

Jewellery, An Archive of Queer Space

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates jewellery through the concepts of queer identity and queer space to understand the relevance of the identity, materiality and scale of this object to the queer archive. Three forms of the queer archive are proposed, which consider the memory recall, materiality and production of jewellery. The research is driven by nine interviews to explore the queer experience of making and wearing jewellery, introduced with portraits of the participants. Concepts have been employed from texts that explore queer studies, queer space and archiving. I, as author and maker, have produced a series of jewellery objects to explore the materialisation of these concepts; the made objects are a product of the research and represent an addition to the queer archive. The intimate and tactile nature of the research has been demonstrated as a valuable approach that should be employed to broaden our understanding of the queer archive.

Keywords: *jewellery, making, phenomenology; queer archive; queer space.*

INTRODUCTION



Figure 1: Lemon's assortment of steel and silver earring hoops.

"For me jewellery was basically the free plastic toys that came with ice cream, but then it became more what I wear now, which is steel and silver. I had a big collection of jewellery pieces, but I stopped wearing most of it because, after my 27th birthday, I realised metal hoops were the best for me. I never lose them because of their hook, and I consider them very sexy and agender. I started wearing hoops when I went to queer techno parties because I wanted something sexy and functional that suited the environment. I don't wear my old pieces anymore, but I keep them as a memorable collection...I'm not sure if I'll wear the old pieces again." (Lemon)

Lemon's recounting of when they started wearing jewellery illustrates how notions of 'jewellery' and 'queer space' can be explored in this research and why they might be relevant to each other. While Lemon describes a space as 'queer techno parties', this appears to have a sense of liminality as the moment in time, not simply the physical space, is considered queer. In Betsky's text *Queer Space*, they describe New York's

gay nightclubs as spaces formed by ephemeral moments in time seen in 'rhythm and light', and elements that appear and disappear (1997, p.5). In a similar vein, jewellery is an object that allows people to recall specific moments in time and space in a talismanic manner. Lemon's story refers to desire and gender, hinting at valuable insights that jewellery can provide into queer identities and space as archive. A description of the queer archive by Brouwer as extending beyond the physical 'toward the symbolic, the immateriality of imagining, the forces of affect' (2014) encourages us to consider the archival significance of Lemon's story beyond the tangible physicality of the item (Figure 1), and additionally to investigate the broader forces in action relating to the jewellery object.

This paper investigates jewellery through the concepts of queer identity and queer space to understand the relevance of the identity, materiality and scale of this object to the queer archive. Three forms of the queer archive are proposed: worldbuilding, materiality and production of jewellery. First, jewellery is understood for its reconciling and worldbuilding capabilities as part of the queer archive of assorted objects. The wearing of jewellery in the context of a heteronormative culture is considered as self-reflexive and transgressive forms of queer worldbuilding. Secondly, jewellery's materially transformative qualities are analysed in relation to its malleability, relationship to the body and its reproductive capabilities, which will be considered in the scaled-up application of jewellery to architecture and landscape. Finally, the physical space and the body of the maker are interpreted as sites of production that counter heterosexual notions of public and private. The liminality between wearing and making expands the

role of archivist through to the maker and maker-wearer. To explore the physical materialisation of each of these three readings of the queer archive I have made a series of jewellery objects. Through this process, as author and maker, I have experienced first-hand the theoretical implications of the research in a practical and tactile manner. The made objects are both a research method and a product of the research, representing an addition to the queer archive.

Central to the research are nine interviews with Akash, Andrew, Antony, Carole, Conor, Harpreet, Kyveli, Lemon and Laurence. These interviews seek to understand the queer experience of making and wearing jewellery, by considering its experiential, qualitative idiosyncratic nature. Five of the interviewees are makers, most of whom wear their own pieces and range from people who make jewellery just for themselves to small-scale professional jewellers. The remaining four interviewees do not make jewellery but wear it and are engaged in art and craft-based practices such as pottery. The interviews lasted approximately an hour each and were loosely structured, allowing for an informal conversation that did not explicitly question if and how jewellery is an archive of queer space, but rather explored these topics intuitively. A series of photographic portraits is presented to allow the reader to witness the intimate nature of the conversations and my personal approach to themes of jewellery and queer space.

As author, I interpreted the interviews by drawing on Charles Morris' theory of the queer archive as debris-like (2012) and José Esteban Muñoz's 'minoritarian performance' that allows for queer worldbuilding (1996) through concepts such as Lauren Berlant and

Michael Warner's *Queer Counterpublic* (1998). The body-object relationship is explored through Sara Ahmed's phenomenological notions of positioning and orientation (2006), and Lucas Crawford's 'Transgender Architectonics' (2020), within the context of a heteronormative society where sex and intimacy are regarded by Jack Halberstam as private and non-reproductive acts that can be celebrated as 'failed' (2011). As with the interviews, the texts do not discuss jewellery as an archive of queer space specifically, however they explore broader notions of queer space or of jewellery individually. The recent emergence of the *Journal of Jewellery Research* in 2018 is a development in this underexplored field of study where there is latent potential for research through the complementary nature of the queer archive and jewellery that is exemplified in Lemon's story. Thus, this research attempts to develop a new area of scholarship at the intersection of queer studies, phenomenology and architecture, emerging from the scale of the wearable jewellery object and expanding to capture its social implications.

INTIMATE INTERVIEW MOMENTS



Figure 2: Kyveli at home with their jewellery. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetsee-Barral, 2023.

“I love playing with fire and I love metals. I love how you can shape them, melt them down, make something, melt it again, they are so malleable. So, when I’m making, I’m also thinking, how am I making justice to this element? Is it pieces that can live through time or is it something that lasts a season and it’s chucked out? I hate making things that are for instant gratification.”

- Kyveli



Figure 3: Lemon showing their rings and bangles. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetsee-Barral, 2023.

“One of my favourite people in the world, Michalis, brought this ring for me in the Canary Islands. It’s not a mood ring but looks like it. He went there with another friend; they are together now, and they bought one for them and one for me. And I don’t know, I thought it was really cute, and I wasn’t expecting that. It’s like I was there with them as well and they thought not about buying me something they didn’t have but something the three of us would have.”

- Lemon



Figure 4: Andrew and a brass candlestick. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.

“These are my perfect hoops which I spent ages looking for. I need pliers to remove them. The one time I took them off was in a medical exam because I was scared of being judged for being gay and taking them out was a real sign of how I had to assimilate, and something I had to confront with myself. Do I want to do that again? And I actually don’t.”

- Andrew



Figure 5: Antony and their custom-made beaded harness. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.

“There has to be a better way of expressing skimpiness and masochism and that’s how I got to a bead chain. I thought I could make fetish wear that isn’t chunky. Now I think I know how to make things that look sexual, are constrictive but still look elegant. And I think that’s where the jewellery story for me evolved from...I want to make it seem that you are tied into your jewellery but not seem super masochistic.”

- Antony



Figure 6: Akash holding a cast aluminium piece I made. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.

“What are your considerations when wearing jewellery?”

“I feel like I don’t think about it that much, aside from something like say exercise. But I’ve lost of earrings partying. 22 carat earrings! But everything I else I haven’t lost. Earrings are the worst because you don’t realise you’ve lost them till after the fact.”

“I know I’ve lost many too.”

- Akash



Figure 7: Carole showing me her necklaces. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.

“Do you ever wear rings?”

“Well, I have a wedding ring, but I don’t wear it, even though technically I’m not divorced. My relationship wasn’t a very happy one.”

- Carole



*Figure 8: Harpreet holding gold jewellery inherited from her family.
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“In India gold is passed down through generations in marriage, sometimes it’s melted and re-used for wedding rings for example. We have a family jeweller in Southall who does all this for us. My grandma dished out her gold before she passed away...there’s a much less taboo attitude to death and inheritance in Indian culture which encourages people to pass on their precious valuables while they’re alive.”

- Harpreet

AN ARCHIVE OF ASSORTED MEMORIES AND LIMINAL IDENTITIES



Figure 9: An assortment of Andrew's objects cast in pewter. See Figures 12-16. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.

When speaking with interviewees who are not jewellery makers, they presented a collection of assorted jewellery items. Andrew's possessions are presented in Figure 9 through a single cast piece of pewter capturing an assemblage of objects he described as 'talismanic'. He talked through their selection by recalling past moments in time when he acquired each item, elaborating on a mix of emotions this raised. The recall of memories spanned undefined timescales, ranging from recent life events, for example Andrew's purchase of a gold hoop earring as a gay man in Cairo, Egypt, where homosexual people are persecuted, to broader narratives of their relationship to jewellery, such as how Andrew negotiates his relationship to the family's jeweller in Cairo. The timespans relating to each jewellery item are idiosyncratic and when read together they represent an assortment of time periods that support Morris' understanding of a queer archive as 'copious and contradictory holdings and ostensible detritus' (2021, p.51). The debris-like composition that Morris describes and is exemplified by Andrew is fundamental in a reading of jewellery as an archive of queer space and an analysis of the context of each archival item allows for the queer qualities to be teased out, as further illustrated in my discussions with Lemon when presenting their plastic ring:

"I have a memory of this ring given by a stranger, at a café bar in Athens where many parties were held and it is frequented by a smoker's political party, a kind of satirical organisation, as well as where chess is played. It's one of the first places where I go for a drink in Athens for some reason, although not necessarily my favourite place. I remember going with my friend Julia and when we went to the bathroom, we found the ring under the sink. No one was looking for the ring, and we allowed time for the owner to find it but nothing....so we kept it! It was an uneventful day, but the ring made it eventful." (Lemon)



Figure 10: Lemon's ring they encountered on in a bathroom in Athens. Copyright: Lemon Gianniri, 2022.



Figure 11: Brass bangle gifted to Akash. Copyright: Akash Sharma, 2022.

The context that Lemon recalls is composed by a scattering of objects and actions that is realised by the encounter with the jewellery item, illustrated in Figure 1. Broadly, the spatial context is one that is familiar to Lemon and where queers meet. The waiting for the rightful owner indicates an undefined moment in the ownership of the ring that Lemon and their friend are caught in, as well as an intimate and possibly exciting

connection to an unknown person. Finally, under its new ownership, the ring will form part of a new assortment of objects, each with their specific spatial context that might relate to queer spaces and queer identities and as such Lemon acts both as wearer and as archivist.

Antony explained how in queer or straight spaces, such as nightclubs, jewellery allows him to express their presence as a queer person, representing an act of worldbuilding in the queer archive. This act of expression, explained Antony, was not merely a means to be attractive to others but an inward motion to feel satisfaction in the free expression of his identity in that context. Jewellery, as exemplified in this case, allows the wearer to negotiate with an outward image of himself, in sexual terms or otherwise, that goes beyond the conventionally heterosexual notions of sex as a reproductive act that Halberstam celebrates as 'failed' in 'Queer Art of Failure' (2011, p.73). George Simmel's writing acknowledges that adornment is an inward act that is ultimately driven by our perception of ourselves through the context in which we exist: 'One adorns oneself for oneself but can do so only by adornment for others' (Greater than or equal to, 2013). Whilst in Simmel's writing the 'other' is referent to other people, perhaps a queer reading of this through Halberstam's celebration of othered and failed queer forms of intimacy can consider the 'other' as queer identities and queer sideways relations. Therefore, we can understand jewellery as the wearer's means to negotiate their context by developing an identity through self-understanding and in relation to other queer people.

The context of queer bodies in space is referenced by Kyvely: “in queer spaces I have entire conversations about the pieces I’m wearing because there is an openness and curiosity but also because people are interrogating the same ideas...I’ve had conversations in the middle of a dance floor about the earrings I’ve made!” The notion of context in assembling the queer archive is described by Muñoz as: ‘fleeting moments and performances that are meant to be interacted with by those within its epistemological sphere’ (1996, p.6). The shared context of the wearer and viewer exemplified in Kyvely’s commentary of other queer people’s interest in their jewellery is key in establishing the object’s epistemological sphere and the significance of the relationship of object-subject-context. This relationship is discussed by Ahmed in her writing in ‘Queer Phenomenology’: ‘Bodies as well as objects take shape through being oriented toward each other, as an orientation that may be experienced as the cohabitation or sharing of space’ (2006, p.552). Within the wider context of a heteronormative society, the nature of a space in which jewellery is worn and the presence of queer people in it enables jewellery to be recognised as a queer archive of that very space, thus recognising and affirming ‘queer life worlds’, considered by Hailey Otis and Thomas Dunn as fundamental to the act of queer worldbuilding (2021, p.1).

In contrast to the acceptability of queerness experienced by Antony and Kyvely’s in nightclubs, Andrew elaborates on their experience of wearing earrings as a man in the context of Egypt: “It is a statement...you are saying something about yourself that is in contrast of the society that you live in.” The wearing of jewellery here represents a subversion of the

‘correct’ heterosexual positioning of desire that we are continuously reminded of. According to Ahmed (2006), the spatial positioning of cultural artefacts, such as family photos and love songs, is a constant visual and auditory reminder of the correct positioning of desire against which Andrew is transgressing, as a gay man in Cairo. Analysing the assortment of Andrew’s items in Figure 12 exemplifies how Ahmed’s reference to the heteronormative positioning of cultural artefacts is one that indeed does not have the flexibility to accommodate the debris-like nature of the queer archive. Both Andrew’s transgressive act and Antony’s notion of wearing jewellery as a means of self-understanding can be understood through Muñoz’s queer text *Disidentifications* (1999), in being everyday rituals and performative acts that form transformational politics. The wearing of jewellery, when considered in context, can be interpreted as a minoritarian performance where the elaboration of queer forms of desire is an act of queer worldbuilding (Muñoz, 1999), in doing so creating queer space by means of an object.

Interviews demonstrated the role of jewellery in queer worldbuilding through its ability to reconcile assorted identities that can be conflicting and illogical as they continuously change over time. As Kyvely elaborated: “Jewellery helps me make sense of different parts of my identity that often don’t make sense together.” Kyvely went on to explain how their upbringing across cultures and continents has led to them having many parts to their identity which can also be read as ‘copious and contradictory’ (Morris, 2012, p.51). The assorted identities and forms of intimacy that queer people enact are not centred around familial or financial forms of reproduction and can therefore be considered, albeit positively, a failed form of intimacy

that invest in 'sideways' relations according to Halberstam (2011, p.73). The reconciling of othered and failed identities in an object means jewellery items can subvert normative expectations of gender and sexual identities, as the wearer can make sense of conflicting aspects of their history: "having something so physical on you that is so universal brings together the whole version of yourself. It's a move away from occupying different identities" (Andrew). Whilst the multiplicity of different versions of oneself is an inherent part of queerness and the queer archive, a reading of jewellery for its reconciling capabilities seems an apologetic act of repair that is overly referent to heterosexual culture. Perhaps, then, we must foreground the idiosyncratic intentions of these cases and celebrate their debris-like nature, such as in the interviews carried out where it appears the participants are attempting to make sense of their identities for their own sense of self-understanding, not simply as an outward act of performance or repair.

The final item Akash came to when recounting their acquisition of each piece of jewellery adorning their body was a textured brass bangle shown in Figure 11. This item, they explained, was given to them by a friend they met while working in a department store and who, on their second meeting, surprised them with a jewellery gift. The bangle continues to bring memories of the friendship and represents a moment of generosity: "We just got on really well, I met her husband and her extended family, and she met my mum and my brother! It was such a mutual and natural bond that just occurred, so this bangle obviously reminds me of her". Akash's friend is older, and the gifting of the bangle represents a form of cross-generational acquisition of jewellery, an act that Pointon identifies

as widely present in literature since the seventeenth century (1999). However, imperative to Akash's story is that the friend is just that, a friend, not a blood relation. The forms of cross-generational acquisition Pointon discusses are familial or in reference to notions of family as understood through heterosexual culture, exemplified in the engagement ring. However, the acquisition of Akash's bangle represents a subversion of the 'correct' forms of intimacy and desire that Ahmed argues we are constantly reminded of in heterosexual culture (2006).

More open-ended and talismanic possibilities of jewellery items exist in the act of reappropriating found objects. While a sense of ambiguity of the past exists in lost objects, the finding by the new owner can give the object a new, esoteric meaning by way of the object's unknown talismanic properties. Thinking again about Lemon's encounter with the lost ring in the Athens bar, we can wonder about the emotional reaction of the previous owner on realising their loss. Indeed, this consideration was made by Andrew when recounting their necklace left on the bus home: "I don't mind that I lost it, because it's circulating somewhere, and someone's found a piece of jewellery on the bus, and they can enjoy it and tell the story to someone." The liminal nature of the jewellery item's ownership, the identities of the wearer, and transgressive forms of relating, represent an interwoven and layered scattering of objects that Figures 12-16 attempt to describe through the process of casting. This assortment of objects in the queer archive is composed by the wearer as archivist.



Figure 12 (above): A scattering of Andrew's objects representative of the queer archive. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.

Figures 13-16 (right, clockwise starting top left). Figure 13: The casting of an assortment of objects is produced firstly by creating a negative impression through clay press-tile casting. Figure 14: Objects are pressed into wet clay, from a plaster positive is cast. Figure 15: A high temperature-resistant silicone negative mould is cast. Figure 16: Molten pewter is cast to create a replica of the assortment of objects. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.

AN ARCHIVE OF MATERIALLY TRANSFORMATIVE AND REPRODUCTIVE OBJECTS



Figure 17: Three pewter rings made by casting pewter into hand formed clay. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.



Figure 18: A pewter bangle made by melting three rings (Figure 17) and casting these into hand formed clay. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.

Metal is a materially ephemeral element that can be formed into an almost infinite range of forms and textures through a vast range of techniques including melting, casting, piercing (sawing into shapes) and hammering. Antony discusses metal's malleable and seemingly ambiguous composition by highlighting how a metal object can hold the same shape but have significantly different weights, for example a bangle made from pewter (a heavy lead-based alloy) versus sterling silver (a comparatively light material). In a similar logic, the material ephemerality of metal allows for the same weight to be articulated in different forms and textures, as demonstrated in Figures 17 and 18. The material ambiguity of jewellery items is discussed by Pointon where they elaborate on how the jewel 'both occludes and mirrors, hides and reveals: the light it gives off through refraction and reflection makes it appear the object of my look/eye, but its glittering impenetrability recalls the opacity of the gaze' (1999, p.5). While Pointon refers to the translucency of precious stones, the same sense or ambiguity can be interpreted in the malleability and composition of metal jewellery.

The malleability and extensive material possibilities of metal jewellery are celebrated by Kyvely in their combined role as maker-wearer. Kyvely explains how they make a unique outfit every time they go out to a party: "I will always change something about my outfit when I go out [...] and I sometimes at the last minute come up with an idea for a [jewellery] piece and quickly get out my tools to make it." Heidegger's 'characteristic of being' could be used as a means to interpret the identity of the jewellery object as it considers this identity to be formed by the function it

provides to the user rather than by a contextual value (Ahmed, 2006). Indeed, the jewellery item can be interpreted for its queer characteristics as materially ephemeral, rather than as a static, wearable, or possibly valuable object simply in monetary terms. The materially transformative capabilities of metal jewellery speak to Muñoz's description of the queer archive as not composed of visible evidence, but existing as 'innuendo...fleeting moments and performances that are meant to be interacted with by those within its epistemological sphere' (1996, p.6). Muñoz's interpretation of a queer archive is one that is undefined and open-ended, characteristics it shares with the malleability and infinite form-finding qualities of metal.

The interplay between the permanence and impermanence of the body and of the object can allow us to interpret jewellery as an extension of bodily matter. As interviewee Kyvely recounts: "I find that in a queer space someone is more likely to be drawn to me [...] the object helps me build relationships as it is an extension of me." The interest by others in Kyvely's wearing of jewellery is driven by the intuitive recognition that the object is an extension of the body. This material relationship of jewellery to the body is contrasted by Holcomb, Benzel and Art who discuss: 'Jewellery's perceived durability allows it to stand as a permanent trace of the impermanent body, a material presence for the stubbornly immaterial.' (2018, p.23). Further, they consider this difference in permanence as jewellery's 'rebutal to corporeal decay' (2018, p.21). However, by interpreting the body together with jewellery as inherent spatial matter, we can preclude differences in permanence that are merely based on

tangible longevity and consider the identities of the body and the object together instead. Crawford's writing on '*Transgender Architectonics*' (2020) celebrates the trans*¹ body for its materially transformational capabilities, both in physical and identity terms, and when considered with the materially transformative qualities of metal jewellery, we can imagine the fusing of both into a single being. The nature of the trans* body allows for the materially transformative qualities of jewellery to extend the queer archive from the space through the object and to the body.

When discussing their making practices, Laurence commented: "Metal is a really unforgiving material to work with, but you can melt it and start from scratch if you need to, in that way it's its saving grace." Laurence's observation highlights the reproductive nature of metal jewellery which allows for the continued existence of the same matter, albeit in infinite possibilities of forms and textures. In the re-transformation of jewellery, such as through melting and recasting, the quantum of matter in jewellery is not being expanded or prolonged, rather it is metamorphosing to a new form in an act self-reproduction, as exemplified in Figures 17 and 18. The transformative and reproductive capabilities of metal jewellery present an ironic and queer response to Berlant and Warner's idea of heterosexual forms of intimacy, in their concept of the Queer Counterpublic, by allowing jewellery to adapt and morph into different objects whilst retaining the same quantum of matter (1998). The Queer Counterpublic is a queer worldmaking project of 'undefinable spaces and incommensurate geographies' that considers how non-

heteronormative forms of intimacy do not relate to capitalist narratives of domestic space, property and reproduction (Berlant and Warner, 1998, p.198). Taking jewellery's reproductive qualities into account, a transgender reading of jewellery at the scale of the building and city could then consider how the same spatial matter can be reused. Modular design approaches, whereby standardised and reusable building components are employed in construction, present a clear and scaled-up translation of jewellery's qualities that can challenge the capitalist forms of reproduction based on financial expansion for more socially, economically and environmentally sensitive design solutions. Jewellery's materially transformative and reproductive qualities present the queer archive's boundless scalability, as Figures 17 and 18 attempt to convey through the simple translation of three rings into a bangle. Referring to Heidegger's characteristic of being at this larger scale whereby the identity of buildings and landscapes is established by their reproductive function, enabled by modular design approaches, we can consider a more dynamic reading of the static and uncritical identity of building materials and programming of spaces. Indeed, the reappropriation of spaces is a characteristic of queer space that evades the neoliberal forces of gentrification, exemplified in Campkin and Marshall's research of shifting of nightclubs through London's neighbourhoods to survive rapidly rising rents (2018). An understanding of the materially transformative and reproductive qualities beyond the jewellery object scale presents interesting applications beyond the material dimension.

1: Trans is a relatively new term that includes all gender identities, such as gender-fluid, gender non-binary and agender (amongst others), alongside the usually considered transgender and transsexual identities (OED Online).*

AN ARCHIVE OF QUEER SITES OF PRODUCTION



Figure 19: Pewter rings cast by implanting a stick into ground in my back garden to create the mould. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.

The combined making and wearing of jewellery items emerged as an undefined liminality in the interviews with makers. Conor asks clients to recall memories of items, moments, spaces and people so these can be captured as a snapshot in a personal item that is intimately tied to the wearer. Laurence explained how they have used materials based on their own memories, for example using coral and seashell from their native Western Australia. The capability to transfer memories from maker to wearer in a material yet implicit manner is unique to the maker-wearer. Indeed, when questioned about the implicit significance of the jewellery object, Laurence explained that, although they identify as queer, they do not explicitly design queer ideas into their work; rather their work is intuitively queer coded through layers of metaphors and personal histories such as the liminality of queer spaces and memories imbued by materials respectively. This transition between making and wearing can be experienced in a more beguiling manner, as discussed by Kyvely who transports themselves to environments of encounter that might be starkly distinct from the environment of making, exemplifying the talismanic properties of jewellery. In one particular example in my discussion with Kyvely, they described the making of a breastplate in the Greek island of Anafi:

“Everyone was just naked on the beach, a vision of beautiful bodies on the beach inspired the breastplate, and every time I wear it, I bring this vision back to life.”
(Kyveli)



Figure 20: Kyveli's breastplate worn in the site of production, Anafi, Greece. Copyright: Kyveli Vlahakis, 2022.

The experience of maker-wearers demonstrates how jewellery items build on the liminalities of time in the queer archive by allowing people to experience a liminality between making and wearing. Winther's 'Maker's Move' jewellery street project (Nygaard and Winther, 2018) exploits this unique liminality by connecting wearers to memories by making objects that resemble spaces and objects recounted by street participants. As Nygaard and Winther explain: 'Jewellery and objects have the power to combine the past with the present time, making lost moments apparent again... As such, objects have the ability to serve as living proof to the liminal spaces of time, culture, personal and social identities' (2018, p.78). The Makers Move project and experiences recounted by the interviewees, as maker-wearers, demonstrate how the talismanic and liminal qualities of jewellery are materialised in the overt and implicit acts of making and wearing. The rings I cast in my back garden (Figure 19) illustrate these liminal qualities as jewellery items with a form and texture specific to the context at that point in time. The moisture content in the soil evaporates upon contact with the molten pewter, resulting in a unique texture on the outside of the item (Figure 22). The stick available at the point in time to me as maker generates the inside form and texture (Figure 23). The act of casting the ring in my back garden establishes a connection to the site that is then recalled in the wearing of the ring. Therefore, the ring acts as a symbol of the sites of production; that of landscape conditions and the maker's body. The wearing of the ring speaks to Kyvely's experience of wearing their breastplate, as a talismanic item that brings the vision of production back to life (Figure 20).

The makers interviewed operate at a small scale and this is reflected in the site of production, such as Antony, Kyvely and Laurence who either share a studio with other queer makers or produce in their own home. The sites of manufacture, due to the small and intimate scale of production, are personal and/or private spaces, and the blurring of the public and private can allow the jewellery to be interpreted as a product of queer worldmaking. In Berlant and Warner's concept of the Queer Counterpublic, they argue there is no distinction between the outside and the home and that this is reflected in queer forms of intimacy where sex is not regarded as a purely private act (1998). Conor's recounting of an order for a custom-made silver cock ring demonstrates the blurring of private and public that the queer maker is able to experience:

"I've made a few cock rings for people so that's intimate I'd say, because it's private [...] there's a level of comfortability when they come to talk to me about something like that...I've had to send my dick pics to guys so that they can understand how it fits. Part of the customer service is sending pics of my cock! It was funny that he was like 'can I see it from the left, from below, can you lift it up'." (Conor)

The object in question, illustrated in Figure 21, hints to and carries what is proximate to the maker as a bodily site of production where sex is not merely relegated to private and domestic spheres. Ahmed argues that the object, in general terms, demonstrates what is proximate to the subject (2006, p.150) and considering the maker as subject can explain how a jewellery item carries a figment of the queer maker's blurred space of production; the jewellery item is an archive of queer sites of production with the maker as archivist.



Figure 21: Conor's cock ring. Copyright: Conor Joseph, 2022.

My exploration of the blurring of public and private space is materialised as a jewellery object, 'Tactile intimacies' (Figures 25-27), which attempts to gesture non-familial forms of intimacy. The piece is sand cast in aluminium, with a smooth pebble-shaped outer surface that contrasts the inlaid organic textures of my housemates Tsari and Michalis' knee and thigh respectively. The piece exists as inanimate sculptural object when not worn (Figure 27) but becomes a jewellery object when the wearers enact a gestural position that is queerly intimate (Figure 26), whereby sexual relations are not necessitated. To generate the skin texture specific to the intended wearers, the knee and thigh were cast with Modroc, a process that required moments of intimacy between me as maker and the wearers (Figure 25). The wearers' legs had to be exposed for the maker to lubricate them and apply layers of modroc bandage cast, leaving it to dry and then carefully removing it to minimise pain and hair removal. 'Tactile intimacies' materialises and immortalises queer forms of intimacy through gesture between Michalis, Tsari and me as maker and by extension establishes the maker as archivist. Bentur (2020) advocates for the designing of gestures as outcomes in jewellery and the blurring of public and private spaces allows for a gestural embodiment of queer sites of production in jewellery objects, as attempted in 'Tactile intimacies'. The explicit nature the maker's blurring of public and private spaces is explicitly communicated in the case of Conor's cock ring, in terms of physicality and meaning. Where production does not allow for a direct and intimate dialogue between maker and wearer, this questions the degree to which jewellery can remain an archive of

queer space at a larger scale. In any case, the individual experiences of the maker and wearer with the object are highly unique and subjective. Conor's account serves as an anecdote from which the theoretical basis of the queer archive can be sited yet not extrapolated to understand the possible extent of queer experiences of archival objects. The idiosyncratic conditions of Conor's account and of my experience in producing 'Tactile intimacies' exemplifies how jewellery as a queer archive of sites of production is reliant on the intimate and personal relationship between the maker and wearer.



Figures 22-24 anticlockwise starting top left. Figure 22: A stick is implanted into the ground. Figure 23: Molten pewter is poured. Figure 24: The ring's outer and inner textures are formed by that of the ground and the stick respectively. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.

The blurring of spaces characteristic of queer sites of production enriches the meaning of wearing jewellery. The binary forms of intimacy found public and private spaces that Berlant and Warner argue are emblematic to heterosexual culture (1998) can be paralleled with that of the sacred inner identity and the outward body, forms that have also been historically reflected in ancient Greece and in the Bible. This historical binary distinction has resulted in a pejorative view of adornment as a gratuitous materialisation of the outward appearance and its associated objects, such as jewellery (Holcomb, Benzel and Art, 2018). A bodily site of production that blurs the public and private can then also blur the binary of the inner identity and outward body so that the aesthetic quality of jewellery is not merely understood as superfluous. Indeed, Conor's cock ring is an object whose aesthetic expands beyond the tangible and visible characteristics of the item through to qualities of the body and of identity that are intimate and implicit. When considered with jewellery's reconciling, talismanic and transformative capabilities more broadly, the function of jewellery as adornment can be recognised as fundamental to the queer archive.



Figure 25: Modroc casting is an intimate process between the wearers, Michalis and Tsari, and the me as maker. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.



Figure 26: The jewellery object encourages a bodily gesture that expresses queer forms of intimacy. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.

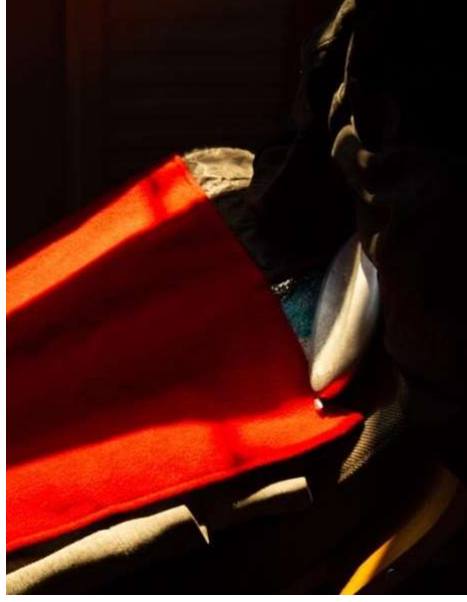


Figure 27: When not worn, the jewellery object exists as a sculptural object. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.

CONCLUSION



Figure 28: Lemon's rings. Copyright: Xan Xacobo Goetzee-Barral, 2023.

The memory-recalling, worldbuilding, transformation and production of jewellery have been examined to understand how the jewellery object can be read as part of the archive of queer space. Interviews have been interrogated alongside theoretical concepts of queer space to promote an underdeveloped area of research that has potential for application at multiple scales. The act of making jewellery has allowed these notions to be explored in practice and communicated with a sense of texture. Therefore, the intimate and tactile nature of the research has been demonstrated as a valuable approach that should be employed to broaden our understanding of the queer archive.

As researcher, maker and wearer, the experience of interviewing and making has offered me a sense of intimacy with the subject matter that speaks to Brouwer's description of the queer archive as 'the forces of affect' (2014). A similar sentiment is expressed by Lemon at the end of our interview:

"I used to think jewellery can be anything I wear. I want jewellery to be part of my daily life, in any space I go."

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