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EDITORIAL

RECENTLY, TRAVELLERS AND visitors passing through Oslo's Central Station (Oslo S) – the busiest and most visited public building in Norway – could rest their weary eyes on large, imposing artworks by Norwegian-Sudanese queer artist Ahmed Umar, who was in fact the cover artist of a previous issue of *lambda nordica* (see Umar 2021). Each picture in his series of eight black and white photos, titled *Carrying the Face of Ugliness*, shows the artist standing in front of another person, benevolently hiding their face, making their identity unknown. Umar assumes a protective yet vulnerable stance before them, staring defiantly at us, or at least at someone. The Oslo S exhibition, part of a national public art project in public transport hot spots titled *Kunstreisen* (Art Travel), showed four of Umar's photos, with accompanying texts introducing the anonymized individuals and their stories in a subjective format. As the first openly gay man in Sudan and a recognized artist living abroad in Norway, Umar's objective with *Carrying the Face of Ugliness* was to lend his face and position to queers in Sudan, where homosexuality remains illegal, and support the collective struggle for liberation and dignity (Kunstreisen 2022).

This issue's cover art, *A Butch Is a Butch Is a Butch Is a Butch* by Norwegian lesbian performance choreographer duo Marte Reithaug Sterud

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and Ann-Christin Kongsness, similarly points to artistically performed defiant queer existence. The photo is a still from their performance piece of the same title, part of the series *Butch Tribute*, which has been performed widely in Scandinavia. As they write in this issue: "The term 'butch' is used to describe masculine women in the queer community, an often marginalised and ignored group. *Butch Tribute* is an artistic and political work that explores what a butch is and can be."

Territorialization, spatial occupation, disruptive visibility – these are but a few of the ways to conceptualize focal strategies in any queer liberatory project, past or present. Other concepts often appropriated in queer research are those of constellations (Gieseking 2020), monumentality (Dunn 2016), heritage (Immonen 2022), archives (Brunow 2020), and memorials (Zebracki & Leitner 2022). What they have in common, by and large, is that they index a veritable surge of interest in interdisciplinary queer and LGBTQ+ studies. Stories and evidence, however ephemeral or tacit, of queer life past and present, intimate and public, individual and collective, are vital for imagining queer futures otherwise and devising strategies on how to get there, wherever or whatever *there* might be. To this effect, the contributions in this issue present us with a diverse set of exciting research and reflections that indicate possible itineraries to think with and maybe even act on.

This issue of the *lambda nordica* journal contains three research articles, a *Cover Art* and a *We're Here* contribution, that each speak to the theme of territorialization in its many queer manifestations, in transnational yet localized contexts: Sweden, Norway, Finland, the US, and Brazil. Three reviews conclude this issue – one on a recent handbook in queer and trans feminisms in performance, one on a recent PhD thesis on intimate partner violence in lesbian and queer relationships, and one on a collection of essays on queer memories.

The first research article, "Policing the Park: Sex Panic and Policy Making in Fresno, California" by Kathryn Forbes and Kris Clarke, discusses the historical roots of sex panic and the criminalization of same-sex erotic activity in Fresno, a major city in inland California, with a specific focus on the 2002 lewd conduct sting operation known

as Operation Protect Our Children. The authors show that, despite broad acceptance of LGBTQ+ rights, stigma against same-sex erotic activity persisted, especially when vaguely linked to (the protection of) children and driven by metanarratives of fear and crime. The operation, which targeted (gay) cruising areas, was unusual in the sense that law enforcement had generally deprioritized such policing. Forbes and Clarke argue that increased carceral budgets in the wake of neoliberal governance led to opportunistic law enforcement efforts, weaponizing stigma to secure more funding. The installation of surveillance cameras in Roeding Park further increased the police budget, with little opposition from elected officials or the community, as the link between cameras and public safety deterred any meaningful resistance. The policing budget continued to grow in subsequent years, reflecting an approach that prioritized investing in police rather than communities to achieve public safety. The article also discusses the underlying policing philosophy, notably the "broken windows" theory of crime from the 1980s, according to which the targeting of small infractions will prevent larger crimes. However, as the article argues, this approach, while purported to mend police–community relationships, in fact provided a broad warrant for expanding state authority, particularly – and not incidentally – in race-class subjugated communities. The practices of surveillance and increased patrolling in Black and Brown poor neighbourhoods are described as generative forces that define community boundaries, reinforcing racial and class-based distinctions in citizenship and justice. The case of Roeding Park illustrates how the democratic intent behind public park establishment has been overshadowed by the neoliberal growth of policing and governing through crime prevention.

In "Articulating Political Feelings: The Social Aesthetics in Feminist Antimilitarism and Queer Environmentalism", Kaisa Lassinaro explores the intersection of performative and aesthetic elements in antimilitarist and ecosocial activism, using as case studies the 1987 protest by the feminist antimilitarists Women for Peace, and a more recent protest action by Extinction Rebellion's queer environmentalists in 2021, both in Helsinki, Finland. By drawing on the ideas of Jacques Rancière,

Judith Butler, and José Esteban Muñoz, the analysis incorporates concepts from social aesthetics, ecofeminist philosophy, and queer ephemerality to argue for shared historical strategies and ethos in political protest. The article emphasizes the connection between intersectional feminism and ecofeminism, highlighting the influence of non-Western and Indigenous knowledges. Importantly, Lassinaro introduces the concept of queer ecology, which disrupts heterosexist narratives, constructing a biosocial awareness based on nonlinear biology.

The second part of Lassinaro's article delves into the formation of feminist and queer positions, rooted in questioning shared perceptions, and a sense of urgency. The polyvocal assembly, representing a diverse range of voices, aligns with Butler's notion of "plural rights". The discussion connects Muñoz's queer theorizing and the ephemerality of performative acts, emphasizing the materiality of the ephemeral in queer politics. The article contends that the aesthetic in activism goes beyond being a byproduct of the culture industry, asserting instead that it plays a crucial role in connecting individuals emotionally and viscerally to larger social and political causes. Lassinaro proposes that political beingness is shaped to a greater extent by senses, collective movement, and performative actions than by reason and factual argumentation. Overall, the article emphasizes the transformative power of social aesthetics in conveying the urgency of political aims, and a sense of connectedness in various forms of activist expression.

The third and final research article, "Minority Stress and Microaggression Experiences among Sexual Minority Women in Sweden", by members of the research group Queer Psychology Sweden, Anna Malmquist, Tove Lundberg, and Matilda Wurm, investigates experiences of minority stress and microaggressions among sexual minority women in contemporary Sweden. Through a deductive thematic analysis of forty-eight interviews, the study reveals that despite Sweden's generally accepting attitude towards same-sex relations, sexual minority women experience distal minority stress and microaggressions in various aspects of their daily lives. The findings challenge the broad-based assumption that the Swedish population is entirely tolerant, emphasiz-

ing the importance of exploring lived experiences to understand the impact of minority stress.

The study identifies common stressors such as verbal abuse, prejudice, and ignorance, with healthcare settings being a notable area of concern. The experiences reported go beyond those indexed by traditional models, introducing the notion of silence as a distal minority stressor, particularly in situations where sexual minority women feel compelled to conceal their identity. Additionally, an intersectional perspective highlights variations among bisexual and non-white participants, indicating that they may feel less safe and included within the LGBTQ community. The authors emphasize the need for policy changes, especially in healthcare, and suggest further research to explore the frequency of experiences among different subgroups of sexual minority individuals. Overall, the article contributes to a nuanced and intersectional understanding of the challenges faced by sexual minority women in Sweden and calls for a more comprehensive examination of the emotional and mental health aspects related to minority stress.

We're Here is this time a text by anthropologist Moises Lino e Silva, titled "Natascha Kellem's Minoritarian Liberalism". Excerpted from his monograph *Minoritarian Liberalism*, it presents an ethnographic critique of the way in which normative liberalism prioritizes the freedom of privileged subjects – typically white, adult, cisheteronormative and bourgeois individuals and communities – at the expense of marginalized populations such as Black and LGBTQ people, children, and slum dwellers. Lino e Silva applies the concept minoritarian liberalism to represent alternative, overlapping forms of freedom advocated by marginalized groups. To this end, he discusses his late friend and interlocutor Natasha Kellem, a charismatic self-declared *travesti*, and through their interconnected experiences, Lino e Silva presents the lived realities of non-normative, circuitous paths to freedom.

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