

THE CLUB'S CONCEPTION

(or How the Egg Was Cracked)

4 May - 1 June 2019

Intervention Architecture and Ryan Kearney

Participants: Angela Gilraine, Anne Ellen, Bernard Shaw, Darren Haywood, Cherub, David Westwood, Graham Beards, Peter Bates, Phil Oldershaw, Steve Weaver

The Club's Conception (or How the Egg Was Cracked) is an exhibition which looks to retrace the past venues of Birmingham's longest-running queer space, The Nightingale Club. In collaboration with those who attended its three preceding venues, Intervention Architecture and Ryan Kearney map these spaces from recollections, replacing absent photographs while positioning personal and collective narratives within archival significance.

Founded as a member's association in 1969, The Nightingale Club leased a two-up, two-down house on Camp Hill. Much like a home, visitors requested entry and could be denied, reflecting the necessitated subtlety of early queer establishments. Following a compulsory purchase order in 1975, the venue moved to a working men's club on Witton Lane, before taking up residence in a fishing association on Thorp Street in 1981, where it remained until it was sold in 1994. The club's previous sites reflect ongoing threats of regeneration in Birmingham's LGBTQ+ community, and the need to shift, occupy and adapt heteronormative structures while providing important spaces for queer people.

The Club's Conception (or How the Egg Was Cracked) consists of armatures which carry the participant's sketches and their culmination as architectural renderings, models illustrating the club's structures based only on recollections and text which blends descriptions of walls, floors, doors and windows.

Using architecture as a point of departure, the exhibition confronts the problematics of a queer venue. Initially run for and by gay men, it was only in the mid-1990s that women could become members of The Nightingale Club, something which is reflected by the ratio between men and women in the project's list of participants. Prior to becoming a member, women would need to be signed in by and have their drinks purchased for them by a male member. While eventually permitted entry, participants describe entire rooms being annexed by female attendees, creating a safer space within a so-called safe space.

The contents of this project and its preliminary research will be contributed to the city's LGBT archive held at the Library of Birmingham.

PROGRAMME

Workshop: Campania, an explanation and a history
Saturday 18 May, 2-4PM

During this workshop, participants will consider the characteristics of a queer country through brainstorming, sketching, mapping and conversation.

Intervention Architecture Ltd (IA) is an interdisciplinary design studio based in Birmingham. Their way of working is collaborative and open, to enable extensive exploration of ideas, an inherent appreciation for craft, and the value of workmanship and materials. Recent artistic projects include *Ways of Learning*, Grand Union (2018); *Pavillion Babs*, Next Generation Design (2017); and *FLUX*, Centrala (2017). Intervention Architecture is currently shortlisted for the Arts & Science Sculpture Commission at University of Birmingham.

Ryan Kearney (b. 1995) is an independent writer and curator based between London and Birmingham. His on-going research centres on participatory and socially engaged curatorial practices. Ryan's writing has appeared in this is tomorrow and In The Pink, a publication launched by Grand Union and SHOUT Festival in November 2018. Recent projects include *Three Models for Change*, STRYX (2018); *Rainbow Flag / Trojan Horse: Ian Giles*, Recent Activity (2018); and *Queering the Archive*, Recent Activity (2017).

Special thanks to Polly Brant

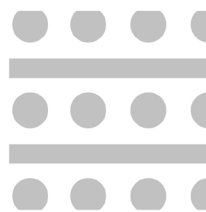




Dance Floor



Stage



Pool Room



Restaurant



Bar



Men's WC



Women's WC



Charities

- 1 50 Camp Hill (1969 - 1975)
 - i. Sketches by Bernard Shaw, Steve Weaver and Graham Beards
 - ii. Planometric of venue
 - iii. Sketches by Anne Ellen, Peter Bates, Phil Oldershaw, Cherub, Angela Gilraine, David Westwood and Graham Beards
 - iv. Planometric of First Floor
- 2 10-12 Witton Lane (1975 - 1981)
 - i. Sketches by Bernard Shaw, Steve Weaver and Graham Beards
 - ii. Planometric of venue
- 3 37-40 Thorp Street (1981 - 1994)
 - i. Sketches by Anne Ellen, Peter Bates (Draft), Peter Bates, Phil Oldershaw, Cherub, Angela Gilraine, David Westwood, Darren Haywood and Graham Beards
 - ii. Planometric of Ground Floor
- 4 Models of 50 Camp Hill, 10-12 Witton Lane and 37-40 Thorp Street
- 5 Text descriptions of venues

