

Joyously Playing with/in Church

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ABSTRACT

Here you are called to contemplate the antics of Big Gay Church (BGC), considering how the NAEA Queer ritual revels in joyous excess, deploys humor and absurd actions that move participants toward healing damaged psyches and souls. The BGC performing troupe tackles critical social injustices and does so through unexpectedly delightful and irreverent services that confront pain, cruelty, erasure, and abuse. Four or more colleagues have led this scholarly, political and performative inquiry for more than a decade, attempting to replace damaging actions with healing gestures of love, caring comradeship, and contemplative reimagining of what church could be. Perhaps most significantly, this arts-based performative inquiry theoretically celebrates all that is queer, and encourages pre-service art educators and those who guide them to embrace diversity and inclusion while in pursuit of equity and engagement. The manuscript opens by outlining how queer inquiries reclaim unattended lives, expands perspectives, and celebrates queerness for all. The paper then shares an overview of Big Gay Church as an annual academic ritual at the National Art Education Association (NAEA annual meeting, Methods and modes of presentation vary by co-presenter – most building on childhood lived experiences of Church. This second section's illustrated counterpoint to descriptions of a typical presenter's contributions to the BGC service. The third section, describes presenters' varying methods and narratives, and assert this play-group employs farce, irony, and humor while leveling institutional critiques (particularly tackling NAEA's evolving relations with the LGBTQIC+ special interest group. The Conclusion traces BGC service, the pedagogical and historical challenges the group calls congregants to help undertake, and ALWAYS doing so with joy.

KEYWORDS: Human Rights, Social Justice, LGBTQ+, Performative Inquiry, Church, Community, Love, Joy

Setting a Seemingly Sacrilegious Scene

During the annual National Art Education Association (NAEA) convention, a decade long, standing conference session titled Big Gay Church (BGC) has aimed to share love and revelry with congregants committed to critical social justice, ethical and equitable treatment of all art inquiring scholars, students and tangles of educating actors. Participating parishioners engaged in studies of art history, craft, play, and social struggle inclusive of gender, sexuality, race, class, and self-identification define a subaltern body who clearly can, and does speak.¹ This is a congregation set on refusing marginality and mistreatment of LGBTQIA+² communities.

The performative inquiry the BGC troupe³ shares disturbs silences the field of art education has perpetuated for far too long. The resistance enacted in the BGC session is enraged, but it's undertaken with a wink, a smile, and valuably, a comforting embrace. Confronting injustice with giddy joy, BGC works toward ending cycles of violence, self-hatred and oppression of LGBTQIA+ peoples; ever cognizant of the risks queer pedagogy undertakes. At this service mistreatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning (LGBTQIA+) and others historically oppressed are not tolerated. Joyously, Big Gay Church leaders leverage this annual assembly to broach concerns that individually and collectively, presenters find most troubling.

The BGC performing troupe disarms hate with humor, camp, irony and play. For over ten years, the performance series has presented serious scholarship, silliness, and protestations of injustice grounded in love, compassion, and refusing our own and Others' reputed powerlessness. The gestures church

1 Here we nod in humble recognition of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's pivotal 1988 essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" as it importantly addresses power, voice, and who is heard.

2 We acknowledge the fluidity of this acronym as it changes to be better-representative of our communities. We are using the LGBTQIA+ version to represent as broad-reaching inclusion as one acronym might have.

3 Primary Big Gay Church Troupe members include Kim Cosier, Mindi Rhoades, Jim Sanders, Courtnie Wolfgang and Melanie Davenport. All five are co-authors of this paper.

leaders share reclaim disquieting childhood memories inflicted by organized religious institutions, with BGC reimagining them as they could be otherwise.



Figure 1. *BGC V San Diego (2014):* Congregation in DIY Paper Parade Hats

Refuting dominant fundamentalist messages framing queers as damned, irredeemable, unlovable and certainly unwelcomed by organized religious institutions, BGC creates a space where all might feel vital in their difference. At Big Gay Church, first and foremost, all are assured they're loved and belong in the congregation. Critical of exclusionary practices leaders experienced in the past, outrageous gestures, prayerful play, and healing acts performed at BGC encourage those once broken to let go of the pains endured through religious oppression.

Congregants are annually reminded that the actions they witness at BGC are not performed to disrespect any religion, but as an institutional critique. The audience is asked to deeply ponder historic injustices enacted in the name of religion, whether justifying colonization, ostracization, or annihilation. Through song services, sermons, Sunday school lessons, and traditional art history lectures, the BGC troupe undresses and exposes inhumane behaviors enacted within and by the church. Big Gay Church encourages participants to *Make a Joyful Noise* and given the current political climate, we certainly CANNOT afford to be silent now. While Big Gay Church services are pan-denominational and have varied each year, most members of the troupe reference their experiences within traditional White

Protestant church services in the United States. Each church leader takes responsibility for one or more service components, but no preordained perspective is prescribed.



Figure 2. *BGC V San Diego (2014): Make a Joyful Noise Kazoo*

Description of BGC Services

Typically, Big Gay Church (BGC) services include the following: recorded background music played as the congregation enter, a component curated by Courtnie Wofgang, aka Brother Love; opening scripture reading and prayer delivered by Mindi Rhoades, aka Reverend Rhoades; congregational recitation of the Oath of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, led by Jim Sanders acting as Sister Sanders in nun's habit followed by their queering art/education multimedia lecture/lesson aka the Sister Sanders Slide Show; art and craft fellowship/ activity + music/hymns presented by Courtnie as Brother Love and Melanie Davenport as Deacon D; Kim Cosier performs Sunday school with Miss Jeanette (lessons vary in form from year-to-year); guest testimony (when applicable); sermon earnestly enacted by Mindi Rhoades as Reverend Rhoades; testimonials/ prayer request /holding to the light Melanie Davenport as

Deacon D can do; reverse offerings (which may involve any/all BGC Troupe Members); and a closing/benediction offered by Rev. Rhoades, Brother Love, and all Others). All facets of each year's service are sub-performances within the larger collective arts-based research structure (see Appendix E, Bibliography). Art educating actors shift slightly over the decade as colleagues move on, confront life-altering events and professional affiliations. Playlists of background music opening services have included Madonna, Boy George, Lady Gaga, David Bowie, k.d. lang, Prince and Van Cliburn--musicians frequently linked to the city in which that year's NAEA convention was being held.

Congregants and church leaders are welcomed into the space, transformed from an ordinary conference room into a welcoming, festive space adorned with banners, streamers, and other decorations. As the session begins, all are welcomed to another year of Big Gay Church. We encourage guests to fellowship with others who are seated next to and/or near them. After a few moments, Reverend Rhoades then shares a passage of scripture (most often) from the Christian Bible. An illustrative example being the "love passage" from 1st Corinthians 13:4-8; 13:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. And these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Reverend Rhoades then segues into an opening prayer. Some years these have been original, they might reference other works, or feature solely the work of another author, such as Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter to Coretta 18 July 1952" aka "The Higher Principle of Love." In this piece, Dr. King envisions a better nation and world, based on sharing instead of greed, peace instead of violence, justice instead of inhumanity. Such selections attend to intersectional relationships and celebrate the solidarity between the LGBTQIA+ community and other groups struggling for human rights and social justice. Sister Sanders then assumes primary

leadership duties, inviting the congregation to join in the annual recitation of the oath of the “Pledge of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence”⁴

Pledge of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence

I, Sister [state your name], as a member of the Order of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, dedicate myself to public service, social activism, and spiritual enlightenment.

Wearing an at times humorously malfunctioning, slippery nun’s garb, Sister Sanders delivers their annual Queer Art Lesson/Slide Show, an academic-style lecture sharing a critical (re)readings of art (historic) subjects that allow Sister Sanders to call out historic visual affect depicting reprehensible acts of xenophobia and intersectional oppressions. In-short, the lesson links historical injustices to contemporary challenges unaddressed, and persistent ones the service seeks to *unthink*.



Figure 3. BGC I Baltimore (2010): *Balboa Feeding Indian Sodomites to the Dogs*

4 The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence initially emerged in San Francisco as the HIV/ AIDS pandemic began to take its toll on the LGBTQ+ community in the early 1980s and bearded men in clown white-face, drag make-up and nun’s habits worked community events in raising social consciousness and support for those needing material and spiritual support. Early acolytes emerged from the Cockettes and populations most impacted by the HIV pandemic.

In subsequent years the talks reclaim LGBTQ+ artists historically erased from art education history, or celebrate the queer antics of cultural icons *straightened out* by popular (read homophobic) media.



Figure 4. *BGC IV Fort Worth, TX (2013): Herman Harry Serving Congregants Pancakes*

Sister Sanders subsequently cedes center stage (as it were), to either Sunday School Teacher, Miss Jeanette, or Music Minister, Brother Love. Love leads a combination of creative (craft) fellowship activities (supported by Deacon D and the entire BGC troupe), and / or leads a song service. In past years, congregants made joyful noises in multiple ways (see figure 2), including voice and kazoo. This portion of our program has evolved to incorporate a collective participatory artmaking activity (see figure 1), providing a productive way to joyously channel creative activist energies while building a stronger sense of community. Past projects have included paper hats and costumes for an NAEA Pride Parade led by Deacon Davenport (BGC 5, 2014 San Diego) and individual sculptural contributions to a large community sculptural installation (BGC 6, 2015 New Orleans). Brother Love often concludes this portion of the service with a short chorus sing-along to bring the congregation back to attention, in preparation for the next presentation.

Miss Jeanette's Sunday School lessons are structured to

forefront important sociopolitical causes, acts of resistance in which she's been engaged, or intersectional queer concerns, artmaking initiatives, and artists. Each year Miss Jeanette honors an individual advancing LGBTQ+ issues and rights, and in recognition of their work fashions prayer cards that have been shared with congregants (see Appendix D) in a reverse offering. Cards celebrate LGBTQIA+ *Saints and Angels*: people prominent in current events, lauded for their historical achievements, and/or associated with the city in which the NAEA convention was held.

Miss Jeanette has offered pithy civics lessons in *artivism*, and arts-based activism (Sandoval & Latorre, 2008), noting how these use / d the arts to confront not only LGBTQIA+ inequities and those perpetuating them, but other forms of injustice as well. From protesting immigration policies to posters, banners and actions supporting teachers striking over unfair labor practices, Miss Jeanette's falsetto accounts illustrate how art educators are putting their lives on the line. Miss Jeanette often includes self-created and / or student-assisted short videos in her Sunday School lessons, and shares resources she anticipates will be of value to congregants and art educating others. *Sweatin' for the Revolution*, Miss Jeanette's most jubilant Sunday School lesson to date, took place in Boston in 2019.

The presentation (re)introduced audience members to sculptor and "badass butch" Edmonia 'Wildfire' Lewis (the subject of a prayer card offered to the congregation at this service), the Kung Fu Nuns (Gupta, 2019) and the Flying Cholitas of Boliva, (Butet-Roch, 2018). Miss Jeanette then screened a video in which she had inserted herself into a vintage Richard Simmons workout tape via green screen, a project she undertook with middle and high school student helpers. Not content to have the congregation (or herself) sit and watch this gem, Miss Jeanette invited the congregation to join her as she danced her heart out wearing the same shoulder-padded, satiny green, vintage 1988 track suit that she wore in the video. The driving disco beat made a joyful noise to be sure!



Figure 5. *BGC X New York City: , Edmonia "Wildfire" Lewis (2019)*



Figure 6: *Big Gay Church #2 New York: Miss Jeanette and Sister Sanders (2011)*

Following Miss Jeanette's Sunday School lesson, Big Gay Church shifts to a proper sermon. While guest presenters have shared Jewish and Hindu spiritual traditions, primarily this portion falls to Reverend Rhoades. Their presentations combine religious texts, art and visual culture, current events and critical theory within a consistent context of community-building and care. An excerpt from two of the most recent sermons offers a sense of the presentations delivered in the twenty-teen decade.

As a group long accustomed to living in the margins, we—the LGBTQ+ community and our advocates/accomplices—should be highly sympathetic to the struggles of others. We should stand in solidarity with those who find themselves othered, outed by society, ousted. We cannot be complacent with justice for the few. It is not enough. We need more. We are more. (BGC 9, 2018)

[W]e didn't just find Big Gay Church. And you didn't just find it either. Not ten years ago, and not today. We built Big Gay Church together. We continue to build it together. We are it. We are a song. We are singing and dancing it while we are writing it, this love song. And it's this love, this refrain that happens year after year, this melody that repeats with words that vary but that always nourish my soul and make me want to sing along. You. You sing the song of my soul. (BGCX, 2019)

Reverend Rhoades sermons stress acceptance, forgiveness, community, and—mostly—love.

After the sermon concludes, Deacon Davenport. (or another clergy member) opens the service for testimonials, prayer requests, and, as Miss Jeanette is fond of saying, *holding people to the light*. Congregants take and use this space. They've shared deeply personal concerns and experiences, they've told their stories, and they've asked for support. This intimacy has been one of the most unanticipatedly moving and impactful portions of this project. To have formed an actual congregation, a

community of love and support in the middle of a professional organization and event is humbling. As the service concludes Reverend Rhoades offers a benediction and congregants often linger and reflect, parting only after hugs. This is the heart of our church, and to share an account of it brings us great joy.

Beyond Hopeful Pronouncements, Methods and Narratives

Big Gay Church is undoubtedly campy, provocative, and entertaining, utilizing smiles and laughter to broach critical topics. Through these playful performances, the troupe invites congregants to examine religious productions of LGBTQIA+ lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and questioning, populations' (LGBTQ) alterity. BGC offers alternative notions of moral and ethical behavior, calling into question queer misrepresentations deployed by many organized religions that have (mis)shaped public perceptions of queer artists and art educators. For a decade, core BGC clergy and guest speakers have engaged congregants in reconsidering the roles the visual arts have played in shaping sociocultural and spiritual (mis) understandings and in pondering how art educators can redress these wrongs.

These joyful services not only present scholarly inquiry but feed it as well. Over the years, BGC leaders have built upon this collaborative work to produce numerous articles that further explore key themes and examine the rite itself. Our publications are the part of our advocacy that fits dominant genres and venues for academic research even as it challenges them. The articles and chapters we have released are the revelation and investigations of the theory, research, experiences, and pedagogy informing our seemingly frivolous diversion. Our academic publications and accumulated research invite colleagues to examine how we have spent a decade reflecting on arts education policies, practices, and the institutional and cultural constraints impacting our lives.

Recently the troupe utilized James Scheurich's archaeological methodology to generate and reflect on an accumulated archive of artifacts and documents from BGC, which can be seen at <New URL to follow>. This has challenged Church elders to consider the impact the research has had on each of us individually, our colleagues, our congregations, and the field. Among the treasures one can find in the BGC archive

are Sister Sanders's slideshows, Miss Jeanette's prayer cards, and Reverend Rhoades' sermons, along with photographic documentation of the congregation. Photographs span the dozen years, picturing events such as a parade, a wedding, and a pancake supper. Reflecting upon this record elicits joy and further conversations about future iterations. The academic publications may provide the most lasting, concrete, and tangible outcomes of our research, education, and outreach efforts. However, nothing compares to experiencing the BGC, as part of a community of believers, dreamers, wishers, lovers, and fighters.



Figure 7. BGC IV San Diego: Big Gay Church Elders (2014)

Conclusion

As a troupe we've interrogated sociocultural prohibitions, the (mis)educating of students, and of those teaching them. We've deconstructed our actions and continue to dive deeper into these topics to demonstrate our dedication to sharing knowledge, confronting challenging issues, and agitating for action. Much of this work has involved us playing sacred fools, self-confidently criticizing, satirizing, cajoling our field—all

while advocating for change from the inside. We argue that maintaining a healthy sense of humor, an openness to critical critique and warm embraces, and a willingness to celebrate in the face of oppression are essential in the lethally serious work of unthinking and undoing heteronormativity, and combating homophobia, in education and society at large. We have facilitated a growing congregation dedicated to playing, laughing, praying, crying, and creating change with us across the past decade, and hope readers too will get engaged in these efforts. It's pleasure and a joy!

As co-authors we recognize the necessity of being prepared for sustained collaborative struggles as we labor for social justice and human rights. We know that journey may at times feel far from bearable, but if it's undertaken with loving friends who share a sense of humor, are open to working-through outrage when facing injustice, and to embrace each pleasure that comes our way, there's a stronger chance that work will continue to be accomplished with joy. Writing-up our efforts in this and other manuscripts has offered our group of long-term LGBTQ+ clergy multiple opportunities to reconsider BGC as a performance that's been enacted in social spaces where tomorrow's art educators can join in fellowship with queer elders eager to share their outrageous histories, their archaeological skills, and both hope and enthusiasm for progress. We close reconsidering what remains after individual, cumulative, and collective cognitive, emotional, and spiritual explorations have been exhausted.

Portions of Reverend Rhoades' sermons both open and close this article, offering readers a sense of the warmth, generosity of spirit and sacred responsibility all BGC troupe members consider somberly, even while undertaking the surface-silly performance in which we engage. These may at times be read as poetic musings, as paeans to a love we share, as testimonies to the political solidarity that bonds and emboldens us, and the mutual admiration and support that has repeatedly buoyed us in the face of near-death experiences, health crises, career concerns, and even the mundane challenges of our day-to-day (queer) lives.

Pushback and resistance to queer concerns persist, and myriad legal and social advances still remain unfulfilled. Our serious work awaits, numerous states have no employment

protections for LGBTQ populations, hate crimes are on the rise, and trans women of color continue to disproportionately be victims of violence and abuse. Our BGC troupe's work will continue to embrace intersectional concerns and offer NAEA members resources for developing more diverse and equitable art education approaches, policies, pedagogical practices and curricula. An ever-broadening army of queer allies, accomplices, activists, and artists (Sandoval & Latorre, 2008) share in co-creating BGC as a pedagogical performance, as arm-in-arm we sustain our commitment to inclusive arts education practices, queer fellowship, and disruptive queer inquiries that move our field toward more equitable, inclusive, and socially-just practices. Our outrageous gestures, costumed performances and thought-provoking antics joyfully inspire.

Reverend Rhoades' Sermonic Reprise

As LGBTQ+ people, we have learned to celebrate and enjoy our successes along the path to equality and justice. As a people relegated to the margins, we have learned, as the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. declared, to accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope. And that infinite hope fuels our celebration and joy, even in the face of oppression. (BGC 3, 2012)

Big Gay Church welcomes me in, over and over. Big Gay Church is us making a place for us, making a place for love together. Across this decade, I've never ceased to be astonished by what we conjure: a time, space, and acolyte the permission to love – to love as a personal and professional praxis. To love radically. To hope radically. To teach radically. To live radically. We are a miracle. We are worthy. We are loved. (BGC X, 2019)

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Table of Appendices

Appendix A: Chronology / Summary of Big Gay Church Services (2010-2019)

Appendix B: Reverend Rhoades Sermons

Co-construction of a self-affirming, loving and inclusive LGBTQ+ community is the annual ends of the joyous services examined in this article, and as summarily named in this appendix.

Appendix C: Sister Sanders/Hermana Harry's Lectures/Lessons

A primary way Big Gay Church addresses constructs of injustice, queer demonization, and hate acts as well as affirming reflections on LGBTQIA+ artists in history and their work, is through Sanders annual PowerPoint lectures. Additionally other church elders at times take up this mantle and work at unthinking the historic erasures of queer perspectives at NAEA.

Appendix D: Miss Jeanette's (reverse) offerings, Prayer Cards and commemoratives

An often coveted Big Gay Church relic is Miss Jeanette's original (almost) annual Prayer Cards; these are regularly linked to the Sunday School lesson annually shared.

Appendix E: Annotated Bibliography

A bibliographic record of Big Gay Church publications addressing social construction, function, and outcome of art policies and practices, including studies celebrating joys shared, tackling social injustice, marginalization, and efforts to redress traumas experienced in church.

Appendix A: Chronology/Summary of Big Gay Church Services 2010-2019

Key:

Red-Letter entries denotes service portion for which artifacts/details are still being sought... like many religious texts, this narrative is the product of collective memories, actions and teachings. Readers with BGC Artifacts they'd like to share, can contact Jim Sanders at jhsandersiii@gmail.com.

2010 *Big Gay Church: Re-examining religiosity and the religious—Baltimore, MD* *LGBTQ readings of religion and visual culture.*

Sister Sanders reviewed art illustrating xenophobia, and acts of violence toward LGBTQ populations and indigenous peoples by members of the clergy. In contrast, contemporary queer artists are identified, and discussions of their works are considered. The art history lesson Sister S shares, both unearths hideous historic records, and captures contemporary artists' works that play with erotic themes and re-imagine parables as seen through the eyes of contemporary queer artists.

Figure 8. *Big Gay Church #1 Baltimore* (2010). Gilbert and George (1997), Sodom

Deb Smith-Shank led the congregation in song, and prayer requests were considered. Deacon D shared story of a friend driven from her church due to her sexuality. Kim Cosier [in a handsome suit] delivered a reading from her recently published piece on girlhood, and shared a lesson on Guardian Angel, Rachel Maddow. Reverend Rhoades' Sermon: Homosexuality Misinterpretation and the Bible. Fellowship (wine, cheese and lettuce leaves shared with congregants)

2011 *Big Gay Church II: Creativity, Imagination, and Innovation Meet The Art Education Congregation—Seattle, WA*

Sister Sanders discussed controversies surrounding the National Portrait Gallery's removing of David Wojnarowicz' *A Fire in My Belly* from the exhibition, *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*, Jonathan Katz and David Ward co-curators (2010). Works published in the exhibit catalog were reviewed, including photos Annie Liebowitz shot of Ellen DeGeneres and Susan Sontag, and images of Ray

Cohn, Marcel Duchamp, Lady Gaga, Langston Hughes, Keith Haring, Robert Mapplethorpe, Robert Morris, Bessie Smith, Gertrude Stein & Alice B. Toklas, David Wojnarowicz, Andy Warhol, Walt Whitman, and others.

Miss Jeanette's Sunday School Lesson:

Offering: "Forgiven" and "Loved" cards distributed to congregants .

Reverend Rhoades' Sermon: *Forgiveness*

2012 ***Big Gay Church III: Hooking up Queer Theory and LGBT Research in the Classroom—New York, NY***

Sister Sanders's Sermonette on Samuel Steward is based on curator Justin Spring's Museum of Sex installation; *Obscene Diary: The Secret Archive of Samuel Steward, Professor, Tattoo Artist and Pornographer*.

Welcome to Sunday School [Lego animation] with Miss Jeanette

Kim Cosier's Sunday School lesson: Guardian Angel Melissa Bollow-Temple. (digital animation)

Rev. Rhoades's sermon: *Judgment + Condemnation vs. Love, Commitment, Equality + Justice*.

Closing silence in memory of Leona Emma Spoltman Smith (d. March 1, 2012), [Debbie Smith-Shank's mother, was interred as BGC II unfolded]

2013 ***Big Gay Church IV: Homo, Homo on the Range: A Pancake Supper, Ft. Worth, TX***

Hermana Harry [aka Sister Sanders] spoke on the value of sustaining supportive communities while flipping pancakes which were served with assorted homemade jams (Brother Love assisted while mourning her beloved father's recent passing).

Miraculously, **Miss Jeanette** appears as a digital apparition and greets the congregation while discussing gendered action figures and delivering **a lesson on...**

Rev. Rhoades's sermon: *Rejecting Rejection: A Tipping Point*
Deacon D provided welcoming banners and with helped serve up pancakes.

2014 ***Big Gay Church V: Sparkle and Shine* San Diego, CA**

A dematerialized digital Sister Sanders rants about media appropriations of queer subjects by heterosexual actors exploiting Others' pain while Jim Sanders in a black skirt and panda hat dances to a Macklemore's Thrift Store video and offers a visual culture analysis of Academy Award accolades bestowed on heterosexual actors Jarred Leto and Mathew

McConaughey for performances in Buyers Club; and Emmy awarded Michael Douglas' for his HBO portrayal of Liberace in HBO's *Behind the Candelabra* (see figure 7 mid-article, above-with Sister Sanders projected on the screen).

Rev. Rhoades's Sermon:

Introduced Lawyer Bob who discusses legal precedents discriminating against LGBTQ populations
Brother Love's craft project: Hat and Parade Costume Making (see fig. 1: Congregants' 2014 Craft Fellowship: Deacon D led hat and costume making for Pride Parade and provided puppets to lead the processional to the wedding of Kim Cosier and Josie Osbourne.

2015 *Big Gay Church VI: Queer by Design* **New Orleans, LA**
Sister Sanders talk on Nick E. Cave: A Fiercely Divine Troubling Angel .

Miss Jeanette's Sunday School lesson; *Beyond Bullying: New Approaches to Queering Art + Design Education*. Resources recommended by contributors to Kim Cosier's, et. al. (eds.) anthology, *Rethinking Sexism, Gender and Sexuality*, included authors Lisa Bloom (2012), *10 Urgent Rules for Raising Boys in an Era of Failing Schools, Mass Joblessness, and Thug Culture*; Jeff Chang (2006), *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop*; Elizabeth Meyer (2009), *Gender, Bullying and Harassment: Strategies to end Sexism and Homophobia in Schools*; Jamie Campbell Naidoo (2012) *Rainbow Family Collections: Selecting and Using Children's Books with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Content*; Melissa Regan (2013) *No Dumb Questions*; Southern Poverty Law Center (2010), *Bullied*; Susan Strauss (2012), *Sexual Harassment and Bullying: A Guide to Keeping Kids Safe and Holding Schools Accountable*; Nicholas M. Teich, (2012), *Transgender 101: A Simple Guide to a Complex Issue*; and *Groundspark Films, It's Elementary* (1999), and *It's Still Elementary* (2008).

Rev. Rhoades' Sermon: *Queer by Divine Design + Called to Disrupt: Making Angelic Trouble*

Brother Love's Artmaking Activity: Group Sculpture installed in the Mezzanine

2016 *Big Gay Church VII: Lead Us (not) Into Temptation: Deadly Sins + Easy Steps* **Chicago, IL**

Sister Sanders Deconstructs David Bowie, marking his life, and art experimentations.

Guest Cantor, Karin Pritikin shares prayers in Hebrew, her Shaindale Script, and stories of the Borsht Belt Burlesque comedian, Pearl Williams.

Sister Jeanette's Sunday School Lesson:

Brother Love's Art Making Enterprise:

Rev. Rhoades' Sermon: *From Ally to Advocate to Activist 7 Deadly Sins + 7 Easy Steps*

- 2017 **Big Gay Church VIII: Turn + Face the Strange: The Challenge of Ch-ch-changes around LGBTQ Issues and Art Education** **New York, NY**
Sister Sanders
Guest scholar, Dr. Manisha Sharma explores Sanatan Dharma and Indian Spirituality
Miss Jeannette's Prayer Card & Sunday School lesson: Badass BUTCH Pauli Murray
Rev. Rhoades' Sermon: *Ch-ch-changes: Returning to Radical Love*
Brother Love's Art Making Event:
- 2018 **Big Gay Church IX: ST3AM Queens** **Seattle, WA**
Sister Sanders' Steamy propositions on mortality, craft and constructing communities
Miss Jeanette's lesson:
Rev. Rhoades' Sermon: Putting on the Whole Queer Ensemble of Love & Protection
Brother Love's Art Making Experience:
- 2019 **Big Gay Church X:**
The Musical (Make a Joyful Noise) **Boston, MA**
Sister Sanders re-examines the Big Gay Church journey, its growth, calls for sustained vigilance and laboring for social justice, equity, diversity and joy.
Miss Jeanette's lesson
Rev. Rhoades's Sermon: *Big Gay Love Songs to You: A Decade of Greatest Hits*
Brother Love's Art Making Extravaganza: Keychains from the Heart

In Appendix A Above

Brother Love is academically known as (aka) Dr. Courtie Wolfgang

Miss Jeanette is also known as (aka) Dr. Kim Cosier

Sister Sanders/Hermana Harry is aka Dr. James H. Sanders III

Reverend Rhoades is aka Dr. Mindi Rhoades

Deacon D. is aka Dr. Melanie Davenport

Appendix B: Reverend Rhoades' Sermons

- 2010 Sermon: *Homosexuality Misinterpretation and the Bible*
2011 Sermon: *Forgiveness*
2012 Sermon: *Judgment + Condemnation vs. Love, Commitment, Equality + Justice*
2013 Sermon: *Rejecting Rejection: A Tipping Point*
2014 Sermon: *legal precedents discriminating against LGBTQ populations??*
Sparkle + Shine (Parade + Wedding)
2015 Sermon: *Queer by Divine Design + Called to Disrupt: Making Angelic Trouble*
2016 Sermon: *From Ally to Advocate to Activist 7 Deadly Sins + 7 Easy Steps*
2017 Sermon: *Ch-ch-changes: Returning to Radical Love*
2018 Sermon: *Putting on the Whole Queer Ensemble of Love & Protection*
2019 Sermon: *Big Gay Love Songs to You: A Decade of Greatest Hits*

Appendix C: Sister Sanders Art and Culture Lectures/Lessons

- 2010 Lecture/Lesson on History of Western Art/Religion and LGBTQ issues
2011 Lecture/Lesson on removal David Wojnarowicz work at National Portrait Gallery
2012 Lecture/Lesson on Samuel Steward based on Spring's Museum of Sex installation
2013 Lecture/Lesson on Sustaining Supportive Queer Communities
2014 Lecture/Lesson on heterosexual appropriation of queer art and culture (digital)
2015 Lecture/Lesson on Nick E. Cave: A Fiercely Divine Troubling Angel
2016 Lecture/Lesson on Deconstructing David Bowie (in memoriam)
2017 Lecture/Lesson on ??
2018 Lecture/Lesson on mortality, craft, and constructing communities
2019 Lecture/Lesson reflecting on past, present, and future of Big Gay Church

Appendix D Sharing Talents: Miss Jeanette's Prayer Cards and Brother Love's Arts and Craft Activity/song service

- 2010 Baltimore, MD John Waters
2011 Seattle, WA Rachel Maddow

2012	New York, NY	Melissa B Temple and Saint Vito Russo
2013	Ft. Worth, TX	Saint Van Cliburn
2014	San Diego, CA	Ally Elizabeth Taylor “Bitch, do something” Crafting Hat and Costumes for Pride Parade
2015	New Orleans, LA	Bayard Rustin Group sculptural construction
2016	Chicago, IL	Jane Addams and David Bowie
2017	New York, NY	Stormé DeLarverie and Pauli Murray
2018	Seattle, WA	Stormé DeLarverie stickers & Pauli Murray stickers
2019	Boston, MA	Angel Richard Simmons and Saint Edmonia Lewis

Appendix E: Bibliography

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