

**RESEARCH STATEMENT
AUTUMN 2014**

Broadly speaking, my research comprises scholarship, performance, choreography, and teaching as distinct and related modes of inquiry that move across and between Dance Studies, Performance Studies, Porn Studies, and Sexuality Studies. Drawing from queer theory and feminist philosophy, feminist science studies, queer ecologies, posthumanisms, and new materialisms, my primary investments are in rethinking the conditional stability and instability—the relative fixity and mutability—of bodies, sexes, genders, and species, their materialities, their boundaries, their relational constitution, and their capacities to exceed or escape established, given categories. In and through my work, I am committed to interrogating and destabilizing regulatory norms that constrain or foreclose how bodies might live, to proliferating difference—particularly sexual difference—as a multiplicity that cannot be reduced to one or two, and to producing spaces—in language, in classrooms, and in performance—in which difference can appear and receive recognition.

My dissertation examines performances of ecosexuality in three different projects: a performance art work, the Love Art Laboratory (Annie Sprinkle and Elizabeth Stephens, 2004–2011), a pornographic film, *Dangerous Curves* (directed by Carlos Batts, 2010), and a dance, *Rite of Spring* (choreographed by Pina Bausch, 1975). With each project, I analyze the choreographic structures at work and how they organize and generate particular versions of ecosexuality. Working from a broad definition of ecosexualities—orientations towards the intra-activities within which the human is not finally separable from the nonhuman and all sexuality is already populated with that which is not human—I consider how these performances contribute to the thinkability of such sexualities.¹ My claim is that performance can be a critical site for developing innovative views of gender, sex, and sexuality, that each of these performance works configures sexuality in ways that direct attention towards ecological entanglements, and that considering what is already ecological about sexuality carries ethical implications for how we might enable livability for more forms of life.

I have published on the topics of queer ecologies and ecosexualities, and presented research at conferences within a range of disciplines including Dance Studies, Performance Studies, and Queer Studies. In the *European Journal of Ecopsychology*, I participated in a roundtable dialogue discussing the future potential of queer ecologies, how queer theory offers an innovative framework for rethinking ecological relations, and how ecological thinking opens the frame of “queer” to account for more than humans lives. My writing about ecosexual orientations as materializing phenomena is included in the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Dance and Theater*, and has been the focus of a number of conference presentations. For instance, in “When Lesbians Becoming Ecosexuals, Or The Ethical Progression From Queer to Posthuman” (Queer Places, Practices & Lives II, 2014), I trace parallel trajectories in the performance work of Annie Sprinkle and Elizabeth Stephens and the scholarship of Judith Butler to suggest that a posthuman ethics is the necessary outcome to any queer politics oriented towards expanding the livability of more lives. Human lives are not the only lives that matter, and if queer politics are oriented towards the critique of norms that make queer lives unintelligible and unlivable, then these are critiques that must eventually account for the violence of human exceptionalism as well.

While ecosexuality has been the primary focus of my dissertation, publications, and conference presentations, my research has also explored adjacent areas of interest. I have written

¹ I borrow the term “intra-active” from feminist quantum physicist Karen Barad to signify the mutual constitution of agencies, in which distinct agencies do not precede but emerge through their relations. Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 33.

about movement practices that generate posthuman ethics, examining Karl Cronin's *Somatic Natural History Archive* as an active engagement with other species that destabilizes the exclusionary position of the human (Congress on Research in Dance, 2013). In "twincest/body fluids/fluid bodies" (Queer Places, Practices & Lives, 2012), I followed body fluids and fluid exchange as processes with which to think about disindividuation and corporeal openness. Reading intertextually between the performance art piece *body shots* (Jiz Lee and Syd Blakovich, 2006)—which involved extracting, exchanging, and ingesting each other's blood on stage—queer pornography, and my own embodied history as a conjoined twin, body fluids and shared flesh provided sites at which any illusory ideal of a whole, contained, bounded individual body becomes impossible to maintain. I have also presented work that considers the construction of gender and sexuality in the work of ballet choreographers Bronislava Nijinska and Frederick Ashton (Meanings and Makings of Queer Dance, 2011; Midwest Slavic Studies, 2009). From ballet history to performance art, pornography, contemporary movement practices, and my own autobiography, each of these projects examined how bodies are constituted, how sex, gender, sexuality, and species function in the stabilization and destabilization of bodies, and how choreography, movement, fluids, and flesh all point to lines of flight that exceed or escape the gridlock of heteronormative, anthropocentric terms.

Within my performance and choreographic work, I bring my research questions back to bodies—my own, other performers with whom I work, and audiences. My choreography is informed by a range of influences, including 1960s Judson postmodern dance, performance art, burlesque, my studies in feminist philosophy and queer theory, and my training in Japanese Butoh, ballet, and contemporary dance. I have made group and solo dances and performance artworks that have been presented in universities, theaters, art galleries, outdoor and nontraditional spaces, and films. Issues that have motivated my performance work include the boundaries of bodies, interpersonal entanglement and intimacy, public displays of affection, agency and power in sexuality and erotic display, and the instability of the body as processes of becoming. Since 2012, I have been performing queer burlesque as a form of contemporary performance art. As a genderqueer performer, I intentionally perform my incoherent gender—gender that refuses to approximate or pass as female or male—putting my own body on the line onstage in order to introduce more difference and variation onto stages that can otherwise traffic in highly homogenized and hegemonic gender presentations. Burlesque is for me both a stage for social activism and a site for embodied research into the constitution of sexuality, sex, gender, spaces of appearance, and approaches to time. I address burlesque further in the first sample of my artistic work, included in this application.

Areas in which I am particularly interested in deepening my own research and engagement include Transgender Studies, Porn Studies, and ecosexuality as a framework through which to continue to examine the entanglement of sexuality, sex, and gender with inter-species relations, ecologies, and the future of this planet. Each of these fields marks a horizon of relatively new and flourishing interdisciplinary study, and their resonances with one another offer fecund opportunities for critical thinking and emerging scholarship. Specific research projects to which I am attracted include thinking film and video technologies as transgender strategies, theorizing fashion—the garments themselves—as performative in relation to the production of genders, developing ecosexuality as a framework for considering the meta-human genome—the complex collective of microscopic lives that the human body comprises, and exploring choreographies that examine the processes of performativity—repetition, accumulation, and variation—at heightened/perceptible scales.