

Re•Vision

The Centre for Art
and Social Justice

REFLECT

REVOLT

REVEAL

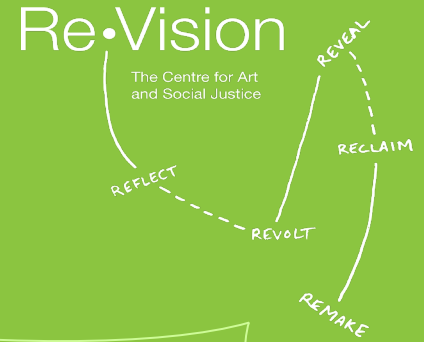
RECLAIM

REMAKE

'Through Thick and Thin'
Queer women speak back to eating
disorder and obesity discourses

Carla Rice, March 16, 2021
EDHIT Research Conference

Agenda & Flow



Introduce research team and methods

Screen films

Share stories told and micro-documentaries made that speak back to assumptions informing expert discourses and practices

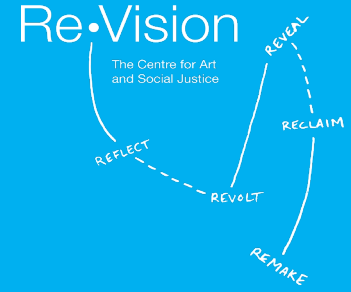
Surface and theorise the toxic operations of weight stigma as “fatmisia” to convey the cumulative intensity of the violence experienced

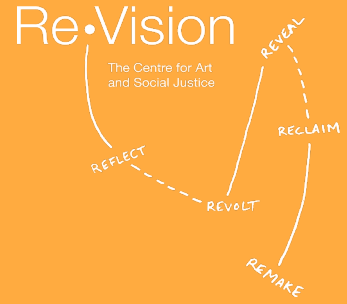
TTT Overview

Research Team (Q & As):
Jen Rinaldi, Lorelee Gillis,
Elisabeth Harrison, Andrea
LaMarre, Jill Andrew, May
Friedman, Margaret
Robinson, Karleen Jiménez,
me

TTT as intervention into
limited representational field
Narratives grounded
in/informed by complex,
unpredictable, and
irreducible embodiments

Health research/practice
pathologize “obesity” &
“eating disorders”, reinforce
sexist, heteronormative body
standards, erase LGBTQ+
communities





Methodology: Interviews & Improvisational Arts Research

In-depth interviews with 24 participants, who occupied varied intersecting marginalized and privileged positions and had complex relationships with queerness, image, food, & fatness

Critical arts-based methods adapted from the Re•Vision Centre: 17 videos yielded from a diversity of creators

'Intersectionality as Process'

**Recruitment Process
Used Strategic
Essentialism &
Privileged Minoritized
Voices**

Recruitment Matrix included gender (cis, trans, non-binary, butch or femme), body size, ED history, disability, race/ Indigeneity; screening questions remained open to self-identifications

Half identified as racialized or Indigenous using descriptors such as "person of color," "mixed," "Indigenous in India," "Indigenous history, Mayan," "black," "Asian," and "white"

Almost all identified as currently or formerly fat, their chosen descriptors including "fat," "big girl," "thick," "chubby," "superfat," "considered big in Asia," "depending," "unsure, curvy, bigger than typical," to "fat but sometimes pass"

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Fatmisia in Healthcare

Melissa: I remember he had opened the door already, so there were other patients in the other cubicles, and they could hear him. And he said to me, 'You need to lose weight and lower this cholesterol, unless you want to die from a heart attack.' And I was kind of taken aback, because we were done—the appointment was done... I said, 'You know, it's really inappropriate to say that to me.' And his response was, 'It's the truth.'

Raine: There were days when I couldn't get out of my bed. There would be days I couldn't walk up stairs. There would be days that tears would be rolling down my face, because of how painful it was.... And I was going into the doctor feeling quite hopeful about perhaps coming up with some ideas to just work with it, and was just provided with, 'You need to lose weight, that's pretty much it. Get out.'...No specific examples of health issues or reasons why or how to modify things, or a referral anywhere else. Just, you need to stop eating, was basically it.

Drake: I had a terrible, terrible vomiting episode, and there was puke everywhere. All over everything. ...The maintenance person asked my friend if she would wipe up the vomit. My friend said, 'No, I'm not going to do that,' which is the right answer. And they just left it there. They left the room. They mopped the floor and left the puke all over my food table—the table I'm supposed to eat off of.



Questions

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What emotions do these stories evoke in you? What are your emotions teaching you?

What are you learning from these stories? What do you know/not know? What do you want to know? What will you tell others about the stories?

What does arts-based work on bodily images and practices offer us that is not captured in existing research about queer (or straight) women's embodiment?

References

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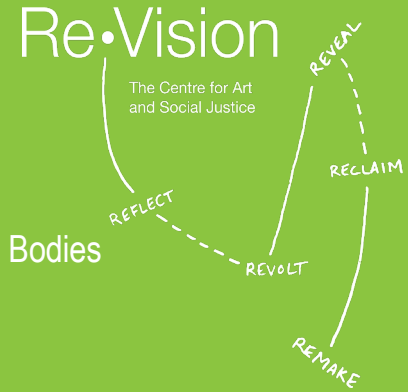
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Why Story?

Story as Methodology/Theory

Story as Methodology

Storied accounts of reality or interpretations of experience ripe for further analysis

Rice & Mundel, 2018

Story as Theory

The truth about stories is that that's all we are... Stories are wondrous things. And they are dangerous.

Thomas King, 2003, pp 2 & 3

Story as Actant

The single story creates stereotypes, & the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.

Chimamanda Adichie, 2010