, eds. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 230.

⁵⁶ The American context, beset with healthcare inequalities and what Simon Watney has described as the “market economics of healthcare and American medical research”, demanded early treatment activism aimed at pharmaceutical greed, access to care, and medical policy. Comparatively, UK AIDS activism was largely aimed at social policy and media awareness. See: Simon Watney, “The politics of AIDS treatment activism”, in *Imagine Hope: AIDS and Gay Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 201-207. For more on ACT UP, see: Sarah Schulman, *Let The Record Show: A Political History of ACT UP New York 1987-1993* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021).

‘True Blue’ also has a double meaning; a synonym for loyalty and romantic love, as encapsulated by Madonna’s album of the same title in 1986 (coincidentally, the year Jarman was diagnosed.) In the album’s eponymous title track, which reached No.1 on the UK Singles Chart within two weeks of its release and remained on the chart for fifteen weeks, Madonna sings:

Hey
What
Listen
I've had other guys
I've looked into their eyes
But I never knew love before
'Til you walked through my door
I've had other lips
I've sailed a thousand ships
But no matter where I go
You're the one for me, baby, this I know⁵⁷

Removed from the context of a self-consciously saccharine pop melody, this lyrical delight in the directional tone and description of the subject’s extensive sexual history – stolen glances, spontaneous encounters, and the sailing of “a thousand ships” – brings to mind Jarman’s later invocation of Blue throughout his final film (1994):

Whisper
Deep love drifting on the tide forever
The smell of him
Dead good looking
In beauty’s summer
His blue jeans
Around his ankles
Bliss in my ghostly eye
Kiss me
On the lips
On the eyes

⁵⁷ ‘True Blue’ was released on September 29, 1986. It was certified gold by the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) in October 1986. Official Charts. <https://www.officialcharts.com/albums/madonna-true-blue>.

Jarman seems to tease out the perceived lewdness of the headline as it is reported by *The Standard* newspaper – simultaneously highlighting the duplicitousness of the Conservative (blue) MP ‘caught in the act’ (at a time of governmental suppression and stigmatisation of the LGBTQ+ community), and undermining the media’s amplifying shock factor by confabulating the ‘romantic’ potential of the encounter. I actively read Jarman’s paintings in such a way as to seek out their multiple meanings and affective resonances, to acknowledge their camp humour, and to trace the ephemeral networks of their references. This approximates Muñoz’s account of queerness as not simply being available as visible evidence but existing as “innuendo, gossip, fleeting moments, and performances that are meant to be interacted with by those within its epistemological sphere – while evaporating at the touch of those who would eliminate queer possibility.”⁵⁸ This mode of interpretation is essential to untangling the ephemeral networks of Jarman’s painting, as well as his wider artistic and archival orbit.

In his attempt to perceive a “queer abstraction”, David Getsy writes that “employments of abstraction gain their political and affective resonances because they are drawn from the anger, exhaustion, and facility that come with navigating the ways in which ‘marked’ positions of difference are opposed to (and defining of) a supposedly unmarked ‘neutral.’”⁵⁹ This notion of a marked position speaks to the subject of the homosexual or PWA as vilified by mainstream media, but it also evokes Jarman’s literal mark-making: political, potent, and peripatetic. The viewer scrambles across the painting’s landscape, arranging and interpreting the sensational headlines or images beneath and between the painted surface. Part of the queer trouble channeled by Jarman’s abstraction in these works is both a reaction to – and a transmission of – what has been described by Jim Ellis as “a new psychic terrain [...] it is not so much about Jarman’s own diagnosis with HIV, or with HIV in general, or even with Thatcherism, but about a new subjectivity born of the collision of these things.”⁶⁰ This psychic terrain, and the collision at its source, is represented in the abstraction of Jarman’s painting and its distorting composition of objects, text, and subjectivities to form networks of meaning that are at once ephemeral, affective, and precarious. Writing on the deliberately incoherent ‘mess’ of abstraction, Susan Harrow establishes that “the production of mess (in the form of the wilfully indiscriminate desecration of tropes, and in the purposive mixing of rhetorical styles) takes forward the urge to disrupt and displace what is culturally smoothed and

⁵⁸ Muñoz, “Ephemera as evidence”, 6.

⁵⁹ David Getsy, “Ten Queer Theses on Abstraction”, in *Queer Abstraction*, ed. Jared Ledesma (Des Moines: Des Moines Art Center, 2019), 69.

⁶⁰ Jim Ellis, “Thatcherism, AIDS, and War”, in *Derek Jarman’s Angelic Conversations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 147.

levelled”.⁶¹ It is precisely this disruption and displacement that Jarman embodies in his affective abstraction, incorporating not only the tabloid material in its physical form but in its distortion of socio-political ‘truth’ and its warped, weaponising of queer subjectivity. Identifying this mode as specifically related to “social or cultural crisis” – applicable to both the AIDS epidemic and Section 28 – Harrow describes how “composite, chaotic, and incomplete, mess narratives and modernist autobiographical narratives solicit readerly acts of retrieval and recycling, only to subvert those acts by exposing the instability of language.”⁶² Jarman’s painting mediates these same notions of mess and crisis by way of affective intervention and incorporation – distorting, displacing, revealing, and also concealing. Furthermore, this notion of retrieval and recycling (only to be confronted with the work’s instability) speaks to the challenge of the queer archive, and its resistance to institutional coherence.

Another example of Jarman employing painterly abstraction as a means of reacting to the distortions of public rhetoric around AIDS is his painting *Priest*, 1992, [fig.13], the next painting in the arranged triptych at Le Crédac, which represents the collision of queer subjectivity with institutional homophobia. This canvas – a storm of heavy impasto oil paint in acrid red, orange, black, purple, and sea-foam green – is gouged with the word ‘Priest’ alongside symbols of the cross and the Star of David. One famous news story from the time – and one that has been taken up by noted AIDS scholars such as Leo Bersani, Simon Watney, and Douglas Crimp – is that of the real-life Reverend Robert Simpson, who proudly declared that he would murder his son if he were to “have the deadly disease.”⁶³ Appearing in *The Sun* as “another red hot *Sun* exclusive”, the story was accompanied by the sensational headline “I’d Shoot My Son If He Had AIDS, Says Vicar: He would pull trigger on rest of his family” [fig.14]. This was the embodiment of moral panic, emblazoned in the pages of one of the most widely read newspapers in Britain. In the article, the rejection of the AIDS carrier (proven or suspected, but implicitly homosexual) is total, vitriolic, and also performed. Reverend Simpson declares he would “ban all practising homosexuals, who are most in danger of catching AIDS, from taking communion [...] If it continues it will be like the Black Plague. It could wipe out Britain. Family will be against family.” For Watney, this article and its accompanying image – in which Simpson stands upon a local hilltop over his 18 year-old son Chris, aiming a shotgun towards his chest – encapsulates all that the contemporary media (and

⁶¹ Susan Harrow, “Debris, Mess, and the Modernist Self: Rimbaud from Poésies to the Illuminations”, in *The Material, the Real, and the Fractured Self* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 2004), 26.

⁶² Harrow, “Debris, Mess, and the Modernist Self”, 31.

⁶³ Simon Watney, *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS and The Media*, 3rd ed. (London: Cassell, 1997), 94.

arguably, both the British and American governments of the time) feared most, and so projected onto the AIDS outbreak; “family breakdown, infanticide, teenage sexuality, homosexuality - printed approvingly as a warning image.”⁶⁴ Connected to my earlier notion of queer ‘idiosyncrasy’, Ahmed describes how:

The reproduction of life – in the form of the future generation – becomes bound up with the reproduction of culture, through the stabilisation of specific arrangements for living (‘the family’). The family is idealisable through the narrative of threat and insecurity; the family is presented as vulnerable, and as needing to be defended against others who violate the conditions of its reproduction.⁶⁵

Indeed, Reverend Simpson’s fears for his son embody his moral panic; if we follow his logic (for want of a better word), gay men are the source of the virus, and yet his son is not even identified as gay. In fact, in an unwitting moment of tragic-comedy, his son comments to the journalist from *The Sun*, “sometimes I think he would like to shoot me whether I had AIDS or not.” This subjective dissonance clearly speaks to the moral and disease hysteria, whilst also echoing Foucault’s description of the threat of a queer ‘way of life’ being dislocated from the threat of gay sex itself. Again, we may observe how the fear of AIDS subsumes – or weaponises – an existing fear of ‘gay sex’ into a moral horror at a queer ‘way of life’.

In another work exhibited in the same room at Le Crédac, in fact the first work the viewer encounters, Jarman notes this hypocrisy. Entitled *40% of British Women*, 1992, [fig.15], this painting is large-format and again set on a ground of photocopied tabled newsprint, upon which Jarman has scored in charcoal and written (again in large, red lettering):

SODOMY STRAIGHT
HERE’S NEWS FOR YOU
40% OF BRITISH WOMEN
TAKE IT UP THE ARSE
YOU CALLED IT MURDER
BUT I CALLED IT LOVE
SPREAD THE PLAGUE

Jarman’s textual intervention inverts the *News of the World* headline from the tabloid background, which reads “HE CALLED IT LOVE BUT I CALLED IT MURDER”, with the subtitle “KINK

⁶⁴ Watney, *Policing Desire*, 94.

⁶⁵ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 144.

THAT COULD BE THE LINK: PAGE 2". This inversion by Jarman echoes the symbolic inversion of KY lubricant previously discussed. In these paintings, he exposes how gay penetrative sex (implicit in the reference to anal sex, and to the lubricant that commonly facilitates it) becomes weaponised by the AIDS crisis – simultaneously revealing the machinations of the media and governmental demonisation of queer communities and the PWA, and levelling gay sex as merely a quotidian aspect of the queer 'way of life'. The KY jelly we can still buy at a pharmacy today is exploded into thick blood-like impasto oil paint; the "suicidal ecstasy" of 'taking it up the arse' is revealed as also being a 'heterosoc' hobby.⁶⁶ In the context of the queer temporality of AIDS, the threat of gay sexual activity indeed collapses within the threat of gay life by revealing how it threatens a heterosexual 'way of life' – from the "family breakdown, infanticide, teenage sexuality" described by Watney to the quotidian idiosyncrasy described by Halberstam and Jarman himself, which extends to non-reproductive and non-vaginal sex, non-monogamy, communal living, inter-generational relationships, and a rejection or dislocation from mainstream media discourse.

v. Dizziness, disorientation, and affective disorder: 'Evil Queen', 1993

In 1993, a year after the production of the 'Queer' series, Jarman created his final body of paintings – 'Evil Queen'. Jarman was again supported by Piers Clemett – primary assistant on the 'Queer' paintings – and by Karl Lydon, a gallery assistant for Salmon with no formal artist training. The aim was to create a series of work ahead of an exhibition at Manchester's Whitworth Art Gallery, and implicit in this was the creation a sort of factory set-up: a frenetic and dynamic production line whereby the canvases could be completed at a dizzying speed, usually in only a couple of hours. In fact, the seventeen works in the series were produced in only seven days of studio time, spread across three months and scheduled around Jarman's many other commitments and failing health. Existing photographs from the production of the 'Queer' paintings show Jarman's active participation, dynamically applying thick lashings of paint to both floor-based and wall-based canvases.⁶⁷ By contrast, footage from the penultimate day of painting for 'Evil Queen' – filmed by Granada Television – shows Jarman "frail and swamped by the armchair from which he directs the painting, wearing thick-lensed glasses and plagued by skin irritation. And yet he is completely

⁶⁶ Leo Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?", *October* Vol. 43, AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism (Winter 1987): 211, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3397574>.

⁶⁷ These studio images, captured by both Piers Clemett and Howard Sooley, are featured in Joanna Shepard's "Painting on Borrowed Time", 97-98.

focused on the work in hand, conveying a quiet urgency to keep going, keep working.”⁶⁸ This section seeks to consider this final series and its presentation at the Whitworth – Jarman’s first posthumous exhibition – as constituting a critical departure point in the consideration of Jarman’s lateness, legacy, and its connection to the ephemeral networks outlined above. By returning to examine the paintings’ collaborative production, I seek to reaffirm the ‘affective connections’ established by Dinshaw and Cvetkovich and the way in which these underpin the contemporary representation of Jarman and the curatorial (but also *curative*) work of the queer archive. By considering not only the finished canvas but its physical production, I examine how the work’s embodiment of Jarman’s physicality – the dizzyed orientation of his illness and deteriorating body – might again be related to the deliberate (and disruptive) testimonial function of his work. How might the instability invoked by dizziness be connected to notions of queer precarity and the physicality of the Person With Aids, not only in the context of Jarman’s late period but in readings of his legacy today?

In the specific case of *Dizzy Bitch*, 1993 [fig.16] – and of Jarman’s own (dis)orientation as an artistic stance directly related to his illness and identity as a Person With Aids – we may trace in his dizziness (affective, embedded) an extension of his queerness. An urgency pulsates throughout the canvas – not only in its riotous red impasto ground, and the bold, agitated washes of paint built up in orange, blue, and green, but in the motion of their application. In an essay for the catalogue of ‘Derek Jarman: PROTEST!’, the conservator Joanna Shepard describes how paint was “roughly daubed on and dragged with broad brushes and rags.”⁶⁹ With *Dizzy Bitch*, the viewer is viscerally aware of how the paint was applied by hand, and by the handful, “flung and clawed” onto the canvases.⁷⁰ The effect is dazzling — dizzying — suggesting something both primal, and yet fearful: hands outstretched and spinning, grasping in the dark (the dizzying dark of Jarman’s blindness) to make sense. Karoline Feyertag describes how “dizziness is fundamentally linked to queerness. Dizziness is shaking the human body *and* the very ideas and concepts of normality we derive from it.”⁷¹ Feyertag questions the extent to which, by existing outside of heteronormative systems and practices, queer persons function as “agents of confusion” – a political, deliberate dizziness, strategic and arguably active in Jarman’s work well before his diagnosis with HIV.⁷²

⁶⁸ Shepard, “Painting on Borrowed Time”, 99.

⁶⁹ Shepard, “Painting on Borrowed Time”, 99.

⁷⁰ Shepard, “Painting on Borrowed Time”, 99.

⁷¹ Karoline Feyertag, “Queering Dizziness”, presented at the symposium “Agents of Confusion!”, Kunsthau Graz, Vienna (10 February 2017), and published online as part of *onDizziness* (6 April 2017), <https://www.on-dizziness.com/resources-overview/queering-dizziness>.

⁷² Feyertag, “Queering Dizziness”.

The correlative of dizziness and queerness is reflected by the term ‘Dizzy Bitch’ itself, drawn from Polari (a linguistic framework of slang jargon, commonly used amidst marginalised communities in the United Kingdom and Ireland, including but not limited to the LGBTQ+ community.)⁷³ In another painting from the ‘Evil Queen’ series, also exhibited at the Whitworth Art Gallery [fig.17], Jarman references *Bubble and Squeak* – Cockney and Polari rhyming slang for a person of Greek heritage (presumably used in reference to a potential love interest or sexual partner.) The series title ‘Evil Queen’ is itself a reference to the Polari ‘queen’ – a synonym for a homosexual male, often associated with camp. Jarman’s invocation of Polari, and other slang, reflects a dark humour that inhabits these final paintings and encodes them with affective resonances. Whilst the ‘Queer’ paintings – with their incorporation of tabloid print and agitated reference to political slogans – are more directly tied to the information and interpersonal networks of Jarman’s own activism and lived experience amidst Section 28, the use of language in the ‘Evil Queen’ paintings draws on the lingua franca of cruising slang, camp comedy, and queer communality. In both cases, we can perceive how Jarman’s paintings – and his incorporation of language – is underpinned by the ephemeral networks of his lived experience not only as an artist and activist, but as a gay man.

In reflecting on the campness of the ‘Evil Queen’ paintings, it is interesting to consider how Lisa Cartwright connects affect and stigma through the way in which such campness is perceived as an ‘affected’ behaviour – used “to imply that someone’s behaviour is not natural or genuinely felt [...] that someone is behaving pretentiously or with conceit”.⁷⁴ Cartwright notes that “we use this phrase to condemn the person in question for performing his or her affect ‘unnaturally’ or in a charade, as if we all shared a template for normative or natural ways of acting in public.”⁷⁵ In his specific use of Polari, a language used to facilitate such ‘unnatural’ socio-sexual identities and encounters, Jarman again invokes the idiosyncrasy of queer life as explored in the previous sections of this chapter, and the affective traces by which queer lives are recorded, inscribed, and testified. Moreover, he seems to emphasise the necessary (in)visibility of its inscription. Polari – from the Italian *parlare*, “to talk” – was in use as far back as the nineteenth century, and possibly even earlier, but has declined in direct correlation with the decriminalisation of LGBTQ+ identities in the mid-late twentieth century.⁷⁶ This (in)visibility recalls Muñoz’s description of the imperceptibility of these references

⁷³ Paul Baker, *Polari – The Lost Language of Gay Men* (London: Routledge, 2003), 48.

⁷⁴ Cartwright, 32.

⁷⁵ Cartwright, 32.

⁷⁶ Paul Baker, *Polari*, 24.

outside of the queer experience (or viewership) and its associated ephemeral (information) networks – or “epistemological sphere.”⁷⁷ When the show opened in September 1994, the viewing public walking the galleries of the Whitworth would not necessarily approximate the affective connections conjured by many of Jarman’s text elements. These ephemeral transmissions connect the ‘Evil Queen’ paintings to sexual identities, histories, and preferences; to cruising bathrooms and park woodlands; to bars and cafes across London and beyond; and to the specific experience of his bodily deterioration as a result of HIV-AIDS. Imagining the experience of the viewer who is not attuned to these ephemeral networks speaks to Ahmed’s notion of phenomenological “moments of disorientation”, which involve not only “the intellectual experience of disorder, but the vital experience of giddiness and nausea, which is the awareness of our own contingency and the horror with which it fills us.”⁷⁸ If we perceive Jarman’s incorporation of queer slang as an artistic and interpretive subterfuge, in tandem with his physical invocation of disorientation and dizziness, we better understand the dark humour of the ‘Evil Queen’ paintings as a subversion, echoing Feyertag’s notion of the queer subject as “an agent of confusion”.⁷⁹

I believe that, in the context of the AIDS crisis, this notion of instability, confusion, precarity – of dizziness – again takes on an inarguable and inescapable resonance related to the specific dislocation of both psychic and physical identity in the case of the Person With AIDS. Previously, I considered how this was channeled through the scrawling sprawl of Jarman’s rage against societal negligence and prejudice in the ‘Queer’ paintings as shown at Le Crédac. In *Ataxia – AIDS is Fun* [fig.18], the large canvas appears frenzied and almost overwhelmed with heavy, painted colour. Streaks of yellow, blue, and green explode on a backdrop of blood red – smudged, scrawled, and seemingly blasted upon the painting’s ground. There exist four lines of text, but most prominent is the titular ‘ATAXIA’ and ‘AIDS IS FUN’. Much harder to distinguish are two other lines of text at the top and bottom of the canvas – ‘BLIND FAIL’ and ‘LET’S FUCK’. The painting references a neurological condition commonly associated with HIV, which leads to a loss of balance and physical coordination. In a diary entry on June 12 1993, Jarman referenced this condition: “I have acquired a new disability, ataxia, which I call “wobble” – the HIV is attacking my nervous system so my wobble is in fact a bit of a stagger.”⁸⁰ In the same year, Jarman described his intention to use his painting practice as a mode to “release some of the anger which everyone with HIV feels [..]

⁷⁷ Muñoz, “Ephemera as evidence”, 6.

⁷⁸ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 544; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 2002), 296

⁷⁹ Feyertag, “Queering Dizziness”.

⁸⁰ Jarman, *Smiling in Slow Motion*, 360

The actual physicality of painting will release the violence in me.”⁸¹ This was quoted in the exhibition catalogue for the Whitworth exhibition, and again speaks to the embodied testimony that is transmitted through both the ‘Queer’ and ‘Evil Queen’ series.

Earlier in this chapter, I considered how Jarman uses affect to disrupt and complicate his own testimony of HIV-AIDS, and in *Ataxia – AIDS is Fun* we can observe the destabilising effect of his humour and tone. As Stuart Morgan describes, “perhaps the most disturbing aspect of these paintings is their incongruity. Despite the proximity to death, a frantic party atmosphere is conjured up.”⁸² In this painting’s frenetic surface and almost crudely jubilant colour, this party atmosphere is surely conjured. The viewer wobbles with the undulating surface and its utterances, with the pulsating washes of paint. Recalling Ahmed’s objects “sticky and saturated with affect”, this painting is sticky like the after-party floor – a crash of spilled fluids, crude directives and declarations, intoxicated and intoxicating in its effect. Like Ahmed’s affective stickiness and the disorientation of a queer phenomenology, Feyertag describes how dizziness might serve to “unsettle dominant modes of knowledge production and orientation.”⁸³ This is surely true of the ‘Evil Queen’ paintings as a record of Jarman’s illness, enacted by his subversive, destabilising play of text – “AIDS IS FUN / LET’S FUCK” – and the dizzying (dis)embodiment of his physical deterioration through his use of paint. Feyertag links this disruptive (and as she observes, “generative”) potential of dizziness to notions of trouble and its etymological root in the Latin *turbulare*, which refers to “disturbance, agitation of the mind, emotional turmoil”.⁸⁴ This of course has resonance with Jarman’s own experience and identity as a PWA, with his desire to use his paintings (and their dizziness) as a means to express his own agitation, and with the queer ‘trouble’ of his testimony as explored in the previous sections of this chapter.

Critically, Feyertag traces this etymological root through to the Latin *turbulentus*, which “also refers to a jester” – commonly conjured as a queer figure. I believe such a reading of the ‘trouble’ at hand in Jarman’s ‘Evil Queen’ series is an important way in which we might better understand the subversive potential – and *play* – that underpins his incorporation of text, slang, and camp humour. Beyond my earlier assessment of Polari as an ephemeral network of queer exchange, we can also link its reference in Jarman’s painting to this notion of the jester (and the jester as a queer /

⁸¹ *Derek Jarman: Evil Queen*, exhibition catalogue, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester 1994, 12-14.

⁸² Stuart Morgan, “Borrowed Time”, in Roger Wollen, *Derek Jarman: A Portrait* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996), 119.

⁸³ Feyertag, “Queering Dizziness”.

⁸⁴ Feyertag, “Queering Dizziness”.

subversive figure) – by way of the language’s roots in circus, carnival, stage, and sex worker communities. The jester is historically a subversive and so a lonely figure belonging to the carnival tradition and representing the potential in disorder. Mikhail Bakhtin’s analysis of carnival frames it as a socio-cultural tendency and aesthetic framework that “inverts the everyday hierarchies, structures, rules and customs of its social formation [...] through exposure of the grotesque aspects of the body.”⁸⁵ In the case of the carnival, the grotesque body might gesture towards the body that is itself disobedient, destabilised, or disintegrating. Bakhtin describes the emphasis put on “those parts of the body that are open to the outside world [...] or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world [...] the open mouth, the genital organs, the breasts, the phallus”.⁸⁶ In the case of Jarman’s late paintings – and especially in the ‘Evil Queen’ series – the jester’s duality of both the comic and the sexual or “grotesque” is a powerful undercurrent and artistic stance – both for articulating Jarman’s own perception of his own identity as a PWA, and for its potential to destabilise the social customs, power hierarchies, and ‘pearl-clutching’ censorship of ‘heterosoc’. This is reflected in the sticky and frenetic “party atmosphere” of paintings like *Dizzy Bitch* or *Ataxia - AIDS is Fun*, but also in the menacing mock-jubilation of earlier post-diagnosis works such as the black tar painting *Smashing Times*, 1987, [fig.19] nailed into which is the KY lubricant of my earlier section, and where the jester’s inversions of church and state see Jarman declare in scratched scrawl upon glass:

AIDS THE HETEROSEXIST prayer
SMASHING TIMES
VIRUS.

The evocation of the grotesque body in Jarman’s ‘Evil Queen’ paintings, along with his incorporation of text elements and specifically Polari, parallels his use of subjective sexualisation as another means of destabilisation – along with, and inherent in, the jester function of the painting’s camp humour and societal subversions. This is clear in the directives of *Ataxia – AIDS is Fun*, and also prominent in the unsettling sexuality of *Fuck Me Blind*, 1993, [fig.20 and fig.21]. Again an ironic stab at Jarman’s accelerating blindness and its roots in his HIV-AIDS diagnosis, this painting sees the titular text rendered with remarkable clarity into the surfaces of an expressive wash of black oil, painted over a yellow ground. Shepard describes how, in the course of producing the ‘Evil Queen’ paintings, Jarman directed Clemett and Lydon’s mixing of colour based on his own affective sensibilities and body memory – using long descriptions from memory to instruct his assistants to

⁸⁵ Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 183.

⁸⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 26.

mix particular shades of colour. Lydon recalls the specific example of Jarman requesting a “sickly, hospital yellow” for the background of *Fuck Me Blind*; Jarman’s highly descriptive instructions – combined with the freedom, or surrender, by which he entrusted his assistants with this task – allowed for Clemett and Lydon “to become his hands and eyes” through an affective transcription.⁸⁷ There is also an affective – that is, bodily, emotional – implication in the painting’s directive. The viewer is immediately situated as the active sexual partner – the gay ‘top’ – and so assumes a responsibility for the act at hand. Not only are we engaged on these physical terms and their psychic-emotional implications, but in the context of Jarman’s HIV-positivity – and the text’s reference to his diagnosis’ deteriorating effect – the viewer (as active sexual partner) becomes complicit in the artist-subject’s illness. Perhaps we become the virus-carrier, or the source of illness.

Again we may encounter how, in his incorporation of slang elements and specifically Polari, Jarman invokes the ephemeral networks of queer identity to implicate and invoke the viewer in similar ways – either towards or away from the queer subjectivity that underpins the paintings. “Fuck me blind” was also a reference to the preferred expletive of Clemett’s then flatmate.⁸⁸ This is yet another example of how the ephemeral networks of Jarman’s world reverberate in his paintings, containing multitudes of meaning. Importantly, I want to reaffirm the way in which these late paintings are underpinned by their collaborative production – itself a critical ephemeral network in their creation, and an extension of the disorientation in Jarman’s relationship to these paintings (the object). As Tim Lawrence describes, “the power of subjectivity in the late works of art is the irascible gesture with which it takes leave of the works themselves.”⁸⁹ Though Jarman was an artist who frequently worked collaboratively across his film and design projects, in the case of his painting there is a tension in how the collaborative mode motions to a decentralisation – or destabilisation – of his own artistic vision, a disorientation of himself from the centre of his work, whilst simultaneously the production process becomes wholly dictated by his bodily breakdown and illness, embodying its frailties and limitations. It is in the context of their creation that the deliberate and decisive action of Jarman’s surface elements hold such a critical significance – finally carved into the surface using a cutlery knife as an act of completion (importantly, these were applied by Jarman’s own hand, despite his physical condition).⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Shepard, “Painting on Borrowed Time”, 99.

⁸⁸ Shepard, “Painting on Borrowed Time”, 99.

⁸⁹ As quoted by Tim Lawrence in “AIDS, the Problem of Representation, and Plurality in Derek Jarman’s *Blue*”, *Social Text* 52/53, Queer Transexions of Race, Nation, and Gender (Autumn/Winter 1997): 252, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/466743>.

⁹⁰ Shepard, “Painting on Borrowed Time”, 97.

In *Death*, 1993 [figs.21 and 22], this surface element appears as the crosshair of a gun. In vivid red and pink, Jarman seems to stare down the barrel of his own extinction. This invocation of violence echoes and extends the destabilising trouble of Jarman's 'Evil Queen' paintings as I have traced through his use of humour and sexual directives. Critically it seems to directly reflect his desire to "release the violence" he felt (at his illness, and at society's response to it), as cited earlier in this section. The painting is determined and direct, and seemingly more figurative than in other works; bright yellow oil impasto circles the crosshair, an orb-like flare as if the gun has just fired. In its viewfinder, splashes of red in thin flashes appear as blood splattered. In shades of blue, purple, and green, narrowing circles of paint create a field of depth seeming to narrow in on the target. In its sightline, some letters appear in the upper half – "I'LL G–" but the darkly-daubed "DEATH" in the lower half appears clearly and allows for no hesitation. In *Arse Injected Death Syndrome*, 1993 [figs.23 and 24], Jarman's artistic acronym for AIDS appears at once defiantly comic, and yet uncomfortably violent. As with the jester's pied colours and exaggerated features, the painting is disingenuously saccharine. Jarman's line appears in loose squiggles, using thin washes of oil in sherbet tones of green, yellow, red, and orange. Yet these tones have an acidic quality, set off by the thick black paint of the titular text element. To understand the tone of Jarman's acerbic humour and its painterly expression, we might again look to the ephemeral networks of the protest group OutRage!, with which he was involved throughout his diagnosis. In 1993 for example, the year that Jarman created the 'Evil Queen' paintings, OutRage! staged a Christmas event presented as an "Urban Glamour Assault". Previous campaigns included Perverts Undermining State Security (PUSSY) in 1991 – in conjunction with Feminists Against Censorship, an activist network founded in 1989 – and a now-iconic 'Kiss-In' at Piccadilly Circus in 1990, which sought to counter homophobic regulations by reclaiming physical expressions of queer intimacy against the state (the group was protesting a series of arrests made against gay men for kissing in public.) In both the play of textual elements, and in the weaponising of queer desire and self-expression, we can perceive shared strategies that affirm how Jarman's late paintings are inter-connected (and codified) by the ephemeral networks of his social life, activism, and diagnosis.

Having considered the production of the 'Evil Queen' paintings as collaborative – from the studio set-up and social networks behind their creation, to the affective influence of activist groups and cultural precedents upon Jarman's queer embodiment and incorporation through text and gesture – I want to also consider this as a curative process. At the Whitworth Art Gallery in 1994, mere months after Jarman's passing, a selection of works from the 'Evil Queen' series hung at a height, set above

windows in a similar square format, at a similar scale [fig.17]. The height of the hang recalls an altar, urging the viewer to meditate on the divine and existential; on life and death. The installation photographs from the Whitworth are reminiscent of the solemn order and stillness of the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas [fig.25] – a non-denominational space filled entirely with paintings by the late Latvian-American abstract artist Mark Rothko. In both cases, the artists did not live long enough to see the project completed (Rothko committed suicide in 1970, and the chapel opened one year later.) Again, this curatorial work functions as an affective conditioning (conscious, or unconscious). As Jarman's first posthumous exhibition, it seems a precursor for the presentation at Le Crédac with which I began this chapter – where Jarman's canvases appeared suspended, monumental and somehow monolithic, imposing in their looming height. Appearing above the windows at the Whitworth, in play with the dynamism of the natural landscape beyond the gallery walls, these final works function almost as portals or devotional objects.

My ongoing consideration of this curatorial work in the context of archive theory, legacy, and lateness, speaks to Marika Cifor's notion of "an archival cure", which draws from the etymological roots of the Latin *curatus* to reflect on – and recognise – "curation and archiving's potential as practices of caring for their community."⁹¹ Critically, Cifor posits that this activist-archivist work constitutes "a broadly defined project of cure that can provide a fix for some of the acute losses and marginalisation experienced by artists with HIV/AIDS."⁹² That is to say, the 'cure' refers not (or not *only*) to medical treatment, but to a remedy for institutional and governmental negligence, for prejudice and stigma, and as a reparative or restorative project for the (in)visibility of the PWA. My analysis of Jarman's 'Queer' and 'Evil Queen' paintings has examined processes of testimony, embodiment, and incorporation of ephemera – using the theoretical frameworks of affect and the archive – in order to consider the complicated catharsis (and even, the 'cure') enacted by these works. I believe that my analysis of these works as affective containers (or archives) of ephemeral traces and 'collated signs' serves to unlock, and underline, their radical potential for PWA testimony and a remedial, holistic approach to Jarman's practice that might re-situate his painting within both art history and cultural legacies of HIV-AIDS. In my next chapter, I seek to extend the concept of this curative work to consider Jarman's black tar paintings, created following his diagnosis in 1986 [fig.26]. In approaching the function of the artist-activist-archivist as 'cure', we might better interpret how these artworks – and the legacies of their creators – are connected to our

⁹¹ Marika Cifor, *Viral Cultures: Activist Archiving in the Age of AIDS*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2022), 113.

⁹² Cifor, 113.

contemporary perception of HIV-AIDS, and to the reparative or 'healing' (affective) work yet to complete.

Chapter II

Prayers and Protests: Prospect Cottage and the black paintings

i. *The fifth quarter of the globe: black tar and a viral temporality*

In this chapter I will expand on the notion of Prospect Cottage as generative of its own temporality, inextricable from Jarman's diagnosis with HIV in 1986. This will be illustrated by a consideration of his 'black paintings', a series of almost two hundred small works that he created throughout the 1980s. Importantly, I wish to consider how these works not only relate to his physical move to Dungeness but to an emotional and psychological shift intrinsically tied to his diagnosis. In this way, I use these works to map a psychic geography, by which we might better reflect upon the specific temporality (that is, a relationship and resonance between time and place) of Jarman's late period – that is, for the purposes of this project, his diagnosis with HIV and move to Prospect Cottage. Moreover, I will continue to examine how this temporality plays out in Jarman's legacy and the ongoing acquisition of the Prospect Cottage archive by Tate. Approaching a selection of these paintings, by which found objects are set against (and encased within) a black ground of oil paint and tar, I seek to frame Jarman's diagnosis as "the hiccup in sequential time" by which Elizabeth Freeman relates a queer temporality.¹ This connects the paintings to notions of death, legacy, and afterlife, as well as to the themes of spectrality, queer subjectivity, (dis)embodiment, and the queer archive explored in my first chapter. In what ways do these works reflect the complications and tensions of time through the lens of chronic illness or epidemic studies, and how might this be related to notions of queer temporality and chrononormativity? Freeman's notion of chrononormativity speaks to the "teleological schemes of events or strategies for living such as marriage, accumulation of health and wealth for the future, reproduction, childrearing, and death and its attendant rituals."² Underpinned and upheld by the state apparatus and 'heterosoc' institutions so frequently maligned by Jarman, this notion of time is inextricable from heteronormative culture and so deviation from it may be perceived as representative of a 'queer temporality'.

That the contemporary queer subject may decide to veer from this temporal linearity – courtship, marriage, monogamy, and biological reproduction – can be related as an expression of their queerness. This is notable in the sardonic tone and vitriol with which Jarman approaches these faith

¹ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 3.

² Freeman, *Time Binds*, 3.

and family-based institutions in the ‘Queer’ and ‘Evil Queen’ paintings explored in my previous chapter. Yet in the case of the AIDS epidemic, this chrononormativity (and its heteronormative frameworks) is not only challenged but critically wounded and ruptured. As Marika Cifor describes, “AIDS sped up time, with bodies raging and deteriorating in a definitive disruption of chrononormative logics.”³ This is manifest through the “reordered vectors of human existence: place, identity, relation, time.”⁴ Furthermore, I wish to explore the moment of diagnosis (at this specific point in the HIV/AIDS epidemic) as becoming a crucial moment – and site – for this shattering of a temporal ‘logic’, beyond which a chrononormativity cannot be recovered and so expires, giving way to a new temporality. As with Freeman’s “hiccup in sequential time”, it is a jolting moment or motion, physically-rendered, that transforms and reorients the body/subject towards a new temporality.⁵ Jonathan P. Watts, in an exhibition text for a 2013 exhibition of Jarman’s black paintings at Amanda Wilkinson Gallery (London), makes a similar link between the moment of diagnosis and its temporal implications in these late works:

Jarman’s obsession [with autobiography] began with this mid-life shock; the tremors worked retroactively into childhood, unearthing, if not structures, devices and archetypes, but layers of buried memories, earlier traumas.⁶

If we perceive the hiccup as an externalised result of, or reaction to, some earlier action – too many drinks drunk, some food consumed, a laughing fit between friends – we come closer to the nuance of Freeman’s physical metaphor as it relates to temporalities. The reorienting effect of this metaphorical ‘hiccup’, as it relates to Jarman’s painting, echoes my earlier exploration of the relationship between dizziness and dis-orientation in Jarman’s ‘Evil Queen’ paintings. In approaching the black tar paintings specifically in this chapter, I believe we may trace how Jarman embodies this moment of psychic and physical fracture – and records the reordering of these vectors of ‘place, identity, relation, time’ as they relate to the ephemeral networks of his own personal life and practice.

In *The Fifth Quarter of the Globe* [fig.27], created in 1987, Jarman reflects this fracturing – and its reorienting effect – by directly invoking the new geography of his recent move to Dungeness following diagnosis. Set upon a ground of black oil painting, the work features found objects gathered in and around the austere shingle beach of this eponymous ‘fifth quarter of the globe’.

³ Cifor, *Viral Cultures*, 11.

⁴ Cifor, *Viral Cultures*, 12.

⁵ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 3.

⁶ Jonathan P. Watts, “Derek Jarman’s Constructions and Paintings: 1982 - 1991”, exhibition text for ‘Black Paintings: Derek Jarman’ at Amanda Wilkinson Gallery, 15 October - 22 December 2013, courtesy of Amanda Wilkinson Gallery.

This is itself a reference to those who regarded Romney Marsh as ‘the fifth continent’ due to the fact that it was “a relatively recent reclamation from the sea, and therefore new land”.⁷ This folkloric descriptor dates at least as far back as *The Ingoldsby Legends* (1837), written by Reverend Richard Harris Barham under the pseudonym of Thomas Ingoldsby, which describes how “the world, according to the best geographers, is divided into Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Romney Marsh”.⁸ In “Mrs Botherby’s Story – The Leech of Folkestone”, Barham goes on to explain that “in this, and fifth, quarter of the globe, a witch may still be occasionally discovered in favourable, ie stormy, seasons, weathering Dungeness Point in an eggshell, or careering on her broomstick over Dymchurch wall.”⁹ This esoteric inflection chimes with Jarman’s own proclivity for British folklore, magic, and historical reference. Tony Peake even describes how “for the alchemist, the fifth element, the element that resides above the moon and beyond those of earth, air, fire and water, is the element that endures, has permanence [...].”¹⁰ This alchemical significance would not have been lost on Jarman, and its connection to permanence is especially significant when considering the implications of Jarman’s move to Prospect Cottage – as a site to endure this contemporaneously fatal illness – as a temporality in itself.¹¹

As with many of the black paintings from this period, *The Fifth Quarter of the Globe* appears to channel this – appearing somewhere between alchemical altar and Dungeness time capsule. The work’s surface includes: bundled driftwood, weathered by the tides and bound together with pale blue cord with to twigs wound into a cruciform composition; a large pearl; an adder (or ‘hag’) stone recalling Ingoldsby’s witch, pierced by a rusting nail; a gold ring; and the work’s title etched into shattered glass. In distinguishing Jarman’s black paintings of the early 1980s from those following his diagnosis, Peake specifically notes the inclusion of this shattered glass and the emotionally-charged shock of its creation:

He was now pressing gilded glass into the black pigment, and engraving the glass with a fragment of Heraclitus or some other gnomic utterance before smashing it with a hammer, thus fracturing the piece at the point of final creation. ‘As I do this,’ he told his diary, ‘I have to shut my eyes from the splinters.’¹²

⁷ Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 395.

⁸ Thomas Ingoldsby, “Mrs Botherby’s Story – The Leech of Folkestone”, in *The Ingoldsby Legends or Mirth and Marvels* (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1894), 122.

⁹ Ingoldsby, *The Ingoldsby Legends*, 122.

¹⁰ Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 395.

¹¹ As in my first chapter, I am careful to distinguish the experience (and perception) of HIV-AIDS at the time of Jarman’s diagnosis from our contemporary understanding of the epidemic, diagnosis, and its treatment. In referring to perceptions of the HIV diagnosis as ‘fatal’, I seek to reflect that at the time there was no known cure and to echo the medical and institutional realities of this period.

¹² Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 371-372.

Recalling Jarman's description of his world "in fragments, smashed in pieces" following his diagnosis, we can observe how the shattered glass becomes a motif across the black paintings from this period.¹³ In another work from the same year, Jarman includes it alongside a similar reference to Dungeness as the fifth continent; *At The Fifth Quarter of the Globe* (1987) [fig.28] presents a square ground, sixteen by sixteen inches, of almost total black. Within the square of black oil impasto, a pane of shattered glass creates an inky play of light and surface extending from a fracture in the upper half that appears circular – like a bullet wound. Yet, an inscription in the lower pane reveals to us even more insight into Jarman's esoteric inclinations and further affirms the temporal function of these works:

at the fifth quater [sic]
of the Globe, on the
night of December the
second nineteen eighty
seven the moon came
up in this mirror as
I watched. Derek Jarman.

PROSPECT COTTAGE

By referring to this work, with its reflective black reflective surface, as 'this mirror', Jarman invokes the black scrying mirror of Elizabethan magician John Dee – a frequent reference in both his film work and writing. Dee appears in Jarman's *Jubilee* (1978), [fig.29] invoking the spirit guide Ariel to propel Queen Elizabeth I into the future of 1970s punk and a Britain in social disarray – a dynamic and subversive leap between temporalities that again echoes Freeman's notion of the "hiccup in sequential time". If we perceive the shattered glass and its rings as a reverberation (suggesting impact), we might consider not only Freeman's hiccup but her notion of a spectral circularity (a haunting) as explored in my first chapter.

Crucially, in the same year as he produced this work Jarman released a film inspired by Dee's experiments in angelic scrying with fellow occultist Sir Edward Kelley. *The Angelic Conversation* (1987), soundtracked by the band Coil and Shakespeare sonnets recited by the actress Judi Dench, makes prominent use of black tones. The film follows a pair of gay lovers as they journey through what Jarman described as "a dream world, a world of magic and ritual" – again invoking the

¹³ Jarman, *Kicking The Pricks*, 235.

alchemical – “yet there are images there of the burning cars and radar systems, which remind you there is a price to be paid in order to gain this dream in the face of a world of violence.”¹⁴ In a scene where one of the lovers swims through water, shot in black and white and soundtracked by Benjamin Britten’s *Sea Interludes*, the frame resembles the inky surface and rippling darkness of this specific painting – similarly invoking the black depths of the scrying ‘mirror’ [fig.30]. Moreover, in an interview from 1985 Jarman even explained how he perceived “the area of magic as a metaphor for the homosexual situation. You know, magic which is banned and dangerous, difficult and mysterious.”¹⁵ Jarman described how his fascination with Dee stemmed from the magician’s “pre-occupation with secrets and ciphers. Why this obsession with the language of closed structures, the ritual of the closet and the sanctuary? the prison cells of Genet’s *Un Chant d’Amour*; the desert encampment of *Sebastiane*; Anger, insulating himself with magick, screening himself off.”¹⁶ Certainly, Jarman’s film work – and especially his use of Super 8 – served as a conduit for his own queer ‘magic’, and this permeates the black paintings created at Prospect Cottage, which itself became an essential cradle for Jarman’s filmic output following his diagnosis.¹⁷ In *Film* (1988), [fig.31], Jarman pays tribute to this channel of his practice, assembling found objects – mostly rusted metallic objects, recalling base metals awaiting alchemical transformation into gold – as if creating a devotional object. Atop a base of black oil paint is a bed of crushed cans, oxidised, punctured with the fifth continent’s hag stones. A circular ring conjures the roundel of the film camera’s lens and a pair of scissors, the sorcery and craft of the editing suite. An Action Man-esque figurine is positioned in the centre of the work, echoing the director’s placement of actors on the set (with Prospect Cottage becoming the set of *The Last of England* (1987) and *The Garden* (1990). With its black balaclava, the figurine even seems to pre-empt the paparazzi of *The Garden* – pursuing Tilda Swinton’s Madonna through the shingle of Dungeness [fig.32] – as well as the masked Prince Edward (played by Jody Graber) in *Edward II*, released the following year [fig.33].

Jim Ellis perceives that “cinema, for the gay filmmaker, becomes, like Dee’s secret languages, a space of alternative knowledge, potentially either the closet or the sanctuary or both.”¹⁸ Ellis

¹⁴ Derek Jarman, *Kicking the Pricks*, 133.

¹⁵ Simon Field and Michael O’Pray, “On imaging October, Dr Dee and other matters: an interview with Derek Jarman”, *Afterimage*, No. 12, Autumn (1985): 40-57.

¹⁶ Derek Jarman, *Kicking the Pricks*, 60.

¹⁷ This relationship between Jarman’s film output and his interest in alchemy has been explored by other scholars. See: Christopher Hauke, “‘A cinema of small gestures’: Derek Jarman’s Super 8 – image, alchemy, individuation”, *International Journal of Jungian Studies* 6, 2 (2014): 159-164, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19409052.2014.905969>.

¹⁸ Ellis, *Angelic Conversations*, 65.

connects this to Foucault's 'heterotopia', which he describes elsewhere as "a constructed space whose spatial and temporal relations are different from those that govern the rest of a society's spaces."¹⁹ This interconnection between Jarman's film output, his writing, and this black painting's diaristic record, reaffirms the temporal function of these works at this period. This specific work was created on the 2nd December 1987, close to the one year anniversary of Jarman's diagnosis with HIV, and it definitively locates the reoriented (reordered) vectors of his physical life at "PROSPECT COTTAGE". By recording an alternative temporality related to the event of his diagnosis with HIV and subsequent move to Dungeness, Jarman's black paintings establish Prospect Cottage (rather than cinema, as explored by Ellis) as its own "space of alternative knowledge". This returns me to my earlier consideration of Foucauldian idiosyncrasy and theories of the queer archive as an alternate structure for knowledge-production and historical documentation – specifically related to queer life and its temporalities.

In my first chapter, I explored how this idiosyncrasy is channeled through the 'Queer' and 'Evil Queen' paintings via abstraction and the accumulation of text elements related to Jarman's ephemeral networks. But in the black paintings, this idiosyncrasy is channeled through assemblage. This enacts its own abstraction, and in this chapter I explore how Jarman uses assemblage as a method by which to accumulate (and alchemise) similar references to his personal history and politics. Jarman's use of assemblage complicates object relations and hierarchies, echoing my discussion of the queer archive and 'complex record' of ephemeral networks and object-collections in Chapter 1. Indeed, in his attempt to provide an expanded definition of assemblage in 1961, William Seitz described "the need of certain artists to defy and obliterate accepted categories, to fabricate aggressive objects, to present subjects tabooed by accepted standards, to undermine the striving for permanency by using soiled, valueless, and fragile materials."²⁰ In Jarman's black paintings, we may perceive how the use of assemblage not only roots the works in the artist's body-politic of queer activism and societal response to the AIDS epidemic, but in a specific time and space – that of Prospect Cottage, and the psychic geography of Jarman's diagnosis and illness. By tracing this specific temporality in Jarman's object-assemblage, we may approximate "assemblage's special function of secrecy, able to conceal meaning beneath and among its many layers and parts."²¹ This of course echoes Dee's secret languages, and Ellis's perception of how Jarman's

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, trans. Jay Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces", *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 22-27, <https://doi.org/10.2307/464648>; Ellis, *Angelic Conversations*, 197.

²⁰ William Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage*, exhibition catalogue (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961), 92.

²¹ Julia Kelly, "The Anthropology of Assemblage", *Art Journal* 67, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 25, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20068579>.

combination of elements (in film) creates “space for alternative knowledge.”²² In this way, the temporal relations at play in the black paintings take on a further idiosyncrasy, transforming the works into hyper-responsive records of Jarman’s engagement with the AIDS crisis at its outbreak.

ii. Clause and effect: embodying ephemeral networks

Establishing the temporality of Prospect Cottage as one that specifically relates to diagnosis / illness leads me to reflect on Marika Cifor’s distinction between epidemic and endemic time. Cifor frames epidemic time as a period – from 1981 to 1996 – of “nearly categorical AIDS dying”, whereas endemic time represents the ongoing period from 1996 to the present day, by which those who share the author’s “white, middle-class, cisgender, able-bodied” privilege, engage with HIV-AIDS only through “its relics, archival records created during and talked about only in curated commemorations.”²³ Cifor’s reference to not only the relic, but the ‘curated commemoration’, speaks to my own exploration of Jarman’s legacy using the framework of the queer archive and my concern for the re-presentation of his work amidst our current ‘Jarmania’, as explored in my first chapter. Returning to Cifor’s discussion of this epidemic register, in which “AIDS sped up time”, there is a resonance with the immediacy and spontaneity of Jarman’s black paintings, in their assemblage and wider production.²⁴ Joanna Shepard describes the “dizzying speed” at which these works were produced, citing Jarman’s own diary entries from July 1989:

(A friend) arrived at lunch with an enormous block of pitch. After swimming we built a brick hearth, lit a bonfire, and melted the pitch in an old tin can. For an hour we rushed back and forth to the house for brushes, gloves, barbed wire, crucifixes, prayer books, [...], which we tarred and feathered. The results were instant and extraordinary. The hot tar splashed everywhere and set like shining jet... Working with the tar had all the excitement of building sand-and-water pinnacles and spires on the beach as a child.²⁵

The physicality invoked by this account of the black tar paintings in production, is inextricable from a certain temporality. Jarman itemises the action of the day – the unfolding sequence of events in the chain of production, broken down so as to reflect the frenetic pace of this collaborative

²² Ellis, *Angelic Conversations*, 65.

²³ Cifor, *Viral Cultures*, 11; 12.

²⁴ Cifor, *Viral Cultures*, 11.

²⁵ Shepard, “Painting on Borrowed Time”, 96; Jarman, *Smiling in Slow Motion*, 116.

creativity. He and his friend *rush* back and forth, seeming to accumulate with an active and productive abandon. They pour and spill and *splash*, creating results that are *instant*.

As observed by Jonathan P. Watts, each work appears as a “frenzied parcel of vitality. [...] Because of their speed of production they seem to promise a unique reading of his psychological mindset.”²⁶ This recalls Sara Ahmed’s “reading of contact” in our encounters with objects, as explored in my first chapter; in the context of the assemblage, the direct contact of the artist’s hand (as organising principle), saturates the object-composition with affective resonance and potential.²⁷ The ‘dizzying’ speed observed by Shepard again returns me to the exploration of dizziness in my first chapter – and to Ahmed’s description of the object’s “affective forms of reorientation” – a whirligig effect by which queerness acts as a disorientation, generating the potent effects of any disruption.²⁸ Yet in this case, the physicality of Jarman’s process – and how his description of that generative moment, “instant and extraordinary” – recalls Freeman’s ‘hiccup in time’, echoing the ‘event’ of diagnosis. Assemblage seems to be a specific vehicle for such spontaneous outcomes, echoing the moment of diagnosis in that it yields a moment of ‘result’ both instant and unexpected. The putting-together of objects evokes the combination of bodily material with some medical test; the blood sample combined with chemicals, the doctor’s hammer with the patient’s knee. Considering *bricolage*, which of course relates to such assemblage, Claude Lévi-Strauss described the propensity for “brilliant unforeseen results.”²⁹ That Jarman draws a parallel between the works production and the childhood excitement of building sandcastles, forges a link between the temporal registers of past and present – a destabilisation of temporal vectors mediated by memory and its activation through his assemblage of objects in the black tar.

This destabilisation – occurring in the years following Jarman’s diagnosis with HIV – speaks to Cifor’s aforementioned perception of the epidemic register as generative of “a definitive disruption of chrononormative logics.”³⁰ In *Untitled (Clothes)* [fig.34], created in 1989 (the same year as Jarman’s diary entry), we can observe how the past and the present are collapsed into each other by the ‘melting pot’ of the black tar. In the centre of the work, sprawling from the bottom left corner up to the top right, a bright blue shirt recalls Jarman’s workwear both on-set and at Prospect Cottage [fig.35]. Suspended in the black tar, it is at once in motion – swallowed, swirling, and so animated

²⁶ Watts, “Derek Jarman’s Constructions and Paintings”, unpaginated.

²⁷ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 8.

²⁸ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 8.

²⁹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), 17.

³⁰ Cifor, *Viral Cultures*, 11.

or “sped-up” – and fossilised in time, embodying and so transmitting the impending absence of Jarman himself. Submerged in the surface of the black tar are a series of black and white photographs featuring travel landscapes and architectural studies, swallowed to various degrees of coverage from dipped corners to total obfuscation. Perhaps these are found objects from a flea market or second-hand bookshop, or perhaps they are from Jarman’s own albums. Perhaps they are both. In any sense, they speak to the past (his past) as entangled with the present, representing the destabilised vectors of a post-viral temporality and the stuttering rhythms of HIV-AIDS’ epidemic vs endemic registers.

Jarman’s idiosyncratic combination of elements – temporal markers, mementos, visual metaphors, and references to personal history – forces the viewer to consider memory in a similarly destabilised (and yet stylised) way. This echoes readings of assemblage as a practice that generates “the transfiguration of collected elements, via poetic associations, endowing assembled works with an “aura””.³¹ As Seitz described in his seminal work on the genre, “certain works of assemblage, with an attraction like that of green-encrusted bronzes or the unnameable artefacts of a people far away or long dead, seem to emit a magical halo.”³² Like the ephemeral “sand-and-water pinnacles and spires” of his childhood, the fleeting and frenetic creation of Jarman’s black tar paintings represents an assemblage of elements from ‘the windmills of his mind’ – affective markers forged together without adherence to chrononormative logic. In referring here to the 1968 song ‘The Windmills of Your Mind’, as made famous by Noel Harrison in *The Thomas Crown Affair*, I want to consider how Jarman’s black paintings parallel the song’s meditation on memory – its spirals, slipperiness, and assemblage of symbolic objects. Harrison sings in circular clauses of clipped English, similarly invoking dizziness as register for the recall of memory and affect:

Round like a circle in a spiral, like a wheel within a wheel
Never ending or beginning on an ever spinning reel
[..]
Like a clock whose hands are sweeping past the minutes of its face
And the world is like an apple whirling silently in space
Like the circles that you find in the windmills of your mind!
Like a tunnel that you follow to a tunnel of its own
[..]

³¹ Kelly, “The Anthropology of Assemblage”, 27.

³² Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage*, 84.

Like a door that keeps revolving in a half forgotten dream³³

It is in this vein, and to gain proximity to Jarman through his personal effects, that each object-element within the black paintings seems to connect us to another facet of the artist's personal life and practice – often corresponding with a reference picked up in one of his workbooks, journals, or films.³⁴ *A tunnel that we follow to a tunnel of its own, a revolving door, a half-forgotten dream* – as constituted by his late period and the self-reference of his work after diagnosis.³⁵

That the canvas of *Untitled (Clothes)* is not only tarred but covered in feathers – from “an old pillow” at Prospect Cottage – invokes a recurring reference in Jarman's late oeuvre; that of tarring and feathering, an historic method of public torture and humiliation [fig.36] by which the persecuted/prosecuted subject would be stripped, covered or painted in black tar, and then forcefully covered in feathers.³⁶ Directly invoked in his diary accounts of production on the black paintings (as cited above), Jarman's reference functions as a visual metaphor for the public excoriation of the LGBT community under Section 28, exacerbated by the outbreak of HIV-AIDS.³⁷ At the time of Jarman's move to Dungeness, this torture was clearly in Jarman's mind – not only in his black paintings, but as a reference in *The Garden* (1990). The film, described by Jarman as “a simple domestic drama, a document”, follows a young homosexual couple through their persecution by various extensions of the state – from the educational establishment and the police, through to religious imagery and a narrative arc loosely resembling the Passion of Christ.³⁸ In a sequence that follows their tarring and feathering by menacingly manic and lascivious policemen, shots of the homosexual couple being stripped and tarred are preceded by a group shot of child actors having a pillow fight against the backdrop of a dusk sky at Dungeness [fig.37]. This interplay between childhood innocence and violent contemporary condemnation recalls the teetering tension of past and present in Jarman's *Untitled (Clothes)* – speaking again to the “half forgotten dream” and temporal instability of memory (nostalgia) and subjectivity, as it played out against the backdrop of Prospect Cottage following Jarman's diagnosis with HIV. In film studies, this interplay by means of rear projection – as in the pillow fight sequence – has been analysed by the scholar Pam Cook for its specific function “as a mechanism for articulating memory”, in so much as that it superimposes

³³ Alan Bergman, Marilyn Bergman, Michel Legrand. ‘The Windmills of Your Mind’ (1968) © BMG Rights Management, Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC.

³⁴ See also: *Derek Jarman's Sketchbooks*, eds. Stephen Farthing and Ed Webb-Ingall (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013).

³⁵ Italicised as referring to the lyrics of the aforementioned song, ‘The Windmills of Your Mind’.

³⁶ Jarman, *Smiling in Slow Motion*, 116.

³⁷ Jarman, *Smiling in Slow Motion*, 116.

³⁸ Lavinia Brydon, “The Nostalgic Gardens of Derek Jarman's England”, *Dandelion* 4, no.2 (Winter 2013), 8, <https://doi.org/10.16995/ddl.288>.

the past (footage shot on location) and the present (footage shot separately on a studio set.)³⁹ This filmic re-composition is surely akin to the physical assemblage of Jarman's contemporaneous black paintings, and facilitates the same articulation of memory as manifest through a destabilising interplay of past and present; a (de)construction serving to "undermine the striving for permanency", as described by Seitz.⁴⁰

In *The Boy Who Drowned in Holy Water*, 1989 [fig.38], Jarman appears again to invoke his own critique of 'heterosoc' – and its persecution of homosexuality – through the visual metaphor of feathers, black tar, and the religious coding of the work's title. This work was exhibited alongside *Untitled (Clothes)* as part of 'Shadow Is the Queen of Colour' – an exhibition of Jarman's black paintings at Amanda Wilkinson Gallery in 2019 [fig.39]. The drowning of the title's subject is echoed by the smothering effect of the black tar, which engulfs a clock incorporated into the painting's surface. As Watts describes, "Jarman repeatedly likens tar to a forceful ocean, which 'eddies' around objects, that 'capsizes and sinks' forms".⁴¹ The artist's reference to symbolic time, seeming to fall through and beyond the bottom half of the rectangular canvas, is obscured and cut-off by a splatter of tar across the clock's face. Just above centre, Jarman includes a blackened egg – inverting that symbol of new and eternal life, as well as emergence from the tomb. Again, this is a symbol that appears in *The Garden*, featuring atop a bed of nails on the desk beside a visibly-deteriorated Jarman amidst the film's opening scenes [fig.40]. In this way, the assemblage of certain objects indeed allows for the presentation of "subjects tabooed by accepted standards" – with ephemera acting as a vehicle for Jarman's critique of mainstream ideals pertaining to the nuclear family and associated moral standards.⁴² This is not to suggest that Jarman struggled to critique such issues, or shied away from taboo subjects, but rather allows us to consider how the incorporation of ephemera – of discarded objects, "soiled, valueless" – bolstered his biting and playful critique by allowing him to bridge both high and low culture, articulating his own historical, and more metaphysical references, through a visual language that pulsed with pop cultural and contemporary charge (and chagrin).⁴³

Such religiously-coded images of persecution reoccur throughout Jarman's artistic response to both life under Section 28 and to his own diagnosis. His relationship with religion permeates his late

³⁹ Pam Cook, *Screening the Past: Memory and Nostalgia in Cinema* (Oxford: Routledge, 2005), 90–91.

⁴⁰ Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage*, 92.

⁴¹ Watts, "Derek Jarman's Constructions and Paintings", unpaginated.

⁴² Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage*, 92.

⁴³ Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage*, 92.

period, and in the quotation above from his journals – where he refers to “the world [being] in fragments” – he goes on to declare:

The God that rules over the debris is SILENCE: you’ll hear him in the wind that chases through the ruins. In the silence I’m impelled to speak, to remind myself of my existence violating the God.⁴⁴

The black paintings become a barbed and complicated portal for prayer, in such a way as recalls the earlier reference to the scrying mirror of John Dee and its attempt at ‘angelic conversations’. In *British Scum*, 1987 [fig.41], on a pane of glass set over black paint and so turned into the dark reflection of the scrying mirror, Jarman has etched, under the heading ‘MOVING IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS’:

Dear Jesus
who is the angel to throw James Anderton in the cesspit? give
us a break, ask
dad to strike with
a thunderbolt or
better turn him into
a pillar of salt

Derek

1987 MODERN TIMES

At the bottom of the painting, sunken into the black oil ground, are two elevator buttons – one presumably going up (to heaven) and the other down (to hell). With this sardonic prayer, Jarman expresses his revulsion at James Anderton – the then-Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, referred to as “God’s Copper” – who, in 1986, publicly described AIDS as “a self-inflicted scourge” resulting from “degenerate conduct”, leading to impacted communities “swirling around in a cesspit of their own making”.⁴⁵ Anderton, believing that “God works in mysterious ways” (as referenced in the subtitle of Jarman’s black painting), viewed himself as a conduit for the evangelical gospel and claimed to receive divine messages “even when he was asleep”.⁴⁶ That such extreme religious fervour not only existed within, but guided and informed, the reaction of police and state towards the LGBT community at the outbreak of AIDS, underpins Jarman’s incorporation of religious imagery.

⁴⁴ Jarman, *Kicking the Pricks*, 235.

⁴⁵ See “Fighting the backlash”, *Gay Times*, January 1987, 14; Duncan Campbell, “Sir James Anderton obituary”, *The Guardian*, 6 May 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/may/06/sir-james-anderton-obituary>.

⁴⁶ Campbell, “Sir James Anderton obituary”, *The Guardian*.

Writing for *Gay Times* in January 1987, Terry Sanderson observes positive reaction amidst the criticism in his coverage of Anderton's comments:

"In leading a moral crusade against the decadent sexual attitude of a society that condones homosexuality and prostitution and thereby fosters the spread of Aids, Mr Anderton is articulating a deep-rooted feeling in Britain," said an editorial in *The LONDON STANDARD* (12 Dec) and this seemed to be borne out by a telephone poll on LBC radio (12 Dec) which showed 74 percent in favour of Mr Anderton's views. The Manchester police claimed 99 percent support for their chief from the "hundreds" of calls they said they had received.⁴⁷

And yet, as with the 'Queer' and 'Evil Queen' paintings, Jarman uses humour and the inversion of symbols to bolster his critique of these heterosocial institutions and their response to HIV-AIDS. As in *The Garden*, the incorporation of religious imagery in his black paintings appropriates religious imagery but replaces the persecuted prophet or Christ figures with the maligned subject of the PWA. In *The Clause*, 1988 [fig.42], a male torso is hoisted above centre, strung up with string and nails, immediately recalling the Christ figure on the cross. To each side of the torso is a hulking figurine, monstrosly bird-headed and yet male, with bulging muscles and loincloths. As with the loose Passion arc of *The Garden*, this composition resembles art historical depictions of the eleventh and twelfth Stations of the Cross; the nailing of Christ to the cross, and the death of Christ on the cross [fig.43]. The figurines even hold silver spear-like weapons, recalling the spear with which Longinus pierced Christ's side.⁴⁸ This work is echoed in another black painting from the same year, *I.N.R.I* [fig.44], which directly references the Crucifixion in its title; an abbreviation for the Latin "Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum" – "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" – as said to be written over the head of Christ on the cross, by order of Pontius Pilate.⁴⁹ Set upon a ground of black oil paint, an assemblage of flattened tin and metal ephemera (including multiple drink cans), is a blackened crucifix, adjoined to which is a He-Man figurine apparently in embrace with the Christ on the cross. They are joined at the waist by a wire tie, and to the top right behind them is a heart constructed in pearls and a large nail covered in gold leaf. Below the cross, Jarman includes two 'Skeletor' figurines from the same comic book 'universe' as a He-Man – blue, masculine bodies with ghoulish skull faces. These figures seem to gesture up aggressively towards the embracing males above – a

⁴⁷ Terry Sanderson, *Gay Times*, January 1987, <https://gtmediawatch.org/1970/07/01/gay-times-january-1987>.

⁴⁸ The Holy Lance as described in John 19:33–34, "But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out."

⁴⁹ John 19:19, *The Bible*, King James Version.

scene recalling both the Roman soldiers at the foot of the cross and the persecuted couple from *The Garden*, as well as a filmic tableaux of the three crosses on Calvary [fig.45].

Returning to Cifor's description of AIDS as remembered through relics, there is a clear resonance with the religious coding and object-fixation of Jarman's black paintings. Their symbolism interlinks the various branches of his practice, recurring across his film, writing, and workbooks from the same period. In fact, following Jarman's death in 1994, a *Reliquary* was produced in connection with his 1996 retrospective, 'Derek Jarman: A Portrait', at the Barbican [fig.46]. Taking the form of a series of numbered boxes, these reliquaries were assembled by Keith Collins in a limited edition of 200.⁵⁰ As listed at auction in 2014, each box contained:

a 155mm section of the original film for *Blue*, a fragment from the "Sainting robe", a photograph of Jarman by Howard Sooley, 16 postcards, a packet of poppy seeds from Jarman's garden, a printed poem, a "Dungeness" stone charm and other objects, this copy numbered 5 of 200 in blue ink on the justification label attached to the base of the box, assembled by hand at Prospect Cottage.⁵¹

As with the ArtFund rewards of 2020 – and the centralisation of Prospect Cottage as a nexus for the commemoration of Jarman's personal life, artistic practice, and legacy – we can observe how the 'relic' indeed becomes a key framework for memorialising Jarman and contemporary 'devotion' to Jarmania. Crucially, in analysing the visual metaphors and artistic framing of the black paintings, we may understand how Jarman developed this framework himself. Not only do these paintings prioritise and assign specific emotional or metaphysical resonance to otherwise everyday objects as a result of the artist's hand (and so, his subjectivity), but they continue to transmit in this way today. Seitz observed how objects come to possess an "aura" when placed into assemblage.⁵² This is palpable in Jarman's black paintings, as it is in the testimony transmitted by clusters and collections of ephemera in the queer archive. In both cases, assemblage performs an almost alchemical function.⁵³ By putting objects together in combinations, imbued with his own subjectivity, Jarman generates an object-relation that continues to transmit his own testimony of queer life under Section 28, the outbreak of AIDS, and the 'hiccup in time' of his own diagnosis with HIV. Having

⁵⁰ Robert Mills discusses this *Reliquary* series as it connects to Jarman's own interest in relics and religious imagery, as well as to the work of Keith Collins in preserving Prospect Cottage, in *Derek Jarman's Medieval Modern*, 143-144.

⁵¹ As listed and sold by Bloomsbury Auctions, March 27 2014, "Derek Jarman (1942-1994) - Reliquary", www.liveauctioneers.com/item/25029062_derek-jarman-1942-1994-reliquary.

⁵² Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage*, 84

⁵³ Julia Kelly connects the two practices through their unexpected outcomes, observing that both magic and bricolage share "the element of chance in its processes and productions." In "The Anthropology of Assemblage", 29. See Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, trans. Robert Brain (1902-3; London: Routledge, 1971), 19 and 54.

considered how this ‘hiccup’ disrupted the vectors of Jarman’s life, driving his move to Prospect Cottage and so generating a specific temporality around Jarman’s diagnosis, these black paintings can be interpreted to function as totemic meditations on Jarman’s own subjectivity. They are active transmitters of his own contagion experience, imbued with his own self-awareness of death and afterlife.

Cifor’s contemporary approach towards analysis of the AIDS epidemic and its archives is balanced on the notion of ‘vital nostalgia’, a “generative practice for interrogating, addressing, and repairing structural power inequities grounded in the bittersweet longing for a past time or space.”⁵⁴ If we perceive Jarman’s black paintings as active transmitters of PWA testimony, emotively embodied through assemblage and ephemera, we can consider their proximity to the affective charge and devotional, curative terms of Cifor’s “bittersweet longing” across temporalities. It is in this way that ‘vital nostalgia’ affirms the testimony and transfer of ephemeral art-objects created amidst the AIDS epidemic, by which contemporary analysis of queer archives (or as Cifor describes, “activist archiving”) “engenders important measures towards healing, enacts long-term survival, and promises thriving.”⁵⁵ As with relics, and as explored in my first chapter, our affective relations towards such object-collections (whether as artwork or as archive) serve to both complicate and consecrate; our treasuring of them inevitably troubled by the same personal histories that contributed to the objects creation. As Robb Hernández observes in *Archiving an Epidemic*, “the archive” is an imperfect project [...] Redactions, omissions, editorial revisions, and serendipitous rediscoveries prevail.”⁵⁶ It is in this way that these affective complexities underpin the very ‘magic’ of approaching such artist-archives; that is, the potency of untangling the relationships between objects as assembled by an artist – whether forged together in black tar, or loosely gathered in desk drawers and boxes. In February 2023, I visited New York to examine the so-called *Magic Box* [fig.47], a personal archive of ephemeral artefacts once owned by the artist and activist David Wojnarowicz, who (like Jarman) worked prolifically across painting, photography, performance, film, and text until his death from AIDS in 1991, at the age of thirty-seven. The next section of this chapter charts my return to this unique object-collection, which I first began writing about in 2017 as a graduate student. Considered within the theoretical framework of the queer archive, the *Magic Box* is presented as a critical case study in my discussion of ephemeral networks, affective

⁵⁴ Cifor, 6.

⁵⁵ Cifor, 6.

⁵⁶ Robb Hernández, *Archiving an Epidemic: Art, AIDS, and the Queer Chicana Avant-Garde* (New York: NYU Press, 2019), 6.

conditioning, and indeed, the complications of the artist-archive amidst the accelerated ‘epidemic time’ of the AIDS crisis.

iii. “Heaven is a Place in Your Head”⁵⁷: ephemera, installation, and the interior world

The *Magic Box* itself is an inexpensive old orange crate, containing a collection of ephemera – fifty-nine objects in total, including the box itself – ranging from crystals, feathers, and plastic toys, through to devotional objects, letters, action figures, animal skulls, and political badges. When I visit Fales Library to access the box, I discover that its contents have been transferred into storage boxes, custom-made with individual compartments. Within these compartments, some objects sit alone, whilst others are grouped by category or because Wojnarowicz had assembled them together. There are zip-loc bags containing seeds, beads, and golden charms. One tray-box appears with decorative necklaces and rosaries strung out like phone-lines and positioned in place with pins. Elsewhere, one of the custom-made boxes contains only an individual feather. In-keeping with the queer archive’s complex and complicating object-relations, hierarchies, and provenances, Fales’ acquisition of The Magic Box seems an unlikely event bound by ephemeral networks and some creative fate unique to the artist behind its creation. It was in 1997, only five years after Wojnarowicz’s death, that Marvin J. Taylor (head archivist of the Fales Library) was approached by a graduate student seeking to access a selection of Wojnarowicz’ printed materials, which had already been acquired for the Downtown Collection. This collection was founded in 1994 and relates to the artistic scene that evolved across SoHo and Lower East Side between the late 1970s and through the early 1990s.⁵⁸ In the process of his research, this student had accessed a storage facility located on the West Side of Manhattan maintained by Tom Rauffenbart, Wojnarowicz’s partner at the time of his death and then executor of his estate.⁵⁹ This facility contained Wojnarowicz’s personal belongings, and the contents of his apartment beyond that which had been considered art, or archive material – including the *Magic Box*.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ David Wojnarowicz, “In the Shadow of the American Dream: Soon All This Will Be Picturesque Ruins”, *Close to the Knives* (New York: Vintage, 1991), 29.

⁵⁸ “Downtown Collection at the NYU Special Collections”, New York University, <http://guides.nyu.edu/downtown-collection>; Ault and Taylor, “Active Recollection”, 4.

⁵⁹ Ault and Taylor, “Active Recollection”, 4.

⁶⁰ Ault and Taylor, “Active Recollection”, 4.

After the artist's death in 1992, it was agreed that completed artworks would go to his gallery, P.P.O.W, and archive materials would go to the Fales Library.⁶¹ But the box seems to have been overlooked, largely because Wojnarowicz had never made mention of it in his extensive journals or memoirs, or in person to either friends or lovers, including Rauffenbart, who remarked to Taylor "oh, yeah [...] David would take that out once in a while and play with it [...] he never told me anything about it, it used to live under his bed."⁶² Taylor instantly recognised the *Magic Box* as existing in "the interstices between work and documentation", and indeed it seems to have fallen into a limbo of declassification in the wake of Wojnarowicz' death, until its recovery by Taylor and incorporation into Fales. Yet, this idea of being 'in between' permeates the object-life of the *Magic Box*, and underpins the way in which Taylor, amongst other academics and curators, has struggled to establish the full parameters of the box's significance within Wojnarowicz' extensive artistic practice. Since its acquisition, the box has challenged archivists, academics and members of art world at large, many of whom have come to see it as a seminal case-study in the discourse surrounding contemporary archive practice, and artistic legacy.⁶³ Bringing this object-collection into dialogue with Jarman's black paintings – and the object-relations contained within these works – illustrates the ways in which subjectivity and objecthood may be engaged and transformed by research, curation, and exhibition. Whereas the contents of Wojnarowicz's *Magic Box* were (originally) assembled privately, loosely gathered, and organically housed, Jarman's black paintings showcase a deliberate assemblage – the artist's hand composing and constructing a series of visual tableaux. Yet both bodies of work speak to an ephemeral legacy of lived experience through the AIDS crisis, the documentation of a queer artist's complex practice, and the embodiment of an artist's symbolic language.⁶⁴

Marvin J. Taylor has spoken of the way in which his instigation of the Downtown Collection was a direct response to his own mourning, referring to the archive function as "the fossil evidence of experience [...] disembodied evidence [...] a stand-in for the absent body".⁶⁵ This immediately conjures the bodiless blue shirt of Jarman's *Untitled (Clothes)*, 1989 [fig.34], and speaks to the "ephemeral trace" of Muñoz.⁶⁶ Moreover, both Jarman and Wojnarowicz position their identity as a

⁶¹ Marvin J. Taylor, "Alternate Histories", in *Brush Fires In The Social Landscape* (New York: Aperture, 2015), 224.

⁶² Taylor, 224.

⁶³ Ault and Taylor, "Active Recollection", 5.

⁶⁴ This notion of *complexity* is predicated on the anti-institutional underpinnings of Wojnarowicz' practice, and the extension of his practice across multiple disciplines, in such a way as to significantly (and consciously) defy categorisation / inventory, in the case of the *Magic Box* and in regards to wider work.

⁶⁵ Ault and Taylor, "Active Recollection", 1; Emily Colucci, "The Dirty Scene of Downtown New York," *Hyperallergic*, 10 August 2012, <http://hyperallergic.com/55469/the-dirty-scene-of-downtown-new-york>.

⁶⁶ Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 51.

PWA in relation to certain objects so as to specifically critique mainstream response to the outbreak of AIDS, as upheld by the demonisation of homosexuality in such state apparatuses as the police, the education system, and the church. It is important to acknowledge the distinctly different contexts of the United States and the United Kingdom as it relates to the outbreak, histories, and legacies of HIV/AIDS, and to the specific ephemeral records of Wojnarowicz and Jarman. Simon Watney, in his landmark analysis during the epidemic era of the crisis, frequently observed the epidemic in the US as running five years ahead of the UK and Europe.⁶⁷ By the end of 1994, the year in which Jarman died, 260,000 American had already died from AIDS whereas in Britain, “with approximately a quarter of the population of the United States”, there has been just under 7,000 deaths.⁶⁸ As Watney affirms, “these figures alone speak of a vastly difference social experience of AIDS between cities such as New York and London.”⁶⁹ And yet, I believe that comparing these artists, and their crucial testimonies of HIV/AIDS, offers meaningful insight into the importance of ephemeral cultures in contemporary analysis of artist-activism, queer archives, and visual legacies of this epidemic.

As with Jarman’s paintings, my analysis of the *Magic Box* explores how queer artists – and queerness itself – challenges archival practice, and posits *collecting* as a curative practice connected to the embodied displacement of trauma and testimony. The contents of the box are incredibly wide-ranging and intricate, made up of curios and ephemera, organised into small groupings so that we may find a cardboard box within the *Magic Box* itself, filled with rocks and beads, a postcard from the Danish Institute Workshop, a lump of metal and a Joker playing card; alongside another bag containing three turquoise stones, alongside yet another bag of essential oils, labelled ‘Ants in Amber’; beside a box of charms and an envelope of foreign currencies including pesos, Turkish coins, and Israeli bills, and so on [fig.48]. Taylor describes the way in which these sorts of objects would traditionally be labelled as ‘realia’, an archival term that he rejects.⁷⁰ Instead, he frames the contents of the *Magic Box* as having a clear significance of their own, not least because they have been arranged and amassed by an ‘organising principle’ inherently understood by Wojnarowicz, no matter how mystifying the collection seems to the objective and contemporary viewer.⁷¹ Echoing Jarman’s artistic interventions and use of assemblage, many of the objects seem transformed or

⁶⁷ See: Simon Watney, *Imagine Hope*, for his collected writings on HIV-AIDS from 1990 onwards.

⁶⁸ Watney, “The politics of AIDS treatment activism”, in *Imagine Hope*, 201.

⁶⁹ Watney, “The politics of AIDS treatment activism”, in *Imagine Hope*, 201.

⁷⁰ Taylor rejects this term on the basis that it implies secondary status in relation to the ‘primary source’ of Wojnarowicz’s artworks and text-based archive. In Ault and Taylor, “Active Recollection”, 223.

⁷¹ Darms, “The Archival Object”, 154.

transfigured – either by combination with other objects, be it Catholic devotional items arranged alongside cut-out photos of Buddhist gurus, or by the addition of paint and collage, such as a skull painted International Klein Blue [fig.49], or another skull in silver-painted plaster, marked with a pink triangle, recalling the symbol used to demarcate LGBT citizens during the Holocaust – a symbol taken up by gay rights organisations such as ACT UP, and by OutRage! in the UK.⁷² Wojnarowicz’s embellishments and interventions mirror Jarman’s biting but playful incorporation of comic book figurines, garish colours, branded items, and pop cultural references – such as in the aforementioned *I.N.R.I.*, 1988 [fig.44]. In the case of both artists, this intentional collection and concurrent intervention – that is, the artist’s hand – becomes the ‘organising principle’, and it is by this transformation that the objects become inscribed with a subjectivity, embodying some sense of each man’s artistic practice, aesthetic systems, and lived experience as a PWA.

Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss “stress the function of magic as a collection of activities”, describing that “a magical rite is *any rite which does not play a part in organised cults* – it is private, secret, mysterious and approaches the limits of a prohibited rite.”⁷³ In fact, they ground their definition of such magical practice in the particularities of the everyday, domestic realm – one that similarly underpins Jarman’s assemblage of objects within Prospect Cottage, or how Wojnarowicz stored, sustained, and secreted the *Magic Box* beneath his bed:

Magic is the art of preparing and mixing concoctions, fermentations, dishes. Ingredients are chopped up, pounded, kneaded, diluted with liquids, made into scents, drinks, infusions, pastes, cakes, pressed into special shapes, formed into images [...] This cuisine, pharmacy, chemistry, what you like to call it, not only causes magical materials to be utilisable, but serves to provide them with a ritual character. [...] Magicians prepare images from paste, clay, wax, honey, plaster, metal or papier mâché, from papyrus or parchment, from sand or wood. The magician sculpts, models, paints, draws, embroiders, knits, weaves, engraves. He makes jewellery, marquetry and heaven knows what else.⁷⁴

Both Jarman and Wojnarowicz, in their object “concoctions [...] formed into images”, operate within this realm of a domestic magic made up of private, deliberate acts that utilise the ephemera of everyday life.⁷⁵ The unexpected results of their assemblage – that “heaven knows what else” – are

⁷² Whilst my focus is on comparing each artist’s approach to ephemera and assemblage as it pertains to their testimony of HIV/AIDS, it is important to again highlight that ACT UP and OutRage! operated in distinct and different socio-political contexts.

⁷³ Kelly, “The Anthropology of Assemblage”, 29; Hubert and Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 24 (italics in original).

⁷⁴ Hubert and Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 53-54.

⁷⁵ Hubert and Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 53-54.

imbued and interwoven with the contagious magic of their subjectivity.⁷⁶ To take up a term used by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer in their survey of memory and transmission, I believe we may relate to the collections (that is, the ‘concoctions’) of both artists as “testimonial objects”.⁷⁷ Hirsch and Spitzer use this term in such a way as to convey objects “as mechanisms for the transfer of history”, which is surely the case with the *Magic Box*, but the focus on ‘testimony’ feels especially pertinent given the context of the AIDS crisis, to which both Wojnarowicz and Jarman were such potent witnesses (activating their practice, memoirs, and now archive materials as testimony in a very specific way.)⁷⁸ As examined in Chapter 1, Cvetkovich aligns the idiosyncrasy of queer collections with the subjectivity of ‘emotional memory’ in the context of witnessing and remembering trauma. The affective details that make up this ‘emotional memory’ are so often subject to “the idiosyncrasies of the psyche and the logic of the unconscious” that they necessitate an ‘unusual archive’.⁷⁹ Cvetkovich suggests that this ‘unusual archive’ often actively resists interpretation and “the coherence of narrative”, instead appearing “fragmented and ostensibly arbitrary”, which speaks to Jarman’s perception of a “world [...] in fragments” but is also clearly the case with the *Magic Box* – a collection anchored only in the emotional memory of Wojnarowicz.⁸⁰ As with the object assemblage of Jarman’s black paintings, I believe we can frame the objects of the *Magic Box* within the symbolic language of Wojnarowicz’s wider work – his collage, paintings, and film, and even within his writings. As an “archive” that so directly speaks to Wojnarowicz’s self-contained symbolic system and artistic ‘interior world’, the *Magic Box* becomes a document of trauma, of displaced emotional labour, and an embodiment of his specific experience of the AIDS crisis.

As with Jarman’s black paintings, Wojnarowicz’s paintings are also a locus for his complex and highly affective relationship to object-collection and combination. This relationship clearly underpins such paintings as *The Death of American Spirituality*, 1987 [fig.50], or *Something from Sleep II* [fig.51], produced in 1988-89, where a green-coloured alien, small and compact like a toy soldier, is fixed inside a grid system. This grid connects it to other symbolic elements such as a human heart and clockface, set against a blue sky and above a sleeping boy rendered, again, in collage map print. *The Death of American Spirituality* [fig.50] lays out a post-apocalyptic cityscape

⁷⁶ Hubert and Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, 53-54.

⁷⁷ Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, “Testimonial Objects: Memory, Gender, and Transmission”, in *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (Summer 2006), as cited by Cvetkovich in *Photographing Objects*, 291, <https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-2005-008>.

⁷⁸ Hirsch and Spitzer, “Testimonial Objects”, 291.

⁷⁹ A term she credits to Toni Morrison. Cvetkovich, “In the Archives of Lesbian Feelings”, 110.

⁸⁰ Cvetkovich, “In the Archive of Lesbian Feelings”, 110; Jarman, *Kicking the Pricks*, 235.

ablaze and reduced to rubble, which, itself, is interestingly mirrored through the *Magic Box* by a rough lump of concrete collected by Wojnarowicz, and noted by Taylor and his archival team for the damage it has caused to other objects in the box.⁸¹ Again, the painting is set out as a grid – in this case, a quadrant – separating off grouped symbols of a fallen America; the bound cowboy on newsprint bull; the Mayan god figurine, alluding to the once-vibrant spirituality of the ancient Americas, now emitting a chaotic red glow. Again, these symbols correlate with private objects in the box [fig.52]. A charred skull is depicted, set against a nuclear power plant, evoking the corporate greed responsible for this ‘death’ of American spirituality. In the bottom right quadrant, the artist includes a radiation-poisoned head of the crucified Christ, with crown of thorns burnished red, set against skin turned toxic green and eyes that stare void-yellow. Like Jarman, Wojnarowicz worked across media in a way that was almost as diverse as the range of objects he collected; this included installation, on which I wish to focus. For it is in the realm of his installation work that we find one of the only traces of the *Magic Box*, as mentioned by the artist in a to-do list from 1988 – “Put *Magic Box* in installation.”⁸² Yet, Wojnarowicz produced no installations in this year, and so again the *Magic Box* remained the artist’s own private project. Though the *Magic Box* itself was not ever included for exhibition, we need only look at these two manifestations of the artist’s *Untitled (Burning Boy Installation)*, conceived at P.P.O.W in 1985 [fig.53], and again by P.P.O.W at Frieze New York in 2014 [fig.54], to trace its influence. There is a way in which the double incarnation of the Burning Boy installation mirrors the afterlives of the *Magic Box*; once secreted away under Wojnarowicz’s bed, it has since existed in the encounters of countless curators, archivists, and academics on visits to the Fales Library (by appointment only), and in the public sphere, through academic discourse and through exhibition, such as its inclusion by Julie Ault in ‘afterlife: a constellation’, first shown at the 2014 Whitney Biennial in New York, and then at Galerie Buchholz in 2015 [fig.48].

Untitled (Burning Boy Installation) speaks in the same symbolic language as the *Magic Box*. Against a painted backdrop of an apocalyptic New York, ablaze in garish primary colours, tower-blocks in siren colours of red and yellow stand stern against a giant figure in a map-printed hazmat suit, who seems to wield a nuclear weapon spewing flames. In the foreground, we see the cross-section of a bunker set into rubble made up of charred tyres and car-parts, inside which the skeleton figure of a child warms their hands against a fire that emits a noxious green glow. To the right of the

⁸¹ Darms, “The Archival Object”, 146.

⁸² Hugh Ryan, “The Final Secret of David Wojnarowicz”, *VICE*, 27 December 2014, https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/the-final-secret-of-david-wojnarowicz-0000469-v21n10.

painting, an explosion seems to tear a chunk of a building that extends out of frame, whilst a giant spider, mutant-bodied so that its bulbous abdomen resembles a red-and-patterned skull, scrambles towards us. In the floor space in front of the painting, a life-size sculpture of a child, papered with the same map print that appears on the hazmat suit in the painting and seemingly set alight, is posed as if running across the gallery floor. To the right of this, a giant pile of rubble is laid out, from which protrude bare branches, like the tree of a barren earth, from which fall only animal skulls, again papered with this world-map print [fig.55]. Many of these objects were sourced by Wojnarowicz from detritus found around Downtown, and when the work was first installed in 1985 [fig.53], the pile of rubble component was especially extensive, including burned-out television sets and car parts. From the symbols that arise in the painted backdrop and sculpture, through to the use of ‘found’ objects in the detritus pile in the floor space, this installation reflects an object-based approach that echoes the collecting impulse behind the *Magic Box*, with found materials and recurring symbols, all repurposed in adherence with Wojnarowicz’s ‘organising principle’. The hanging skulls, some longer and more animalistic, and some globular, like shrunken heads, all painted or printed, echo the IKB skull and globes of the *Magic Box* [fig.48], whilst the sculpture of the Burning Boy stands suspended in motion, arms raised, recalling one of the many action figures collected by Wojnarowicz.

Untitled (Burning Boy) echoes Jarman’s invocation of childhood as means to destabilise temporal markers so as to mirror the temporal dislocations of HIV-AIDS and its ‘epidemic register’.⁸³ Matt Cook traces this *hiccup*-ing (to again invoke, Freeman) along similarly ‘queer’ lines, writing that “looping back to childhood homes is a common motif in post-liberation gay fiction and autobiography [...] often used to mark a distance travelled and to accentuate a sense of rupture.”⁸⁴ Within artistic attempts at deconstructing the associated trauma of ‘queerness’, we may perceive how the child figure becomes a totem for ongoing wounds, unresolved healing (see contemporary self-help discourse surrounding the ‘inner child’), and mainstream ideals of moral purity (childhood) as it relates the supposed origins of deviant behaviour (adulthood). As described by Kathryn Bond Stockton, “the child is precisely who we are not and, in fact, never were. It is the act of adults looking back.”⁸⁵ In the context of the PWA, and of queer experience under Section 28 and the outbreak of HIV-AIDS, the child subject takes on a specific, subjective, charge. At a time when

⁸³ Cifor, *Viral Cultures*, 11.

⁸⁴ Matt Cook, *Queer Domesticities: Homosexuality and Home Life in Twentieth-Century London* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 236.

⁸⁵ Kathryn Bond Stockton, *The Queer Child, Or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 5.

government saw fit to intervene with children's education so as to prohibit access to the LGBT lived experience, Jarman was highly attuned to the moralism, bias, and determined intolerance by which adults sought to 'protect' the perceived homogeneity, and innocence, of the childhood experience.⁸⁶ In Jarman's black paintings, this is expressed through comic book imagery, brash colours, and what might be perceived as a child-like, 'naïve', approach to the 'dizzying' activity of assemblage (binding objects together with string, composing tableaux of figurines together, embracing). We may recall the newspaper story referenced in my discussion of Jarman's 'Queer' paintings in Chapter 1, regarding the Reverend who would kill his own son were he to be gay. Indeed, this discourse surrounding the child subject is closely linked to religious (specifically, Christian) criticism of homosexual identities and the promotion of a public perception of HIV-AIDS as an outcome of God's wrath against homosexual 'sin' and other forms of behavioural 'deviance' (non-reproductive sex, promiscuity, intravenous drug addiction).

In the UK, these were narratives driven by evangelical groups and family associations alongside public figures including the aforementioned 'God's copper' James Anderton and, of course, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher herself – who, at the 1987 Conservative party Conference, decried that “children who need to be taught to respect traditional moral values are being taught that they have an inalienable right to be gay.”⁸⁷ In the United States, this rhetoric was similarly maximised by religious groups – with the outbreak of HIV-AIDS coinciding with the height of televangelism and allowing for widely-broadcast, public-access, sermons of condemnation.⁸⁸ As in the UK:

[the notion that AIDS is divine retribution on sinful people] struck a responsive cord in many religious people, especially those with a conservative traditional theology who, having wrestled with the issues of homosexuality through the 1970s, had concluded that homosexuality was a sin and that all sin stood under the judgment of God.⁸⁹

In Wojnarowicz's installation *America (Heads of Family, Heads of State)*, 1990 [figs.56, 57] – produced for an exhibition at the New Museum (New York) in 1990 – this critique of the state apparatus (church and government, entwined) underpins the assemblage of objects; a mixture of personal ephemera, artworks, and found elements. Like Jarman's black paintings (as well as his 'Queer' and 'Evil Queen' series) this installation was a collaborative project, with Wojnarowicz

⁸⁶ This is discussed in detail by Alexandra Parsons, in “History, Activism, and the Queer Child in Derek Jarman's Queer Edward II (1991)”, *Shakespeare Bulletin* 32, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 419, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26355049>.

⁸⁷ As reported in “Thatcher mocks right to be gay”, *Capital Gay*, 16 October 1987. Cited by David T. Evans, in “Section 28: law, myth, paradox”, *Critical Social Policy*, 9:27 (1989), 74, <https://doi.org/10.1177/026101838900902705>.

⁸⁸ Albert R. Jonsen and Jeff Stryker, eds., *The Social Impact of AIDS in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 1993), 130; Peter G. Horsfield, *Religious Television: The American Experience* (New York: Longman, 1984).

⁸⁹ J. Gordon Melton, *The Churches Speak On: AIDS* (Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1989), xvii.

enlisting the assistance of his friend and fellow artist Judy Glantzman. On the walls that encircle and enclose the installation hung portraits of the installation's titular 'heads of family' (the artist's parents, Ed and Dolores Wojnarowicz) and 'heads of state' – political figures, anti-LGBT legislators, and Conservative pundits including Ronald Reagan, Senator Jesse Helms, President George H. W. Bush, Representative William E. Dannemeyer, and Cardinal John O'Connor.

In the central body of the installation, beneath a large papier-mâché head, blindfolded and bearing the word 'QUEER' in menacing red paint, two video monitors stood elevated and wedged between breeze-blocks playing footage from *ITSOFOMO (In the Shadow of Forward Motion)* – a multimedia performance piece developed with the musician Ben Neil and first staged in December 1989 at The Kitchen in New York. The base of this stand was adorned with images of anti-LGBT protesters bearing signs of religious condemnation – "AIDS is a Punishment from the Eternal Father" – alongside a photo of Nazi youth looting the Institute of Sexual Science (Berlin) in 1933. In front of this altar-like structure lay a child skeleton in a white dress atop a nest of twigs and flowers. On the back wall of the installation space, Wojnarowicz included a large print of *One Day This Kid*, 1990, [fig.58] – a photostat (photocopy) again invoking the child-subject, this time with a childhood portrait of Wojnarowicz himself. One of the artist's most-enduring images, the photograph is set within a text-poem that describes the queer subject's journey from childhood 'innocence' into a consciousness of homosexuality, subsequent otherness, and the societal persecution that results:

One day this kid will do something that causes men who wear the uniforms of priests and rabbis, men who inhabit certain stone buildings, to call for his death. One day politicians will enact legislation against this kid. [...] This kid will lose his constitutional rights against the government's invasion of his privacy. This kid will be faced with electro-shock, drugs, and conditioning therapies in laboratories tended by psychologists and research scientists. He will be subject to loss of home, civil rights, jobs, and all conceivable freedoms.⁹⁰

This invocation of homophobia and its societal implications as mediated by extensions of the state – legal and medical systems, educational bodies, governmental encroachment into the private lives of its citizens – echoes Jarman's specific concerns and critique regarding Section 28 and HIV policy in the UK. The sacrificial themes of Wojnarowicz's altar – the innocent child, the skeleton, the persecuted 'QUEER' – mirror the condemnation of Jarman's 'Queer' and 'Evil Queen' paintings,

⁹⁰ David Wojnarowicz, *Untitled (One Day This Kid)*, 1990, photostat mounted on board, sheet: 75.7 × 101.9 × 0.5 cm; image: 71.4 × 95.3 cm, courtesy of Estate of David Wojnarowicz / P.P.O.W.

the persecution narrative of *The Garden*, and the shattered-glass screeds of Jarman's black paintings. In the case of both artists, the assemblage of personally-significant – affective – objects with testimony of their (sexual) politics underpins the defensive magic of their artist-activist practices; the result is artistic interventions that appear as at once makeshift altars, memorial offerings, protective amulets, and fetish objects.

As Cynthia Carr describes, between the central altar and the print of *One Day This Kid*, Wojnarowicz also produced “a kind of village on a leaf-and-twigs-strewn floor, with a couple of small houses covered with dollar bills, his globe where the only country is America (repeated in all hemispheres), a doll reclining in a plexiglas cube, a child's chair, with branches growing from it” [fig.57].⁹¹ This observation of the way in which the installation generates imaginary (and alternative) spaces – “a kind of village” constructed from ephemera and affect – speaks to the queer archive's potential for temporality and transfiguration. The installation is constructed so as to create spaces with space, offering individual tableaux within the wider structure of the immersive artwork. We might even relate this construction of chambers of space (and affective meaning) to the notion of a ‘memory palace’ (the method of loci), by which a subject generates “familiar spatial environments” through visualisation in order to consolidate specific details and terms relating to a memory. In this way, the subject generates psychic spaces or locations (the Latin “loci”) by which they may revisit specific specific times and associations – a temporality by which they may (re)trace the past. As in the assemblage of Jarman's black paintings, the artist's intervention enacts a transformation of these objects that embodies the temporal implications of the artist's queer lived (linear) experience as disrupted by diagnosis with HIV: time shattered, captured, suspended, warped (but never reversed). Writing of his work with objects and personal ephemera, Wojnarowicz expressed that “they're meaningful things and they're meaningful to me, and I know that they have to have a life beyond me.”⁹² In this way, Wojnarowicz's work with installation echoes Ellis's description of Jarman's film as creating “a space of alternative knowledge” – again connected to Foucauldian heterotopia as a constructed space that adheres to a destabilised, alternative temporality.⁹³

⁹¹ Cynthia Carr, *Fire in the Belly: The Life and Times of David Wojnarowicz* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012), 484-485.

⁹² David Wojnarowicz, *Weight of the Earth: The Tape Journals of David Wojnarowicz*, ed. Lisa Darns and David O'Neill (South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2018), 80.

⁹³ Ellis, *Angelic Conversations*, 197.

Central to Wojnarowicz's practice was a critique of the "illusion of a one-tribe nation", by which we are "born into a pre-invented existence within a tribal nation of zombies."⁹⁴ His final painting, *Why the Church Can't/Won't be Separated From the State, or, A Formal Portrait of Culture*, 1991 [fig.59] presents the viewer with what appears to be a picturesque landscape, presented upon a ground of maps collaged into a grid-formation. The painting is at once topographic and allegorical, laying out a distinctly American view of natural splendour and plunder – rocky mountains and winding rivers dotted with the urban interventions of water towers, sewage plants, convenience stores, cheap housing – so as to conjure a body. The two bodies of water are labelled "ARTERY" and "VEIN", separately streaming with red and white blood cells between the machinations of the "WASTE" plant, and the "OXYGEN RECEIVER". By rendering the body's workings in this way – as an industrial site, as a natural resource being mined – Wojnarowicz invokes the "One Tribe Nation" and his critique of how the state compels the body-subject into control, capital, and (re)production. That this was his last artistic statement before his death from AIDS – that inevitable (and yet simultaneously preventable) tragedy of his life and practice – forces us to reflect on how this painting networks (or maps) the processes by which the artist-subject's bodily disintegration is engineered and economised by the state. Onto the grid of its landscape, Wojnarowicz embellishes the work with personal mementos and aides-mémoire, both stitched onto the work with red thread like bloodlines, and viewed through pin-hole tondo forms in the work's surface (a recurring motif in his work). There are his own photographs, found imagery of bodies in water, medical illustrations and prayer cards (as collected in the *Magic Box*), and a large-scale drawing on the right panel of a mummified skeletal figure appearing to wear a mitre fashioned from a ten dollar bill (echoing the work's titular critique of the capitalist entwinement between Church and State).

It is testament to the enduring sting of Wojnarowicz's insightful commentary on these societal entanglements that his work became the centre of a censorship controversy in November 2010, after the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. agreed to remove one of his film works from the exhibition 'Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture' – under pressure from the Catholic League, who described the work as "hate speech", and the threat of reduced federal funding.⁹⁵ For Wojnarowicz, the counterpoint to the "pre-invented world" of the 'One Tribe Nation' was a "transient position of the body in relation to the Other World [...] a place that might be described as interior world [...] where movement was comfortable, where boundaries were stretched

⁹⁴ Wojnarowicz, *Close to the Knives*, 37.

⁹⁵ Jacqueline Prescott, "Ant-covered Jesus video removed from Smithsonian after Catholic League complains", *The Washington Post*, 1 December 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/30/AR2010113004647.html?hpid=topnews>.

or obliterated: no walls, borders, language or fear.”⁹⁶ Ben Gove observes how, for Wojnarowicz, “the transitory was not only a tool of elucidation, but also form of resistance to the dominant construct of ‘permanence,’ which is often the cornerstone of the normalising project.”⁹⁷ The artist described this destabilised position – which we can interpret as a temporality – following his diagnosis, and this notion of transience (that is, impermanence) speaks directly to the ephemeral nature of his works as well as to the queer archive’s attempt at dissolving hierarchies of object and experience. In this way, the use of ephemera – as a material / medium – functions as a marker of impermanence. We can witness this not only in the work of Wojnarowicz and Jarman but in the public artwork of the AIDS Memorial Quilt [fig.60], which I came to encounter on World AIDS Day (1st December) 2021 whilst visiting the Derek Jarman retrospective at Le Cr  dac in Paris that would become the basis of my first chapter. Unplanned, I found myself kneeling down outside the exhibition’s entrance alongside members of Les Actupiennes, the Parisian chapter of activist organisation ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), in a laying of the quilt.

Though my analysis in the next section focuses specifically on the American project of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, I also wish to acknowledge the efforts of the UK-based AIDS Memorial Conservation Partnership.⁹⁸ In recent years, this British coalition of seven HIV support charities – including Positive East and Terrence Higgins Trust (London), George House Trust (Manchester), and Waverley Care (Edinburgh) – has been working to preserve and re-present the UK AIDS Memorial Quilt, a public project and “irreplaceable piece of social history”.⁹⁹ This quilt currently consists of forty-two twelve foot by twelve foot panels, each containing up to eight individual, smaller panels representing approximately 384 people from across the UK. Prior to a 2021 display at Acorn House in King’s Cross, the quilt hadn’t been shown in its entirety since ‘Quilts of Love’, a large-scale public presentation in London’s Hyde Park in 1994. In the intervening years its panels have largely remained in storage, currently housed at Positive East “in calico bags [...] at real risk of deteriorating” and without sufficient funding for conservation or specialist storage.¹⁰⁰ Siobhan Lanigan (CEO of The Food Chain, which is one of the charities in the Partnership)

⁹⁶ Wojnarowicz, *Close to the Knives*, 108.

⁹⁷ Ben Gove, *Cruising Culture: Promiscuity, Desire and American Gay Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000) 139.

⁹⁸ For the purposes of this chapter and my comparative analysis of David Wojnarowicz, I focus primarily on the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt as both he and Jarman are represented, and Jarman had specifically addressed this quilt’s memorial function and impact, as well as its incorporation of ephemera. The UK AIDS Memorial Quilt could warrant its own chapter, if not an entirely separate thesis. For more information and to support, please go to <https://www.aidsquiltuk.org>.

⁹⁹ “About”, UK AIDS Memorial Quilt. <https://www.aidsquiltuk.org/about>.

¹⁰⁰ Dominic McGovern, “The UK’s Only Aids Memorial Quilt Is Still Kept in Storage”, *Vice*, 26 November 2021, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/uk-aids-memorial-quilt-preservation>.

observes that the quilt is “a social memorial; it can’t sit in an archive, it needs to be displayed and interacted with.”¹⁰¹ This comment, and the distinction Lanigan makes between a public, socially-engaged memorial and the perceived ‘archive’, speaks to the tensions, exclusions, and hierarchies that permeate the archival terrain and tradition, as I explored in Chapter I. Moreover, that such an invaluable record of AIDS remembrance in the UK (itself, an ephemeral, affective archive) remains at risk, under-represented, unstable, and largely unseen, speaks to the significant challenges faced (and posed) by queer archives. As a uniquely affective object-encounter, and an essential document in the complicated history around the memorial legacies of the AIDS crisis and its (queer) archive, how might we both include and even implicate the quilt in a discussion around the complex potential of ephemera as a vehicle for the transfer of memory, testimony, and identity, in the context of HIV-AIDS?

iv. Time Binds: private objects, public mourning, and “picturesque ruins”¹⁰²

The Quilt is the ultimate collage, one that is constantly being reformed, reinvented. Its center is wherever you find it; no one tells the viewer where to start, finish, or pay particular attention. Nor does it require of the viewer anything like an “appropriate” response. For despite the enormous grief that inspired and attends it, tackiness and camp also play their irrepressible roles – the carnival always interrupts the wake.¹⁰³

Like Wojnarowicz’ final painting above, the AIDS Memorial Quilt uses the grid format to conjure the body – not only in its tributary function as memorial to the dead, but in its material invocation of the absent body (the quilt, itself, as an object of domestic intimacy, social bond, body contact, and touch). Its rectangular panels repeat with their grave-sized dimensions, similarly complicated by affective embellishment, object-elements, queer memories, and boundless creative expression. Echoing Wojnarowicz’s recurring invocation of a “kind of village” in his installation work, the panels represent chambers of affective resonance and ephemeral signifiers, loosely contained. The example of this quilt – the world’s largest public artwork, described by Steven James Gambardella

¹⁰¹ McGovern, “The UK’s Only Aids Memorial Quilt Is Still Kept in Storage”.

¹⁰² This is taken from the subtitle of an essay written by Wojnarowicz in 1991, “In the Shadow of the American Dream: Soon All This Will Be Picturesque Ruins”. It is also a reference to a 2018 exhibition of David Wojnarowicz’s installations at P.P.O.W in New York, ‘Soon All This Will Be Picturesque Ruins’, organised by Annelis Beadnell.

¹⁰³ Peter S. Hawkins, “Naming Names: The Art of Memory and the NAMES Project AIDS Quilt”, *Critical Inquiry* 19, no.4 (Summer 1993): 764, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1343905>.

as “the defining mass spectacle of the AIDS epidemic” – returns me to the potential of the queer artist (and archive) to transform, reorder and reorient objects of everyday experience towards a memorial function.¹⁰⁴ In turn, this brings into focus the specific temporality of AIDS in ‘epidemic time’. As with the queer archive itself, the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt (now commonly referred to as the AIDS Memorial Quilt) is unruly and ever-accumulating. It is a boundless project, open-source in its ongoing creation and belonging to an unstable (or rather, destabilised) temporality by which it simultaneously belongs to the past, present, and future of the AIDS crisis. Since its conception by the San Franciscan activist Cleve Jones in November 1985, the quilt has come to number over 50,000 panels – each of which is individually produced and functions as a memorial to those who have lost their lives to HIV-AIDS.¹⁰⁵ Two of these panels are dedicated to Derek Jarman [fig.61] and two were directly created by David Wojnarowicz himself [fig.62, 63].

On the 14th September 2022 – on what would have been Wojnarowicz’s 68th birthday – his foundation announced that two quilt panels honouring Wojnarowicz and his partner, Tom Rauffenbart, had been donated to the AIDS Memorial Quilt [fig.64]. These two panels were produced by a team of the artist’s former friends, collaborators, gallerists, and estate guardians – including Anita Vitale (founder of The David Wojnarowicz Foundation), Gracie Mansion (Wojnarowicz’s gallerist in the 1980s), the artist Judy Glantzman (collaborator on the aforementioned installation *America (Heads of Family, Heads of State)*, 1990), and Cynthia Carr (Wojnarowicz biographer and author of *Fire in the Belly* (2012)). The addition of these two panels, both of which feature Wojnarowicz’s own artwork and the incorporation of his personal mementos (including photographs and object details that occur across his paintings and the *Magic Box*), speaks to an inter-relation between the artist’s ephemera and the memorial culture surrounding his queer archive – underpinned by the affective networks of his creative practice, social life, and activism. Both panels use a background of red, and the panel devoted to Wojnarowicz includes his work *Something from Sleep IV (Dream)*, 1988-89 [fig.65]; a grazing dinosaur bearing the artist’s surname along its spine, at once sweetly cartoonish – childish, even – and yet apparently a reflection of “his feelings of alienation and impending extinction.”¹⁰⁶ In the mid-section, below the artist’s full name memorial dates (birth and death), slithers a snake resembling a plush toy, crudely-assembled, belonging to the *Magic Box* [fig.66]. Below this, portraits by friends and from photographs

¹⁰⁴ Steven James Gambardella, “Absent Bodies: The AIDS Memorial Quilt as Social Melancholia”, *Journal of American Studies* 45, no. 2 (2011): 213, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23016271>.

¹⁰⁵ National AIDS Memorial, <https://www.aidsmemorial.org/interactive-aids-quilt>.

¹⁰⁶ David Wojnarowicz Foundation, <https://wojfound.org/foundation/aids-memorial-quilt>.

(including a photograph of Wojnarowicz with his lover and mentor Peter Hujar) feature alongside other details from his paintings, and an affectionate dedication to this “ARTIST, ACTIVIST, FRIEND.” The panel for Wojnarowicz’s late partner, Tom Rauffenbart, pays tribute to him as “BEST FRIEND EVER” and includes Wojnarowicz’s painting *Something from Sleep III (For Tom Rauffenbart)*, 1989, [fig.67] in which “an outline of Tom contains an entire galaxy” – a demarcation of absence, and the ‘galaxy’ of affective and ephemeral networks contained within a lover, lost.¹⁰⁷

This assemblage of elements from Wojnarowicz’s painting with personal artefacts and ephemera, echoes the artist’s own contribution to the quilt – particularly his tribute to Hujar [fig.62], which features the isolated detail of a bird’s wing (a favourite image of his former lover), taken from Wojnarowicz’s painting *Wind (for Peter Hujar)*, 1987 [fig.68]. This wing is extracted from the grid-structure it belongs to within the painting – set against a dream-like cloudscape – and transplanted onto a background of mournful black. Below this, a globe and to the right, a small figurine attached to a branch. Both of these objects reoccur across Wojnarowicz’s practice, appearing both in the *Magic Box* and in his installations – including *America (Heads of Family, Heads of State)*, above [fig.57]. Three bars are embroidered across the panel, appearing like light-beams and echoing the grid lines of the source painting. In assembling these symbolic elements (read as ephemeral objects) on a background of black in order to serve a memorial function connected to the loss of the PWA, this panel surely bears comparison with Derek Jarman’s black tar paintings. Jarman described the quilt as “horrible” in a diary entry from June 1991, wondering “what bits of cast-off clothing would be sewn into mine? Old taxi receipts to Hampstead and a membership to the Subway?” – referring to the famous London cruising grounds, and a contemporaneous sex club.¹⁰⁸ This comment reflects widespread critique of the AIDS Memorial Quilt as homogenising (and so sanitising) the queer experience with its neat panels of “regularised squares” – despite the quilt’s diversity and relative deregulation, which I explore in this section as akin to the ‘queer archive’ itself, and antidotal to the traditional classifications and representational ‘order’ of Anglo-American memorial culture and death rituals.¹⁰⁹

Matt Cook observes that “Jarman rejected such domestication in his imagined panel”, yet recognises how the artist “domesticated queerness in other ways” – continually invoking his various domestic spaces (both past and present) across his published journals, work in film, and the sharing

¹⁰⁷ David Wojnarowicz Foundation, <https://wojfound.org/foundation/aids-memorial-quilt>.

¹⁰⁸ Jarman, *Smiling in Slow Motion*, 26.

¹⁰⁹ Cook, *Queer Domesticities*, 249.

of Prospect Cottage and its garden with both collaborators and members of the public.¹¹⁰ Cook eventually concludes that the “eclectically panelled quilt perhaps after all serves as an apt metaphor for queer domesticities.”¹¹¹ I believe we might go even further in relating the quilt to Jarman’s own queer testimony and artistic incorporation of ephemera, considering the actual inclusion of “cast-off clothing” in *Untitled (Clothes)*, 1989, as referenced earlier in this chapter [fig.34], as well as other domestic items included in his black paintings; used beer cans, costume jewellery, children’s toys, photos and postcards. Furthermore, in my earlier analysis of his painting *KY* (1992), from the ‘Queer’ series (chapter 1), I considered his specific invocation of Hampstead (Heath) and its socio-sexual relations. In bridging both artists engagement with the affective resonance of ephemera to the AIDS Memorial Quilt, I am specifically interested in how we might trace their experience of the destabilising impact of HIV-AIDS – and the queer temporality / temporal disruption of diagnosis – onto a wider experience of mourning and memorial culture connected to this epidemic (one that is not only more public, but both socially-sustained and ongoing.)

The quilt, itself, was generated from Cleve Jones’ own ephemeral experience and affective object-encounter – an experience at once individual and collective. It was in 1985, whilst planning an annual candlelit march in memory of the assassinated San Franciscan LGBT activist Harvey Milk, that Jones requested attendants to create placards remembering the names of those who had died of AIDS. Using ladders, these placards (in their hundreds) were later taped to the walls of the San Francisco Federal Building, producing a memorial patchwork that immediately inspired the creation of quilt.¹¹² Peter S. Hawkins describes how “the sight of the massed placards instantly reminded him of a patchwork quilt handed down within his family and used to comfort those who were ill or housebound.”¹¹³ Jones’ only stipulation was that each panel measure three by six feet – “the size of a standard grave.”¹¹⁴ That loved ones were otherwise allowed so much freedom in the creative conception and production of each panel, has resulted in the quilt being embroidered with a deeply affective and specific personalisation – critically connected to the incorporation of personal ephemera: “shirts and ties, teddy bears, crushed beer cans, merit badges and credit cards, photographs and computer-generated images, leather and lame, wedding rings, cremation ashes-anything goes.”¹¹⁵ This disregard (or lack of preciousness) regarding object hierarchies, provenance,

¹¹⁰ Cook, *Queer Domesticities*, 249.

¹¹¹ Cook, *Queer Domesticities*, 249.

¹¹² Gambardella, *Absent Bodies*, 214.

¹¹³ Hawkins, “Naming Names”, 756-757.

¹¹⁴ Gambardella, *Absent Bodies*, 214.

¹¹⁵ Hawkins, “Naming Names”, 764.

or even permanence, speaks to a distinctly *queer* memorial culture – as observed in my examination of the queer archive in the first chapter. It is this same impulse that surely underpins the encounters with ephemera in both Jarman’s and Wojnarowicz’s work, as well as their open-source approach to authorship and collaborative production. To return to Cifor’s work on a “vital nostalgia”, we may consider these creative outputs as existing within destabilised vectors of time, place, and space – individually-generated, collectively-shared, and in a constant state of reconfiguration or relocation – by which the memorial culture surrounding HIV-AIDS is constructed through ephemera so as to connect the PWA of the past to a present (and future) of the illness. Like the physical patchwork of the quilt, the unboundaried borders of Prospect Cottage, or the psychic grid-lines of Wojnarowicz’s “interior world” (as illustrated in *Wind (for Peter Hujar)*, 1987 [fig.68]), the queer archive becomes a loose and unregulated framework by which to keep connected, in the present, the vast and unruly affective and ephemeral networks of the PWA.

As I have traced in the work of Jarman and Wojnarowicz following their respective diagnoses with HIV, the experience of illness – that is (in this case) the rehearsal of death and of a certain, chronic, ‘lateness’ – ruptures a pre-determined (or as Wojnarowicz might describe, “pre-invented”) chrononormativity and so gives way to a new, unstable (and so, queer) temporality.¹¹⁶ The PWA oscillates between past, present, and uncertain future. The sick and so deteriorating body gives way to affective, ephemeral object-markers, so as to accommodate the re-oriented vectors of time and place amidst terminal illness – the “absent body” described by Hawkins, and referred to by Marvin J. Taylor in regards to his archive impulse at Fales.¹¹⁷ Allowing for the conscious instability of this ruptured and reoriented temporality – one belonging to the body that is sick, failing, queer – provides a vehicle for an expression of experience and identity at the interstices of classification. This not only plays out in the multimedia practices and activist-assemblage of Wojnarowicz and Jarman, but is deeply imbued in both the spirit and surface of the AIDS Memorial Quilt. Like the artist’s hand at play in the act of assemblage, the material nature of the quilt is integral to its affective expansiveness; Jones affirmed how it was “not made of stone or metal and not raised by engineers. Our monument was sewn of soft fabric thread, and it was created in homes across America wherever friends and families gathered together to remember their loved ones lost to AIDS.”¹¹⁸ As Hawkins poignantly observes, “unlike stone, with its illusion of an eternal witness,

¹¹⁶ My reference here to “the rehearsal of death” invokes Eric Michael’s description of AIDS as “the disease of a thousand rehearsals” in *Unbecoming. An AIDS Diary* (Sydney: EMPress, 1990), 139.

¹¹⁷ Ault and Taylor, “Active Recollection”, 1.

¹¹⁸ Cleve Jones, “Address Given at the Lincoln Memorial”, unpublished material distributed by the NAMES Project, as cited by Hawkins, “Naming Names”, 765.

cloth fade frays with time; its fragility, its constant need for mending, tell the truth about “material” life.”¹¹⁹ This material intimacy – one belonging to the domestic space, to the private life, and to the ‘interior world’ of our ephemeral, affective inter-personal networks – carries over into the way in which plans reflect a multiplicity of identities and so, identifiers. Unlike stone, again, the quilt registers the dead not only with the traditional classifiers of legal names and official birth/death dates, but with affectionate nicknames; “for every “David R. Thompson” or “Willi Smith” there is a “Patty”, a “Clint,” a “Fuzzy,” or a “Best Daddy in the World.””¹²⁰ In reflecting the nuance and complexity of such queer subjectivities, the quilt expands the affective potential of our mourning for what is lost – fully encompassing the interstices (that is, an in-betweenness) of the queer life and domestic realm.

The expanded scope of the quilt’s mourned subjects reorients us towards an affective intimacy with the deceased – beyond the mere statistic of their death. Crucial to this is Ahmed’s recognition that “queer subjects do use different names for what they find significant in their lives and they find significance in different places, including those that are deemed illegitimate in heteronormative cultures” – an experience that is frequently exacerbated in the context of death and mourning.¹²¹ Take, for example, the common dead-naming of deceased trans subjects, or the suppression of sexuality in the context of death rituals such as the funeral. Simon Watney notably recorded the funeral of his late friend Bruno, who died of HIV-AIDS, and observed his mother and father “condemned to silence, to euphemism [...] in this the most devastating moment of their lives as parents.”¹²² Watney describes how “the irony of the difference between the suffocating life of the suburbs where we found ourselves, and our knowledge of the world in which Bruno had actually lived, as a magnificently affirmative and life-enhancing gay man, was all but unbearable.”¹²³ In approximating how the quilt and its ephemeral markers allow for such a reading (and reflection) of an expanded queer subjectivity, whilst oriented towards a memorial function, I am affirming how the queer archive allows us to bridge this ‘difference’ between identities, temporalities, social relations, and traditions – making space for what Muñoz describes as a “queer possibility” ascribed in our ephemeral relations, and integral to the work of both Jarman and Wojnarowicz.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Hawkins, “Naming Names”, 765.

¹²⁰ Hawkins, “Naming Names”, 765.

¹²¹ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 154.

¹²² Watney, *Policing Desire*, 7.

¹²³ Watney, *Policing Desire*, 7.

¹²⁴ Muñoz, “Ephemera as evidence”, 6.

Like both Hawkins and Gambardella, I want to highlight a specific panel from the quilt dedicated to Jac Wall [fig.69]. This panel is almost entirely filled with the inverted silhouette of a male figure, literalising the absent-body in white cloth upon a background of blue pattern, life-size in scale. Witnessed online via the AIDS Memorial Quilt's interactive database, the panel at first appears strikingly minimalist – unadorned with the typical (nick)names, embellishments, and ephemeral markers of favourite hobbies, geographies, professions, and passions. It is only when we zoom in to observe the panel in detail, that the viewer realises the ghostly silhouette of its subject is in fact outlined with embroidered text, reading:

Jac Wall is my lover. Jac Wall had AIDS. Jac Wall died. I love Jac Wall. Jac Wall is a good guy. Jac Wall made me a better person. Jac Wall could beat me in wrestling. Jac Wall loves me. Jac Wall is thoughtful. Jac Wall is great in bed. Jac Wall is intelligent. I love Jac Wall. Jac Wall is with me. Jac Wall turns me on. I miss Jac Wall. Jac Wall is faithful. Jac Wall is a natural Indian. Jac Wall is young at heart. Jac Wall looks good naked. I love Jac Wall. Jac Wall improved my life. Jac Wall is my lover. Jac Wall loves me. I miss Jac Wall. I will be with you soon.¹²⁵

The quilter's oscillation between past, present, and future tenses – much like the queer archive, itself – might specifically function to reclaim and represent the destabilised temporality of the PWA. "Jac Wall is [...]", "Jac Wall had [...]", "Jac Wall died", "I love Jac Wall" (present tense, ongoing), "I will be with you soon"; this slippage between temporalities in which the mourned is at once absent, present, and potential, reflects the same (queer) refusal of chrononormativity that I have traced in the black paintings of Jarman and in the sprawling installations and phantasmic grid-paintings of Wojnarowicz. By imagining the lover's body as belonging both beyond and between temporal registers – and to a psychic future of eternal togetherness conjured by impermanent sexual kinship – the quilter's text speaks concisely to Freeman's notion of that "hiccup in sequential time" as connecting "temporal dissonance to queer sexual dissidence."¹²⁶ This is something I have outlined as occurring at the specific intersection of queerness and chronic illness. As with the work of both artists, and despite the grave-like dimensions of the quilt or painting border, the absent-body (subject) is not merely recorded as a physical loss (the dead body-object), but re-conjured over and over across temporal registers and ephemeral signifiers.

¹²⁵ Hawkins, "Naming Names", 774.

¹²⁶ Freeman, *Time Binds*, 1.

My comparative analysis of Jarman and Wojnarowicz emphasises how creative testimonies of the HIV-AIDS crisis demand a purposeful engagement with their resistance to art historical and archival rigidity. This must include affective analysis of the queer archive's ephemeral networks and evolving permutations, and an integrative approach to artist-activist afterlives and complex memorial cultures. In 2008, the artist Isaac Julien curated a retrospective of Jarman's work at the Serpentine Galleries in London. The retrospective is itself an exhibition format that, like the memorial quilt, reaches across temporalities – assembling artworks, images, and other markers from across an artist's oeuvre in order to reconsider (and so reconjure) their identity and lived experience. In this case, it was curated by one of Jarman's own friends and so both underpinned and upheld by the ephemeral network(s) Jarman so frequently threaded through the collaborative practices of his art and activism. On one wall, fourteen of Jarman's black paintings were hung in a loose, irregular grid formation [fig.70], their rectangular forms aligned in another echo of the quilt's repeating panels, or like rows of headstones inscribed with affective and temporal markers. In the exhibition's catalogue, Julien noted how Jarman's work “now serves as a fascinating archive that we can use to examine our present”, invoking the archive as a way-finding framework for Jarman's “complicated legacy: a legacy that should not be relegated to an art- or film-history class.”¹²⁷ Approaching Jarman's paintings with such archival thinking allows the contemporary art historian and viewer to encounter these works as ephemeral records in evolving constellations, and as vital networks of information, memory, and testimony. Such curatorial and critical strategies are an important aspect of the queer archive's *curative* potential for contemporary legacies of HIV-AIDS, as outlined in my Introduction and Chapter I, enabling the contemporary art historian or activist to more successfully advocate for the conservation and circulation of these unusual, unstable, and under-represented objects. In the next chapter I seek to push the boundaries of this archive thinking as it applies to Jarman's painting, not only by expanding what we might consider ‘painting’ to be within his multi-hyphenate practice, but by extending the notion of the archive to encompass specific urban spaces and their function as a testimonial record of queer lives, legacies, and HIV-AIDS memorial cultures.

¹²⁷ Isaac Julien, “Introduction”, *Derek Jarman: Brutal Beauty* (London: Koenig Books and Serpentine Gallery, 2008), 29.

Chapter III

Promises, ‘Projections’, Progress?: Pet Shop Boys and Super 8

i. Promises, promises, promises: ‘King’s Cross’ and architectural memory

Where is the ‘debris’ of Britain’s queer histories, the ‘remains’ [...] of the non-commodified archive? Who might gain access to those ‘bonfires and dustbins’? And how?¹

On a Thursday afternoon in April 2023, I finished a supervision in Bloomsbury and walked the short journey northwards from my university campus to King’s Cross station. Passing through the crowds of city workers on their lunch break, tourists, and travellers, I crossed Granary Square and soon arrived at Queer Britain: the United Kingdom’s “first dedicated national LGBTQ+ museum.”² The museum opened in 2022, set up in part of an historic building owned by ArtFund – the same charity that ensured the preservation of Prospect Cottage in 2020. Inside, four galleries present an ambitious yet neatly-packaged history of queer identities and visual culture within the United Kingdom, with an ongoing and inaugural exhibition – ‘We Are Queer Britain!’ – that aims to document over 100 years of queer life, constructed around the 50th anniversary of the country’s first Pride march in 1972. The modest cluster of exhibition spaces provide an arc of queer history that spans Oscar Wilde’s prison door at Reading Gaol and original correspondence relating to the charity Stonewall, contemporary portrait photography, costumes worn by popular entertainers such as Olly Alexander and Elton John, Pride-inspired Islamic dress, protest placards for causes such as opposing Section 28 and supporting gay marriage, alongside a gift shop containing merchandise, books, and memorabilia reflecting contemporary popular interest in debates around gender identity, feminism, and reality television franchise RuPaul’s Drag Race. Derek Jarman is represented not only in the evocatively faded poster for his 1978 feature film *Jubilee* (1978), on display from a private collection [fig.71], but in the documentation and ephemera relating to the protest group Outrage! with which he took part in numerous demonstrations [fig.72].

In addition to these physical reminders, Jarman’s artistic and political spirit permeates the building’s surrounds. For unrepresented on the gallery walls, but rooted in this location, is a short film (shot as a Super 8 film) that Jarman made in 1987 for the track ‘King’s Cross’ by electronic music duo Pet

¹ Anderson, “Please Help Yourself”, 55.

² “Queer Britain secures its first physical home”, Queer Britain, 24 January 2022, <https://queerbritain.org.uk/history-2022-granary-square>.

Shop Boys, released as part of their album *Actually*. This moving image was not only recorded before a fire that would devastate the station in November of that year, but after Jarman's own diagnosis with HIV-AIDS in 1986. Jarman would return to the area to shoot further footage following the fire, making the work a loose and artistic record of the station's history and its unique geography as a nexus for queer communality, sex work, nightlife, and the urban migration of countless would-be queer Londoners who continue to commute via King's Cross as a means to 'come out of the closet'. As plays out in the lyrics of the song:

It's the same story every night

I've been hurt and we've been had

You leave home, and you don't go back³

In this chapter, I use Queer Britain – and its location in King's Cross – as a departure point from which to reflect on the interactions of the PWA with urban space, how this connects to contemporary memorial cultures of the AIDS crisis in London, and how we might reappraise Jarman's own work in this urban space as a "counter-memorial" to the queer identities of not only the station and its environs, but the city itself.⁴ How might urban spaces be read as a stand-in for the body of the PWA and its memory: denigrated, dilapidated, abandoned and high-risk, or preserved, privatised, reclaimed, and regenerated? This consideration allows our queer remembrance in the present to be informed by queer documentation of the past, generating an archival through-line by which we might both critique and connect memorial sites and remembrance cultures pertaining to the AIDS crisis (alongside issues of cultural inheritance, and legacy).

While Jarman's documentation of King's Cross has been examined by Ben Campkin within the field of urban geography, this chapter uses art historical analysis to connect the socio-political (and ephemeral) implications of Jarman's film, and selected paintings, to the ongoing complications of contemporary memorial culture. This encompasses not only 'queer Britain' and the AIDS epidemic in the UK, but the recent reactivation of Jarman's practice following the ArtFund campaign in 2020.⁵ Moreover, I continue to examine how we might use archive and memorial theory in conjunction with contemporary discourse surrounding AIDS activism and remembrance to generate new links within Jarman's oeuvre, alongside that of other artists attempting to consider how the

³ Pet Shop Boys, 'King's Cross' (1987), lyrics by Neil Tenant and Chris Lowe, copyright Cage Music.

⁴ James E. Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today", *Critical Inquiry* 18, no.2 (Winter 1992): 267-296, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343784>.

⁵ Ben Campkin, "Crisis and Creativity," in *Remaking London: Decline and Regeneration in Urban Culture* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 105-125. I also reference Campkin's article "Urban image and legibility in King's Cross", in *Interventions*, eds. Malcolm Miles and Tim Hall (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2005), 63-80.

memory of AIDS plays out in the urban space. Connecting Jarman to the urban context also serves to decentralise contemporary perceptions of his practice from Prospect Cottage. As I explored in Chapter I, revisiting his domestic space at Bankside and the work he produced there, this is an important recalibration within his archival and institutional reconjuring. Importantly, I want to expand my consideration of Jarman's work by bringing it into dialogue with Sunil Gupta's own documentation of alternative urban sites in London (taken from a perspective of ongoing seropositivity during what is widely regarded as the 'endemic' era of AIDS) as part of his series 'From Here to Eternity' (1999).⁶ I will also consider Ira Sachs' *Last Address* (2010), a video work connecting these notions of urban space to contemporary remembrance of the AIDS crisis and the complexities of its artistic legacies.

Jarman's short film for 'King's Cross' was developed as part of a series of back projections commissioned ahead of a tour of Hong Kong and Japan, to be followed by three British headline concerts in Birmingham, Glasgow, and London (at Wembley Arena). Pet Shop Boys "wanted the show, their first-ever full-length live concert, to be highly theatrical and to involve an element of film."⁷ In producing this series, referred to as 'Projections', Jarman was assisted by James Mackay and "as many of the gang as he could muster", including his late companion Keith Collins. In total, he produced eight short films for this series, to be projected as visual accompaniment to the tracks 'Opportunities', 'Heart', 'Paninaro', 'Nothing Has Been Proved', 'It's A Sin', 'Domino Dancing', 'King's Cross' and 'Always on my Mind'. In this chapter I will approach a selection of these films, and seek to re-situate them within the oeuvre of Jarman's wider practice and specifically his painting. Not only do they echo painting in their play of colour, light, and motion (gesture), but I will also examine how the artist's subjective and material manipulation of Super 8 is analogous to his use of assemblage and found material, as explored in the black paintings of my previous chapter. I believe such an assessment to be in line with Jarman's own multifarious practice, himself describing how – when blown up to 70, 65, or 35mm – Super 8 "gives you a palette like a painter [...] like stained glass [...] [with] wonderful colours."⁸ Jarman's own enthusiastic response to the 'Projections' – "a medley that cavorts through the styles of the underground. ... Effects like this have never been seen on film" – affirms to me that such a consideration is both in line with (and inclusive of) his expanded painting practice.⁹

⁶ Cifor, *Viral Cultures*, 11.

⁷ Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 436.

⁸ Jarman, *Kicking the Pricks*, 185.

⁹ Jarman, *Modern Nature*, 93.

Jarman worked frequently with Super 8 film from the earliest stages of his career – including works like *Studio Bankside* (1971), and *Death Dance* (1973), as explored in my first chapter, as well as incorporating it into later feature films such as *The Angelic Conversation* (1987) and *The Garden* (1990), as explored in my second chapter. ‘King’s Cross’ opens with shots of the area’s iconic (and now decommissioned) gas-holders, also a starting point for Campkin’s study of regeneration in the area by which he finds that “[the] painstaking act of taking apart the gas-holders piece by piece can be viewed as a metaphor for contemporary attempts to rename, rebrand and change the image of King’s Cross.”¹⁰ To the song’s opening chords, the camera moves through the backstreets behind the station in sketchy black-and-white Super 8 (blown up to 70mm) – leading the viewer on a point-of-view walking tour through this “hopeless environment, where local landmarks representative of past industrial power and civic stability have accumulated the negative associations of an area deemed to be dirty, dangerous and disorderly; notorious for street prostitution, the drugs market and associated crime.”¹¹ Mark Turner writes that “in his general resistance to 35mm and preference for Super 8mm, Jarman’s aesthetic sensibilities, his antiestablishment politics, and the filmmaking process itself all converge”, producing results that appear (deceptively) “incomplete, even unprofessional [...] they wilfully refuse finish and polish, and though many of the films are heavy in symbolism and metaphor, there is rarely anything like conventional linear narrative.”¹² At only five minutes and six seconds in length, ‘King’s Cross’ surely embodies this spirit of spontaneity and resistance, while also conjuring the urban grit of the area as made manifest in the speckled footage, shifting light, and streaming bodies of passers-by.

As the first verse unfolds, we see staring strangers and passing trains spill into wrestling shadow-figures [fig.73];

The man at the back of the queue was sent

To feel the smack of firm government

Linger by the flyposter, for a fight¹³

Counter to Campkin’s metaphorical invocation of regeneration as a “painstaking act of taking apart”, Jarman employs a process of edited assemblage – a piecing together – to reflect the city’s dilapidated terminal and its back streets, its creeping redevelopment, and the urban rhythms of its

¹⁰ Campkin, “Urban image”, 64.

¹¹ As Campkin describes Salman Rushdie’s use of the area as a setting for his novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988), “Urban image”, 68.

¹² Turner, “Derek Jarman in the Docklands”, 81-82.

¹³ Pet Shop Boys, ‘King’s Cross’.

commuters and crowds. In my second chapter, I examined Jarman's use of rear projection in *The Garden* – a filmic tool by which location footage (past) and studio footage (present) are superimposed upon each other – considering the function by which this re-composition might function as “as a mechanism for articulating memory”.¹⁴ This film employs the same process of assemblage and re-composition, one that is akin to the collecting impulse of Jarman's black paintings. Tony Peake describes how Jarman took on the task of producing his ‘Projections’ with renewed fervour following his diagnosis, “working in both super 8 and 16mm and mixing footage from his own and other ‘libraries’ with an equal amount of new material, some shot on location, one in the course of two brief studio sessions in south London.”¹⁵ Here, this interplay of imagery has a similar critical function – mirroring the song's ambiguous, ambulatory account of its every-queer subject(s), and the circling lyricism of an urban unknown:

Someone told me Monday, someone told me Saturday
 Wait until tomorrow and there's still no way
 Read it in a book or write it in a letter
 Wake up in the morning and there's still no guarantee¹⁶

Moreover, this interplay relates to Jarman's anti-establishment feeling and desire to conjure the social malaise of Thatcherite Britain, Section 28, and the unfolding AIDS epidemic. Writing in 1988, Stuart Hall described how Thatcherism “has succeeded, to some degree, in aligning its historical, political, cultural and sexual ‘logics’ with some of the most powerful tendencies in the contemporary logics of capitalist development.”¹⁷ As explicitly addressed in Jarman's paintings, and in the affective record of ‘King's Cross’, the social (and physical) impact of these ‘logics’ had clear ramifications in the urban context. The intensity of Jarman's feeling is viscerally rendered in the painting *Margaret Thatcher's Lunch* (1987) [fig.74], created only a year after work on the ‘King's Cross’ projection as part of his series of black paintings. Menacingly set into the viscous black oil paint of its ground, a real set of cutlery borders a warped and rusted coil of metal wire – as if freshly set down and staining the table setting with streaks of blood-red paint. The direct implication is of Thatcher having blood on her hands, while the composition conjures the perceived violence, darkness, and greed of her political agenda. Scratched into the surface above the place setting, Jarman has scrawled:

GBH promises GBH

¹⁴ Pam Cook, *Screening the Past: Memory and Nostalgia in Cinema* (Oxford: Routledge, 2005), 90–91.

¹⁵ Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 436.

¹⁶ Pet Shop Boys, ‘King's Cross’.

¹⁷ Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* (London and New York: Verso, 1988), 276.

GBH promises GBH

Promise promises promise

The affluent society

Whilst GBH has been interpreted as both “Grievous Bodily Harm” or “Great British Horror”, this repetition of “promises / promises / promises” in a central column evokes the slick and empty aspiration of a politician’s grandstanding – invoking the same “still no guarantee” as sung by Pet Shop Boys.¹⁸ Jarman’s fury at the aggressive disparities, economic acceleration, and morality theatre of Thatcher’s Britain is palpable in the fierce assemblage and gestural velocity of this painting. He would go on to describe the country as “a land in bondage to the estate agent, PR, and runtish Tory MPs whose faces are deep in the trough, selling off the Welfare State our fathers and grandfathers died to create, to line their pockets. What patriots these?”¹⁹ Yet it also permeates the splicing of Super 8 and the disintegrating, monochrome melancholy of ‘King’s Cross’. Turner cites Jarman’s own journals for the feature film *Last of England*, written as he simultaneously worked on this and other short films for Pet Shop Boys’ upcoming tour:

The film constructed round an almost imperceptible narrative (spontaneity is the life blood of Super 8 film). Freed from the constraint of narrative, and the control of formal film making in G.B. The image can take flight.²⁰

Here, the notion of artistic freedom is inherently tied into Thatcherite policies of privatisation and individualism, as explored in Chapter I – systems that impacted cultural production in the UK from conception through to consumption.²¹ Jarman emphasised his own intention to dismantle “the structure in which the image is controlled by emphasis on ‘quality’ and therefore expense leading to the deliberate creation of rarity and monopoly”, instead stating his “*intentions* to explore through metaphor and dream imagery, the deep seated malaise in current Britain.”²² The use of Super 8, blown up no less, clearly subverts this cultural prizing of filmic ‘quality’ – instead allowing (and even exaggerating) the shakiness of the hand-held camera, a speckled grain, light leaks, and a manual handling of image sequence and focus. Even more, this work – that is, a filmic accompaniment to a popular music track that Jarman did not himself create, intended for large-scale projection before a live audience – reflects a decentring of authorship and narrative control that

¹⁸ These interpretations of ‘GBH’ occur across scholarship on Jarman’s work, including Robert Mills, “Derek Jarman’s Revelation: AIDS, Apocalypse and History”, in *Imagining The Apocalypse: Art And The End Times*, eds. Edwin Coomasaru and Theresa Deichert (London: Courtauld Books Online, 2022), 20. See also, the artwork’s description in the collection of the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), <https://imma.ie/collection/margaret-thatchers-lunch/>, accessed 10 June 2023.

¹⁹ This is from *War Requiem*, as cited by Jim Ellis in *Angelic Conversations*, 157.

²⁰ Jarman, *Last of England*, 197–99.

²¹ In Chapter I, I cited Mark Turner’s description of Super 8 as “a kind of refusal to engage fully in systems of capital” – in regards to Jarman’s navigation of networks outside of mainstream distribution or ownership. Turner, “Derek Jarman in the Docklands”, 83.

²² Jarman, notebook for *The Last of England*, 1985–1986, JAR-2-1-12 (formerly Jarman II Box 12), Derek Jarman Collection, BFI National Archive and Special Collections (Berkhamstead, UK).

echoes my earlier examination of the political implications of collaborative labour and production in his 'Queer' and 'Evil Queen' paintings in Chapter I.

ii. "It takes more than the matter of time"²³: terminality and queer temporalities

Writing on Jarman's incorporation of the music video format within his feature film *Edward II* (1991), Robert Mills draws a similar link to Jarman's interest in disrupting the conventions of mainstream cinema, reflecting on the format of the music video as a vehicle by which "to interrupt the audience's sense of a single "now.""²⁴ In *King's Cross*, the use of image interplay / overlay disrupts this sense of a singular present – in tension with the emphatic "now" that is generated by the 'POV'-style perspective of the walking subject. Campkin indirectly reflects on this distinct sense of movement and its associated instability, remarking that "contemporary King's Cross is in a constant state of flux, characterised by movement, defined by its railway termini, underground station and cross roads. This feature is often cited as being largely responsible for the problems ascribed to the area."²⁵ Not only does this use of overlay have echoes of the object-assemblage in Jarman's black paintings from my previous chapter, but the camera's motion affirms the subversive potential of queer temporalities and their ruptures – not only here in this film, but across my project and indeed, 'AIDS time'²⁶.

In fact, the ambulatory unfolding of *King's Cross* brings to my mind Jarman's own account of his diagnosis:

As I walked up the freezing street against the tide of Christmas shoppers I thought it was inconceivable I could have avoided the virus, though I had avoided the test for as long as was decently possible. [...]

Walking back down Tottenham Court Road from the hospital, I thought how fortunate to be forewarned so that one can wind one's life up in an orderly fashion. The finality of it seemed attractive.

As I joined the crowds at Oxford Street, I thought— could my perception of all this change, could I fall in love with it again as I did when I left home early in the 1960s?

²³ Pet Shop Boys, 'King's Cross'.

²⁴ Mills, *Derek Jarman's Medieval Modern*, 40.

²⁵ Campkin, "Urban image", 65.

²⁶ By which, I refer back to my discussion of epidemic vs endemic time in Chapter II (Cifor, *Viral Cultures*).

The sun came out briefly, the thin wintry sun, so low in the sky it blinds you.²⁷

And so it is that this short film for *King's Cross* opens with the viewpoint of a seemingly lone figure walking towards and through a crowded city street, before the 'doors of perception' do indeed change with the various overlays of the station and its urban scenography: the passing train, the station marquee, shadowy strangers, overhead lights, tiled walls, rolling advertisements. As with my examination of Jarman's 'Queer' and 'Evil Queen' paintings (Chapter I), and his black tar object-paintings (Chapter II), it is these ephemeral markers that underpin his subversive conjuring of a distinct temporality – that of 1980s Britain, of Thatcherite malaise, of an unfolding epidemic, and of queer lived experience.

In *The Last of England*, a black painting from 1986 [fig.75], Jarman scratches into a thorny surface of black oil paint and broken glass – “The Dead Sea of VICTORIAN VALUES”, in between top and bottom corner inscriptions that read “NIGHT”, “LIFE”. The inscription is enclosed on either side by the fragments of a skull, literalising the gloomy political reference of the text into a memento mori, set against shards of gilded broken mirror-glass. This mirror-glass is now stained with the passage of time and flecked with a marbled green patina, transforming the metaphorical imagery of death and destruction into a literal deterioration before our very eyes.²⁸ The skull's jawbone is pincerred with the end of a compass, embellished upon the black paint and gold-leaf underlay of the canvas. This compass, frequently identified in the Western world as a symbol of Freemasonry, references the architect's tools. It speaks to deliberate acts, planning, intention, calculation – invoking Thatcher's pointed political rhetoric surrounding 'Victorian Values', as referenced in the painting's inscription. These 'values' provided a blanket term, and useful trope, for policies of individualism (“self-reliance”), moral puritanism, censorship, and homophobia (“you were taught self-respect”, “that cleanliness is next to godliness”), and nationalism (“to take pride in your country.”)²⁹ For Thatcher, “all of these things”, and more, “are Victorian Values. They are also perennial values.”³⁰ Raphael Samuel describes how Victorian Values “created a metaphorical space for the expression of moral anxiety”, resonating with those who resisted or even feared the cultural change that was percolating throughout the period.³¹ This anxiety is clearly conjured in Jarman's 'Queer' and 'Evil Queen' paintings, with their explicit taunting of Conservative pearl-clutching,

²⁷ Derek Jarman, *Kicking the Pricks*, 16-17.

²⁸ I witnessed this deterioration myself, on a visit to the exhibition 'When yellow wishes to ingratiate it becomes gold' at Amanda Wilkinson Gallery (London, UK), which ran from 4 June - 7 August 2021.

²⁹ “The Good Old Days”, *Evening Standard*, 15 April 1983. As quoted in Raphael Samuel, “Mrs Thatcher's Return to Victorian Values”, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 78 (1992), 14.

³⁰ Samuel, “Mrs Thatcher's Return to Victorian Values”, 14.

³¹ Samuel, “Mrs Thatcher's Return to Victorian Values”, 14.

tabloid scare-mongering, and censorious attitudes towards homosexuality, the perceived promiscuity of gay men, and the ‘uncleanliness’ of anal sex. It seems to underpin the anarchic and antagonistic tone of such painted slogans as “ARSE-INJECTED DEATH SYNDROME” [fig.23], “FUCK ME BLIND” [fig.20], and “SPREAD THE PLAGUE” [fig.15]. Yet, both in ‘King’s Cross’ and in concurrent black paintings, Jarman taps into a more opaque melancholy surrounding British culture, Thatcherite privatisation, ‘traditional’ (or ‘Victorian’) values, and the social malaise generated by numerous efforts to suppress not only homosexuals, but the working classes, any other embodiments of the imagined ‘other’.

The song itself is anchored in this temporality, coded with ephemeral markers that transmit the cyclical banalities of urban life:

Good luck, bad luck waiting in a line

It takes more than the matter of time ³²

Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government was voted into power in the General Election of 1979 following a widely-circulated and well-remembered poster campaign devised by advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi, which showed a snaking line of Britons waiting outside an unemployment office under the campaign slogan “LABOUR ISN’T WORKING” [fig.76]. This was a reference to the fact that, in 1978, unemployment in the UK was at a contemporaneously high 5-6% (although it must be highlighted that the unemployment rate would actually remain above 6% until 1999).³³ As such, the image of “waiting in line” had been seared into the visual consciousness of the British public at the turn of the 1980s, and would only become more potent – more poignant, and more pained – by the time of the song’s release in 1986. What Turner describes as “Thatcher’s radically neoliberal, market-driven restructuring of Britain” would see further austerity inflicted upon the working classes, with rampant privatisation leading to further job losses amidst a promotion of the ‘self’ – of ‘pulling oneself up by the bootstraps’. As sung in the opening line of King’s Cross, “the man at the back of the queue was sent / to feel the smack of firm government.” In Jarman’s own words, “I wouldn’t wish the eighties on anyone [...] it was the time when all that was rotten bubbled to the surface.”³⁴ And yet he was determined to record the broiling tensions of this socio-economic and political climate on film.

³² Pet Shop Boys, ‘King’s Cross’.

³³ “Unemployment rate (aged 16 and over, seasonally adjusted): %”, ONS LLF2Q (ILO Labour Force Survey), accessed 19 May 2023, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/unemployment/timeseries/mgsx/lms>.

³⁴ Derek Jarman, *At Your Own Risk*, 95.

William Pencak describes how “Thatcher’s economic policies in the eighties led not only to the destruction of traditional England, but even modern factories and housing projects degenerated into slums and then ruins.”³⁵ The dilapidation of King’s Cross and its environs was a clear case study for this, as was exposed by public enquiries following the fire that took place only months after Jarman produced this footage. Investigations concluded that the incident occurred when a lit match (presumably used to light a cigarette) was dropped onto the station’s wooden escalator, falling below and starting a fire, which then spread into the underground ticket hall in a sudden explosion – referred to as a ‘flashover’ – as a result of over twenty years of layered repainting on the tunnel’s ceiling absorbing the superheated gases of the escalator smoke. The eruption into the ticket hall resulted in 31 fatalities, and over 100 people injured.³⁶ A subsequent public enquiry – initiated by Thatcher’s government and conducted by Desmond Fennell – suggested infrastructural neglect and gross corporate mismanagement at both London Underground and London Regional Transport (LRT), leading to the resignation of senior management across both organisations including LRT chairman Keith Bright. As Campkin describes, “this catastrophe was a dramatic manifestation of the neglect of the public realm [...] a symbol of blight, under-investment and the failure of governance.”³⁷

That Jarman provides us with this record of the station’s interior, only months before this catastrophic event and then returning in 1989, has a particular hauntological resonance – especially when we consider the fire as an event that, like the AIDS crisis itself, might illustrate how public hysteria and media blame can obfuscate years of political neglect, poor infrastructure, and a collapsing public realm. His interest in this tabloid media culture permeates *At Your Own Risk* (1993), and of course the ‘Queer’ paintings I examined in Chapter I. The hauntological implications of the station and its ruin can be considered in light of Fiona Anderson’s analysis of the dilapidated landscape of New York’s waterfront and the unruly temporalities of its cruising piers, with their affective ties to the embodied experience and artistic legacies both pre and post the AIDS epidemic.³⁸ Anderson investigates the cross-temporal potential of this urban context through close analysis of its “cumulative erotic architectural and material histories.”³⁹ This approach informs my own investigation into the queer resonance of King’s Cross; not only as it appears in Jarman’s short film, but through its accumulated queer histories (and affective networks) from 1987 into the present. As Campkin importantly recognises, the station was featured not (only) for its resonance as

³⁵ William Pencak, *The Films of Derek Jarman* (London: McFarland, 2002), 144.

³⁶ “The King’s Cross Fire of 1987”, British Transport Police, accessed 10 July 2023, <https://www.btp.police.uk/police-forces/british-transport-police/areas/about-us/about-us/our-history/the-kings-cross-fire-of-1987/the-victims>.

³⁷ Campkin, *Remaking London*, 116.

³⁸ Fiona Anderson, *Cruising the Dead River: David Wojnarowicz and New York’s Ruined Waterfront* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019).

³⁹ Anderson, *Cruising the Dead River*, 97.

a site of societal collapse and de-generation, but for its relevance to queer (night)life, community, opportunity and activism. As well as being the central location for social venues including The Bell and Central Station, the area also provided a meeting place for the Lesbian and Gay Switchboard, the Camden Lesbian Centre, and even the first and only National Black Gay Men's Conference in 1987.⁴⁰

As the song climaxes, the subject-eye of the camera/viewer seems to externalise itself as the lone figure of Chris Lowe – one half of Pet Shop Boys, and the band's keyboardist. Lowe is seemingly depicted as the queer émigré, holdall bag slung over his shoulder as he arrives “by the station called King's Cross” [fig.77]⁴¹ Neil Tennant, the electronic duo's other half, has described how the song sought to reflect that:

King's Cross is the station you come to when you come down to London looking for opportunity from the Northeast, then the most depressed part of England. And there's lots of crime around King's Cross – prostitution, drug addicts, and a lot of tramps come up to you there. I just thought that was a metaphor for Britain – people arriving at this place, waiting for an opportunity that doesn't happen, waiting for the dole queue or some documentation for the NHS. It's about hopes being dashed... it's an angry song about Thatcherism.⁴²

Tennant's reflection on the track speaks to not merely a symbolic invocation of the station and its historical identities, but to a very real lived experience – if not exclusively queer, then at the fringes of what Jarman would have referred to as ‘heterosoc.’ In Anderson's assessment of the New York waterfront, she models the ruin not only as a container for evolving ephemeral traces and artistic afterlives, but as a nexus for queer preservationism in the face of redevelopment and gentrification. The ruin becomes a marker of queer existence, memory, and endurance; a site by which to situate oneself within the urban context.⁴³ This notion of the ruin's afterlife, and testimonial potential, is central to the concept of the counter-memorial, which I explore in the next section of this chapter. This analysis will examine the (counter-)memorial as a point for ongoing and interactive interpretation of history and its subjective, slippery legacies. Drawing a memorial (and affective) lineage from the King's Cross of 1987-1989 through to the present day remembrance of a ‘queer Britain’, while prioritising ephemeral records and markers, expands a cultural understanding of the shifting landscape of HIV-AIDS and its memory in the UK, as well as the evolution of queer identities and reconjuring of Jarman's own artistic and activist practices since 2020's Art Fund

⁴⁰ Campkin, *Remaking London*, 113.

⁴¹ Pet Shop Boys, ‘King's Cross’.

⁴² Neil Tennant, “King's Cross”, in *Actually / Further Listening 1987–1988* (CD booklet). Pet Shop Boys (London: EMI Records, 2001), 21.

⁴³ Anderson, *Cruising the Dead River*, 138.

campaign. Having previously sought to trace the function of Prospect Cottage and its shifting temporalities in my last chapter, I believe that examining Jarman's artistic encounters with urban space may function as a counter-case study by which audiences come closer to understanding the particular resonances (and complexities) of the PWA's affective (re)orientation and ephemeral networks. In this way, the contemporary viewer of Jarman's paintings can uncover how these networks permeate the city's streets and social landscapes – from artist studios and domestic realms, through hospital rooms and cruising grounds – not only in the documentation of physical space, but in the reconfigured urban present and its cultural memory.

iii. 'Counter-memorial': ephemera, communality, and the vernacular arc

In reappraising Jarman's work in King's Cross, encompassing the area's marked redevelopment and departing from the formalised museum context of Queer Britain, I want to consider James E. Young's 'counter-memorial' as a critical framework. Young describes the 'counter-memorial' as aiming:

not to console but to provoke; not to remain fixed but to change; not to be everlasting but to disappear; not to be ignored by its passersby but to demand interaction; not to remain pristine but to invite its own violation and desecration; not to accept graciously the burden of memory but to throw it back at the town's feet.⁴⁴

Young's description can be applied to Jarman's projection for Pet Shop Boys, documenting as it does the complicated urban space of King's Cross, which is represented as being caught between social malaise and memorial, between a queer temporality and the rupture of the AIDS epidemic. This work was not the austere, memorial record, but instead a tricky, ephemeral tribute intended for enjoyment before a live audience in the course of a music concert – heady, heartfelt, and potentially hedonistic. Young describes how the counter-memorial functions, by the same anti-establishment impulse that underlies Jarman's film, "as a valuable 'counter-index' to the ways time, memory, and current history intersect at any memorial site."⁴⁵ Mark Turner's analysis of *The Last of England*, which is set in the post-industrial landscape of The Docklands, echoes this impulse in observing how "the spirit of resistance and anger expressed is deeply connected to an understanding and knowledge of specific London sites and their ongoing, ideologically motivated transformations under Thatcher."⁴⁶ In the case of 'King's Cross', there is a stark contrast – from the ghostly cruising

⁴⁴ Young, "The Counter-Monument", 277.

⁴⁵ Young, "The Counter-Monument", 277.

⁴⁶ Turner, "Derek Jarman in the Docklands", 78.

piers of Fiona Anderson's work in New York, or the abandoned docklands of *The Last of England* as examined by Turner – in that the station is defined by its populousness. In Jarman's short film, the viewer darts headlong into shadowy crowds, and the eventual figure of Chris Lowe appears enwrapped in the bodies of swarming commuters as he disembarks the arriving trains and edges across (or through) the station. As such, there is an inherent vernacular at play: a conjuring of communality, of shared experience, of familiar strangeness, even akin to the "peculiar magic" that Anderson cites in connection with the piers of New York.⁴⁷ This permeates the work, even in its afterlives; in contemporary YouTube comments on an uploaded copy of Jarman's projection, one viewer recalls "saw it on the '89 tour they did - the whole crowd simultaneously cheered [...] when Chris walks through Kings Cross."⁴⁸

The counter-memorial, unlike the state-sanctioned monument, is moulded by these ephemeral encounters and interventions, shaped by vernacular associations, oral histories, and saturated with affective details. In the words of Noam Lupu, the counter-memorial "deconstruct[s] rather than displace[s] memory", activating our present (and communal) memory-work – that is, not only formal remembrance but a spectrum of ongoing personal grief, loss, and the active nature of cultural legacies – by not merely consigning past events to a fixed and monumental 'history'.⁴⁹ Much of the academic work on counter-memorials has come out of scholarship on the various cultural and artistic projects generated in response to remembering the Holocaust. Approaching the urban landscape of contemporary Berlin, Karen E. Till describes a "place haunted with landscapes that simultaneously embody presences and absences, voids and ruins, intentional forgetting and painful remembering."⁵⁰ This tension of intentional forgetting and painful remembering is fundamental to our understanding of the AIDS crisis, and to the queer archive – both of which are replete with deliberate and incidental omissions. As Robb Hernández has written of AIDS archives, they are frequently "caught somewhere between completion and oblivion", riddled with "redactions, omissions, editorial revisions, and serendipitous rediscoveries."⁵¹ My work so far has sought to recognise the affective resonance and implications of the ephemeral networks (and temporal complications) at play in Jarman's work, as echoed in works by other PWA artist-activists. By

⁴⁷ Andrew Holleran, "Nostalgia for the mud", in M. Denny, C. Ortleb and T. Steele (eds.) *The Christopher Street Reader: Journalism from America's leading gay magazine* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1983), 68. As cited by Anderson, *Cruising the Dead River*, 4.

⁴⁸ "Pet Shop Boys - Kings Cross (1989)", YouTube, 10 November 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFIFaX7YXs4>.

⁴⁹ Noam Lupu, "Memory vanished, absent, and confined: The counter-memorial project in 1980s and 1990s Germany", *History and Memory* 15:2 (2003): 131, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/ham.2003.0010>.

⁵⁰ Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2005), 8.

⁵¹ Robb Hernández, *Archiving an Epidemic*, 6.

considering how ephemera can be incorporated so as to invoke the ‘absent body’, I have been invested in this same tension of embodied absence / presence. But in expanding absence/presence into the affectively-fraught relationship between an “intentional forgetting and painful remembering”, the counter-memorial provides a framework for unpacking our remembrance of AIDS in a way that at once echoes – and is adjacent to – the complexity and ‘grey area’ allowed by theories of the (queer) archive.

Whilst Jarman’s paintings seemingly provide us with incisive, framed, tightly-contained, and often carefully-assembled statements of his political outrage, medical struggles, and existential angst, his filmic works exist in an especially non-linear temporality: these projects often spanned years, were compiled through research notes and elaborate workbooks, were the subject of intensive edits, and reflect the multiplicity of the many hands that made them. This affects not only their very conception and creation, but their afterlives. In the case of Jarman’s pop cultural work (that is, in this case, my selection from his series of ‘Projections’ for Pet Shop Boys), this afterlife is especially phantasmic, unfixed, and active – compounded in its ephemerality by the context of a limited series of live concerts at which they were originally shown, only to live on through pop music merchandise and now in pirated uploads by die-hard fans in the throes of their own nostalgia (which is also an affective relation.) In recognising vernacular (or counter-)memorials as “spatial forms for the routines of everyday life” – situating the memory-work of historical loss and ongoing grief within the mundane – we may understand the specific charge of Jarman’s ‘Projections’ as (memorial) vehicles to both embody and extend ephemeral networks and resonances pertaining to his life and the queer lived experience.⁵² Just as in his paintings Jarman incorporates the ephemeral traces of his daily existence (newspapers, found objects, empty packets, drinks cans, and scribbled notes), these ‘Projections’ reflect on such “routines of everyday life” as walking around the city, waiting in line, passing billboards, and taking public transport. In both cases, the work serves to conjure (and memorialise) a specific temporality pertaining to queer lived experience – both private and public, absence and present, remembered and forgotten.

Paul Stangl perceives the counter-memorial as urging us to reflect on “not just how we remember; we must also consider how we as culture unremember, and thereby make space for counter memory

⁵² Paul Stangl, “The Vernacular and the Monumental: Memory culture and Landscape in Post-war Berlin”, *GeoJournal* 73, no.3 (2008): 245, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41148297>; Mary Rachel Gould and Rachel E. Silverman, “Stumbling upon History: Collective Memory and the Urban Landscape”, *GeoJournal* 78, no.5 (2013): 792, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42002548>.

and microhistories.”⁵³ In another work from Jarman’s ‘Projections’, entitled and accompanying Pet Shop Boys track ‘Heart’ (a single from the same 1987 album *Actually*), he turns from the quotidian motions of everyday daytime – the monotonous and monochrome waiting, walking, commuting of London’s urban backstreets and central terminal – to the ephemeral spaces of London’s nighttime. In this case, the backdrop is Benjy’s in Mile End – a nightclub that held regular ‘gay nights’, as has been described by producer Ron Peck as specifically comparable with The Bell in King’s Cross.⁵⁴ Jarman was a regular visitor to Benjy’s and in 1984, prior to his work for Pet Shop Boys, had used the nightclub as a setting for 78 minutes of footage intended as a research experiment for dance scenes to be included in Ron Peck’s feature film *Empire State* (1987). Jarman’s research existed only in the archive for exactly three decades before it was rediscovered by Peck and released, unedited, as *Will You Dance With Me?* (2014) two decades after Jarman’s death. Preceding his ‘Heart’ projection by three years, and offering a distinctly different record of the nightclub’s queer communality, this footage shows Jarman experimenting with a newly-acquired Olympus VHS camera – a revolution in economising his work in film, allowing for him to film in VHS without the arduous post-production transfer of Super 8 film, whilst still carrying the camera in his hands (cabled to a deck, which would be worn on the back).⁵⁵

Will You Dance With Me? opens with an extended, hand-held tracking shot of the darkened club interior – we hear the background noise of music tracks and idle chatter, whilst transfixed by orbs of light generated by camera’s shuddering capture of the club’s octagonal neon wall-decor [fig.78]. The club appears sparsely filled as the camera turns to a DJ booth, and onto the cherubic blonde curtained-hair of a young man. Amid the darkness of the club, the camera picks up on these moments of high-contrast: the man’s blonde hair, the spotlit back of a club patron ascending the stage, twirling figures in the dappled disco lights, the white Umbro logo of a man’s track-jacket, glimmering bottles above the bar. Jarman moves across a crowd of New Romantics, that defining fashion trend and street style of the 1980s popularised by music acts such as Spandau Ballet and Duran Duran, via queer nightclubs such as Blitz Club and Taboo in Leicester Square as hosted by performance artist Leigh Bowery. Next we are by the bar, between bodies and grinning faces, punters banter and pulled pints. Silhouetted male heads and angular leaning limbs give way to

⁵³ Alexandra Juhasz and Theodore Kerr, “How to Have an AIDS Memorial in an Epidemic”, in *We Are Having This Conversation Now: the times of AIDS cultural production*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2021), 92.

⁵⁴ Ron Peck, “Jarman’s gay club film Q&A”, Youtube, posted 27 March 2014, following a presentation of *Will You Dance With Me?* (1984) at the BFI Flare Festival in 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1YjIFv7-Fs>; Ben Campkin also makes reference to Benjy’s in his book *Queer Premises* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), 156-157.

⁵⁵ Peck, “Jarman’s gay club film Q&A”.

impatient bartenders and imagined talk of daily life and lovers. The film's diverse subjects were assembled from over 100 of Jarman's friends, loose acquaintances, and wider community – appearing across all ages, races, gender expressions, sexualities, and aesthetic 'tribes' as the camera (and his body) increasingly whirligigs across the dance floor [fig.79].

At almost halfway through the film, the lighting seems to improve. The filmmaker Bruce LaBruce describes how "Jarman seems to turn on a strong light above the dance floor, like the eye of God, and the shadowy figures become more illuminated."⁵⁶ This not only shifts our perspective on the clubgoers, but tenderly (and incidentally) speaks to the newness, naïveté, and raw excitement with which Jarman was experimenting with this technology. It is as if the atmospheric dark of the film's anticipatory, opening scenes, was just an accident of not having gauged the optimal lighting set-up. Perhaps the lighting transition occurred as Jarman himself entered the heady mix of the central dancefloor, moving away from the room's peripheries and under the spotlights. Either way, it seems to embody the spritely and spirited ephemeral traces of the very scene Jarman seeks to capture and of his body within it: not captured but behind the camera, at once absent from view and present in the long cast of his angular shadow. In the last twenty minutes of the film, Jarman and his directorial spirit (as well as his own subjectivity) seems to break through the camera's eye as he zones in on the robust and buzzcut body of Philip Williamson in a red varsity jacket, white t-shirt, and blue jeans – dancing at first to The Pointer Sisters "Jump (For My Love)" and then to the hypnotic "Relax" by Frankie Goes to Hollywood [fig.80]. Filmmaker Bruce LaBruce describes how hearing these "monster tracks of the year", as they play over the joyful movements of these mostly young men, "you almost want to cry, reminded as you are that the ravages of AIDS will soon decimate the gay community, and sweep Jarman away with it."⁵⁷ Williamson would appear in Jarman's feature film *The Angelic Conversation* the following year (1985), [fig.81]. In my last chapter I cited this film in the context of Jarman's black paintings and their shared reference to the occult practice of divination, with reference to Sir John Dee's obsidian scrying mirror. In *Will You Dance With Me?* there seems, at times, to be a similar process of spectral encounter at play: bodies captured appearing as if spirits fleeting, ghostly and luminous as the camera struggles to absorb the light that scatters over their limbs. A man in a white shirt appears to materialise from the dark and then vanish, angelic. This assessment of the nightclub, and the spectral promise of queer communality, recalls the *Cruising Utopia* of Muñoz, who recognised "the transformative powers of

⁵⁶ Bruce LaBruce, "Bruce LaBruce on Derek Jarman and *Will You Dance With Me?*", *TalkHouse*, 9 August 2016, <https://www.talkhouse.com/bruce-labruce-derek-jarman-dance>.

⁵⁷ LaBruce, "Bruce LaBruce on Derek Jarman".

nightlife”, whereby “sometimes the utopian spectator needs to squint to see the anticipatory illumination promised by utopia, yet at other times its visibility and non(presence) cannot be denied.”⁵⁸

By contrast, when Jarman returned to Benjy’s to shoot his ‘Heart’ projection the result was a much more tightly produced work (which we of course come to view in its fully-edited and final form, unlike *Will You Dance With Me?*). The film opens with the same focus on the orb-like forms of the disco lights, yet here the frame is much tighter and centred on the bulb [fig.82] – turning the pulsating rhythm of the light into an abstracted and interpretive reflection of the heartbeat that dominates the song’s lyrics. Tenant’s voice reverberates from this palpitating form: “Beats. Heartbeats.”⁵⁹ The form and framing of this opening shot – gold glimmering against a background of black darkness – bears comparison with the black paintings Jarman was making during this period. *Dragonfly* (1986), [fig.83], presents a large bulb shattered in a circular formation – producing rings of glass shards, bevelled like the surface of a disco ball. These parts are arranged around a loose orb-shape of gold leaf. Each component, set into the black oil ground, seems to catch the light and glimmer. Amidst the metallic surfaces, it seems to take a moment before we realise the central composition is off-set with two gold bullets. Like the monochrome ripples of water in *The Angelic Conversation* [fig.30], the shattering in *Dragonfly* creates a sense of motion and undulation – like the pulsating light of ‘Heart’.

In *This Instant* (1987), [fig.84], produced in the same year as ‘Heart’ (the music track) was released, another bulb – set into a wash of black oil paint, rendered with a loose murkiness upon the painting’s ground of gold leaf – appears blown out, smashed, and scattering gold light in splinters across the painting’s surface. In the top right corner Jarman includes a bullet in motion and, in the bottom right corner, again a slick stain of blood-red paint. Like LaBruce observed above, we may perceive how the spectres of death, age, illness, and mortality retrospectively permeate Jarman’s phantasmic vision of this nightlife space and its effervescent, ephemeral landscape of mostly unidentifiable bodies. And yet, the opening shot of ‘Heart’ gives way to an ecstatic and spirited swirl of dancing bodies with smiling figures [fig.85]. Both they and the camera remain in motion for the video’s 3 minute 42 second entirety. A boy with bleached hair seems somewhat familiar – was he the original dancing partner of Philip Williamson in the footage shot at Benjy’s in 1984? A

⁵⁸ Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 108-109.

⁵⁹ Pet Shop Boys, ‘Heart’, 1987.

woman with long, auburn curls gyrates with arms warmly outstretched towards the camera's lens. Two older clubgoers with white hair appears not as some symbolic memento mori – some spectre of the gay community's notable fear of ageing bodies and waning beauty – but grinning as they are carried along with the beat of the track and the bevy of other dancing bodies. Jarman, himself, even takes a turn before the camera's spinning eye, comically raising his eyebrows with a sly grin as he takes a sweeping side-step [fig.85].

To my knowledge it has not previously been recognised that *Will You Dance With Me?* and 'Heart' might be read as two conjoined records of a specific, ephemeral experience – one being produced pre-diagnosis, although the spectre of AIDS was beginning to come into view, and the other post-diagnosis. I have previously reflected on my own hesitation when it comes to reading these artistic records of queer life during the AIDS crisis as foreshadowing, or exclusively interpreting the long shadow of illness, prejudice, and death as felt by the queer subject or PWA. It feels reductive, even traitorous, to gaze upon these two sets of Jarman's footage from Benjy's – in so many ways, a record of queer joy and communality – and perceive (or project) an inflection of grief, mortality, or decline. Yet, Jarman had of course been diagnosed at this point, was living with HIV, and experiencing the prejudice it inspired. Although his work had (re)acted defensively against societal homophobia long before his diagnosis, the prospect of bodily defeat must surely alter a reading of his subsequent work as a record of solely queer defiance. It is precisely this ambiguity that the framework of the counter-memorial – as a "counter-index" for historic tragedy, loss, and grief – allows us to navigate.⁶⁰

Throughout my thesis, I have sought to consider how bringing Jarman's wider practice into dialogue with his painting – much of which was previously inaccessible – might indeed allow his painting to act as a "counter-index" for the contemporary art historian approaching his multimedia work. His affective ambiguity can be traced in *Night Life*, a black painting also produced in 1987 [fig.86] – the year of 'Heart' but also the year that Jarman moved to Prospect Cottage following his diagnosis in 1986. Again, the same play of black and gold occurs, glinting in gold leaf on a mirror surface set into thick undulating black oil paint upon which is embellished with a nail piercing hag stones (a reference to Dungeness) and a gold ring. In a section of *Dancing Ledge*, his first foray into auto-biographical text published in 1984 – also titled 'NIGHT LIFE' – Jarman determines that "the

⁶⁰ Young, "The Counter-Monument", 277.

apocalypse is fulfilled [...] we live daily with this reality and all our actions are shadowed by it.”⁶¹ The section is entirely centred on a performance by Michael Clark, the choreographer and iconoclast of dance, who Jarman knew and had filmed (on Super 8) as he danced during the opening of Jarman’s first major solo exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in 1982.⁶² In *Dancing Ledge’s* ‘NIGHT LIFE’, Jarman reflects that “the dance is so old and alive, and the dance he danced was new, but was dead; as dead as the fragmented universe we live in [...] Now surely the time has come to banish the abstract space, fill it with our daily life transfigured. Michael dances at the edge of time [...] dance against the void.”⁶³ Jarman’s work at Benjy’s, his dual capture of that daily (night) life “transfigured”, echoes the counter-memorial and its vernacular memory work – its alternative “spatial forms for the routines of everyday life” as described by Stangl.⁶⁴ Recalling my earlier invocation of the ‘queer archive’ as a vehicle to understand the slippery ephemerality and affective resonances captured, transcribed, and reworked by artists processing their experience of HIV-AIDS, how might we use the counter-memorial as a means by which to contend with the complex and contested ‘reality’ of urban life following not only the outbreak of the epidemic but their own specific diagnoses?

Benjy’s has since become a contested site on its own terms, away from an afterlife directly connected to the AIDS crisis but rather (and arguably, inextricably) as an attempted victim of redevelopment. In 2017, Tower Hamlets rejected proposals dating from 2007 to ‘develop’ the site of Benjy’s (long since closed) into a fifteen-storey apartment building – to be named ‘Benjy’s Tower’ [fig.87].⁶⁵ To consider how the sprawling one-floor nightclub interior of *Will You Dance With Me?* might be transmogrified into a fifteen-story apartment development – its hypnotic lights, its transient bodies and smiling faces, its idle chatter and sweat-soaked walls, each square of the dance floor “sticky, or saturated with affect” – is to reckon with the complicated reorienting effects of not only physical gentrification, but of a psychic gentrification and its associated loss of ephemeral networks, (in this case queer) lived experience, and legacies.⁶⁶ I invoke gentrification as a metaphor, and as a strategy, by which to interrogate what becomes of urban sites of queer significance and the “network of relations” they represent, “with scenes that overlap and cross-

⁶¹ Jarman, *Dancing Ledge*, 224.

⁶² Mackay, *Derek Jarman Super 8*, 224.

⁶³ Mackay, *Derek Jarman Super 8*, 224.

⁶⁴ Stangl, “The vernacular and the monumental”, 245.

⁶⁵ Mike Brooke, “Benjy’s nightclub reprieved as Tower Hamlets Council rejects high-rise block for Mile End”, *East London Advertiser*, 16 February 2017, <https://www.eastlondonadvertiser.co.uk/news/20963237.benjys-nightclub-reprieved-tower-hamlets-council-rejects-high-rise-block-mile-end>.

⁶⁶ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 11.

reference different times and places, rather than evolving in a linear fashion.”⁶⁷ By framing the ephemerality of queer lives and spaces in these terms, I seek to affirm the queer archive as a means of conservation for the LGBTQ+ community's “collective memory”: cross-temporal, cumulative, and ever-evolving, yet at equal risk of ‘redevelopment’ by corporate (and institutional) entities.⁶⁸ This returns us to King’s Cross, where this chapter began, and to the regeneration strategies by which the loss (that is, the decisive closure) of multiples queer spaces, and their associated communities, gives way to the ‘Queer Britain’ museum and its compartmentalisation of LGBT history into a neat quadrant of clean, glistening gallery spaces far removed from the lived realities of dimly-lit nightclubs, dilapidated cruising areas, or disease.

In Campkin’s analysis of King’s Cross, he describes the hoardings of a similar development project approved in the area – imploring passers-by to ‘take another look’ at the changing landscape of King’s Cross illustrated by “cartoon images of idyllic parks, happy families, office workers, heritage buildings and CCTV cameras.”⁶⁹ Campkin rightfully asserts that these hoardings cover the empty lots and building sites previously occupied by communities erased from these marketing materials, and cites the sex workers, homeless, and drug users historically (and culturally) associated with the area.⁷⁰ In considering how gentrification might serve as a framework for understanding the legacy of AIDS in the UK – as well as the relationship between the PWA, urban spaces, and queer precarity – it is critical to recognise the intersection of these communities with queer-identifying individuals and their erasure from public (and cultural) space. This erasure surely returns us to the “failure in cultural memory” by which Hal Foster traces an artistic “archival impulse” – an important underpinning of my own interest in reading Jarman’s work against the framework of the ‘queer archive’ and, in turn, the ‘counter-memorial’.⁷¹ For it is precisely this intersection of social groups that Margaret Thatcher’s social policies sought to exclude from public life – an intersection seemingly acknowledged by Jarman’s aforementioned painting *The Last of England* (1986) [fig.75], and its positioning of ‘VICTORIAN VALUES’ as sounding a death knell between ‘Night’, ‘Life’, marked out by the skull fragments and shattered fragments surrounding it. That the painting refers to ‘The Dead Sea’ of this intersection, speaks to the present-day ocean of loss that exists between these generations, their experience, and ephemeral networks – taken

⁶⁷ Campkin, *Queer Premises*, 12.

⁶⁸ Halberstam, “Queer Temporality”, 169.

⁶⁹ Campkin, *Remaking London*, 120-121.

⁷⁰ Campkin, *Remaking London*, 121.

⁷¹ Hal Foster, “An Archival Impulse”, 22.

asunder by the recurrent ‘failures’ of a legacy culture that privatises memory and *gentrifies the mind*.⁷²

iv. ‘From Here to Eternity’: urban precarity and intimacy in the work of Sunil Gupta

When interrogating the role of the counter-memorial in urban space, it is important to direct attention to the critical relation between not only the public and private space but the public and private self. In order to begin untangling the queer and memorial significance of urban regeneration (or development) plans for the site of Benjy’s, I first presented Jarman’s *Will You Dance With Me?* and ‘Heart’ as crucial case studies in understanding the affective and ephemeral stakes at play. That such records of this nightlife space exist – shadowy, social, subcultural, and (sometimes) queer – is a rare and valuable thing. This same scarcity underpins the cultural value of Jarman’s ‘King’s Cross’ as a vehicle to understand not only the area’s historical resonance with queer life and AIDS legacy, but with a cultural moment all but eclipsed by London’s rapid and widespread redevelopment. In both cases, Jarman’s camera – and its point-of-view lens – allows us a private view onto these public spaces. We are anchored into a present moment, and an encounter between Jarman’s lens and the bodies that in each case whirl all around. As I explored above, Jarman’s presence / absence in each of these films allows us to reflect upon the ways in which we do and don’t remember – as well as all those people and places we do and don’t forget.

This interplay and tension between private and public is a critical underpinning for Sunil Gupta’s 1999 photography series ‘From Here to Eternity’, which takes its title from the 1953 feature film – a romantic drama set during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and directed by Fred Zinnemann – based on the 1951 novel by James Jones. Gupta has described both the book and its film adaptation as “post-apocalyptic”.⁷³ “It was kind of about that Cold War pessimism... *we are on the verge of*

⁷² This italicisation is a reference to Sarah Schulman’s aforementioned *The Gentrification of the Mind*, which I expand upon in the conclusion of this chapter. Whilst Schulman is addressing a specific urban context in her work, that of the East Village in New York, I believe her invocation of metaphorical (and cultural) gentrification is relevant to my analysis of these works: not only as queer testimony of urban life and the precarity of space and community, but as markers of the rapid, constant, and complex regeneration of HIV-AIDS and its cultural legacies in London. Schulman’s notion of psychic gentrification is a framework for acknowledging the personal efforts of these queer artists, and their desire to record and be recorded (that is, to make visible and so be visible) across space / identity / time. As I emphasise in this chapter, such an analysis connects urban spaces to queer communities past and present, cultural memory, and the (queer) archive. For more empirical analysis of urban redevelopment in London, I have been influenced not only by the work of Ben Campkin, as referenced, and the UCL Urban Laboratory (including Lo Marshall), but by the scholarship of Johan Andersson in connecting urban spaces to queer memory and memorial cultures. See: Johan Andersson, “Homonormative aesthetics: AIDS and ‘de-generational unremembering’ in 1990s London,” *Urban Studies* 56, no. 14 (2019): 2993–3010, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018806149>.

⁷³ Caroline Molloy, “Sunil Gupta: From Here to Eternity / an interview by Caroline Molloy”, *Photomonitor*, December 2020, accessed 3 June 2023, <https://photomonitor.co.uk/interview/sunil-gupta-tpg-interview>.

being blown up.”⁷⁴ Gupta explains that in 1999, when creating the series four years after his own diagnosis, he found himself sharing this pessimistic, existentially fearful outlook: “my underlying conclusion from the diagnosis, which in the early years I thought was *death is around the corner* kind of thing, *time is running out*.”⁷⁵ Gupta would survive the epidemic era of the AIDS crisis and remains alive with HIV today. He would go on to use the same title for his 2020 retrospective at The Photographer’s Gallery in London, as well as for its accompanying catalogue publication, which was curated by Mark Sealy of Autograph-ABP and ran from 9 Oct 2020 until 24 Jan 2021 before touring to The Image Centre Gallery in Toronto. Gupta’s 1999 series – also commissioned by Autograph-ABP – presents as six diptychs, each contrasting an intimate photograph of the artist inside a domestic or private (sometimes, hospital) with exterior photographs of the (mostly former) sites of London gay nightlife and sex clubs. The series was first shown at Standpoint Gallery in London, and Gupta has described it as “a kind of phototherapy”, created “partly in response to a period of illness brought on by the HIV. I thought that it might be time to think about how the virus affects my life.”⁷⁶ Gupta’s engagement with the urban context conjures themes of social isolation, (in)visibility, and exclusion or displacement, which reverberate through contemporary discussions of HIV-AIDS remembrance and the remedial potential of the queer archive.

In the first of this series, *Chicago/Hoist* (1999), [fig.88], Gupta – like Jarman – grounds the viewer in the subjective and personal eye of his camera. Standing in a mirror, the viewer is put in the place of Gupta’s viewfinder which reflects back a naked self-portrait. In 1999, the artist was 46 years old and already HIV-positive. The image mirrored back is that of a stern face set beneath greying hair and the black square of the camera’s body. Beneath this, the viewer’s eye gravitates towards a soft body that is at once ageing and youthful. Sunlight catches the grey highlights of the artist’s pubic hair, haloing the softness and vulnerability of a flaccid penis. The background of the photograph reveals the ephemeral mundanity of a hotel room, which we’re told by the work’s title is in the city of Chicago. Flocked wallpaper catches the sun in shades of beige and gold, whilst a wooden headboard folds into floral bedding besides a blue armchair and hotel lamp, with nightshade askew. Gupta’s diagnosis appears invisible, if not for the visible shape of a bedsheet folded into a neat rectangle in the centre of the bed; we might read this as a padded cot for the sweating, resting body of the PWA. On the right side of the diptych, the artist pictures the stark exterior of *The Hoist* – a

⁷⁴ Sunil Gupta and Mark Sealy, “From Here to Eternity – The Making: Mark Sealy and Sunil Gupta in conversation”, Nero Editions, 7 January 2022, <https://www.neroeditions.com/from-here-to-eternity-the-making>.

⁷⁵ Gupta and Sealy, “From Here to Eternity – The Making”.

⁷⁶ Molloy, “Sunil Gupta: From Here to Eternity”; Sunil Gupta, *From Here to Eternity*, project caption on the artist’s website, accessed 8 June 2023, <https://www.sunilgupta.net/from-here-to-eternity1.html>.

gay leather and fetish club in Vauxhall, London, which closed in December 2016.⁷⁷ Compared with the relatively ‘vanilla’ interior of the hotel room’s neutral wallpaper and chintzy soft furnishings, this image of The Hoist is stark and graphically rendered – a monochrome sign in all capitals, hung flat above the sharp forms of metal shutters, gates and grills, centred within a wall of cool brick beneath a former railway arch. In some sort of dialogue with the inviting and implicating gaze of Gupta’s self-portrait, the exterior of The Hoist is embellished with a sign in alert yellow reading ‘CCTV in operation’ – you are being watched, just as Gupta is watching you watch him in the mirror. Yet, where Gupta’s gaze invites you into this personal moment, imploring you to be beside him, our awareness of CCTV is one associated with a sense of otherness – you are being watched, and so should behave. At the corners of the image, we observe two CCTV cameras both centred on the club’s entrance. Above the club’s door is a security alarm. In the tension generated by these images and their interplay of the soft, private body with the harsh effects of urban precarity – whether it be their architectural form, security defences, or subsequent redevelopment – we begin to intuit and interpret the resistance encountered by the PWA. Testifying to his own encounters with surveillance, exclusion, and erasure, Gupta’s photographs position the unrelenting project of urban ‘regeneration’ at odds with a body that exists on a spectrum of compromise, deterioration, adjustment, and survival.

The cot-like form of the bedding in Gupta’s hotel room interior is echoed by an arrangement in his work *Shroud/Pleasuredrome* (1999), [fig.89], from the same series. The artist is pictured on the left-side image of the diptych beneath a similarly-folded bedsheet, this time seemingly in a bedroom at home (the viewer’s eye is drawn to a family picture in a silver frame on the bedside table.) On the right side of the diptych is the photographed exterior of Pleasuredrome, a gay sauna in Waterloo. Although still open, since Gupta’s photograph in 1999 this sauna has experienced repeated closures as a result of on-site fatalities inevitably seized upon by sensational media outlets.⁷⁸ This has led to subsequent internal developments comprised of efforts at rebranding the venue in such a way as to seemingly dispel any perceived seediness. Its current website is headlined by this regeneration: “Welcome to the new Pleasuredrome spa bar in London. Enjoy the new experience” [fig.90]. The shroud of the image’s title forms a stark white rectangle above a blanket of turquoise blue, echoing the blue brick of the venue’s exterior, from which the artist’s head and feet emerge. Beneath the

⁷⁷ Paul Waugh, “Legendary leather fetish club The Hoist is closing down after 21 years”, *Metro*, 2 November 2016, <https://metro.co.uk/2016/11/28/legendary-leather-fetish-club-the-hoist-is-closing-down-after-21-years-6288614>.

⁷⁸ Ben Morgan, “Man dies hours after collapsing at gay sauna Pleasuredrome in Waterloo”, *Evening Standard*, 9 March 2015, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/man-dies-hours-after-collapsing-at-gay-sauna-pleasuredrome-in-waterloo-10094827.html>.

sheet, our eye can make out the shape and neutral form of the artist's thighs and darkened pubis. Read against *Chicago/Hoist*, there is a nudity of form at play and yet it is literally shrouded – still, and hidden from view, as if witness on a mortuary slab. Gupta stares up at the bedroom ceiling, seemingly blank. There is an intense vulnerability to this image, and to the repeated mundanity of its setting – the blanket and dated headboard, mismatched against the linoleum wood-effect floor, the family photo, the grid-patterned bedsheet coming undone in the lower left of the image, the thin lamp on the bedside table that one can imagine buying from a mainstream retailer like Ikea or John Lewis. The bed of the PWA, and its shroud-like form, is a motif that occurs similarly across Jarman's artistic output post-diagnosis. It appears in the film *The Garden* (1990), where Jarman's body writhes with the night sweats and nightmarish anguish of the PWA on a sickbed cast out to sea [fig.91]

It is also invoked in black paintings such as *Night* (1986), [fig.92], where Jarman invokes the domestic interior with a hair comb sunken into the black oil of the painting's canvas alongside a piece of shattered glass into which he scrawls:

The Night
in the dead of
a perfect moment
DEAD SOULS WHISPER
Deep thoughts Dark memories

In this work, 'The Night' becomes a no man's land – akin to the 'Dead Sea' invoked in his painting *The Last of England* (1986), [fig.75] – in which the chorus of the PWA's mortality, that 'DEAD SOULS WHISPER' (as was the title of Jarman's retrospective at Le Crédac, as featured in Chapter I), comes to ruminate within the artist's mind and body. In this way, 'The Night' is recognised as a liminal space in much the same way as the after-hours venues photographed by Gupta on the right side of his diptychs in 'From Here to Eternity'. These are spaces – like the night itself, and like the bedroom – that, in the context of queer life and specifically the AIDS epidemic, accommodate a spectrum of desire, leisure, rest, pleasure, illness, and with it mortality. Notably, the motif of the bed also features in a series of paintings included by Jarman in his installation at Third Eye Glasgow in 1989, as part of the Open Eye Festival. In this instance, Jarman used the installation to again rally against the destructive impact of Section 28, setting a gay couple in bed within a caged structure. Nailed to the walls were a series of paintings constructed from beds set within black oil paint, taking the familiar form of his black paintings but on a larger scale. Both this bed scene from *The*

Garden, and bed paintings from the Third Eye Glasgow installation, featured prominently in the exhibition ‘Derek Jarman: Brutal Beauty’, curated by Isaac Julien in 2008 at the Serpentine Gallery in London.⁷⁹ In *Bed (IV)*, 1988-1989, we observe a set of white bedsheets and single striped pillow enmeshed as if being swallowed into the black oil paint of the painting’s ground [fig.93]. The bedding is darkly stained, somewhere between sweat-through and soiled. In the centre of the work is an open book – conjuring the body of the sleeper freshly absented from this obliterated cot. The walls of Jarman’s installation hung with tabloid newspapers and their vitriolic indictment of homosexual men. By positioning the two men in bed at the centre of the installation, at once encaged and exposed, Jarman seemed to reflect upon the dissolved boundaries between the private and public realms. By way of Section 28 and Thatcher’s ‘Victorian Values’, political rhetoric had literally invaded the bedroom – making homosexual men (and the PWA) a social prisoner of their private lives, personal desires, and chosen partners.

Again, this tension of the private and public permeates Gupta’s series – as does the notion of a social entrapment by which censorious political values effect the erasure of queer subjects and spaces. *Blood/Fort* [fig.94] recalls the ambiguous dynamics of defeat, defence, and defiance that underpin Jarman’s Third Eye installation: the cage structure echoed in the symbol of the fort. In this case, the reference is to the exterior of The Fort – a leather and fetish bar in Southwark, described by one patron (with, I imagine, somewhat gleeful camp) as a “horrific hell hole of biblical proportions.”⁸⁰ Closed down in 2011, the venue has since been “regenerated” into a completely unrecognisable apartment development retailed by Savills estate agency with prices starting from £595,000 [fig.95]. The image of The Fort’s exterior is presented alongside a portrait of Gupta, on the left side, having blood drawn by a male nurse in a hospital interior. Gupta gazes beyond the camera, an ambiguous half-smile on his face. The white ribbon of his tourniquet forms a line down the middle of the image, mirrored in the central silver line of a lamppost in his photograph of the bar’s exterior. As well as the tension of private/public across these diptychs, there is an interplay of inside/outside, soft/hard, openness/closure, personal care/corporate greed, community/capital, control/abandon. In this image, there is an intimacy to witnessing Gupta in this moment – medical care being an encounter enshrined in the privacy and protection of doctor-patient confidentiality and the Hippocratic oath. But in this intimacy there is also a pain/pleasure (or at least, care) dynamic – a

⁷⁹ These works are highlighted by James Wilkes in his review of the exhibition: “Derek Jarman: Brutal Beauty”, *Studio International*, 21 April 2008, <https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/derek-jarman-brutal-beauty>.

⁸⁰ *Southwark Notes* on Twitter, 14 July 2020, accessed 23 June 2023, <https://twitter.com/SouthwarkNotes/status/1283009017779032065>.

control and release – invoked by the withdrawing of blood and seemingly in dialogue with the fetish economies of The Fort (an image of defence that similarly resonates with the notion of medical care, preventative action, and the fighting of disease.) The yellow of the waste disposal bucket in the upper right, is even echoed in the yellow parking lines outside the bar’s entrance. Gupta’s arm is harnessed across his bicep, tended to by the same-sex nurse who mirrors his upright posture. Gupta wears blue jeans and shirt unbuttoned to reveal a white undershirt. He and the nurse wear matching watches, wrists upturned so that we see not the clock faces but only the black leather of their watch straps. The nurse of course wears latex gloves. I am reminded of Jarman’s incorporation of his medical care into his camp and often sexually-suggestive ‘Evil Queen’ paintings (as explored in Chapter I): works such as *Arse Injected Death Syndrome* [fig.23], and *Ataxia - AIDS is Fun* [fig.18], all painted in 1993. I am also reminded of a playful portrait of Jarman in his hospital bed at St. Mary’s in Paddington (London) in 1990, waving at the camera with a grin despite the bandage on his right wrist and the wires connecting his body (clothed in his iconic blue jumpsuit) to a medical machine on the right of the image [fig.96]. In Gupta’s diptych *Pentamidine/Attitude* (1999), [fig.97], the artist is photographed undergoing Pentamidine inhalation therapy – a preventative treatment for pneumonia infections of the lungs. Gupta again sits upright, this time in a brown leather armchair, leaning over a white medical machine to which he is connected and bound by his face-mask, its wires, and the machine’s own black cabling. The machine’s lid is opened, revealing the arch-like shape of its white plastic – mirroring the white arch of the now-demolished Attitude bar exterior, as photographed on the right side of the diptych. Attitude was a gay nightlife venue on Sumner Road in Peckham – “And how! Sleazy dark bar with go-gos on weekends. Deliciously unEnglish.”⁸¹

This notion of being “unEnglish” feels like an important reflection of how the sexual freedoms, oft-encouraged nudity, communality, and diversity, of these nightlife spaces seemed to contradict the traditionally-perceived respectability politics of English (British) culture. It was this nostalgic notion of English respectability – of restraint, austerity, “self-reliance [...] cleanliness” – that underpinned the ‘Victorian Values’ espoused by Margaret Thatcher and their condemnation of the “decadent, undisciplined” society seemingly embodied by these nightlife spaces and by the queer bodies that frequented them.⁸² Not to mention that Gupta’s work is informed by his own identity as an Indian-born British and Canadian artist also educated in New York. Gupta describes how “I was a born Indian, became Canadian, moved to London, where I became an ethnic minority, then Asian,

⁸¹ David Andrusia, *Gay Europe* (New York: A Perigee Book, 1995), 56.

⁸² Samuel, “Mrs Thatcher’s Return to Victorian Values”, 14-15.

then Black, and finally South Asian. I think I would like to return to being simply Indian and a gay man.”⁸³ In declaring his displacement by (and defiance of) the social categorisations of British (and institutional) culture, Gupta speaks to a ‘queer survivance’ and relational subversion that permeates his diptychs. Laurel C. Schneider observes such ‘survivance’ as existing in “the making-present lives of sexual outsiders who remember to tell and retell stories of resistance, tricky resurrections, campy refusals, and brave failures.”⁸⁴ This is a spirit that surely underpins both Gupta and Jarman’s artistic projects and wider activism in the context of HIV-AIDS and the PWA, while similarly echoing the “failures in cultural memory” described by Foster.⁸⁵ Such survivance is explicitly tied into a queer precarity underpinned by the forces of social exclusion and capitalism that drive ‘regeneration’ and redevelopment’ at the expense of spaces (both physical and psychic) occupied by queer, and ‘sick’ bodies.

‘Survivance’ is a term coined by Gerald Vizenor to reflect a “conceptual assemblage of survival and resistance”, generated so as to dispel narratives of victimhood or defeat and to accommodate the active and ongoing legacies of those who remain.⁸⁶ “Like affect, it is a force of life in a passing glance, in a story told and retold, in a sense of humour that rejects tragedy or victimry.”⁸⁷ In approaching ‘From Here to Eternity’, I find myself challenged by my own readings of humour, sexuality, and eroticism in Gupta’s compositions of domestic interiors, medical interactions and gentrified urban exteriors in this series. It feels like there is little to laugh at. And yet, as in Jarman’s work, there is a tangible power – and that same rejection of victimhood – that charges the works with an assertive, affective resonance. Critically, Gupta does survive, *has* survived, his diagnosis with HIV. This series – interfacing his experience of illness, medical intervention and treatment, alongside images that focus on the systemic efforts made to erase and eradicate queer spaces – is essential in that it conjures the very ephemeral network of urban bodies, encounters, and redacted spaces, by which he has navigated his own ‘survivance’ amidst the HIV-AIDS epidemic. In this way, his work indeed functions as the “counter-index” by which we may approximate not only a lived experience of HIV-AIDS in both epidemic and endemic times, but also the ongoing mechanism by which queer survivance and erasure occurs.

⁸³ Sunil Gupta, *We Were Here: Sexuality, Photography, and Cultural Difference* (New York: Aperture, 2022), inside cover.

⁸⁴ Laurel C. Schneider, “More Than a Feeling: A Queer Notion of Survivance”, in *Sexual Disorientations: Queer Temporalities, Affects, Theologies* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), 272.

⁸⁵ Foster, “An Archival Impulse”, 21.

⁸⁶ Schneider, “More Than a Feeling”, 264.

⁸⁷ Schneider, “More Than a Feeling”, 270.

In *Christmas/Substation* (1999), [fig.98], Gupta appears in reverse nude – facing away from the camera to reveal visible red scarring on his back. He stands between the camera’s eye and a Christmas tree that leans against a window with the curtain loosely drawn. It is a familiar scene – a sparse tree with simple decorations of silver baubles and pale lilac bows. Fairy lights hang haphazardly in spindly loops. There is a vulnerability to the scene, with Gupta’s body turned faceless and soft – pale buttocks demarcated by a tan-line and so matching the beige interior of this living room interior. His prepossessing gaze and handsome face, notable in other images from this series, are absent. On the right side of the diptych is the exterior of Substation South – a gay bar in Brixton, now closed. The venue’s red brick exterior seems to echo the tanned shades of Gupta’s brown body. Its entrance appears half-open, not fully shuttered or gated as with the other club exteriors included in this series. Green tiling and foliage beyond the entrance of the venue pick up the form of the Christmas tree. Light seems to pour in beyond the venue’s partially-revealed entrance. In *Babe/Fist* (1999), [fig.99], Gupta once again faces the camera, his face partially-obscured by the fur of his dog Babe whose mottled fur seems to match with the artist’s own salt-and-pepper hair. Gupta is topless, revealing a soft and speckled belly above blue jeans. He stands against a terracotta-coloured wall and a framed picture of a phallic architectural form – “a famous 19th Century picture by Bourne and Shepherd of the Qutb Minar in Delhi.”⁸⁸ On the right side of the diptych stands a gated entrance above which is embellished the head of a roaring lion. As signposted, this was the entrance to Imperial Gardens – a (sometimes gay) nightclub and live music venue that has since been closed as part of a controversial redevelopment campaign.⁸⁹ Gupta notes it as “the entrance to quite a heavy-duty sex club.”⁹⁰ Besides the entrance is a large billboard, with the text: “If God exists, why doesn’t He help you?”

In the context of HIV-AIDS, one could read the composition of these images with pathos: a plea for divine intervention; Gupta engaging the viewer in physical vulnerability and tenderness; the sentimentality of an intimate encounter with a favourite pet. He has elsewhere describe his dog Babe as a reason to leave the house during periods of illness and the isolating effects of his HIV status:

You begin to feel like nobody will want to sleep with you anymore, and then the whole trauma of disclosing your HIV status. All these things become factors to keep you indoors,

⁸⁸ “From Here to Eternity – The Making: Mark Sealy and Sunil Gupta in conversation”.

⁸⁹ Hugh Muir, “Outrage at closure of talent factory”, *The Guardian*, 6 April 2004, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2004/apr/06/race.arts>.

⁹⁰ Sunil Gupta, “Sunil Gupta – ‘Being in the Dark Room is Healing’ | TateShots”, posted 4 August 2017, by Tate, YouTube, 6:02, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doVmfYt0994>.

it's not worth it to go out and expose yourself to all this. I began to go out less and less, even socially. And that's when I got the dog.⁹¹

Yet in a video interview for Tate from 2017, Gupta refers directly to the *Fist* image and explains that “this is why I love street photography, I love that you can walk around the street and find these juxtapositions.”⁹² His tone is jovial, clearly still thrilled almost two decades later with the serendipitous urban dialogue of the sex club entrance and the stark, sombre monochrome text of this commercial billboard. Gupta's enjoyment of this work echoes the humour of Jarman's own paintings and their comic engagement with the Christian faith – such as in *British Scum*, 1987, [fig.41] which I referred to in my last chapter, whereby Jarman asks Jesus “who is the angel to throw James Anderton [the openly homophobic Manchester police chief] in the cesspit?” In *Dear God* (1987), [fig.100], on a glass pane pressed into the black oil of the painting's ground, Jarman implores, amongst other prayers:

dear God
if you insist on reincarnation, please
promise me that, I
will be queer ^tho' I've heard
you don't approve
 I'll go down on my
knees,
 yours faithfully
Derek Jarman

Across the six diptychs of 'From Here to Eternity', Gupta not only invites the viewer into the domestic and private interiors of his treatment for HIV but indexes the urban geographies of his queer life and experience of illness – its vulnerabilities, its complicated erotic resonates and sexual histories, and finally its dark humour. In this way he enacts an affective encounter with the viewer, an emotional and ephemeral 'counter-index', generated by his diagnosis. He records himself not as a sequestered or celibate hermit but as an open and active queer subject – artistically, sexually, intellectually, and politically. This clearly echoes Jarman's own response to diagnosis in his work, and it is a response that is mediated by encounters with urban space, contemporary British politics, and by the city's whirr of bodies, buildings, and ephemeral materials (billboards, blue jeans,

⁹¹ Gupta and Sealy, “From Here to Eternity – The Making”.

⁹² Gupta, “Sunil Gupta – ‘Being in the Dark Room is Healing’ | TateShots”, at 5:09-15.

newspapers, and other found objects either collected or photographed.) In the shuttered, abandoned, and dilapidated urban landscape, both artists find a mirror – or void – for the projection of their own experience of exclusion or erasure, a dislocation and isolation, resulting from their HIV-positive status. Yet critically, amidst their reflections on the disorientating effects of urban life, both artists connect the viewer to their domestic space as a vehicle for their inner world, and almost as a way to counteract the city's harshness. Jarman had always been keenly aware of the affective resonance and charge of his domestic space, as far back as opening up his studio at Bankside for not only events and parties but as the subject of his own aforementioned Super 8 film *Studio Bankside* in 1971 (as referenced in my first chapter and earlier in this chapter.) Yet post-diagnosis, the domestic space of the PWA takes on a renewed spectral and temporal significance; perhaps it will be the place where they spend their last moments, where they die.

In my earlier consideration of the legacy of Prospect Cottage I reflected on its perception as a 'terminal' by which Jarman reoriented his life post-diagnosis. What is lost in such a perception is the fact that so much of Jarman's life – by which I of course include his artistic and activist practices – was so informed and inflected with his encounters in the urban space. It permeates his politics and the sense of self that guided his contribution to contemporary (pop culture), and it exists in the bodies and buildings by which he traces his sexuality both before and after diagnosis. We may perceive it in the campy statements of his 'Queer' and 'Evil Queen' paintings – a barbed humour honed in bars, practiced in parties, and later on busy hospital wards. All of these spaces are conjured through the painting's exuberant and frenetic surfaces, sticky with the affect of his painted punchlines. It exists in his black paintings, absorbing the bric-a-brac of his daily life (spent *between* London and Dungeness, until the very end) alongside inscriptions relating to the political frustrations, social associations, and ephemeral coding of his daily life. Even after his move to Prospect Cottage, Jarman continued to relate to his urban life in London – inviting and including friends in the works he made there, across not only his films and painting but his extensive writing practice. By including his work with Pet Shop Boys in a consideration of his 'late period' – that is, post-diagnosis – we come closer to recalibrating an understanding of how illness informed his practice. Not only does his subsequent work relate to and record his encounters with the urban landscape, it constitutes an active, affective, and important "counter-index" of the lived experience of the PWA: present / absent; remembering / forgetting; of-the-moment / out-of-time. In such a way, we might correctly remember him as unrepentant and urgently engaged with the temporality of his

life in the city, both dislocated and existing in duality with the isolated, melancholy poet we commonly come across in institutional representations of the late Jarman.

v. *Last Address* and the lingering absence of gentrified legacies

Ira Sachs' *Last Address* (2010) is a nine-minute "elegiac film" reflecting on the lives and lived experience of twenty-eight artists who died of AIDS-related illness in New York City, consisting of static film shots documenting the urban façades of "houses, apartment buildings, and lofts where these and others were living at the time of their deaths to mark the disappearance of a generation."⁹³ The film is highly-formalised and typological with minimal titling or artistic intervention, instead utilising closely-framed shots of these residential exteriors as they exist now and including the ambient sounds recorded [fig.101]. Each shot runs one after the other, with a subtitle declaring the name of the artist who lived there and the address (but with no birth or death dates.) These artists include writer and actress Cookie Mueller, the graffiti artist and painter Keith Haring, photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, musician and performance artist Klaus Nomi, and the multimedia artist David Wojnarowicz – whose work I brought into dialogue with Jarman's in my previous chapter. Cars and trucks hurtle past, traffic swells, ambulance sirens ring out, pedestrians pass by, construction works take place, lights flicker, businesses operate from ground-floor lots, after-hours cleaners abandon their equipment in empty hallways, new tenants enter and exit, the sun is caught in the reflection of closed windows; the city runs and runs as it did, and will. In many ways, the film seems to reflect on how the world of course continues to turn in the absence of those being remembered. And yet this only amplifies the "elegiac", affective impact of the film. For in conjuring the city's very aliveness – its continued presence – the viewer is so guided to reflect on the absence of these former residents.

These residents were significant artists, almost all actively remembered, reprinted, and re-presented in museum collections and exhibitions today. That Sachs' film exists in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum (both based in New York) seems to affirm the very dynamic of presence/absence that it reflects upon.⁹⁴ For inherent in this film is the same turbulent force of urban redevelopment that underpins Gupta's exterior photographs in 'From Here

⁹³ Ira Sachs, *Last Address* project website, accessed 9 June 2023, <http://lastaddress.org>.

⁹⁴ The Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY), <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/181723>; The Whitney Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY), <https://whitney.org/collection/works/38707>.

to Eternity'. This not only impacts physical spaces, but the physical bodies of their patrons and the psychic landscape of their lived experience: the dimly-lit activities of after-hours, and its metaphor for the shadowy, spectral realm inhabited by commonly suppressed (or erased) queer lives. Critically, my discussion of this affective, psychic gentrification draws upon the work of Sarah Schulman and her book *The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination* (2013). Schulman proposes that the trauma of the AIDS epidemic – “a trauma that has yet to be defined or understood, for which no one has been made accountable” – has resulted in “a gentrification of the mind for gay people”, extending to the normalisation and desirability of patriarchal models such as (gay) marriage, the upholding of traditionally racist and sexist power structures and erasures, and an internalisation of the narrative that “no survivors or witnesses are walking around today with anything to resolve.”⁹⁵ Moreover, that “the loss of those individuals has had no impact on our society, and that the abandonment and subsequent alienation of a people and culture does not matter.”⁹⁶ Needless to say, in the context of this thesis on the artistic legacies of the AIDS crisis, that Schulman asserts “this could not be further from the truth.”⁹⁷

In *Last Address*, Sachs could be seen to affirm such a narrative – focussing only on those artists who died between 1983 and 2007 as a result of their seropositivity. He notes, in a closing title of the film, that “only four of them lived past 50.” Yet, in recording the lives of these artists and their lived domain as it exists now, Sachs invokes the hauntological – the lingering presence / absence, and the very afterlives of those he seeks to commemorate. In her case study of a now-gentrified neighbourhood in contemporary Beijing, presented in comparison with the East Village of New York that is her primary focus (and which is also documented in *Last Address*), Schulman cites a resident who described how this neighbourhood “is not easy to explain. It’s something flowing inside me.”⁹⁸ Schulman expands on this, reflecting that “there is a loss of self in relation to others when that *something flowing* is destroyed.”⁹⁹ In Gupta’s and Jarman’s documentation of urban life in London, captured through the artistic eyes of the PWA, they seem to echo the ephemerality of this ‘something flowing’; their records are ambulatory, underpinned by spontaneity, saturated with affective encounters and resonances, filled with an openness to the chance rhythms of the city.

⁹⁵ Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, 155.

⁹⁶ Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, 155.

⁹⁷ Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, 155.

⁹⁸ Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, 178.

⁹⁹ Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, 178.

We can perceive this in Jarman's roaming footage as it trawls the busy streets behind King's Cross, encountering ephemeral materials and passers-by to be spliced together with found footage in an alchemical assemblage of film grain and light leaks. It also permeates the "time capsule curio" of his work at Benjy's (as described by Glenn Kenny), a stream of ecstatic encounters as he spins through fellow patrons under flickering lights.¹⁰⁰ *Something flows* through Gupta's own series – the intimacy of strangers and loved ones alike, in public and in private, offset by accidental juxtapositions discovered on the street in a stroke of luck that still brings the artist joy decades later. Yet both artists clearly illustrate the loss of self that occurs when this flow is disrupted: how the darkened pleasure of the nightclub or gay bar might be replaced by the psychological darkness of illness, moralising shame, anxiety, and social ostracisation as reflected so powerfully in Jarman's paintings. We bear witness to how the shutters come down, how the doors close and lock, how rapidly both space and soul – that is, almost entire communities – can be disappeared amidst endless redevelopment. We are confronted by how this gentrification, both physical and psychic, effects an erasure and echoing absence: "voids and ruins, intentional forgetting and painful remembering", as previously described by Till.¹⁰¹

In Sachs' record of these urban exteriors, over two decades on from Jarman's own diagnosis, the use of film – the very motion of these spaces – feels critical in its counter-memorialising of the building's original inhabitants. Like Jarman's own filmic records, and like the dialectical relations of Gupta's affective compositions, it seeks to provide a counter-index by which Sachs not only records a data set of physical addresses or notable deaths, but instead echoes the spectrality of these artistic legacies and afterlives. In this way, it channels the tensions of remembering and reconjuring amidst institutional attempts to re-present (and in turn, reconfigure) 'reality' – an essential operation of both redevelopment (or 'regeneration') and the contemporary art market or museum.¹⁰² How might we then apply all this to generating new art historical approaches to Jarman's practice, and to wider considerations of AIDS memorial cultures as they engage the artistic efforts of the PWA? I have sought to illustrate how our renewed access to Jarman's painting provides a vital tool with which to read his multidisciplinary work across film, writing, music, and activism, not only in dialogue with one another, but against the socio-political context that so critically informed his practice. I believe that reflecting on Jarman's encounters with the urban landscape offers the

¹⁰⁰ Glenn Kenny, "Review: Dim All the Lights, Again: 'Will You Dance With Me?'" , *New York Times*, 4 August 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/05/movies/will-you-dance-with-me-review.html>.

¹⁰¹ Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin*, 8.

¹⁰² Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, 161.

contemporary art historian a similarly essential framework by which to reflect on the ephemeral and collaborative networks that not only underpinned his work but uphold (and constitute) his active and ongoing legacy in the wake of the ArtFund campaign. Crucially, this analysis re-contextualises Jarman's own painting within a social politics of cultural memory. This challenges the critical function, and potential erasures, of anchoring Jarman's legacy to the fossilising re-visitations of Prospect Cottage in recent discourse and retrospectives.

Chapter IV

Prophecy: abstraction, *Blue*, and the crip time of Prospect Cottage

i. “In the pandemonium of image”: painterly strategies and devotional space

This chapter will explore Jarman’s use of abstraction as a strategy for his representation of, and response to, the virus in his paintings. I previously considered the notion of abstraction whilst examining the expressive impasto of the ‘Queer’ series in Chapter I, as well as in the impulsive assemblage of Chapter II’s black paintings, as connected to Jarman’s activism and anger at his own AIDS diagnosis and societal response to the epidemic. Yet, in this chapter, I wish to focus more closely on how his modes of abstraction connect to his experience of illness – considering his development (or disintegration) towards the monochromatic ‘void’ of his ultimate film, *Blue* (1993), across a series of ‘AIDS paintings’ and ‘Dungeness landscapes’ created in 1991-92 (many of which are untitled). To what extent might abstraction represent the ultimate vehicle by which Jarman could represent the unrepresentable aspect(s) of HIV-AIDS? Acknowledging the physical horror of the virus, and the devastating deterioration of its victim’s body and mind, how might we consider the loss of subject-body as echoed and embodied by the abstraction of these paintings? Whilst my other chapters have connected these painterly strategies to our present, reflecting on how Jarman’s paintings and their representation of living with HIV-AIDS might inform our contemporary representation of his legacy and relation to his work, in this chapter I wish to also work backwards – tracing how abstraction is a strategy that connected his epidemic present to his own creative past.

In considering this context, out of which Jarman was creating his work and living as a PWA, I invoke the “pandemonium of image” he describes in *Blue*.¹ ‘PANDEMONIUM’ was the title of a Jarman retrospective at King’s College London in 2014, timed to commemorate the twenty-year anniversary of his death. As a then-undergraduate at the Courtauld Institute of Art, my impression upon visiting was that this ‘pandemonium’ referred to Jarman’s anarchic spirit, DIY approach, and the punk-adjacent imagery of his films: soldiers having gay sex on top of a Union Jack; Tilda Swinton as a riotous bride engulfed in flames (*The Last of England*); drag queens in acidic-bright ballgowns (*The Garden*); and esteemed philosophers rendered in camp tableaux (*Wittgenstein*). Yet, as I have conjured in my analysis of his paintings (and wider work) following his diagnosis with HIV-AIDS, the context of the epidemic was a pandemonium in itself: chaotic, unregulated,

¹ Derek Jarman, *Blue* (1993).

conflicted, and reverberating with the anger and outrage of voices on all sides (from the vitriol of political and mainstream media outlets, to the deliberate and demonstrative disruptions of activist groups and artists.)

A key reference for my analysis is Tim Lawrence's work on Jarman's *Blue*, and specifically his consideration of abstraction as a means to refuse (and redirect) the representation of the PWA – citing Jarman's own anguish at the ways in which “it was a minefield to be one of the few identifiable HIV+ men in the world, realising that whatever I said might be taken as representative.”² I will also fill a gap in Lawrence's analysis, by situating this late abstraction (and its relationship to illness and the epidemic) within the wider oeuvre of Jarman's painting – tracing his engagement with abstraction back through his early paintings, which have a certain prescience to the landscape of Dungeness and its essential impact on Jarman's life, work, and legacy following his diagnosis with HIV in 1986. Crucially, the timing of my project allows me to reflect on how these paintings – and their retention in the interior of Prospect Cottage – might be integrated into the contemporary consideration and ongoing construction of Jarman's legacy, facilitating a more holistic approach to his expansive practice and its ephemeral afterlives. It is in this vein that I wish to consider Jarman's abstraction as a strategy by which he might not only embody his experience of HIV-AIDS in its dislocation and disintegration, but as a means to disrupt his own involvement in having to represent the unrepresentable. How, I ask, did abstraction enable him to relay his experience as a PWA, amidst the onslaught of political persecution and public opinion symptomatic of a homophobic society seeking to culturally navigate this epidemic?

Reflecting on this painterly strategy as a sort of resistance tactic returns me to a specific experience of his abstract work and essential underpinning for my analysis in this chapter. In September 2023, I visited Prospect Cottage in its current incarnation. This was my first visit since the ArtFund campaign of 2020 – saved for the nation, preserved for the public, and seemingly untouched since Keith Collins (Jarman's aforementioned companion and the beneficiary of his estate) passed in 2018. Beyond the front door, where I am greeted by the cottage's current custodian – Hamish Findlay – as part of my pre-arranged research and development day visit, I turn immediately right into the cottage's sitting room. Above a sage-coloured sofa hangs a large painting of a pale male body dressed only in a loin cloth. This work, *An Autobiographical Incident* (undated), is by Robert

² Jarman, *At Your Own Risk*, 123; Gabriele Griffin also addresses this notion of representation in *Representations of HIV and AIDS: Visibility Blue/s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

Medley [fig.102] – a lecturer at the Slade School of Fine Art during Jarman’s time there, and an early supporter of his work. Despite this painting’s scale and central placement in the room, its figurative melancholy is completely off-set by Jarman’s own paintings and the way in which they envelop every other wall in this sitting room. These works, belonging to the aforementioned ‘AIDS paintings’ and ‘Dungeness landscape’ series completed in 1991-92, counter the muted scene of Medley’s Christ-like figure with their bold colour and thick surfaces of impasto oil paint, scratched into and scraped by furious hands that compensated for Jarman’s loss of vision due to medical treatment for HIV-AIDS. The works (twenty-three in total, displayed across three walls) are all fairly small in scale, and are hung in vertical rows and horizontal pairs, at varying heights – carefully assembled around light fixtures, electrical switches, window panes, and cabinet doors.

At the end of my first chapter I invoked the monochromatic linearity of the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas, whilst analysing the installation of Jarman’s monochromatic ‘black paintings’ as part of a retrospective exhibition at Le Crédac in Paris, which I visited on World AIDS Day in 2021 [fig.25, 26]. Inside Prospect Cottage, these abstract works are assembled to similar effect, even further evoking the grid-formations of religious icons (particularly in the Orthodox Christian tradition [fig.103]) with the play of height and scale. Perhaps even, we might think of the unruly salon-hang of Kazimir Malevich’s black square paintings [fig.104], themselves surely a reference for Rothko’s later posthumous ‘chapel’, and a similar parallel to the display of Jarman’s black paintings at Le Crédac.³ That Rothko was born in the Russian Empire (now Latvia), with a father who converted to Orthodox Judaism during his early life, suggests to the contemporary art historian that he understood the particular resonance of these icons and the visual language of their arrangement. Jarman too was familiar with the language of these icons and had also visited Moscow in 1984; one even remains in prominent position on the wall of his study across the hall from the sitting room [fig.105]. This specific icon, that of the Mother and Child, was from Chernobyl.⁴ During my own research visit I discovered an unpublished guide to the artwork at Prospect Cottage written by Keith Collins, in which he notes of the icon:

(people had to leave in a hurry and their icons were all they took as collateral).

³ This notion of these particular works as recalling religious icons is indebted to a panel discussion, hosted by the author in October 2023, during which Neil Bartlett – an activist, writer, and close friend of Jarman’s – affirmed such a reading of their specific installation at Prospect Cottage, and of the monochrome meditation enforced by *Blue* (1993), which forms a key counter-point in this chapter.

⁴ It is notable that, prior to purchasing Prospect Cottage, Jarman had imagined what it might be like to live in Dungeness and “dreamt up a little lead-lined house, ‘The Villa Chernobyl’, a Geiger-counter ticking in the hall [...] a villa remote in time and place, visited by foolhardy adventurers who braves the desert landscape for tea and scones.” As recounted in *Kicking the Pricks*, 239.

Chernobyl is ‘twinned’ with Dungeness as part of a technology exchange programme; Chernobylites visit Dungeness for respite.⁵

Even in contemporary Orthodox worship, the notion of an ‘icon corner’ (also known as a ‘beautiful corner’, or ‘holy corner’) remains an important instruction as to how images might be ordered and assembled so as to serve a devotional and memorial function – often with a focus on symmetry and linearity as is reflected in the installation of these works in the sitting room. The effect is one of aesthetic harmony. The assemblage of various icons in a linear formation ensures a uniformity, order, and visual repetition, that counters the often emotionally-charged and spiritually effusive content of the individual icons themselves. This is important to my analysis, in as much as I wish to consider the paintings in this sitting room as a group of works – as they were installed, and as they have been preserved – rather than isolating individual works as has been my method in previous chapters, and as is often art historical tradition. Within this analysis I will zoom in on and zoom out of specific paintings, but all the while it feels crucial to remember this collection of abstract works as a specific grouping enmeshed into the interior DNA of Prospect Cottage and its combined function of queer domestic, creative space, and active memorial.

ii. Touching testimony: abstraction in the sitting room of Prospect Cottage

Amidst the near-total abstraction of these twenty-three works, various text elements appear that echo the “pandemonium” of AIDS in its epidemic era; ‘HORROR’, ‘VIRUS’, ‘FATAL’, and ‘EGO ET IN ARCADIA’ (a memento mori, attributed to Virgil, by which the figure of Death reminds the reader/viewer “I am also in Arcadia”). In the context of Prospect Cottage – this site of queer pilgrimage suspended between past and present – this collection of Jarman’s paintings (and the optics of their installation) has a similarly hallowed and hauntological resonance. The surfaces of these works appear intermittently ablaze and acrid, even nuclear – putrid surfaces of acidic colour evoking both the natural landscape of Dungeness (itself unsettling and anomalous) and the interior landscape of Jarman’s illness; colour planes of thick, wet red evoke not only rage, but open wounds and the sores that plagued his final years. From early 1992, the artist battled a ‘parasitic molluscum’ on his face that required regular treatment with liquid nitrogen (used to burn off the viral skin lesion), and in *Modern Nature* he describes his appearance as “scarlet-eyed [...] complexion

⁵ Keith Collins, “Tour of Prospect Cottage” (unpublished booklet found in the kitchen of Dungeness during my research visit in September 2023), 6.

shrivelled like a conker.”⁶ To the left of the sofa, HORROR appears at the top of a vertical row of three paintings, as if sign-posted above this place of rest [fig.106]. The word is scraped into a surface of dark paint to reveal the scarlet-pink of a painted underlay, by which the lettering becomes a fleshy embodiment of an open wound or bloody sore. Below it, another painting proffers a thick slab of sky-blue, cut through with finger markings clawed from top-left to bottom-right of the picture in a diagonal motion. This gesture appears to leave bloody remnants in dark red paint, beneath which we can witness traces of yellow-gold. A small hallmark in hammered metal bears the label, VIRUS. Beneath this work, hangs an abstract colour-field painting featuring a near-rectangle of black paint atop a ground of the same blood-red (covering not only the painting’s surface but its edges too) – so that the red hangs above like a banner, or even a sky. In the lower half of the painting, on top of the black bar, is another hallmark: ET IN ARCADIA EGO (again, this memento mori motif, here in its original form.)

Seán Kissane has described how “Jarman had a habit of giving his work away, so it is important to identify a pattern among those paintings that he kept for himself and those in his family’s care, as clearly these held a particular significance for him.”⁷ Indeed, the contemporary viewer (and visitor to Prospect Cottage) surely intuits that there is some symbolic framework underpinning the arrangement – and the hauntological resonance – of Jarman’s own collection. These works, hung in their vertical row, prompt the viewer to read them in sequence: the horror, its cause, and its consequence (death). In my first chapter, I explored how this incorporation of text elements into the ‘Queer’ or ‘Evil Queen’ paintings (1993-1994) often served to assign the paintings with a barbed camp and gallows humour. This spanned comic wordplay (such as in *Arse Injected Death Syndrome* or *Fuck Me Blind*, both painted in 1993 [figs.20, 23]), bitter riffs on tabloid sensationalism (*40% OF BRITISH WOMEN*, 1992 [fig.15]), and semantic (or even semiotic) inversions as a means of societal critique (*Priest* [fig.13], or *Poofs* [fig.8], both painted in 1992. In the case of these three sitting room paintings, there is instead a solemnity to the text that appears. Unlike the larger-scale of the ‘Queer’ and ‘Evil Queen’ paintings, where text is sprawling and frequently bold – appearing as if graffiti on a street wall, or an all-capitals headline on a passing newsstand, or a billboard slogan – the smaller scale of these works, like icons, beckon the viewer to engage in a more intimate encounter: a private inspection and reflection, held at closer proximity.

⁶ Jarman, *Modern Nature*, 233.

⁷ Seán Kissane, “Irresistible Grace: Tracing Alchemy, Existentialism and Literature across three decades of Painting”, in *PROTEST!* exhibition catalogue, 20.

On the right side of the sofa, a mirroring column of works (also hung in order of descending width, from top to bottom) include text elements in a similarly muted tone [fig.107]. At the top is a painting in thick red and yellow impasto as if ablaze, with a central hallmark bearing the word FATAL. Below it, as on the left side, is a painting in red and blue – a messy, spiralling surface of smudged paint into which another hallmark bears the title CMV. These initials stand for cytomegalovirus – a common virus frequently responsible for opportunistic infections in those with advanced HIV, and the cause of Jarman’s deteriorating eyesight (for which he was receiving treatment to his retinas). And so it seems that the work’s abstraction functions as a literalisation (or reflection) of the artist’s interrupted field of vision – speckled and scarred, under siege. In fact, when working on the ‘Evil Queen’ paintings from 1993, Jarman used hospital photographs of his eyes as reference material for the canvases. Beneath this work hangs a square painting with a black field under a red banner – mirroring the composition of the bottom painting in the vertical row on the left of the sofa. As in its companion work, this painting is again inscribed with the words ET IN ARCADIA EGO. And so, again we might read these works as a relational triptych: Jarman’s HIV diagnosis in expressive colour (FATAL), its symptoms (CMV), and its consequence (the reoccurring memento mori of that final destination Arcadia – for which Prospect becomes a symbolic stand-in.) Analysed in this way, these two columns of Jarman’s abstract painting become a frame by which Medley’s “autobiographical incident” above the sofa is affirmed as a vision of solemn and tragic religiosity.

Beneath Collins’ guide to the artwork at Prospect Cottage, which I discovered amidst a pile on the kitchen worktop, lay a laminated press clipping from *The World of Interiors* magazine (November 1989) with a double-spread image of Jarman sat on this sofa – photographed by John Vere Brown [fig.108].⁸ Behind him, Medley’s painting hangs alone. The image caption on the magazine page describes that “above [Jarman], the painting entitled ‘Sebastiane’ is by Robert Medey [sic], who was in the Jarman film of that name.”⁹ Medley did indeed play Emperor Diocletian in Jarman’s *Sebastiane* (1976), which despite being a martyrdom story is famous for its homoerotic imagery, expressive physicality, and (as in the aforementioned paintings at the bottom of each column now hung either side of the sofa) its incorporation of Latin text. Presumably the title of the painting as cited in *The World of Interiors* feature was provided by Jarman himself, and in the accompanying image he is sat below it half-smiling and still healthy in appearance (despite having been diagnosed

⁸ As described in “Where’s the Jarman I knew?”, *Evening Standard* (5 April 2012), <https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/wheres-the-jarman-i-knew-7404419.html>.

⁹ Found press clipping at Prospect Cottage, from *The World of Interiors* (November 1989), 168.

with HIV three years earlier.) The magazine caption describes the “purple velvet curtain” he sits upon, “rich against the faded yellow tongue-and-groove walls of the sitting room.”¹⁰ On either side, he is framed by flourishing signs of life: a vase of bright daffodils in vibrant yellow to his left, a green houseplant to his right, and at his feet a cup of tea still visibly waiting to be finished. In these ways, the image is one of homosexual style and virility – much like the film ‘Sebastiane’, itself. In approaching a contemporary analysis of the sitting room as it exists in the present, the title-change of Medley’s painting to *An Autobiographical Incident* (as listed in Keith Collins’ guide to the cottage) – now flanked on all sides by Jarman’s paintings from 1991-92 – seems to echo the mercurial temporality and memorial function of Prospect Cottage itself, which I explored in Chapter II. A temporality generated by – and subject to – the distortions and disjunctions of Jarman’s diagnosis and subsequent passing as a result of HIV-AIDS, the “reordered vectors of human existence: place, identity, relation, time” as described by Marika Cifor.¹¹ In this way, the entire constellation of these paintings in the sitting room – including Medley’s work – becomes a microcosm for reflecting on the memorial function of Prospect Cottage, the shifting temporality of this space/legacy, and the inter-relation between Jarman’s painting and his illness.

To the left of the sofa, on the eastern wall of the sitting room facing out onto the shingle and sea beyond, is a pillar of five rectangular works [fig.106]. At the top is a painting made up of a spiralling scrawl in thick impasto, black on a red ground. Below it hangs a work framed with heavy black and a banner of red in the lower third, from which yellow paint shoots up as if like fields of wheat from a scorched earth. In the upper third, the red returns in spurts like bursts of lava or even blood shooting into a black background as if to represent a night sky, rolling storm-clouds, or billowing smoke. This composition is almost identically matched by the painting at the bottom of the pillar of five, and in between are two works both painted on a ground of blue – with ribbons of white, red, and black impasto – painted with remarkable heaviness, so that the surface is almost entirely raised from the canvas. The tactile or haptic encounter of this impasto recalls those objects described by Sara Ahmed as “sticky, or saturated with affect”, which framed my analysis of Jarman’s ‘Queer’ paintings in Chapter I. This can be underlined by the fact that – at a 2001 exhibition in Folkestone – some of the painting’s surfaces remained sticky with the wetness of the oil paint even a decade later.¹² These abstract paintings rupture the domestic space with their

¹⁰ *The World of Interiors* (November 1989), 168.

¹¹ Cifor, *Viral Cultures*, 11.

¹² As told to Michael Charlesworth by Kelvin Pawsey, who installed the paintings as part of ‘Derek Jarman Late Works’ at Metropole Galleries in Folkestone, Kent, 8 September - 13 October 2001. Charlesworth, *Critical Lives: Derek Jarman*, 141.

evocation of the open wound rendered by his diagnosis and death from HIV-AIDS. They are still raw, still wet – still painful – even as you sit on the sofa with a cup of tea today.

This tangible wetness of the paintings, combined with the organic tactility of their soft, fleshy folds, and the specifically prominent use of red oil paint, recalls images of the wound in medieval manuscripts – a phenomenon Jarman would likely have been aware of given his extensive interest in (and knowledge of) the medieval.¹³ These images of the wound served a devotional function, echoing my own affective encounter with Jarman's paintings in the hushed intimacy of his sitting room. One example of such a manuscript is Egerton 1821 in the British Library: produced in 1480-90, possibly by Carthusian monks at Sheen Priory (now Richmond, in London) for a Kentish laywoman, this "pocket-sized codex" is perhaps most well-known for the abstract representations of Christ's wounds featured in its prefatory pages [fig.109]. Nancy Thebaut describes how "blood devotion, in particular, was reified during this period [...] blood frenzy widely manifested itself in images, texts, and alleged visions."¹⁴ Thebaut even notes that "marks on the parchment of scratching, touching, and/or kissing provide clues of such physical intimacy."¹⁵ In these pages, droplets of blood appear on block colours – red, black, and white – recalling the colour planes of Jarman's paintings and their ground of textural oil paint, surfaces that are similarly scratched and scarred, emotive, expressive, tactile, and appearing still wet.

The smaller scale of these paintings in the sitting room echoes the votive object of the manuscript – ready to be taken in the viewer's hands, laid down, and poured over. To my mind, there is a resonance between this possible votive function, and the explicit prayers expressed by Jarman in black paintings such as *Dear God*, 1987 [fig.100]. Like Jarman's paintings, these works beg for us to touch them; to feel their anguish, to take it on, and to embody it. The Egerton 1821 manuscript also instructs the reader on "the importance of meditating on images", with an inscription that "images are, according to the opinion of the holy doctors of the Church, the books of the faithful [...]"¹⁶ Furthermore, Thebaut cites Mary Carruthers' work on medieval memory theory – explaining that "medieval images were intrinsically associated with remembering, just as religious meditation

¹³ See: a recent article by Eleanor Myerson, "Derek Jarman's medieval blood: Queer devotion, affective medicine, and the AIDS Crisis", in *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies* 14, no.1: 61–88, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41280-022-00260-0>. This article also makes reference to BS Egerton 1821 as part of a medieval analysis of Jarman's 'Queer' paintings' and film.

¹⁴ Nancy Thebaut, "Bleeding Pages, Bleeding Bodies: A Gendered Reading of British Library MS Egerton 1821", *Medieval Feminist Forum: A Journal of Gender and Sexuality* 45, No. 2 (2009): 175, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17077/1536-8742.1815>.

¹⁵ Thebaut, "Bleeding Pages", 178.

¹⁶ Thebaut, "Bleeding Pages", 182.

was an act of remembering. Indeed, in remembering, an internal image is/was created, too.”¹⁷ In approaching Jarman’s use of abstraction, this notion of the image as a mechanism for devotion-meditation-remembering is especially resonant with his experience of illness and informs my analysis of Jarman’s film *Blue* (1993) later in this chapter.

On the opposing wall to the sofa in the sitting room, another ten of these abstract paintings are hung around a central, larger-scale photographic image [fig.110]. A winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1968, famously known as *The Kiss of Life*, this image is by Rocco Morabito (on behalf of Spot News Photography in Jacksonville, Florida) and features mouth-to-mouth resuscitation between two male linemen – Randall G. Champion and J.D. Thompson – whilst at work on a utility pole for Jacksonville Electric Authority. In his guide to Prospect Cottage, Collins explains that “the poster is public service exhortation from Italy, torn from a metro station in Rome.”¹⁸ Beyond the homoerotic resonance of two athletic men in seeming embrace, I find that this photograph also evokes devotional imagery with the composition recalling the Deposition of Christ from the Cross – a recurring motif in paintings of the Crucifixion, with which Jarman was well-acquainted. In fact, Caravaggio’s painting *Deposition* (c.1600-1604), [fig.111] – also known as *The Entombment of Christ*, and currently in the collection of the Vatican Museums – was explicitly referenced and recreated in Jarman’s eponymous film about the artist’s life [fig.112]. This poster hangs opposite Medley’s figurative painting, echoing its muted palette and composition. Both works evoke Crucifixion symbolism, centring on a male body suspended in the hands of another man, and both are framed by the smaller panels of Jarman’s abstract AIDS paintings.¹⁹ In this way, each wall-hang recalls – and I suggest constitutes – a polyptych altar-like structure, such as that of the Isenheim Altar [fig.113], with which we know Jarman was not only familiar but had been “thrown into a terrible state of agitation” upon viewing in 1962.²⁰ His description of how the altar’s “colours blazed forth in great flaming haloes with shimmering rainbow edges” could equally be applied to his own abstract paintings as assembled on both walls of the sitting room [fig.114-15].

As on the wall around the sofa, the abstract works surrounding the Marabito poster make reference to AIDS – with similar invocations of HORROR and ET IN ARCADIA EGO [fig.116] – as well as to the landscape colour-fields of Dungeness. Another motif that reoccurs on this wall is that of the

¹⁷ This is Thebaut’s own paraphrasing of Mary Carruthers’ *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), as cited in “Bleeding Pages, Bleeding Bodies”, endnote 51, 199.

¹⁸ Collins, “Tour of Prospect Cottage”, 3.

¹⁹ The term ‘AIDS paintings’ is used by Keith Collins to describe these works in his “Tour of Prospect Cottage” guide, 3.

²⁰ Jarman, *Dancing Ledge*, 47.

orb or spiral – a radiating circular form appearing to the top left and top right of the poster, in symmetry. This orb recalls the shattered glass rings in Jarman’s previously-explored ‘black paintings’, including *The fifth quarter of the globe* (1987), [fig.27], and *Night* (1986), [fig.92]. In analysing those works, I considered how this circular form recalled the flashing spotlights of Benjy’s nightclub in ‘Will You Dance With Me?’ and ‘Heart’ [figs.78, 82]. This orb shape also appears as a cross-hair in *Death* (1993), from the ‘Evil Queen’ series, [fig.22] – an explicit reference to HIV-AIDS, with the same tone of the ‘FATAL’ inscriptions of the sitting room works. The orb or circle also appears prominently in Jarman’s ‘GBH Series’ (1983-84), [fig.117], a set of six paintings created for his 1984 retrospective at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London. In these monumental works – each extending almost three metres in height – Jarman painted upon a partial ground of tabloid newspaper (as with the later ‘Queer’ and ‘Evil Queen’ paintings), embellished with cartographic imagery of Britain, “swirls of charcoal, gold and fiery red pigment”, with large circle inscriptions similarly “[calling] to mind the targeting sights of a wartime bombing mission.”²¹ Despite their references to anarchy, punk, and nuclear disaster, all rendered in expressive colour and texture (as with the later landscape and AIDS paintings), Robert Mills describes how – as part of the ICA retrospective – these works were “displayed separately in a dark, contemplative, near-sepulchral space within the galleries.”²² Tony Peake also notes Jarman’s intention, upon completing these paintings, that the works should generate a reflective and ceremonial ambiance similar to the aforementioned Rothko Chapel in Houston.²³ Imagining the experience of seeing these GBH paintings for the first time within this quasi-ecclesiastical install, I am returned to Jarman’s description of his first encounter with the Isenheim Altar – particularly his wonder at its scale: “breathless from the run I was surprised [...] unlike many jewel-like paintings of the North, it was enormous.”²⁴ Earlier in the same passage, Jarman reflects that: “there are some paintings which diminish when you finally see them after years of reproductions in art books. They shrink away, pale ghosts of your imaginings, and others are overwhelming.”²⁵ This idea of creating hallowed space – especially, this hauntological space – is essential to my consideration of the

²¹ Robert Mills, “Derek Jarman’s Revelation”, 19.

²² Mills, “Derek Jarman’s Revelation”, 19. Mills goes into extensive analysis of Jarman’s interest and anxieties regarding the apocalyptic subject in these works.

²³ Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 319. I also reference the Rothko Chapel at the end of Chapter I, in my analysis of Jarman’s posthumous ‘Evil Queen’ exhibition at the Whitworth Art Gallery in 1994.

²⁴ Jarman, *Dancing Ledge*, 47.

²⁵ Jarman, *Dancing Ledge*, 47; it feels significant, in the context of examining artistic responses to the AIDS crisis, that the Isenheim Altar has a long connection to illness and visitation by hospital patients (even though Jarman’s own encounter predated his diagnosis with HIV and subsequent illness.) This connection has been explored in extensive detail. See: Andrée Hayum, “The Meaning and Function of the Isenheim Altarpiece: The Hospital Context Revisited”, *The Art Bulletin* 59, no. 4 (1977): 501–17, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3049705>.

affective resonance and afterlives of Jarman's painting, both as it was produced and in its (re)presentation or preservation today.

Michael Charlesworth has made the compelling argument that these 'Dungeness landscape' paintings are in fact realistic portrayals of close crops from the garden at Prospect Cottage – “hardly abstracted at all” – locating them in the aftermath of the English summers of 1989 and 1990 “when temperatures soared, water became scarce, trees wilted, everything burned in the sunlight.”²⁶ Although acknowledging the abstraction of the works, he attests that “the atmosphere of burning and shimmering in them can be understood as a response.”²⁷ I find myself taken in by this interpretation, and of course Jarman's relationship to Dungeness does underscore his work there. Yet I find it challenging to accept these works as merely a “faithful impression” or “surprisingly naturalistic depiction” of Jarman's exterior surrounds, when considering their place within this sitting room arrangement and the signifiers by which Jarman explicitly refers to his experience of HIV-AIDS: ‘HORROR’, ‘CMV’, FATAL.²⁸ Charlesworth's assessment – in which he perceives the paintings as a sort of painterly love letter, created from “the swelling of [Jarman's] heart” in regards to his garden and seemingly distinct from the more explicitly political ‘Queer’ and ‘Evil Queen’ paintings I have discussed in previous chapters – is presented alongside analysis of Jarman's concurrent film work. However his interpretation seems to distinguish between these strands of Jarman's work, once again upholding a dynamic within Jarman's legacy by which his film is privileged as more radical, or revelatory, than his painting.

Charlesworth does not bring these landscapes into direct dialogue with Jarman's other paintings, but we might consider how the artist's early experiments with landscape already show a burgeoning interest in abstraction and the affective potential of abstracting/assemblage interventions — including the referential assemblage (for me, a defining element of his particular mode of ‘abstract’ painting) that would go on to underpin series such as ‘Queer’, ‘Evil Queen’, as well as the black and landscape paintings created at Dungeness. I believe it is important – in attempting to establish the cross-temporal and inter-disciplinary ‘queer archive’ of Jarman's expanded painting practice – to consider such early works. In a series of paintings created in 1967, the year Jarman left the Slade School of Art, we can observe this mode in the inclusion of found objects, collage, and minimal graphic elements upon strikingly large-scale – even altar-like – landscape panels grounded in

²⁶ Charlesworth, *Critical Lives*, 143 and 141.

²⁷ Charlesworth, *Critical Lives*, 141.

²⁸ Charlesworth, *Critical Lives*, 143.

monochrome. Recalling the later, almost total abstraction of *Blue*, these paintings appear as screens – almost entirely filling the viewer’s field of vision. Alongside showcasing his early interactions with this abstracting mode, the paintings also demonstrate his interest in alchemy; this is a practice associated with the assemblage of symbols, with re-composition (as I explored in Chapter II), as well as with meditation and scrying (a theme in my analysis of Jarman’s black paintings, but also in my analysis of *Blue* later in this chapter.)

As with the black paintings, Jarman was able to produce these works rapidly and in quick succession having similarly “arrived at a visual schematic and a technical formula”, by which “he could complete a work within two days.”²⁹ Works from this series were exhibited as part of the (then) Tate Gallery’s ‘Young Contemporaries’ exhibition in the same year they were created, with the newly-graduated Jarman selected as one of seventy-six artists out of over one thousand entries. In *Landscape with Marble Mountain* and *Landscape with Blue Pool*, [figs.118-118], vast rectangles entirely filled with monochrome green oil paint finish short of the painting’s edge leaving a border of exposed canvas, only centimetres thick. With this device, Jarman seems to emphasise the flatness of the image, exposing not only the painting’s surface but the very nature of paintings itself. The abstraction becomes a device – creating a field within a field, or a projection upon a screen. In the first work, three black horizontal lines and three red vertical posts create a sense of perspective and depth whilst a collage insert on the left of the canvas represents the titular ‘Marble Mountain’. In the second, two horizontals (one black, and one white) are matched with another three red posts, and collage inserts represent a mountainous backdrop whilst in the foreground the titular blue pool appears simply geometric – ringed in stone – resembling a portal.

In both paintings Jarman includes irregular geometric elements on the surface, appearing like earth fissures or wind currents, which disrupt the linearity of their grid-like fields. In *Cool Waters* [fig.120], the majority of the painting’s surface is a field of red oil paint, above which a horizontal bar of mottled blue becomes the sky. Various geometric elements – two green lines above centre-point, one black linear form composed of three lines, two collage pyramids, and three large smokestack chimneys (a prescient visual reminder of the power station at Dungeness, albeit painted some twenty years before Jarman moved there) – construct a perspective and conjure a landscape before the viewer. Crucially, the work incorporates found bathroom elements – metallic, three-

²⁹ Kissane, “Irresistible Grace”, 30.

dimensional interventions that extend out of the painting's surface. A towel rail borders the centre-bottom of the canvas and to its right hangs a real tap – above pools of water painted onto the canvas; the combination achieves an almost Surrealist visual effect. Whilst these bathroom elements can and have been interpreted as queer references to the cottaging Jarman engaged in throughout his life – this is the practice of cruising for sex in public bathrooms, such as I previously discussed in Chapter I – I am more interested in the affective and phenomenological of these forms (and their assemblage) as part of Jarman's abstract mode.³⁰

Writing in 1967, when these paintings were produced, Michael Fried posits the object as a site of potential bodily encounter – one that has the ability to distance the viewer “not just physically but psychically”, but of course it can also bring the viewer in – into contact / touch / engagement / proximity.³¹ These sculptural elements, extending out of the monochrome field of the canvas, similarly implicate the viewer. In the context of Jarman's abstraction and these paintings, this activation through potential touch incorporates the viewer into the field of the work and into an affective encounter. This recalls not only the sitting room paintings and the tactility of their heavy impasto, but Egerton 1821 (the aforementioned manuscript) and its traces of devotional rubbing, scratching, touching. In this vein, we might even consider how the sitting room furniture activates the hang of the landscape and AIDS paintings – echoing the household objects of *Cool Waters*. The sofa, and a side-table on the opposite wall, both extend out of the screens of abstraction hung around them. The table becomes a literal altar table, whilst the sofa directly engages the viewer in an encounter with the paintings; we are encompassed and embraced by the abstract screens on all sides, seated as in church, beholding and arguably beholden to this testimony of the PWA. My analysis of these sitting room works, and their arrangement, establishes Jarman's specific mode of abstraction – a painterly strategy of combining assemblage, ephemeral markers, and text – as performing a memorial (and archival) function singular to the temporality of his HIV-AIDS diagnosis (time) and his life at Prospect Cottage (place). By analysing the *collective* impression of these paintings as grouped together by Jarman himself (whether as a series, as in previous chapters, or in the case of this specific sitting room install), we may better comprehend the intention and creative logic – that “organising principle” – inherent in the queer archive of his estate, at Prospect Cottage and beyond.³²

³⁰ Kissane proposes this link between the bathroom elements and cottaging, in “Irresistible Grace”, 30.

³¹ Michael Fried, “Art and Objecthood” (1967), published in his collected works *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 154.

³² Darms, “The Archival Object”, 154.

iii. Abstraction as ‘another place’: temporality and liberation

The monochrome is an alchemy, effective liberation from personality. It articulates silence.

It is a fragment of an immense work without limit.³³

Connecting Jarman’s abstraction to the ‘queer archive’ represented by Prospect Cottage, and its singular (queer) temporality at ‘the fifth quarter of the globe’, allows our interpretation of his late work to rightly encompass place-making, conjuring and altar-making (alchemy), assemblage, documentation, and an affective archival encounter. I have previously cited Jarman’s sensation, following his diagnosis, that “my world is in fragments, smashed in pieces so fine I doubt I will ever reassemble them.”³⁴ Yet crucially he goes on to explain how his creative process – this singular, experimental, and expanded abstraction – provides some means of reassembly / remedy: “so I scrabble in the rubbish, an archaeologist who stumbles across a buried film. An archaeologist who projects his private world along a beam of light into the arena, till all goes dark at the end of the performance, and we go home.”³⁵ The notion of Jarman as archaeologist is a helpful image for approaching his abstraction in the terms I outlined above, and one he invoked in paintings such as *Archaeology* (1988), [fig.121], and *Prospect – Archaeology of Soul* (1987), [fig.122]. The archaeologist projects presence into absence, uncovering and (re)assembling, gathering and transforming found objects into treasure and totem, re-conjuring and projecting presence into absence; as I have argued, it is hauntological work. Jarman’s efforts to in some way re-assemble these ‘fragments’ – utilising this mode of abstraction and assemblage – can be traced through his final work *Blue* (1993). This film was indeed that “beam of light into the arena, till all goes dark at the end [...] and we go home”, consisting of a single shot of International Klein Blue (IKB) alongside a soundtrack of monologues and instrumental sounds created with Simon Fisher-Turner [fig.123].

The soundtrack is, itself, formed from re-assembled ‘fragments’ and includes choral singing, time-marking sounds like ticking clocks, bell chimes, and gongs, as well as monologues narrated by John

³³ Jarman in a Basilisk proposal for *Blue*, undated, from Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 515.

³⁴ As cited by Roger Hallas in *Reframing Bodies: AIDS, Bearing Witness, and the Queer Moving Image* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 220.

³⁵ Hallas, *Reframing Bodies*, 220.

Quentin, Tilda Swinton, Nigel Terry, and Jarman himself. It also includes musical works by Brian Eno, Coil (John Balance and Peter Christopherson), and Erik Satie. IKB is a shade of deep blue, first produced as pigment by the French artist Yves Klein and largely made up of ultramarine. In Jarman's earliest workbook for *Blue* – inscribed with the initial title *Bliss* – he directly aligns his work with Yves Klein's artistic motive of “evolving towards the immaterial.”³⁶ Klein, whose aforementioned shade of monochrome [International Klein Blue] was used by Jarman as the single shot for *Blue*, was preoccupied with the idea of the void – ‘*La Vide*’ – and it is a repeating motif in his oeuvre. Jarman's workbook and papers for *Blue* feature many of these moments from across Klein's career – such as his exhibition ‘*La spécialisation de la sensibilité à l'état matière première en sensibilité picturale stabilisée, Le Vide*’ (The Specialisation of Sensibility in the Raw Material State into Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility, The Void) opened in April 1958, and his iconic portrait *Le Saut dans le vide* (The Leap into the Void), 1960. In his film *The Garden* (1990), Jarman tells the viewer “I want to share this emptiness with you” and this image of ‘the void’ clearly resonated with his experience of illness – declaring in his notes for *Blue*, “I announce the masterly void.”³⁷ This ‘emptiness’ is echoed in *Blue*, where Jarman announces his desire to be “an astronaut of the void” – an image of detachment, separation, and free-fall.³⁸ This brings to my mind the figures of the sitting room at Prospect Cottage: Medley's male body raised up, faceless, arched as if floating; and Morabito's lineman, similarly suspended in free-fall between life and death.

Jarman described *Blue* as “the first feature [film] to embrace the intellectual imperative of abstraction [...] it takes film to the boundary of the known world [...] The film is dedicated to HB and all true lovers.”³⁹ And so it is, through his use of abstraction, that he generates a new temporality as well as a dedication to his love and loss – bringing the viewer to the ‘boundary of the known world’ at which he found himself, on the cusp of his death from HIV-AIDS. The total blue of the monochrome screen is both an outward literalisation of the effect of AIDS treatment upon his vision – “a haze of belladonna [...] the shattering bright light of the eye specialist's camera leaves that empty sky blue after-image” – and an affective device, replicating his experience as a PWA in the vision (and visual encounter) of the viewer.⁴⁰ Paul Connerton describes this psychic work of

³⁶ “L'évolution de l'art vers l'immatériel” (“Art's Evolution Toward the Immaterial”), was the title of a lecture Klein delivered on June 3 1959 at the Sorbonne in Paris. The lecture is included in *Air Architecture: Yves Klein*, eds. Peter Noever, Francois Perrin (Los Angeles: MAK Center for Art and Architecture and Hatje Kantz, 2004), 35-76.

³⁷ Jarman, *The Garden*; Jarman, large notebook for *Blue*, 1992-1993, JAR-2-1-16 (formerly Jarman II Box 16), Derek Jarman Collection, BFI National Archive and Special Collections (Berkhamstead, UK).

³⁸ Jarman, *Blue*.

³⁹ Jarman, *Smiling in Slow Motion*, 320.

⁴⁰ Jarman, *Blue*.

depicting absence in his analysis of mourning and remembrance in tribal cultures, investigating performative perceptions of ‘ghosts’ in ritual practice. He aligns the tribal invocation of ghostly absence (the dead, lost to the ‘boundary’ of the spirit world) with Levy-Bruhl’s notion of ‘representing’ as a literal *re-presentation* – that is, a re-presenting of that which has been lost; “to cause to appear, that which has disappeared.”⁴¹ Connerton posits this ritual process as a ‘gestural repetition’, which we might consider alongside the unchanging single shot in Jarman’s film; itself a gestural repetition – that of the monochrome blue rectangle. In fact, in the earliest incarnations of *Blue* – when it was still being devised as a project entitled *Bliss* – Jarman actually presented the visual as a looped film (and thus, a *literal* repetition) of Yves Klein’s painting *IKB 79* (1959), which he had seen in the Tate gallery. This notion of gesture – and, in repetition a sense of motion – echoes in the way “the first audiences reported seeing shapes appear in the blue azure” of the film’s monochrome screen, “like Dee and Kelley, they were scrying for angels in the ‘shewstone’.”⁴² This account reminds me of my earlier analysis of dizziness, disorientation, and affective disorder in Jarman’s ‘Queer’ and ‘Evil Queen’ paintings (Chapter I: section v), for which his painting *Dizzy Bitch* (1993), [fig.16], was a starting point. In both these series of paintings as well as in *Blue*, the spatial and affective disorientation induced by Jarman’s abstraction – its sprawling forms, thick slabs of dizzying colour, and cacophony of references (textual, gestural, sonic) – serve to literalise and embody the disorder and disintegration of disease, the life “in fragments” as experienced by the PWA.

HIV-AIDS is a virus that contradicts traditional notions of infection and disease; upon first entering the blood system, it is not perceived as a foreign body, and thus fails to be identified and attacked by one’s antibodies. Retroviruses, such as HIV, insert a DNA copy of their genome into the host cell in order to replicate, requiring the body to battle its own host cells, thus putting the body at war with itself. Nicoletta Vallorani has written that “the filmic equivalent of this contradiction is [...] a cinema fighting itself, that is a cinema without images.”⁴³ Yet, Jarman’s attempt to project ‘emptiness’ in the void of the blue screen – this ‘cinema without images’ – is off-set by the discombobulating echoes of its soundtrack, affronting the spectator with channels of sound and exhaustive description of medical visits, symptom lists, names of the deceased. By voiding the visual, Jarman heightens our awareness of the audio elements, triggering our senses of taste, smell,

⁴¹ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 68.

⁴² Karim Rehmani-White, “Magical Aesthetics: The Power of Illusions for Protest and Resistance”, in *PROTEST!*, 187.

⁴³ Nicoletta Vallorani, “Path(o)s of Mourning: Memory, Death, and the Invisible Body in Derek Jarman’s *Blue*”, *Autres Modernities*, no. 4 (2010): 90, <https://doi.org/10.13130/2035-7680/691>.

and touch in an affective encounter and active disorientation. Through this encounter, Jarman “breaks spatial and temporal boundaries [...] there is a constant vertigo-inducing shift between private and public realms, with sounds of hospital equipment immediately following those of buzzing public spaces such as cafés and busy roads.”⁴⁴

In his painting *Time* (1992), [fig.124], from the ‘Queer’ series, Jarman uses a background of monochrome blue on a ground of tabloid newspaper from *The Sun* with the headline “GAY SANTA GETS SACK”. In the centre of the painting, the word ‘TIME’ appears almost as wide as the canvas, scored into the blue mist in black capital letters of oil paint. In the lower-half, Jarman writes in red lower-case – ‘dear Santa please send’ – above the word ‘ME’ in yellow. The ultramarine wash of the background recalls the monochromatic screen of *Blue*. It is thinly-painted, almost spectral – unlike the notably thick impasto of the sitting room paintings at Prospect Cottage, or other works from the ‘Queer’ and ‘Evil Queen’ series. As in *Blue*, Jarman uses abstraction to confront and conjure – to channel – the temporal disorder of HIV-AIDS; time running out, the shortage of time, his desire for more of it, the conflicting temporal registers of childhood (the wishing to Santa) and adulthood (“GAY SANTA GETS SACK”, or Jarman’s PWA present), of public and private temporalities. The painting’s multiple channels of intervention, from the reference material of the ground to the varying colour and scale of the text elements, echo the shifting soundscape *Blue*’s soundtrack – likewise shifting the viewer’s attention in different directions, and across different affective registers. In *Epistle* (1992), [fig.125], a similarly large-scale canvas from the ‘Evil Queen’ series, we see Jarman use the same blue background as well as the inserts of yellow, red, and black, but the canvas descends into a near total abstraction akin to the monochrome of *Blue*. Similarly rendered on a ground of photocopied tabloid newspaper, this work has a heaviness; and out of the thick, almost shimmering mist of blue, the word ‘EPISTLE’ appears centrally in blood-red, barely legible. The format of the ‘epistle’ – that is, a letter – underpins much of Jarman’s painting during this period – from the prayers and scrawls of the black tar paintings, to the directives and confrontations of the ‘Queer’ and ‘Evil Queen’ paintings. Yet, it was in *Blue* that Jarman would perhaps most acutely – and extensively – achieve his artistic *epistle* to the condition of HIV-AIDS.

⁴⁴ João Florêncio, “Evoking the Strange Within: Performativity, Metaphor, and Translocal Knowledge in Derek Jarman’s *Blue*”, in *Queer Dramaturgies: International Perspectives on Where Performance Leads Queer*, eds. Alyson Campbell and Stephen Farrier, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 188.

It is a critical tension in *Blue* – and throughout the abstraction of Jarman’s late painting – that amidst the cacophony of impasto paint, colour, emotion, assemblage, and voices (whether in *Blue*’s soundtrack or in his late painting’s tabloid and textual inserts), his abstraction simultaneously intended to serve (in his own words) a “liberation from personality.”⁴⁵ Briony Fer asserts that total colour/monochrome – framed as a form of camouflage – can act as “a negative signifier, a sign of non-being, which effaces rather than produces a connotational value.”⁴⁶ In making art that mirrored, embodied, and enacted death’s ‘emptiness’, Jarman surely sought to produce this ‘sign of non-being’ as described by Fer – for death is the ultimate state of ‘non-being’. This tension – of presence/absence, being/non-being – speaks to the specific complexity and conflict of HIV’s retroviral nature (as highlighted by Vallorani); the presence of the virus as seeking to bring about the eventual absence of the body (through physical disintegration and death); the positive status of the HIV/AIDS patient as enacting a negative status (contemporaneous social exclusion and again, death.) In this way, the void of *Blue*’s monochrome acts as symbolic embodiment of the virus and its impact. It is an expression of retroviral representation, of art (and thus artist) enacting the particular cruelty of the AIDS death – the body disintegrating the self. Jarman’s “liberation from personality” surely engages in this play of (non)signification and non-being, albeit by filling ‘the void’ of the IKB monochrome with multiple other personalities, identities, and voices. Beyond the various voices of the work’s collaborators, narrators, and musicians – both literal, and creative – the script itself channels a dizzying spectrum of personae: Tania in Sarajevo, nurses, the names of the dead (“David. Howard. Graham. Terry. Paul.”), friends and lovers lost, the character of ‘Blue’ itself, a seemingly boy-figure and stand-in for the younger Jarman.⁴⁷

Tim Lawrence observes how Jarman “refuses to dwell on themes such as sexuality, race, and the specifics of illness, pursuing a determined vagueness that counters mainstream attempts to fix and render transparent the identity of the person with AIDS.”⁴⁸ Yet, there is also a playfulness to this engagement, by which Jarman comically embraces this ‘liberation’ from his own persona:

I am a mannish

Muff diving

Size queen

⁴⁵ Jarman in a Basilisk proposal for *Blue*, undated, from Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 515.

⁴⁶ Briony Fer, *The Infinite Line: Re-making Art After Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 108.

⁴⁷ Jarman, *Blue*; it is also notable that this child or boy figure reoccurs in Jarman’s work, see: Parsons, “History, Activism, and the Queer Child in Derek Jarman’s *Queer Edward II* (1991)”, 413-428.

⁴⁸ Lawrence, “Problem of Representation”, 254.

With bad attitude
An arse licking
Psychofag
Molesting the flies of privacy
Balling lesbian boys
A perverted heterodemon
Crossing purpose with death
I am a cock sucking
Straight acting
Lesbian man
With ball crushing bad manners
Laddish nymphomaniac politics
Spunky sexist desires
Of incestuous inversion and
Incorrect terminology
I am a Not Gay

This play of labels and (for want of a better word) slurs, echoes the sardonic and sharp-humoured ‘Evil Queen’ paintings – even including the very title of this series. As with those paintings, Jarman uses his abstraction to highlight and attune the viewer’s gaze towards the specificity of how homosexual men (and the PWA) were treated, targeted, and inevitably tarnished within a vernacular belonging not only to the realm of mainstream media tabloid headlines, but within medical literature, establishment screeds, social spaces (bars and clubs and around office water coolers). This vernacular also encompasses that of the gay community itself, as evidenced in his aforementioned incorporation of Polari, such phrases as ‘evil queen’ or ‘size queen’ (still in usage on gay dating-apps like Grindr today), and the self-inflected black comedy of terms such as ‘Psychofag’ or ‘Heterodemon’. Upon hearing these words spoken amidst the audio of *Blue*, one can almost visualise them emerging from the abstract and monochrome impasto layers of his ‘Queer’ and ‘Evil Queen’ paintings, emblazoned in Jarman’s signature capitalised scrawl. Furthermore, in this rapid interchange of labels and identities – as well as in the ricocheting voices of the film’s narration – *Blue*’s decentralised narrator/author (that is, a decentralised Jarman) echoes the decentralisation of Jarman’s own hand in the ‘Queer’ and ‘Evil Queen’ paintings (for which, as I discussed in Chapter I, he was assisted by Piers Clemett and Peter Fillingham.) Again this reflects the tension of Jarman’s abstraction and its attempted ‘liberation’ through ‘emptiness’. Jarman is at

once willing himself to let go – and to be liberated – but simultaneously unable to relinquish the authorship and multivalence (or rather, the *fullness*) that so defined his oeuvre. In removing or *voiding* one Jarman, it is as if another hundred Jarmans appear in the soundscape of the film, shape-shifting or even metastasising. Writing on *Blue*, João Florêncio has described AIDS (and *Blue* itself) as a “strange stranger”, invoking the work of Timothy Morton, and explaining that “[AIDS] is even, perhaps [...] the strangest of strangers because it is a stranger one is forced to host.”⁴⁹ The tension of Jarman’s specific form of abstraction, as a fraught mechanism to elude representation of ‘self’, in fact evokes the very strangeness of HIV-AIDS itself – disintegrating the self into ‘fragments’, turning friends into strangers, the body upon itself, the present into past, “exploding into timelessness”.⁵⁰

iv. “The drip ticks out the seconds”⁵¹: late catastrophe, crip time, and queer failure

The temporality conjured by *Blue* transcends boundaries relating to subject, time, and place; resonating with HIV’s “re-ordered vectors”, its disorientations, and with theories relating to lateness.⁵² Lawrence, in his own assessment of *Blue*, describes how AIDS – in its “ubiquitous portrayal as a source of doom, despair, and death” – functions as “the ultimate metaphor for lateness.”⁵³ He relates this to Adorno’s analysis of ‘late works’ – that is, artworks created in an artist’s final years of life and commonly in the late stages of illness and/or decline – as “catastrophes.”⁵⁴ For Adorno, writing specifically on the late style of Beethoven, lateness is defined by “sudden discontinuities”, and the conjuring of a “fractured landscape” within which the artist refuses “to bring about [...] harmonious synthesis.”⁵⁵ In many ways, this description resonates with *Blue* and its dislocated, disruptive play of voice, visual, sound, text, and time – as well as with Jarman’s own aforementioned assessment that his “world is in fragments”, fractured despite his frenetic attempts at re-assemblage. And yet, as Lawrence acknowledges, Jarman actively resisted the dourness and despair associated with this “prescribed ‘catastrophe’” of late work and late style, frequently ascribing a playfully disruptive queer stance (and even comedy) to his work in this

⁴⁹ Florêncio, “Evoking the Strange Within”, 186-187.

⁵⁰ Jarman, *Blue*.

⁵¹ Jarman, *Blue*.

⁵² Cifor, *Viral Cultures*, 11.

⁵³ Lawrence, “Problem of Representation”, 261.

⁵⁴ Theodor Adorno, “Late Style in Beethoven”, from *Essays on Music* (California: University of California Press, 2002), 567.

⁵⁵ Adorno, “Late Style in Beethoven”, 567.

period.⁵⁶ In an interview about *Blue*, Jarman described that “the stories that are told are not all to do with the hospital – it’s only a third of the film at most. The rest of it is really quite ‘up’ and funny. Because you can’t just sit there in a gloomy state in hospital. You must have a laugh, and everyone does.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, Jarman was able to find a gallows humour in the very notion of the late (or last) work itself, teasingly noting in his penultimate interview that “I’ve written my epitaph about six times now, apparently. Every single film is scotched up as my last. Surely they’ll stop on that business, especially if I get another run together. That will be the end of all this malarkey.”⁵⁸ This again echoes the black comedy of his ‘Evil Queen’ paintings, with their camp critique of the media’s obsession over AIDS, gay life, and amplifying a pre-manufactured deathly association between the two. In this section of the chapter, I draw on Lawrence’s analysis of this ‘lateness’ through a close reading of *Blue* and its temporalities through theories of ‘crip time’. This is informed by Christopher Robert Jones’ short essay “Blue Cripistemologies: In and Around Derek Jarman”, and by the work of ‘crip theory’ scholars including Robert McRuer, Linda Ware, and Ellen Samuels. Such a reading not only allows us to develop the critical connection between Jarman’s ‘late style’ and his experience of diagnosis and disease, but to expand our analysis of the affective encounters, temporal disruptions, and sensory dislocations throughout *Blue*, his late paintings, and Prospect Cottage. Furthermore, I believe that such a reading provides an important way of relating my own interpretation of Jarman’s ‘late period’ – that is, in the context of my research, his diagnosis and move to Prospect Cottage – back to theories of a ‘queer archive’ and the complicated terrain of his recent reappraisal within the landscape of contemporary art and culture.

Cripistemologies offer us a different framework with which to consider the notions of embodiment and affect that underpin my research into Jarman’s painting. This is negotiated by an analysis of the ways in which “non-normative bodies [...] harness creative means by which to live alternative lives — in part, because they must do so to survive, but additionally, because they derive their strategies of living from the historical traces of other devalued lives.”⁵⁹ Such an understanding clearly illustrates how we might draw a connection between ‘crip’ and ‘queer’ notions of the body as they relate to time, space, embodiment, and alterity. The field of cripistemologies provides

⁵⁶ Lawrence, “Problem of Representation”, 261.

⁵⁷ Mick Brown, “The Dying Wishes of Derek Jarman”, *Daily Telegraph*, 16 August 1993, 11.

⁵⁸ Richard Morrison, “Derek Jarman: The Final Interview, Thursday, November 18, 1993,” *Art and Understanding* 3 (April 1994): 17-22 (as cited by Lawrence, who wryly observes how the interview’s title reflects the media’s obsession with finality and death – betraying exactly the “malarkey” Jarman describes. In fact, Jarman would go on to be interviewed by Gerard Raymond in a piece titled “Fade to Blue” and published in *Genre*, no. 19 (June 1994): 44-47.

⁵⁹ David Mitchell, Sharon Snyder, Linda Ware, “Curricular Cripistemologies: The Crip/Queer Art of Failure”, in *Das Geschlecht Der Inklusion* (Leverkusen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2016), 39.

“opportunities for re-imagining our relationship to devalued forms of embodiment in order to better speak to the political dilemmas of contemporary experience”, allowing us to trace this connection through Jarman’s own practice and its specific intersection of activism and artistic output.⁶⁰ *Blue* actively – that is, directly – engages the viewer in a process of embodiment, one that is beset with affective resonance given the context of Jarman’s own ‘devalued’ (that is, diseased, deteriorating, and dying) body. The film opens with the directive: “You say to the boy open your eyes.” Later, Jarman repeatedly puts us inside his body as a doctor guides him through a retina test:

Look left

Look down

Look Up

Look right

Blue flashes in my eyes.

This invocation of the visual sense has a dual function. Its *solicitation* of sight marks a shift of encounter around the object from artist to viewer, whilst at the same time it also flags Jarman’s own failing sight as a result of the AIDS virus – immediately centring *Blue* as a filmic expression of AIDS loss and associated absence. The total monochrome of the blue screen mimics this ‘blue flash’, implicating the viewer into a phenomenological encounter – an embodied exchange – by which they become the sick patient (Jarman). As Daren Fowler describes:

with the sudden appearance of the full blue image, I had to shield my eyes from the burning blue light. Behind my closed eyes I saw the first revelation in *Blue*—it had marked my eyes. I attempted to escape the blue behind shut eyelids, but it continued on [...] taking over my vision [...] the blue scorched on the surface of my eyes.⁶¹

This recalls Karim Rehmani-White’s description of how contemporaneous viewers “reported seeing shapes” in the “blue frost” of the film’s monochrome screen – described as, itself, an echo of Jarman’s interest in Dee’s scrying, which I explored in Chapter II.⁶²

Later in *Blue*, Jarman writes “I have to come to terms with sightlessness. If I lose my sight will my vision be halved?”⁶³ The way in which this statement of self-assurance is followed by the narrator’s concerned question betrays the subject’s own failure to fully reconcile himself with a bodily loss,

⁶⁰ Mitchell, Snyder, Ware, “Curricular Cripistemologies”, 38.

⁶¹ Daren Fowler, “Step Into a Blue Funk: Transversal Color and Derek Jarman’s *Blue*” (Thesis, Georgia State University, 2014), 2, <https://doi.org/10.57709/5672764>.

⁶² Rehmani-White, “Magical Aesthetics”, 187.

⁶³ Jarman, *Blue*.

with the absence of his vision as a result of AIDS, with a body that itself is ‘failing’. As Jarman describes in *Blue*:

I feel defeated. My mind bright as a button but my body falling apart – a naked light bulb in a dark and ruined room. There is death in the air here, but we are not talking about it.⁶⁴

As with the field of cripistemologies, Jarman actively seeks to expose – to bear witness, and to ‘harness’ – the “devalued” body (and “devalued forms of embodiment”) pertaining to the diseased and deteriorating body. That is, to declare and to inhabit (or to transmit) the failing body “we are not talking about”: in this case, the body of the PWA. Similarly, Mitchell, Snyder, and Ware draw a link between cripistemologies and Jack Halberstam’s notion of “queer failure” – both providing a platform, and framework, for “active refusal”, embracing bodily disability / deterioration / illness, and deflecting societal expectations of embodiment (that is, ableist standards of how we inhabit our bodies). As Halberstam describes, “failure allows us [queer people] to escape the punishing norms that discipline behaviour and manage human development with the goal of delivering us from unruly childhoods to orderly and predictable adulthoods.”⁶⁵ We might relate this to Jarman’s gallows humour, and his aforementioned insistence on being able to laugh in the process of his extensive hospital stays – a refusal to surrender to the quiet melancholy of the mythologised ‘sick patient’. This is but one example of his refusal to adhere to (chromo/hetero) normative narratives of the ‘sick’ body (or even, the queer body) as a subject to be shut off, ostracised, quieted, and removed not only from view but from the frameworks of mainstream media representation and record. It is in this way, as I will go on to examine, that the queer/crip subject of the PWA/diseased body (and of course, Jarman himself) critically overlaps with the structural erasures of the traditional archive – so requiring documents such as *Blue* to provide an alternative record of (alternate) lived experience, belonging to the queer archive and echoing its many complications and systemic disruptions.

As with Halberstam’s description of a queer failure that allows the subject-body to subvert the systems of human development, crip time proposes that disabled bodies “dwell in temporalities incongruent with the logic of capitalism: moving slowly or unexpectedly and stunning the normative socioeconomic developmental trajectory.”⁶⁶ Moreover, the body of the PWA resonates with the disabled body as it connects to “futures [that] are in question, cut short, unable to be

⁶⁴ Jarman, *Blue*.

⁶⁵ Halberstam, *Queer Art of Failure*, 3.

⁶⁶ Joshua St. Pierre, “Distending Straight-Masculine Time: A Phenomenology of the Disabled Speaking Body”, *Hypatia* 30, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 54.

projected into domestic (heteronormative) bliss. [...] often desexualised and pushed outside reproductive and family time.”⁶⁷ Again, this is evidenced in *Blue* by the way in which Jarman’s assemblage of sound and text elements makes manifest the temporal disjunctures of illness: another echo of the “reordered vectors” of place, time, and identity as previously described by Cifor.⁶⁸ Similarly, Ellen Samuels affirms how “disability and illness have the power to extract us from linear, progressive time with its normative life stages and cast us into a wormhole of backward and forward acceleration, jerky stops and starts, tedious intervals and abrupt endings.”⁶⁹ Jarman not only moves through multiple past/present/future(s), but connects the viewer/listener to multiple spaces and subjects – an expansive and frenetic assemblage of time-and-place that constitutes the disorientating and disordered temporalities of the film. He describes, amidst the hospital environment to which his ‘failing’ body now belongs, how:

The drip ticks out the seconds, the source of a stream along which the minutes flow,
to join the river of hours, the sea of years and the timeless ocean.⁷⁰

Elsewhere, he describes that:

The worst of the illness is the uncertainty. I’ve played this scenario back and forth each hour of the day for the last six years.

Blue transcends the solemn geography of human limits.⁷¹

This notion of temporal disjuncture and disorder – an experimental and often improvisational rhythm – permeates the subjectivities, testimonies, and temporalities of many marginalised identities.

In his study of black radical aesthetics, *In the Break* – a work that bridges sexual identity, activist politics, and jazz – Fred Moten explains that:

the rhythm of in/visibility is cut time: phantasmatic interruptions and fascinations. Stories are propelled by this formation of inhabitable temporal breaks; they are driven by the time they inhabit, violently reproducing, iconising, improvising themselves.⁷²

Just as Moten’s study of jazz connects us to the music’s wider influence on abstract painting, we can link Jarman’s own engagement with this disjointed, dislocated, and re-assembled time pattern to his

⁶⁷ St. Pierre, “Distending Straight-Masculine Time”, 54.

⁶⁸ Cifor, *Viral Cultures*, 11.

⁶⁹ Ellen Samuels, “Six Ways of Looking at Crip Time”, *Disability Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (Summer 2017): unpaginated, <https://dsq-sds.org/index.php/dsq/article/view/5824/4684>.

⁷⁰ Jarman, *Blue*.

⁷¹ Jarman, *Blue*.

⁷² Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 72.

own expansive mode of abstraction, which I have underlined throughout this chapter.⁷³ *Blue*'s collage of temporalities – people, places, and present/past/future tenses – becomes an abstraction unto itself, continually dizzying to the listener-viewer who is denied the accompaniment of visual representation. This 'rhythm' arguably recalls Adorno's description of late works and their "sudden discontinuities", which he expands on as "those moments of breaking way", where "the works turns its emptiness outward."⁷⁴ Jarman's manipulation of time in *Blue* – jumping, juddering, and jolting between bodies and "a blue frost" – echoes this rhythm of cut time: a rhythm that makes visible the invisible 'other', that declares itself, and enacts an affective embodiment of the subject's internal (and external) alterity.⁷⁵ As Jarman records his experience, he reorients the listener over and over again. We, like the bodies of the victims, are "at work, at the cinema, on marches and beaches. In churches on [our] knees, running, flying, silent or shouting protest."⁷⁶ This specific rhythm and its temporal disorder are central to Jarman's testimony, by which "[his] pen chased this story across the page tossed this way and that in the storm."⁷⁷ As with the temporality generated by Prospect Cottage – itself, a veritable shelter in the storm – Jarman uses *Blue* to conjure the disorientation of a body failing and in free-fall, putting the viewer inside the artist's disintegrating body, as witnessed from within.⁷⁸

This analysis of how Jarman reorients the body in *Blue* – and my reading of the film through the lens of cripistemologies and crip time – is critically connected to its phenomenological impact and encounters (as in the account of the blue screen's visual impact upon the viewer's vision, as cited above.) Crip theorists such as Joshua St. Pierre have built on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's seminal consideration of the body as the "null point" (*nullpunkt*) of our "spatial orientation and perception" – one that centres our body as a the site (and anchor) of our experience of temporality (as a relation of space, place, identity, and time.)⁷⁹ Recalling the complex and 'cut' rhythm of *Blue*'s temporalities, Merleau-Ponty wrote that:

⁷³ In my reference to the connection between Moten's work on jazz and its influence on abstract painting, I am thinking here of works such as Piet Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, the music's influence on Jackson Pollock's improvisational 'action painting', the work of Romare Bearden, Norman Lewis, and Robert Ryman (a former jazz saxophonist), amongst many others.

⁷⁴ Adorno, "Late Style in Beethoven", 567.

⁷⁵ Jarman, *Blue*.

⁷⁶ Jarman, *Blue*.

⁷⁷ Jarman, *Blue*.

⁷⁸ This recalls a work that remains in Jarman's hallway at Prospect Cottage, a gift from the filmmaker Gus Van Sant given to Jarman following his diagnosis. It shows a cottage resembling not only Prospect itself, but the cottage of Dorothy (from *The Wizard of Oz*, one of Jarman's recurring references for Dungeness), caught in mid-air as a result of the hurricane that features in the opening sequences of the film. In this metaphor, the 'storm' itself is what transports Dorothy from the grayscale mundanity of her life to the technicolour of Oz (this is, in turn, often invoked as a metaphor for the 'journey' of homosexual 'coming out', and was surely an element of Jarman's own resonance with the film.

⁷⁹ St. Pierre, "Distending Straight-Masculine Time", 53; Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 249.

my body ties a present, a past, and a future together. It secretes time, or rather it becomes that place in nature where for the first time events, rather than pushing each other into being, project a double horizon of the past and future around the present and acquire an historical orientation.⁸⁰

We can surely trace this in Jarman's recurring invocations of time past/present/future, by which he plays the 'scenario' of his illness "back and forth each hour of the day" – encompassing not only his impending death, and present deterioration, but past pleasures and active sexual engagement (all the way back to his childhood.)⁸¹ Whilst Lawrence observes a "determined vagueness" by which Jarman reflects upon his hospital experience, it is undoubtedly through his own body that (as cited above) he experiences "the river of hours, the sea of years and the timeless ocean" of his own subjectivity. It is through his own medicalised (crip) body that he experiences this tying of "a present, a past, and a future together" by which, as described in *Blue*, "the year slips on the calendar."⁸² Jarman not only uses the cut-time rhythm of *Blue* to evoke the dislocation of the PWA but, returning to the metaphor of the aforementioned altarpiece as constituted by the paintings in the sitting room at Prospect Cottage, he frequently invokes the 'null-point' of his own body – diseased, disintegrating, (disabled?) – in a way that echoes the suffering traditionally represented in such altarpieces.

In an interview at the Edinburgh Film Festival in August 1993, at which *Blue* was shown, a visibly-ill Jarman described that "Blue is based around a hospital diary", anchoring the work in his personal, bodily experience of illness.⁸³ Indeed, the film contains extensive descriptions of encounters between his sick body and its treatment (both medical and societal):

The side effects of DHPG, the drug for which I have to come into hospital to be dripped twice a day, are: Low white blood cell count, increased risk of infection, low platelet count which may increase the risk of bleeding, low red blood cell count (anaemia), fever, rash, abnormal liver function, chills, swelling of the body (oedema), infections, malaise, irregular heart beat, high blood pressure (hypertension), low blood pressure (hypotension), abnormal thoughts or dreams, loss of balance (ataxia), coma, confusion, dizziness, headache, nervousness, damage to nerves (paraesthesia), psychosis, sleepiness (somnolence), shaking,

⁸⁰ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 249.

⁸¹ Jarman, *Blue*.

⁸² Lawrence, "Problem of Representation", 254; Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 249; Jarman, *Blue*.

⁸³ "Blue Derek Jarman Interview at Edinburgh Festival 1993", YouTube, accessed 4 Jan 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV0P1cR6j6A>.

nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite (anorexia), diarrhoea, bleeding from the stomach or intestine (intestinal haemorrhage), abdominal pain, increased number of one type of white blood cell, low blood sugar, shortness of breath, hair loss (alopecia), itching (pruritus), hives, blood in the urine, abnormal kidney functions, increased blood urea, redness (inflammation), pain or irritation (phlebitis).⁸⁴

Passages like this one – deliberately and dramatically exhaustive – are off-set by Jarman’s familiar gallows humour (“If you are concerned about any of the above side-effects [...] please ask your doctor”). Certain symptoms of course also appear in his paintings from this period, such as *Ataxia – AIDS is Fun*, or *Dizzy Bitch*, both painted in 1993 – the same year *Blue* premiered [figs.18, and 16]. And yet still, the stark weight of their desperate reality is unrelenting and effects an affective encounter with the viewer through a process of embodiment – of becoming the sick body, disoriented and daunted by the many medical terms and other information administered so thick and fast that we can barely keep up. Jarman continues, “I really can’t see what I am to do. I am going to sign it [a medical waiver acknowledging these possible side effects of the drug.]”⁸⁵ As Samuels describes, “I moved backward instead of forward, not into a state of health, but further into the world of disability [...] from being someone who kept *getting* sick, over and over, to someone who *was* sick, all the time, whose inner clock was attuned to my own physical state rather than the external routines of a society ordered around bodies that were not like mine.”⁸⁶ Unlike in the paintings, where such medical terms are literally spelled out (allowing the contemporary viewer to sit with its weight, and to Google as necessary), the auditory nature of *Blue*’s delivery (and lack of visual representation) again heightens this disoriented embodiment – disabling the conventional boundaries of our critical (and subjective) reception.

Jarman’s detailed account of his hospital treatment generates an affective embodiment by literalising the subjectivity of the sick body / patient / PWA – a process described by Roger Hallas as “corporeal implication.”⁸⁷ This echoes – and dramatically extends – the affective encounter of his abstracted paintings in the sitting room at Prospect Cottage. Whereas those open gashes of bloodied red paint, clumped in clotted lumps of oil paint, can be read as expressive evocations of the PWA’s sores and suffering – imploring us to *feel* the wound, in an echo of Egerton 1821’s medieval blood devotion – the text of *Blue* engages the viewer-listener in a direct exchange of sickness, symptom,

⁸⁴ Jarman, *Blue*.

⁸⁵ Jarman, *Blue*.

⁸⁶ Samuels, “Six Ways”, unpaginated.

⁸⁷ Hallas, *Reframing Bodies*, 225.

treatment, and survival. As with the careful arrangement of the sitting room's expressive and emotive paintings – experiments in his particular mode of testimony through abstraction – *Blue* is a deliberate and decisive assemblage of abstracted elements and episodic ephemera: from the Tibetan bells of its opening chimes, to the disorientation of its multiple memories, its cut-time rhythm, and (as Florencio described) its “constant vertigo-inducing shift” between spaces, places, and temporalities.⁸⁸ The crip time of *Blue* is an essential element of this abstraction. Jarman not only (dis)orients us upon the disabled axis of his own medicalised body but within a de-limited temporality of other's illness, voices, and experience – recalling the extensive ‘ephemeral networks’ I have previously traced through his paintings from this period:

How can I walk away with a drip attached to me?

How am I going to walk away from this?

I fill this room with the echo of many voices

Who passed time here

Voices unlocked from the blue of long dried paint

[..]

This is the song of My Room

David. Howard. Graham. Terry. Paul.⁸⁹

It is through a crip time – stuttering, jolting, looping, broken, and so abstracted – that Jarman engages us in a bodily enactment (and affective embodiment) by which he can relate the dizzied and disorienting repetition of his own relentless suffering:

The nurse fights to find a vein in my right arm.

We give up after five attempts.

Would you faint if someone stuck a needle into your arm?⁹⁰

Here, both the blue screen of the film and its sonic landscape – that “echo of many voices” – are combined with a bodily evocation of the hospital drip, and included within an affective invocation of the grief of the PWA (or, in fact, any gay man living in an epicentre such as London during the AIDS crisis, who would have experienced a similarly relentless loss of lovers, friends, and partners.) That Jarman specifically situates this experience of illness within this language of paint – ‘unlocking’ both his and others PWA testimonies from the ‘dried paint’ of time, again invoking the image of himself as archaeologist – is essential to the thrust of my own thesis, and an echo of the

⁸⁸ Florêncio, “Evoking the Strange Within”, 188.

⁸⁹ Jarman, *Blue*.

⁹⁰ Jarman, *Blue*.

ways in which his identity as a painter remained sacred amidst his bodily decline (or body-failure) – a critical cornerstone of his testimony as a PWA, until the very end of his life.

v. Care strategies: cripistemologies, the queer archive, and the contemporary Jarman

By reading *Blue* against theories of crip time, I am providing an analysis that reflects the central intersection of illness (AIDS) and temporality in Jarman's late work. This reading expands the multiple ways in which we understand his work's affective resonance – not only at the time it was created, but in an ongoing battle (and tension) with the complicated and unresolved legacies of the AIDS crisis. Crip time offers a framework in much the same way as I have implemented that of the queer archive: a framework that acknowledges complexity, that rejects conventional standards of production and chronology (or even provenance), and one that allows for multiple readings at once. This reflects Jarman's own multiplicity and the nuance of his tone in this period – frequently combining emotive expression with his aforementioned gallows humour, and experiments in assemblage that are simultaneously frenetic and meditative. Christopher Robert Jones describes how “*Blue* provides multiple points of access that are not indexed by a “primary” or “intended” format through which to experience the work.”⁹¹ That is to say that *Blue* exists not only as the film itself, but as its DVD version, a radio play, an audio soundtrack, as well as a written text most recently re-published by the commercial gallery David Zwirner's imprint *ekphrasis*.⁹² As a text, it had previously been available in various formats including fragments within Jarman's own memoirs, his workbook for the film (now in the collection of the British Film Institute), as part of a booklet accompanying the CD version, and as part of Jarman's book *Chroma* published in 1993-1994.

Jones describes how “these text-based formats, which predate the film version, disrupt our understanding of a script as text that needs to be vocalised or externalised to be fully instantiated.”⁹³ This is without even mentioning the multiple formats in which Jarman initially conceptualised and developed *Blue*. Jarman's earliest conception of the work dates back as far as 1974, when he noted “blue film for Yves” in his own diary after seeing Yves Klein's exhibition at the Tate Gallery.⁹⁴ He

⁹¹ Christopher Robert Jones, “Blue Cripistemologies: In and Around Derek Jarman”, *ArtPapers*, accessed 12 December 2023, <https://www.artpapers.org/blue-cripistemologies-in-and-around-derek-jarman>.

⁹² Derek Jarman, *Blue* (New York: David Zwirner Books, 2023), with an introduction by Michael Charlesworth.

⁹³ Jones, “Blue Cripistemologies”, online.

⁹⁴ Rowland Wymer, *Derek Jarman*, 170.

began developing the film in his own workbooks soon after his diagnosis in 1986, progressing through titles including “‘Bliss’, Blueprint’, ‘Blue Poison’, International Blue’, ‘Into The Blue’, ‘My Blue Heaven’, and ‘A Blueprint for Bliss.’”⁹⁵ By 1991, Jarman had prepared a live performance version of the project, which premiered as *Symphonie Monotone* at the now-defunct Lumiere cinema on St. Martin’s Lane in London. Before a screen of International Klein Blue (IKB), “on which, at intervals was projects a series of slides: images from Jarman’s Super 8s and of passages from an essay on blue”, both Jarman and Tilda Swinton sat at a table, also dressed in blue, reading Jarman’s writings on the colour.⁹⁶ Beneath this table, Jarman had hoped to present “a naked blue devil [...] and have him frequently interrupt proceedings”, as well as actively engaging – and immersing – the audience with offerings of blue fruit and confetti.⁹⁷ Instead, Jody Graber (who starred in *Edward II*) handed out small pebbles painted blue and gold. Meanwhile, Simon Fisher Turner – who worked on the soundtrack for the final version of the film – performed an accompaniment of live music in meditative monotones.

As the film concept developed, Peake describes how Jarman took turns turned towards “a more personal past evoked by footage from Jarman’s home movies”, and then “towards something more social and more personal”.⁹⁸ In one proposed version, Jarman considered anchoring the project in an exploration of London itself – guided by “a voyager named Bliss” – with sequences that served to “illuminate the difference between subjective memory and documentary reality.”⁹⁹ This distinction, or at least the recognition of it, surely chimes with a reading of Jarman’s *Blue* – as well as his other works from this period, which I have previously examined – against the framework of affect theory. There is once again a resonance with Cvetkovich’s “archive of feelings”, by which the queer archive seeks to accomplish its disjointed, ephemeral, and emotional testimony. This is a framework that makes space for subjectivity, for those distinctions (or ‘gaps’) between memory and documentation, between the body and its feelings, between fact and affect. Recalling Halberstam’s framing of the queer archive (as it extends from a queer temporality), *Blue* – not only as a film, but as a project and as testimony – “extend[s] beyond the image of a place to collect material or hold documents” and instead becomes “a model that locates sexual subjectivities within and between embodiment, place, and practice.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Chrissie Iles, “All Arts Are One”, in *PROTEST!*, 176 (originally published in the catalogue for ‘Derek Jarman: Brutal Beauty’ at the Serpentine Galleries, 2008).

⁹⁶ Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 473.

⁹⁷ Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 474.

⁹⁸ Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 475-476.

⁹⁹ Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 475.

¹⁰⁰ Halberstam, “Queer Temporality”, 169.

Like Jarman's 'Queer' or 'Evil Queen' paintings, his black paintings and painterly Super 8s – and of course like the careful arrangement of the altar-like AIDS and Landscape paintings in the sitting room at cottage – this work requires us to read his testimony (that of his bodily experience of HIV-AIDS between 1986-1994) against the ephemeral networks of his life and practice (as prioritised by the queer archive). Florêncio indirectly recognises the importance of these ephemeral networks in *Blue*, observing how – through its “affective and evocative powers” – the film “successfully bridges the local and global dimensions of the epidemic, therefore constituting itself as translocal knowledge.”¹⁰¹ As previously examined, these are the networks of testimony and documentation frequently constituted by ephemeral materials such as diary entries and magazine clippings, by social and sexual relations, cruising encounters, hospital visits, nightclubs and daily commutes – all situated within the context of the artists's wider work. Such an analysis extends from the sitting room and studio of his home-life, to the bureaucracy and boardroom of his professional life. This thesis affirms that these works are a foundational aspect of this expansive queer archive – based in ephemera, experimentally and yet deliberately assembled, unconventional or deregulated in their authorship and ‘organising principle’, and hitherto omitted or at least pushed to the margins of his wider practice.

Echoing the delimited rhythms of the queer archive, crip time – and so, the crip archive – seeks to “weave together archival, historical, theoretical, and personal narratives [...] to highlight the multiple systems that produce absences, omissions and perspectives in documentation”, as observed by Gracen Brilmyer.¹⁰² Such a reading allows us to include “all the records that were never made, those that were thrown away, lost, disregarded throughout their lives before, in and after archives”.¹⁰³ The contemporary AIDS scholar, like the crip scholar, is compelled to approach their analysis of these ‘late works’ in such a way as to make space for this plurality of illness and its cut-time temporalities: its disorder (or ‘failure’); its connection to death; and its complex legacies. In establishing a ‘critical disability archival methodology’, Brilmyer describes an approach that centres “how sickness and disability are continually fluctuating.”¹⁰⁴ Like my own analysis of Jarman's ‘late work’ during the period of 1987-1994 in which he was ‘ill’ – and like Jarman's own artistic assemblage in *Blue* – this is a process of “accumulating and synthesising the throughlines that I

¹⁰¹ Florêncio, “Evoking the Strange Within”, 1-2.

¹⁰² Gracen Brilmyer, “Towards Sickness: Developing a Critical Disability Archival Methodology”, *Journal of Feminist Scholarship* 17 (Fall 2020): 28, <https://doi.org/10.23860/jfs.2020.17.03>.

¹⁰³ Brilmyer, “Towards Sickness”, 28.

¹⁰⁴ Brilmyer, “Towards Sickness”, 36.

witness in so many writings from sick and disabled communities [...] to mark these as a new form of evidence of our existence.”¹⁰⁵ Brilmyer’s description of these archival strategies is acutely resonant with my own research methodology and its focus on interpreting Jarman’s painting through theories of the queer archive as an “imaginative” and “complex record”, constituted by “ephemeral trace[s]” and “affective connections [...] across time.”¹⁰⁶ Moreover, a crucial – and critical – act of the establishing the queer archive is to recognise and record these works, not just as they are archived and exhibited in institutional spaces now, but as they were developed – and all the lived experience (subjectivity), social exchange, and ephemeral networks that went into their very creation. This is true of recognising Clemett and Fillingham in their aiding of the ailing Jarman as he painted the ‘Queer’ and ‘Evil Queen’ series (Chapter I), of connecting the black paintings to concurrent media discourse, medical visits, and Jarman’s move to Dungeness (Chapter II), and of tracing the complicated temporalities and urban legacies of his Super 8s and their connection to queer nightlife and AIDS legacies (Chapter III). But also, it is a key impulse behind Jarman’s own creation of *Blue* – an affective and collaborative collage of ephemeral testimony, non-linear temporalities, collaborative exchange, and creative vulnerability.

In this chapter, I have considered the ways in which Jarman used abstract elements – from the sitting room paintings, through to the monochrome screen of *Blue* – in order to transmit the specific, personal, and unconventional temporalities of his illness and eventual death from HIV-AIDS. This has taken my analysis from the sitting room of Prospect Cottage, with its devotional and altar-like assemblage of the abstract AIDS and Landscape paintings, to the ticking, dripping, leaky time of the hospital room – “My Room” – and its “echo of many voices.”¹⁰⁷ By considering the ‘cut-time’ rhythms and temporal registers of these spaces and their testimonies – facilitated by careful analysis of the ephemeral markers by which each space is conjured, created, and (re)represented – I have traced the ephemeral networks of Jarman’s final years. Incorporating his experience as a PWA with a public profile, I have sought to acknowledge and interpret the resonances and dissonances by which he so carefully and creatively relayed his experience of the epidemic – not only bodily, but psychologically, sexually, socially, and affectively. This strategy seeks not only to affirm and underline the importance of the queer archive as a framework by which to contemplate the complicated legacies of representation and record surrounding the HIV-AIDS crisis, but to come

¹⁰⁵ Brilmyer, “Towards Sickness”, 28.

¹⁰⁶ Here, I am returning to some of the queer archive theory that forms the basis of my first chapter, and of this project: Cvetkovich, “Photographing Objects”, 281; Halberstam, “Queer Temporality”, 169; Muñoz, “Ghosts of Public Sex”, 367; Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, 11-12.

¹⁰⁷ Jarman, *Blue*.

closer to the artistic intention of the PWA as artistic witness. That is to approximate the urgency of the diseased (or disabled) artist working not against physical limitation and bodily “failure”, but against societal stigma and the unequivocal failure of governmental negligence, media demonisation, and “the logic of capitalism” – encompassing heteronormative systems of bureaucracy and record, as well as temporalities set by “the normative socioeconomic developmental trajectory.”¹⁰⁸

Such a reading – one that not only expects but embraces plurality, disorder, and complexity – is essential to art historical and cultural research or representation of the AIDS epidemic, and part of the “curative” or “care” strategies outlined by Marika Cifor. This is to recognise the “promising potential” of the queer (AIDS) archive, as a portal and platform by which “to realign AIDS time in ways that expose its uneven valences and rest its social rhythms” – that is, the epidemic queer (crip) time.¹⁰⁹ When Jarman died in February 1994, just over six months on from the release of *Blue*, he did so in “a series of wracking spasms”, eventually passing with “one final, defiant convulsion” – an echo of crip time’s jolting, juddering rhythms, of Adorno’s “sudden discontinuities”, those “moments of breaking away.”¹¹⁰ Jarman was buried at St Clement’s Church in Old Romney, close to Dungeness, with “various treasures” placed inside his coffin: a lapis lazuli necklace he had bought during production on *Blue*; a bottle of poppers (recalling his Hampstead Heath ‘armoury’ as explored in Chapter I); a silver razor; his eyeglasses; a cap emblazoned ‘Controversialist’; his watch; a pen; a fresh fig; and a toy frog that Keith Collins had taken to attaching to Jarman’s person during his final months so as to hear it jingle as he moved through Prospect Cottage.¹¹¹ In death, just as in life, we can witness how this assemblage of ephemera – affective, alchemical – remained a foundational aspect of Jarman’s testimony as an artist and activist living with HIV-AIDS. It is through the theoretical framework of the queer archive (and its temporalities), that we understand how this testimony was not interred with Jarman’s physical body, but continues to resonate across (queer) temporalities of past, present, and future.

¹⁰⁸ St. Pierre, “Distending Straight-Masculine Time”, 54.

¹⁰⁹ Cifor, *Viral Cultures*, 16.

¹¹⁰ Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 532; Adorno, “Late Style in Beethoven”, 567.

¹¹¹ Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 533. Ensuring that the coffin remained unsealed, in order that these items could be placed alongside Jarman’s body (and to fulfil his wish that the coffin remain open until it entered the church) required complicated negotiations between Collins and the undertakers, who feared the body might be somehow infectious – yet another reflection of the still-fervent stigma attached to HIV-AIDS in this period.

Conclusion: The Tree of Life, and networks of memory

I walk in this garden
Holding the hands of dead friends
Old age came quickly for my frosted generation.¹

I've removed some rings that will sit alone, upturned, to stand in for those lost generations.
I call it a 'halo'. In a way, it's this section that looks like a monument.²

¹ Derek Jarman, *Modern Nature*, 69.

² Anya Gallaccio, in interview with Evan Moffitt, "Anya Gallaccio on the London AIDS Memorial: 'It's Really Important, a Big Deal'", *Frieze*, 27 June 2024, <https://www.frieze.com/article/anya-gallaccio-london-aids-memorial-interview-2024>.

On 12 June 2024, a small group assembled beneath the golden mosaic ceilings of Fitzrovia Chapel in central London. This small chapel, built in 1891-92, sits in the grounds of the former Middlesex Hospital and its historic Broderip Ward – the first dedicated ward for the care and treatment of HIV-AIDS patients in the UK.³ Within walking distance of the chapel’s luminous interior, the now-demolished ward (constructed from a disused space as part of the hospital’s general renovation) accepted its first HIV-AIDS patients in January 1987. Given the widespread demonisation of the PWA at this time and the deeply-rooted homophobia in contemporaneous British society, both of which I have examined throughout my analysis of Jarman’s paintings in this thesis, Broderip Ward remains striking in its humanity, care, and progressive treatment of those with HIV-AIDS. In an interview given just days before The Broderip began operating in January 1987, the ward’s first sister, Jacqui Elliot, displays a frank pragmatism and tenderness for her incoming patients, whilst reckoning with the rampant stigma of the epidemic:

You just have to treat the symptoms as they come along, keep a positive attitude and provide the best possible nursing care for the patients. [...] It’s very difficult to wipe out those attitudes and I sometimes feel I’m beating my head against a brick wall. It makes me feel tremendously sympathetic towards the patients because they’re actually having to live with it. [...] I’ve no prejudice and I don’t see AIDS victims as homosexual people. I see them as people infected with the virus.

A few months later, on 9 April, the ward was officially opened by Diana, Princess of Wales. This royal visit, during which the Princess greeted and shook hands with patients “without gloves”, received widespread media attention and has been perceived as changing public attitudes and stigma towards the epidemic and the Person With AIDS.⁴ Yet it is notable that contemporary media reports describe how no patient on the ward felt safe to have their face photographed, for fear of public identification and presumed retribution.⁵ By gathering on the former grounds of the Middlesex Hospital in 2024, the organisation AIDS Memory UK and its assembled guests gestured towards a new watershed in the memorial culture of HIV-AIDS, and its place in the public imagination: the announcement that Turner Prize-nominated artist Anya Gallaccio had won an open competition to create London’s first and only AIDS memorial [fig.126].

³ “How London’s first dedicated HIV ward changed the AIDS response”, UNAIDS, 03 October 2019, https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2019/october/20191003_Broderip_Ward.

⁴ “How Princess Diana changed attitudes to Aids”, *BBC News*, 5 April 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/magazine-39490507>.

⁵ “Teachers carry on working”, *The Times*, 9 April 1987, 3.

Gallaccio's commission incorporates a tree of life, described by AIDS activist and art historian Simon Watney (a member of the judging panel) as "a tree, a table, an altar, a place of respite, a monument to loss, and a celebration of community."⁶ The tree of life is a symbol that occurs across multiple religions, cultures, legends, and folklores, often representing the source of life but similarly connected to the life cycle and death itself.⁷ In the Christian faith, it appears in the Book of Genesis as one of two trees in the Garden of Eden alongside the tree of knowledge. After Adam and Eve eat from the tree of knowledge, they are expelled from the Garden (and exposed in their nudity and sin) in order to prevent them also eating from the tree of life and achieving immortality. In this way, the tree of life is arguably connected to moral transgression and its perceived consequences, but also to mortality, mourning, and memory. Gallaccio's memorial will be located on the South Crescent of Store Street – just a short walk from Senate House and University College London, where I sit writing this conclusion. Upon the pavement, Gallaccio's memorial revolves around a "felled tree" constructed from yet undisclosed material: a wide tree trunk lies flat with its central rings, those markers of time, extracted and stood vertically upright beside it.⁸ This reference clearly invokes the distinct temporality of the AIDS epidemic. The felled tree and its extracted, upturned, rings serve as a metaphor for the virus's temporal disruptions, the lives cut-short, and the undulating past-present-future of memory, remembrance, and a virus that continues to impact lives today. Gallaccio explains that the trees already lining Store Street "are everywhere in [London], for good reason – they withstand pollution. They are survivors, living despite their environment, a clunky but perhaps fitting metaphor for those living with HIV and AIDS. Hidden in plain sight."⁹ This emphasis on the survivors – the living – is a crucial underpinning of Gallaccio's intention with this commission, and an important challenge to the memorial culture(s) surrounding HIV-AIDS, as well as the conventional function of the 'memorial' or 'monument' itself.¹⁰ The horizontal 'trunk' component of the sculpture has a double function as a seating area, meeting place, and stage: "a heart for community-generated events and oral histories."¹¹ The artist imagines the space being used for live events such as poetry performances, community engagement activities, and the commemoration of

⁶ Simon Watney, as quoted in an Instagram post on the AIDS Memory UK account, 12 June 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C8HrHokvBka/?igsh=MXU3c29yaXhzOWJidw==>.

⁷ "Tree of life", Encyclopaedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/tree-of-life-religion>.

⁸ "Anya Gallaccio Will Create The AIDS Memorial in London", AIDS Memory UK, 12 June 2024, <https://aidsmemory.uk/2024/06/12/anya-gallaccio-will-create-the-aids-memorial-in-london/>

⁹ Anya Gallaccio, "ANYA GALLACCIO TO DESIGN LONDON'S FIRST HIV/AIDS MEMORIAL", *ArtForum*, 12 June 2024, <https://www.artforum.com/news/anya-gallaccio-design-londons-first-hiv-aids-memorial-555801>.

¹⁰ As I acknowledge in my Introduction, contemporary AIDS activists – including the organisation ACT UP! – remind us not only that "The AIDS Crisis Is Not Over", but that "AIDS Is Not History".

¹¹ "Anya Gallaccio Will Create The AIDS Memorial in London", AIDS Memory UK.

World AIDS Day (1 December).¹² This part of the sculpture will be deliberately low to the pavement, making it accessible to all. Such an awareness of proactive inclusion appears deeply-engrained in Gallaccio's proposal, modelling an important and yet unconventional dedication to expanding the memorial legacies of not only the AIDS epidemic, but London's monument culture itself.

Reflecting on the proximity of the memorial's intended Store Street location to the former site of Broderip Ward, Gallaccio's plan for the memorial makes a crucial effort to include communities that are frequently marginalised within public memory and remembrance of HIV-AIDS. This is a remembrance that consciously holds space for women, lesbians, trans-identifying individuals, those with blood disorders, intravenous drug users, and medical professionals like Jacqui Elliot. These communities have been frequently sidelined or 'slipped' through the 'gaps' of archives, museums, and memorials seeking to record the 'history' of LGBTQ+ activism and the AIDS epidemic:

The broader perception of AIDS is still that it's a gay male disease. However, 53% of people living worldwide with the virus are women and girls. Again, it becomes about education as well as remembering those lost to the virus [...] We must acknowledge the caregivers, nurses and doctors. Lesbians for example, were important in terms of providing care and giving blood when other people were too scared to.¹³

This oversight, and exclusion, has been acknowledged by many AIDS scholars, including Jack Halberstam and Ann Cvetkovich who explicitly counter such interstices in their modelling of the queer archive – that is, the “archive of feelings”, or “archive of trauma”.¹⁴ This framework has been a cornerstone of my own analysis in this thesis. Reflecting on how Gallaccio's proposed memorial challenges conventions of monument culture and public remembrance, I believe we may trace a link with the queer archive itself. Both prioritise an expanded engagement of affected communities, the affirmation and incorporation of ephemeral networks, oral histories, and community activities, and a non-linear chronology that connects past, present, and future. In my analysis of Jarman's painting, I have tried to hold a similar space for expansive engagement, ephemeral histories, and slippery (queer) temporalities. Likewise, I have shown how contemporary art historical analysis should – like Gallaccio's memorial – lead us to reflect upon the current (and evolving) state(s) of HIV-AIDS remembrance and representation in the UK.

¹² Anya Gallaccio, *Frieze*.

¹³ Anya Gallaccio, *Frieze*.

¹⁴ Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*.

In 2017, Fitzrovia Chapel hosted an exhibition entitled ‘The Ward’, featuring photographs by the artist Gideon Mendel. These works were produced at The Broderip and The Charles Bell Ward (another department of The Middlesex that also served HIV-AIDS patients, albeit not exclusively) over the course of numerous visits in 1993. This was followed in 2022 by an exhibition of work by the late Leigh Bowery, who died of HIV-AIDS at the end of 1994 – the same year as Derek Jarman. Jarman and Bowery were known to each other through the shared landscape of London’s avant-garde and nightlife scenes, as well as their mutual participation in Andrew Logan’s Alternative Miss World (a legendary and well-documented annual drag ball with competitive costume categories). Jarman performed, and won, as Miss Crêpe Suzette in 1975 [fig.127]. Riley Black describes how “the image of the Tree of Life depicts a world neatly organised by lines of progress. But the living world is [...] a tangled network of relationships, both biological and chosen.”¹⁵ Gallaccio’s tree of life – like queer history and the queer archive, itself – reflects this complexity, complication, and communality. I have similarly demonstrated how Jarman’s paintings can be interpreted along such entanglements of ephemeral networks: lovers, friends and political figures; artistic collaborators and social commentaries; song lyrics and political slogans; through natural landscapes, urban sprawls, and outer space; across temporalities spanning days, weeks, years, and even generations past and future. Like the words sgraffitoed into Jarman’s canvases or etched into glass, Gallaccio intends to engrave her sculpture with labels highlighting the multivalent identities of those with HIV-AIDS. These include “auntie, carer, brother, lover, etc. in different languages”.¹⁶ This recalls Jarman’s monologue from *Blue*, previously cited in full in Chapter IV, by which he lists his own PWA identity as encompassing the “mannish / muff diving / size queen / with bad attitude / an arse licking / psychofag [...]”.¹⁷ In a memorial culture that so often fixates on formal names and titles engraved in stone, both artists resist such solidity – instead celebrating the multivalence of queer identities and intimacies.¹⁸

On the afternoon of the AIDS memorial announcement, I stood opposite the South Crescent of Store Street with the renders on my phone and imagined my own phenomenological encounter with this future sculptural site. Gallaccio describes “thinking about process and cycles and regeneration, in terms of things decaying [...] my fixation with stone is its monumentality. It has taken hundreds of thousands of years to form through geological events, and, like the tree, it has a history embedded

¹⁵ Riley Black, “Uprooting the Tree of Life”, *Atmos*, 15 November 2022, <https://atmos.earth/tree-of-life-queer-ecology-aspen-clonal>.

¹⁶ Anya Gallaccio, *Frieze*.

¹⁷ Jarman, *Blue*.

¹⁸ This connects to my discussion of the NAMES Project AIDS memorial quilt in Chapter II, which similarly allowed for the inclusion of nicknames, alternate identities, loosely-defined personal relationships, and unconventional or informal relations.

into it.” I thought of Jarman walking through his famous garden at Prospect Cottage, “holding hands with dead friends”.¹⁹ Amidst the vacant space, this proposal for the future, and the passers-by sipping coffee somewhere between my university and Tottenham Court Road’s tube station, I tried to visualise Gallaccio’s felled tree in grey stone, and recalled Jarman’s own grief: “I feel furious and impotent, why should this happen? Lovers shrivelled and parched like the landscape.”²⁰ Daniel O’Quinn describes Jarman’s idiosyncratic garden at Prospect Cottage as evoking gardening as an “emergency praxis” – evolving both to and from a “motivated consideration of the relationship between time and community.”²¹ Just as Gallaccio explains that the final version of her tree sculpture will appear “as a composite of trees associated with life and knowledge”, Jarman’s garden enacted a process of assemblage that extended beyond his botanical decisions into the incorporation of found objects and sculpture.²² O’Quinn perceives how “violets and daffodils and poppies make a living among the stones in the shadow of the nuclear plant”, enacting a metaphor for “how Jarman and the communities he invokes [...] demonstrate their strength and their resilience in the face of the personal, cultural, an social crisis of Thatcherite Britain.”²³ This interpretation of Jarman’s garden, arguably widespread, has a resonance with Gallaccio’s description of the plane trees on Store Street and their symbolic ‘survival’ – that self-described “clunky but perhaps-fitting metaphor” – as it connects to HIV-AIDS and the contemporary PWA.²⁴ Yet, no matter how obvious this metaphor may be, its resonance travels (and connects) across a queer temporality that extends from Jarman’s own cultivation of Prospect Cottage to the prospective future of Gallaccio’s memorial without losing its power or potential for public connection and catharsis. Jarman’s garden, set amidst a landscape as “shrivelled and parched” as the state of queer life and love in crisis, also speaks to the queer archive as a necessary reaction to (and against) history itself. Just as the queer archive challenges binary systems, object hierarchies, and archival conventions, Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands asserts that Jarman “clearly rejects any view of gardens and gardening that relies on an overarching systematisation of gardening practice, be it based on application of horticultural science, quest for aesthetic harmony, or even adherence to ecological principle.”²⁵ Instead it is an effort to remedy, restore, and resist through symbolic assemblage and an “emergency praxis” of piecing together what remains: to gather, to grow, to give life.

¹⁹ Jarman, *Modern Nature*, 69.

²⁰ Jarman, *Modern Nature*, 129.

²¹ Daniel O’Quinn, “Gardening, History, and the Escape from Time: Derek Jarman’s “Modern Nature””, *October* 89 (Summer 1999): 116.

²² Anya Gallaccio, *Frieze*.

²³ O’Quinn, “Gardening, History, and the Escape from Time”, 115-116.

²⁴ Anya Gallaccio, *Frieze*.

²⁵ Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands, “Melancholy Natures, Queer Ecologies”, in *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, 351.

To my mind, Jarman's paintings enact a similar strategy, as I have shown through my analysis of the multiple ways in which they connect his lived experience of HIV-AIDS with the various branches of his artistic practice, activist politics, and ephemeral networks of his social and sexual lives (both private and public.) Mortimer-Sandilands describes how the garden, as a motif in Jarman's practice, is "a site for specifically *queer* acts of memory, in which environmental histories and knowledges are rewritten as part of a memorial project."²⁶ This notion of rewriting accepted histories and knowledges is a key tenet of Jarman's practice, including his filmic adaptation of historical biographies (*Edward II* and *Caravaggio*), Shakespearean texts (*The Tempest*), and even Victorian painting (*The Last of England*, drawn from the painting by Pre-Raphaelite artist Ford Madox Brown in 1855.) It also permeates his own painting and the "memorial project" by which he sought to record, in real-time, the contemporary history of the AIDS epidemic in the UK. Like his garden, Jarman's paintings represent an assemblage of found objects, emotional memory, and personal history – from tabloid newspaper and personal ephemera, to gay slang, prayers, and medical terminology. These are activated by the action of his touch, placement, arrangement, and attention, akin to the physical act of planting, pruning, or scattering seeds (sometimes literally, as in *Untitled (Seed Pod/Corn Circle)* from 1991 [fig.128]). O'Quinn perceives how "Jarman counters the chain of events that make up the temporality of monumental history with a spatial figure for the suspension of time – i.e., the garden."²⁷ This speaks to the same engagement with (queer) temporalities that has underpinned my analysis of Jarman's painting. Yet in my analysis, these works not only suspend the time and testimony of Jarman's lived experience (and ephemeral networks), but relay its distortions and delays across temporalities of past/present/future and the complex territory of HIV-AIDS memorial culture(s.) To think of Jarman's paintings as each their own sort of garden, my own encounter in the present – all these years after their creation and his death – has been to witness the multiple ways in which these works have flowered, withered, taken root, and weathered the storm.

The sublimation of HIV-AIDS remembrance into ecological metaphor reflects a broader turn not only in Jarman's legacy and re-presentation, but in contemporary queer theory and specifically, the field of queer ecologies. Connecting queer grief and melancholia to environmental loss, Mortimer-Sandilands perceives a shared question: "how does one mourn in the midst of a culture that finds it

²⁶ Mortimer-Sandilands, "Melancholy Natures, Queer Ecologies", 343.

²⁷ O'Quinn, "Gardening, History, and the Escape from Time", 123.

almost impossible to recognise the value of what has been lost?”²⁸ In a reading that draws on queer ecologies, she observes “a patina of nature-*nostalgia* in place of any kind of active negotiation of environmental mourning.”²⁹ This can be traced in Jarman’s recent exhibition history from the aforementioned Garden Museum retrospective in 2020, which featured two of his ecologically-prescient paintings: *Acid Rain* and *Oh Zone*, both produced in 1992 [fig.129]. In April 2024 the exhibition ‘Our Earth’ opened at Salisbury Cathedral in the UK, exploring “the domestic impact of climate change [...] and how that will be felt differently across the world.”³⁰ Two of Jarman’s paintings are included, *Landscape III: Summer* and *Summer* (both also painted in 1992), representing two contrasting views of ‘SUMMER’, which is emblazoned in capital letters at the top of each work [fig.130]. On the left, the word appears in a dark sky of black, red, and inky blue above a landscape of yellow dunes [fig.131]. Expressive markings in a simple pattern give the impression of a chain-link fence or row of pylons, locating the scene to Dungeness. On the right, the majority of the canvas is consumed from bottom-to-top in thick black impasto with streaks of blue, below a heavy band of red paint [fig.132]. The impression is of a rising wave, or a field on fire: scorched earth, or the “parched” landscape described by Jarman.³¹

At the end of June, a collection of Jarman’s paintings were also included in ‘Stories from the Ground’, as part of the 9th Biennial of Painting at the Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in Belgium [fig.133]. This exhibition addresses “the ecological, material, social, symbolic, and spiritual dimensions of painting, telling stories about today’s globalised world.”³² Six of Jarman’s works are presented in a horizontal line: five black paintings from the 1980s (including *Untitled (Clothes)* from 1989 [fig.34]), and an early mixed media work on paper from 1966 entitled *Study for a Landscape* [fig.134]. Michael Charlesworth has perceived this ecological subject, and anxiety, as metaphorical:

the world (the planet Earth) unable to keep out the damaging invasive forces from outside, just as Jarman’s body, infected with HIV, could not keep on defeating varied bacteria, germs and viruses that normally our bodies keep at bay.³³

²⁸ Mortimer-Sandilands, “Melancholy Natures, Queer Ecologies”, 333.

²⁹ Mortimer-Sandilands, “Melancholy Natures, Queer Ecologies”, 332-333.

³⁰ “Our Earth - Art Exhibition”, Salisbury Cathedral, <https://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/arrangements/our-earth-art-exhibition>.

³¹ Michael Charlesworth notes, in reference to another painting from 1992 (*Prospect Et In Arcadia Ego*), that “summer 1992 at times featured heat, blazing sunshine and consequent intense colouring of an alternately parched and wetted land”. In *Derek Jarman’s Visionary Arts*, 173.

³² “9th Biennial of Painting: Stories from the Ground”, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, <https://museumdd.be/en/exhibition/9e-bi%C3%ABnnale-van-de-schilderkunst>.

³³ Charlesworth, *Derek Jarman’s Visionary Arts*, 152.

He stresses that this is not to undermine Jarman's concern about the natural environment and ecological threat (in fact, he insists, quite the opposite), but instead interprets "a mystical link between microcosm and macrocosm; that is, between soul and world soul (anima Mundi)".³⁴ I, too, interpret Jarman's ecological subject as connected to his experience of HIV-AIDS and to a sense of foreboding, anxiety, isolation, and threat to life: the recurring darkness of his thick, black impasto consuming the canvases in the exhibition at Salisbury Cathedral; the fractured surface of his black paintings as they swallow up his personal ephemera at the Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens. But I also feel that his prescient connection with the subject (and its connection to HIV-AIDS) is less to do with a "mystical link" than with a persistent frustration – one that is increasingly shared and collectively felt – at the systemic failures, human greed, and structural negligence that facilitates this threat of extinction. This was, and remains, the case both in terms of climate change and the outbreak of the AIDS epidemic.

Jarman described that "in the short space of my lifetime I've seen the destruction of the landscape through commercialisation, a destruction so complete that fragments are preserved as if in a museum."³⁵ That these recent exhibitions share his preoccupation with climate change and ecological anxiety reflects not only the prescience of his painting but its deeply personal resonance, and lasting urgency.³⁶ Reflecting on the tree of life imagery in Gallaccio's AIDS memorial, the posthumous fixation on Prospect Cottage and its garden within Jarman's contemporary legacy, and ecological metaphors for HIV-AIDS, Jarman's notion of the natural world dismantled and transplanted into the (institutional) museum context feels especially pertinent. In *Modern Nature*, his published journals documenting the creation of his own garden, he cites the example of the garden at Sissinghurst Castle in Kent (not far from his own Dungeness) – the former home of Vita Sackville-West, a fellow queer radical and former lover of Virginia Woolf:

Sissinghurst, that elegant sodom in the garden of England, is 'heritized' in the institutional hands of the National Trust. Its magic has fled in the vacant eyes of tourists. If two boys kissed in the silver garden now, you can be sure they'd be shown the door.³⁷

This touches precisely upon my earlier analysis of Prospect Cottage in this thesis, and the way in which its re-production, 'saving', and simulation has dominated – and arguably, distorted – the

³⁴ Charlesworth, *Derek Jarman's Visionary Arts*, 152.

³⁵ Jarman, *Kicking the Pricks*, 136-138.

³⁶ It is now a mainstay of major publications to have a section dedicated to this topic. See, for example, The Guardian's 'Climate crisis' tab, which is a permanent feature of the top bar on their homepage: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/climate-crisis>.

³⁷ Jarman, *Modern Nature*, 15; O'Quinn also cites this passage in his discussion of Jarman's *Modern Nature*, and the relationship between temporality and the garden, in "Gardening, History, and the Escape from Time", 121.

public perception of Jarman's practice, diluting the legacy of his painting and its personal significance to his artistic self-identity. When I began my own research for this thesis in 2021, I was influenced by the Garden Museum's central simulation of Prospect Cottage as part of their Jarman exhibition: its two tonnes of shingle imported from Dungeness; the uncanny valley of its replica interior and reproductions; its hauntological traces, and affective design. Most of all, I was troubled by its sterility and the flattening of Jarman's practice (and specifically, his painting) into British politesse via the same 'heritization' he, himself, bemoaned. Just as Jarman imagined the queer spirit of Sackville-West only returning to Sissinghurst "long after the last curious coachload has departed, the tea shoppe closed, and the general public has returned home to pore over the salacious Sundays", I imagined Jarman's sardonic spirit let loose amidst the museum's polished gift shop and gourmet cafe (currently serving a starter of "baked figs, stracciatella, & mint" for £10.50).³⁸ Through my own analysis of Jarman's painting, and by re-situating these works within the ephemeral networks of his queerness and community, his activism and emotional life, and within the expansiveness of his wider artistic practice, I believe we may not only acknowledge but affirm their testimony of queer life and the AIDS crisis in all its essential vitality.

An early and essential influence in the field of queer ecologies is the writer and ecologist Aldo Leopold, who remarked that "one of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds."³⁹ To my mind, the affective sensation of this statement recalls Jarman's description of a world "in fragments, smashed in pieces so fine I doubt I will ever re-assemble them", following his diagnosis with HIV.⁴⁰ This is a quotation I have returned to frequently throughout the writing of this thesis. In both instances, one can acutely feel the raw emotion, loneliness, and wave of grief. It is explosive, propulsive, and still resonant today. It is precisely this urgency and energy that our contemporary remembrance of HIV-AIDS should embody and transmit. As I have acknowledged in this thesis, the AIDS crisis is not over but remains ongoing and equally urgent. Returning to Gallaccio's AIDS memorial – the first in London – I am compelled to consider how it too can affirm a dynamic and evolving remembrance of a virus that continues to affect lives on a global scale, every day. This is to question how we, as a culture, must memorialise in an active way, beyond the stone of monument of culture that so dominates our urban spaces. When over eighty books about HIV-AIDS have been published between 2020-2024, how might our

³⁸ Jarman, *Modern Nature*, 15; "August Sample - Garden Cafe", Garden Museum, <https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/cafe>, accessed 3 August 2024.

³⁹ Aldo Leopold, *Round River* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 165. This quotation is also cited by Mortimer-Sandilands as an epigraph in "Melancholy Natures, Queer Ecologies", 331.

⁴⁰ Jarman, *Kicking The Pricks*, 235.

memorials encourage a socially-active and affective public mourning that echoes the lived experience and testimony of the PWA?⁴¹ The notion of the ‘counter-monument’, which provided an essential framework for my analysis in Chapter III, imagines that such memorials must aim “not to remain fixed but to change [...] not to be ignored by its passersby but to demand interaction; not to remain pristine but to invite its own violation and desecration; not to accept graciously the burden of memory but to throw it back at the town's feet.”⁴² Gallaccio’s intention for this memorial to be a socially-engaged space, and stage, for not only the ongoing exchange of oral histories but social events, suggests its promising potential as a true ‘counter-monument’ to the lived, and live, experience of HIV-AIDS in the UK. In the final chapter of this thesis, I considered a number of paintings in the sitting room of Prospect Cottage – all produced in Jarman’s final years – that contained variations of the inscription ‘Et In Arcadia Ego’: “even in Arcadia [paradise], there I am”. In this way, he imagined – and positioned himself – within the very future we exist in: in this present, in these politics, and in our memorials. Likewise, “the counter-monument asks us to recognise that time and memory are interdependent, in dialectical flux.”⁴³ Speaking in the language of the garden – of nature, and the tree of life – Jarman asserted his intention that “before I finish, I intend to celebrate our corner of Paradise, the part of the garden the Lord forgot to mention.”⁴⁴ When I imagine Gallaccio’s completed memorial, I try to imagine such a corner of paradise: an inclusive, active, living “part of the garden” that takes this Biblical symbol and uses it to centre a continuing, community-led, and socially-activated remembrance of all who were, and are, impacted by HIV-AIDS.

⁴¹ Matteo Pfahler, “Pandemic Publications: On AIDS, COVID, and Books”, Visual AIDS, 1 August 2024, <https://visualaids.org/journal/pandemic-publications>.

⁴² Young, “The Counter-Monument”, 277.

⁴³ Young, “The Counter-Monument”, 294.

⁴⁴ Jarman, *Modern Nature*, 23.

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Appendix

List of Selected Exhibitions

‘Our Earth’

Salisbury Cathedral

Salisbury, UK

20 April–6 October 2024

‘9th Biennial of Painting: Stories from the Ground’

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens

Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium

30 June–6 September 2024

‘Aux temps du SIDA [In the Days of AIDS]’

Strasbourg Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MAMC)

Strasbourg, France

7 October 2023 – 4 February 2024

‘Derek Jarman: Queer’

Amanda Wilkinson Gallery

London, UK

5 October–16 December 2023

‘We Are Queer Britain’

Queer Britain

London, UK

2022–ongoing

‘Radical Landscapes’

Tate Liverpool

Liverpool, UK

5 May–4 September 2022

‘Derek Jarman PROTEST!’

Manchester Art Gallery

Manchester, UK

2 December 2021–10 April 2022

‘Derek Jarman’s Modern Nature’

John Hansard Gallery

Southampton, UK

27 November 2021–26 February 2022

‘Dead Soul’s Whisper (1986-1993)’

Le Crédac

Paris, France

25 September–19 December 2021

‘When yellow wishes to ingratiate it becomes gold’

Amanda Wilkinson Gallery

London, UK

4 June - 7 August 2021

‘More Life’

David Zwirner Gallery

New York, USA

24 June–3 August 2021

‘My garden’s boundaries are the horizon’

Garden Museum

London, UK

24 April–12 July 2020

‘Derek Jarman PROTEST!’

Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA)

Dublin, Ireland

15 November 2019–23 February 2020

‘Shadow Is the Queen of Colour’

Amanda Wilkinson Gallery

London, UK

12 April–22 June 2019

‘Derek Jarman Pandemonium’

Somerset House / King’s College London

London, UK

23 January–9 March 2014

‘Black Paintings’

Amanda Wilkinson Gallery

London, UK

15 October - 22 December 2013

‘Derek Jarman: Brutal Beauty’

Serpentine Gallery

London, UK

23 February - 13 April 2008

‘Derek Jarman: A Portrait’

Barbican Art Gallery

London, UK

9 May–18 August 1996

‘Evil Queen’

Whitworth Art Gallery

Manchester, UK

8 September–5 November 1994

‘Derek Jarman: Queer’

Manchester Art Gallery

Manchester, UK

16 May–28 June 1992