

**MAWJOU DIN:  
THE LGBTQI+ COMMUNITY  
AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SPACES OF  
VISIBILITY IN TUNISIA**

By

Erica Beccarello

Submitted to

Central European University

Department of International Relations

*In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in  
International Relations*

Supervisor: Professor Erzsébet Strausz

Word Count: 11,444

*Budapest, Hungary*

2020

## **Abstract**

The *Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival (MQFF)*, started in Tunisia in 2018, uses creative practices for the representation of the LGBTQI+ community, with the aim of celebrating the LGBTQI+ communities of Global South and developing for them spaces of freedom. The artistic and creative processes that take place during the Festival play a central role in the understanding of specific issues and needs of the community, in a social and political context where homosexuality is criminalized by law and who recognises as LGBTQI+ still awaits a reframing of rights and recognition of equality. The combination of art with social activism in what can be defined as a form of artivism reaches here an effective outcome, pushing for a legitimization of the community in the society and also bringing out a colonial question that enhances the need of recognition inside the International Queer Community itself.

**Key Words:** Performativity, Artivism, Postcolonialism, LGBTQI+, Tunisia.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisor Erzsébet Strausz for her support and feedbacks. With her teachings and positive attitude, she taught me a lot and inspired this project.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the Interviewees for their willingness, as without them this experience would not have been possible.

# Table of Contents

Abstract .....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iii
Introduction .....	1
CHAPTER 1 - LITERATURE REVIEW: SPACES, BODIES AND ARTISTIC PRACTICES .....	9
<b>1.1 The Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival (MQFF) as performative space</b> .....	9
<b>1.2 Performativity of the Body</b> .....	10
<b>1.3 The Queer and Postcolonial body</b> .....	11
<b>1.4 The activist process</b> .....	13
CHAPTER 2 - THE MAWJOUNDIN QUEER FILM FESTIVAL (MQFF).....	16
<b>2.1 The birth of the Mawjoudin Queer Festival</b> .....	16
<b>2.2 The artistic process within the <i>MQFF</i></b> .....	18
<b>2.3 The artistic process as lived experience</b> .....	23
CHAPTER 3 - ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND SPACES OF FREEDOM .....	26
<b>3.1 The Artistic Practice for the creation of a safe space</b> .....	26
<b>3.2 Artivism as alternative means</b> .....	30
Conclusion.....	34
Bibliography.....	36

## Introduction

I do not remember the exact moment when I started having a profound admiration for the arts. I have always loved writing and the fortuitous junction of events that brings me here began about ten years ago. I have made writing my personal drive for change since poetry allowed me to stand up and still believe in the power of life. At that time, poetry had become everyday medicine, which allowed me to grasp something that others did not see. With constancy, writing helped me to overcome great changes and breakages, and through it, I was able to detach myself from labels that were imposed on me. It was precisely among those labels that I understood the deep meaning of poetry, of the immense variety of which the verses are capable, which is not only words describing beauty, but also the capacity to express freedom and be emancipated from certain feelings. Poetry had, therefore, to be seen in its ancient roots of *poiesis*, a creation which, unlike other forms of writing, is entirely an artistic creation succeeding in transfiguring intense emotions into an aesthetic that often contains contemplation and fight.

Starting from that moment, my research on how artistic practice can become healing and change began. A path that in the last two years has come to a more conscious development, going alongside the passion and trust that I have always cultivated in art and its power to overcome human boundaries that have often been insurmountable with my interest in human interactions and influences within different societies. This thesis is the final core of a two-year journey and it brings and weaves together topics that in the past I had analyzed as something loose and that are now forming a larger picture in what is an intersection of meanings that grow and complement each other.

The context in which the *Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival (MQFF)* develops is a clear example of the intertwining of artistic creation and social involvement, developing in a country

such as Tunisia that, if from a side ranks as 69th<sup>1</sup> among the states that guarantee civil liberties and human rights, is still contradictory on the recognition of equality for the LGBTQI+ community. Starting from a question that looks at what the role of the artistic and creative process is in the creation of spaces of freedom for the Tunisian LGBTQI+ community, I will analyze how the artistic practices become a medium for the promotion of a positive debate, understanding, and recognition of the community's rights.

If a strong influence comes from the studies on performativity developed by Judith Butler and Henri Lefebvre, the starting point of my research is the history and works of Audre Lorde. The concept of performativity will enable to deepen not only the background from which the *Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival (MQFF)* was developed, but also the results achieved. In this sense, Butler's studies of the performativity on questions of gender are combined with the production of spaces that are experienced in the development of linkages "between space, materiality and subjectivity" and a "common concern with the ways in which space materializes or 'matters' subjectivity".<sup>2</sup> On the other side, the use of Lorde's production as a starting point for the development of an analytical tool in my research comes from her multidimensionality as a woman, "black/lesbian/mother/warrior",<sup>3</sup> through which she generates a work that can be traced to the later concept of *artivism*.

The union between art and activism becomes an initial impetus to deepen the role that artistic processes have in the claim of certain rights and, in the context of the *MQFF*, a means to understand how the LGBTQI+ community relates with the audience of the Festival and asserts spaces of freedom. With her poems, Lorde not only deepens the concept of

---

<sup>1</sup> Freedom House, 2019, "Tunisia", *Freedom in the World 2019*. Accessed on Mar 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/tunisia>

<sup>2</sup> Melissa Tyler, and Laurie Cohen, 2010. "Spaces That Matter: Gender Performativity and Organizational Space", *Organization Studies*, 31 (2): 175–98, p.178

<sup>3</sup> Laurie Ann Guerrero, 2013. "Birthing the Warrior: Poetry as Illumination", *The Feminist Press*, 40 (3): 306–10, p.306

intersectionality by trying to give a new voice to feminism, but also shows aspects that had not been addressed until then. Trying to reach with her work anyone who is able to listen to her, understand her and, in some way, feel represented by her words, Lorde uses the artistic process for a purpose that goes beyond art itself and makes it become a life project, which is "inseparable" from social protest.

I loved poetry and I loved words. But what was beautiful had to serve the purpose of changing my life, or I would have died. If I cannot air this pain and alter it, I will surely die of it. That's the beginning of social protest.<sup>4</sup>

The combination of art with social mediation in a "balance between visibility, durability, and risk"<sup>5</sup> is used in the context of the *MQFF* for the purpose of bridging individuals and create a collectivity where the subjects can understand the LGBTQI+ reality through the "catalytic power [of this kind of art in emphasising] injustice, inequality or emptiness in human development".<sup>6</sup>

If art also represents the need to raise the voice, and if the artistic process considered as activist overturns "the very idea of an aesthetic object" by subverting the discourses related to power and representation through "framing and reframing of the visible and seemingly invisible",<sup>7</sup> it is necessary to look also at where, and how this reframing takes place. As the artistic process gives life to "spaces of reflection, creation, and art production, aesthetic spaces of questioning color, humor, contemplation, appreciation, and respect for the others",<sup>8</sup> the plurality of facets in the context of the *Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival* seemed to be the most

---

<sup>4</sup> Audre Lorde, ed. Joan W. Hall, 2004. "*Conversations with Audre Lorde*", University Press of Mississippi, p.92

<sup>5</sup> Eva Aladro-Vico, Dimitrina Jivkova-Semova, and Olga Bailey, 2018. "Artivismo: Un Nuevo Lenguaje Educativo Para La Acción Social Transformadora", *Comunicar*, 26 (57): 9–18, p.10

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.12

<sup>7</sup> Simon Sheikh, October 2009. "Positively Trojan Horses Revisited", *e-flux*. Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020: <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/09/61372/positively-trojan-horses-revisited/>

<sup>8</sup> Teresa Torres De Eça, 2017. "*Activist Art Education: Creation of Hybrid Spaces for Learning and Living*", Research Gate, p.59

striking example of what the role of these processes is in developing spaces of freedom within societies.

This Festival, founded in 2018 in Tunisia, is the first queer Festival in the Country and second in the whole MENA region,<sup>9</sup> and not only gives voice through different artistic practices to LGBTQI+ rights, but has become a real reference point for the Tunisian community and many other communities of the Global South (a term that refers to the regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania<sup>10</sup> and that was often used by the interviewee to recognize themselves). The characteristic that distinguishes *MQFF* from any other festival is the fact that it has become a symbol for the struggle for LGBTQI+ rights in a country where homosexuality is still governed by Article 230 of the Tunisian Penal Code of 1913. This Article in its French version criminalizes sodomy and in the Arabic version both male and female homosexuality,<sup>11</sup> legitimizing practices such as anal inspection and providing for imprisonment for up to three years. The approach and the idea of taking part in the *Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival* was therefore increased by a desire to live in a more direct way an activist experience, trying to understand how the creative process can not only play an important role for a specific community, but also give voice to needs that from a smaller group, then represents a larger community of people.

Although over the years I had the opportunity to deepen and develop my knowledge of the history of Tunisia and of the human rights situation in the Country, in particular LGBTQI+ rights, a very important question I have raised was that of my positionality with regard to this research. My positionality in this context was complicated because of the cultural and also

---

<sup>9</sup> The first queer festival in the MENA region is the Palestinian *Kooz Queer Film Festival*, started in 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Nour Dados, and Raewyn Connell, 2012. "The Global South", *Contexts: Understanding People in Their Social Worlds* 11 (1): 12, p.12

<sup>11</sup> Ramy Khouili, Daniel Levine-Spound, 2019. "Article 230: A History of Criminalization of Homosexuality in Tunisia", <https://article230.com/en/article-320-eng/> p.8



social distance that separates my life experience from the Tunisian queer community and which, for this reason, could make more complex the understanding of certain aspects of my research. My awareness of the need to declare my positionality strengthened after a conversation about my approach during the research with someone that would have been then one of my Interviewees. The main concern was about the way in which the LGBTQI+ community of Global South is often represented by European people that recalls what Massad describes as "Gay International's imperialist epistemological task", consisting in an attempt to replicate in the non-Western communities "a world in its own image".<sup>12</sup>

I decided, therefore, to approach the study not only with the desire to know and confront myself with more points of view, but above all with the awareness that everyone brings a different story to tell. The aim is not to make judgments or impose a unified vision but to look at the role of the artistic process by educating and making myself more aware of how it could benefit the LGBTQI+ community by taking specific directions. In fact, by focusing on the importance that during the Festival the artistic and creative process has for social bridging, it becomes an example for the use of arts as an opportunity for an alternative creation of spaces for sharing and supporting the LGBTQI+ community. This will also be a starting point for a deeper awareness of how the community itself can be an agent of change, initiating a constructive criticism on some contradictions present not only in the society where the community is living, but also inside the International Queer Community itself.

My argument is the result of eight semi-structured interviews that gave the Interviewees the opportunity to present their experience within the *MQFF* and deepen the role of the artistic process that develops within it. The interviews were made online, due to the circumstances of COVID-19 that have not made possible my participation during the Festival and have delayed

---

<sup>12</sup> Joseph Andoni Massad. 2002. "Re-Orienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World", *Public Culture*, Duke University Press, 14 (2): 361–85, p.385

its implementation. My Interviewees are mostly from Tunisia with the exception of one, who comes from a European country, but they all share the fact that they participated during the Festival as organizers, artists, or audience. Through a collection of qualitative interviews that enabled me to obtain "data on understanding, opinions, what people remember doing, attitudes, feelings and the like, that people have in common",<sup>13</sup> the different perspectives gave me the opportunity to better understand the more general frame of the dynamics happening during the Festival but, at the same time, to dwell on the personal experiences and engagements of the Interviewees with the practices performed and the spaces created.

This research is placed in an IR tradition of performance studies focusing on questions and approaches that "study how practices, performances and networks create and transform agency".<sup>14</sup> If agency is considered as the "capacity to act",<sup>15</sup> performative studies not only start from the idea that "performances are actions", but also that the artistic practice plays a central role in what is the "performance studies project".<sup>16</sup> Defined by Schechner as an action that among many, has the capability "to entertain, to create beauty, to mark or change identity, to make or foster community [...]",<sup>17</sup> performance is understood as a way "by which actors, individually or in concert, display for others the meaning of their social situation"<sup>18</sup> that is established "by patterns of signifiers whose referents are the social, physical, natural, and cosmological worlds within which actors and audiences live".<sup>19</sup> The performance is strongly related to artistic practices and social studies with regards to an analysis of social structures and

---

<sup>13</sup> Hilary Arksey, Peter Knight 1999. "Interviews and research in the social sciences", in *Interviewing for social scientists*, H. Arksey, & P. T. Knight, London: SAGE Publications, p.2

<sup>14</sup> Benjamin Braun, Sebastian Schindler, and Tobias Wille, 2019. "Rethinking Agency in International Relations: Performativity, Performances, and Actor-Networks", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, vol. 22,787–807, p.787

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.788

<sup>16</sup> Richard Schechner, and Sara Brady, 2013. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, Routledge, 3rd edn, p.1

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.46

<sup>18</sup> Jeffrey C. Alexander, and Jason L. Mast. 2006. "Introduction: Symbolic Action in Theory and Practice: The Cultural Pragmatics of Symbolic Action", in *Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast, 1–28. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 32

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p.33

attitudes that has revealed “the possibility that all human activity could potentially be considered as ‘performance’”.<sup>20</sup> In performative study, as Goffman highlights, the relation between performer and audience and the interconnection that develops between them is central because, through this mutual exchange, “a social relationship is likely to arise”.<sup>21</sup> Performativity, in this sense, in its capacity to give shape to things and acts, relates to “a variety of topics, among them the construction of social reality including gender and race”.<sup>22</sup> In this context, I interpret the performances that are taking place during the *MQFF* and how these, being strengthened and facilitated by the artistic practices, can establish a new pattern in the relations that the LGBTQI+ community has with some conventional structures and rules.

What this analysis brings to light is the possibility, through the use of art, of more direct interaction with other individuals for the explanation of issues that could not be experienced by other means because they are subject to limitations. Through the research it also emerges the ability of activism to ensure the achievement of legitimacy even in situations where the LGBTQI+ community is criminalized by law. In the first section of the thesis, I will look at concepts of performativity of the space, of the queer and post-colonial body and the way they intertwine. I will also analyze the concept of activism and its role in addressing certain types of issues. These key concepts will be the bases from which I will develop my analysis in the following chapters. In the second section, I will use activism as a tool to examine the different directions developing within the Festival that the artistic process takes. I will also focus on this process as a lived experience where I will report the impressions and expectations of the interviewees. The third part of my thesis will be dedicated to the artistic and creative processes for the development of safe spaces. The use of the concept of performativity in the queer and

---

<sup>20</sup> Marvin Carlson, 2013. “*Performance: A Critical Introduction*”, London and New York: Routledge, 2nd edn, p.4

<sup>21</sup> Erving Goffman, 1956. “*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*”, University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre, Monographs; no.2, p.9

<sup>22</sup> Richard Schechner, and Sara Brady, 2013. “*Performance Studies: An Introduction*”, Routledge, 3rd edn, p.123

postcolonial body, will be the background for an analysis on how the construction of these spaces is inevitably intertwined with a post-colonial tradition that claims specific rights not only within Tunisian society itself, but also, on a wider level, within the International Queer Community. Following this, I will analyse the way in which the Interviewees live and produce the safe space of the Festival.

During my research, when I use the term *queer* I will refer more broadly to the whole LGBTQI+ community, referring to the way the Interviewees themselves spoke about the community. The decision to call my Interviewees with a number comes from the importance that, during the interviews, the participants gave to the topic of security and protection of their privacy. The use of the enumeration is therefore a way to protect the Interviewees' privacy allowing, at the same time, to follow and distinguish them.

# CHAPTER 1 - LITERATURE REVIEW: SPACES, BODIES AND ARTISTIC PRACTICES

## 1.1 The Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival (MQFF) as performative space

When developing a work related to an art festival like the *Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival (MQFF)*, it is inevitable to take a look at the history of the event and at the people who take part in it. It is necessary that the narrative deepens not only what the individual paths within the Festival are, but also how these stories have been intertwined in that space, how they have taken on board the present artistic practices and how, from this interconnection, common goals and visions have emerged.

The space that develops thanks to the artistic process that takes place during the Festival, builds its roots in what is a claim of LGBTQI+ rights and the research for greater legitimation of the community within a society where homosexuality is criminalized by law and not yet fully known. It is a space that, following the Lefebvrian theory, is produced by the social relations and bodies encounters that bind it,<sup>23</sup> emerging from the “intersection between that which touches, penetrates, threatens or benefits my body on the one hand, and all other bodies on the other”.<sup>24</sup> If Lefebvre’s production of spaces emerges from the dialectic among the triad of space perceived, representing the material flows that ensure social production, the space conceived which is the signs and disciplines for understanding space practices, and the space lived, namely the symbolic and imaginary spaces that open up new possibilities,<sup>25</sup> in the context of the Festival, the lived space develops particularly as an imagined space with a marked symbolism

---

<sup>23</sup> Deirdre Conlon, 2004. “Productive Bodies, Performative Spaces: Everyday Life in Christopher Park”, *Sexualities*, 7 (4): 462–79, p.463

<sup>24</sup> Henri Lefebvre, 1991. “*The Production of Space*”, Oxford: Blackwell, p.184

<sup>25</sup> Stuart Elden, 2004. “*Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*”, Continuum Studies in Philosophy, London: Continuum, p.190

that develops and strengthens with time.<sup>26</sup> In this sense, space takes shape thanks to the commitment of those who occupy it and the perceptions that change and "become more fine, more subtle, more profound, more differentiated".<sup>27</sup>

## 1.2 Performativity of the Body

To understand the reasons for the development of the *MQFF*, it is of primary importance not only to look at the geography of the Festival as physical space in the Tunisian frame, but also at the context of the spatial dimension of societies, of the environment where bodies develop in a certain way because they are influenced and shaped by characteristics that facilitate particular configurations. Specifically, in order to comprehend how the space is created and developed, it is important to dwell and analyse especially the performativity of bodies in the spaces that they inhabit and artistic practices as a means through which these bodies can move in the space and be reimagined. Looking at the queer community it is essential to consider its multidimensionality, "recreated and transformed through an inseparable mix of norms and behaviours that are cultural, economic, historical, sociological, linguistic and always political".<sup>28</sup> It is necessary therefore to analyse how the performativity of the queer body in the Tunisian context intertwines with a culture strongly influenced by its past as a colonized territory and how, within the Festival, this space takes on a different dimension.

If in the context of gender performativity, the question of individual identity is firstly developed by Judith Butler along the lines of Simone de Beauvoir's affirmation of the body as something constructed by social reality, a "historical situation",<sup>29</sup> in her discourse on

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.190

<sup>27</sup> Ibid p.182

<sup>28</sup> Elisabeth Doré, 1997. "*Gender Politics in Latin America: Debates in Theory and Practice*", New York: Monthly Review Press, p. 9

<sup>29</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, trans. H.M. Parshley, 1974. "*The Second Sex*", New York: Vintage, p.38

performativity, Butler focuses on the development of identity, on the body considered not only as a means for the expression of the word, but as the founding basis of the formative act.<sup>30</sup> In the context of gender performativity, the body is legitimized by the repetition of gender norms present in the society and given by the construction of a precise social reality which, in being repeated and performed, gives shape to the materiality of the body. For Butler, the gender in its effectiveness is “performative” because “it is real only to the extent that it is performed”.<sup>31</sup> In fact, it applies to a pre-existing body with respect to social norms and gender.

In this way, the body, the “‘I’, which is produced through the accumulation and convergence of such ‘calls’, cannot extract itself from the historicity of that chain or raise itself up and confront that chain as if it were an object opposed to me, which is not me, but only what others have made of me[...]”.<sup>32</sup> A similar pattern is happening in the context of race and the relationship that this has with performativity. As anthropological studies have proven, the use of stereotypes related to racial groups, although important from the point of view of cultural characteristics, is not related to genetics.<sup>33</sup> Talking about race, it is therefore important to consider the condition of otherness that is given by performativity based on social constructions.

### 1.3 The Queer and Postcolonial body

By combining knowledge on performativity, it is interesting to see how, when placed in the context of a postcolonial country such Tunisia, the discourse around sexuality and the heterosexual/homosexual dichotomy, has developed mainly around the colonial epistemology belonging to Western ideas and speeches.<sup>34</sup> For this reason it is important to distinguish

---

<sup>30</sup> Judith Butler, 2006. “*Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*”, New York: Routledge, 2nd ed

<sup>31</sup> Judith Butler, 1988. “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory”, *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4: 519-31. doi:10.2307/3207893. p. 527

<sup>32</sup> Judith Butler, 1993. “*Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of “sex”*”, New York: Routledge. p.122

<sup>33</sup> Eliot Marshall, 1998. “DNA Studies Challenge the Meaning of Race”, *Science* 282, 5389: 654–55, p.654

<sup>34</sup> Michel Foucault, 1976 / 1998. “*The history of sexuality vol. 1: the will to knowledge*”, London: Penguin.

sexuality as perceived in the context of non-Western countries. The queer world is often "'read through the lens of Stonewall, Sydney's Mardi Gras and San Francisco, whilst same-sex or transgender practices that do not fit this mould can be categorised as 'tradition'".<sup>35</sup>

Recent approaches to it in the context of post-colonial countries have developed anxieties and understood the need to consider this world as steeped in "the (sometimes imagined) spatialities of intimacy".<sup>36</sup> The queer communities of Global South countries have claimed the importance of looking at the community from a different perspective, eliminating the traditional homologation and taking into account the various nuances and needs that each community demands. In this sense, the post-colonial identity through which the societies of these countries identify themselves is of great importance. This type of identity helps "to desist from either homogenising same-sex love in a White, Western, capitalist and male gay model, and from its inverse, of orientalising which is exoticising and othering".<sup>37</sup>

Postcolonial identity finds itself similar to queer in its development in a context of hierarchies of power and subordination.<sup>38</sup> What allows for interaction and convergence between being queer and being a post-colonial body is precisely the concept of "other". An "other" subject that represents the need for repudiation "constitutive not only of the colonial subject but also the heterosexual male subject"<sup>39</sup> and which becomes here important in stressing the need to look at and emphasize diversity within the queer communities. The colonial representation requires taking into account and analysing the binary relationship between colonizer and the

<sup>35</sup> Ara Wilson, November 2006. "Queering Asia", *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Issue 14. Accessed Apr 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue14/wilson.html>

<sup>36</sup> Gavin Brown, Kath Browne, Rebecca Elmhirst, and Simon Hutta, 1st October 2010. "Sexualities in/of the Global South." *Geography Compass* 4, no. 10: 1567, p.1571

<sup>37</sup> Jeremy Punt, 2008. "Intersections in Queer Theory and Postcolonial Theory, and Hermeneutical Spin-Offs", *Bible & Critical Theory* 4 (2): 24.1, p.24.2

<sup>38</sup> cf. eg Fernando F. Segovia, 2005. "Mapping the Postcolonial Optic in Biblical Criticism: Meaning and Scope". In "*Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*", eds SD Moore and FF Segovia, Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, p.25

<sup>39</sup> Philip Holden, and RJ Ruppel, 2003. "'Introduction'". In "*Imperial Desire. Dissident Sexualities and Colonial Literature*", eds. Philip Holden and RJ Ruppel, ix--xxvi. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, p: xii



“other”, the colonized, that is also a sexual body where "exclusion, suppression and relegation can often be seen as literally embodied.”<sup>40</sup> In fact, the body of the “other” becomes a sexual body because it is imagined by the colonizer as something carnal, a land to explore and occupy freely.<sup>41</sup>

In this sense, both the knowledge of the colonial representation and of post-colonialism are helpful to better observe the environment where the Tunisian queer community is operating. However, looking at the first it will be possible to analyse the ways in which the Tunisian laws in force have been imposed and normalized in the performativity of the citizens and of the state itself. An understanding of the second will help to examine some kind of binary relationships in the political, racial and cultural context that have been re-imagined through post-colonialism.<sup>42</sup>

#### **1.4 The activist process**

Taking into account the queer and postcolonial context, questions regarding the performativity of the body and the performative identity of the subjects emerge. These questions connect and develop a discourse on the importance of the artistic and creative process for a freer expression and construction of spaces where bodies can perform freely. The concept of performativity has often been linked to the arts known as performance and this intersection has been considered one of the most fruitful,<sup>43</sup> especially for the strong connection between *mise en scene* and the performance of acts in everyday life. The artistic performance developed

---

<sup>40</sup> Elleke Boehmer, 2005. “*Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation*”, Manchester University Press p.129

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.132

<sup>42</sup> Victor Ukaegbu, 2017. “Post-colonialism and performance: political, cultural and pedagogic legacies and constraints”, *Repertório, Salvador*, ano 20, n. 29, p. 12-34, p.18

<sup>43</sup> Andrew Parker, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1995. “*Performativity and performance*”, New York: Routledge, p.1

through dance, theatre, music and other artistic means and performed on a stage often reflects ordinary life situations.

The performance that can be found in any human activity and that is built on a system of beliefs<sup>44</sup> becomes a real experience through the artistic process. The performance of art as a creative process of deconstructing an identity built and adapted according to social norms, in fact, tells a new story, giving the possibility to reconstruct that same identity following the desires of the individual to whom it belongs. In this sense then, “a work of art is intrinsically expressive; it is designed to abstract and preset forms for perception-forms of life and feeling, activity, suffering, selfhood”.<sup>45</sup>

The *Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival* was born from the encounter between the socio-political performative dimension of the Tunisian queer community and the artistic and creative dimension as a liberating medium, in a context that could be defined as that of activism, where art meets activism. In fact, activism is a practice born from the encounter between art and activism, a concept described by the German based Artivism Network as a necessary means to change the vision of who does not consider the social and ecological change as an integral part of the artistic work.<sup>46</sup> In this sense, Diverlus looks at activism as the “understanding that, in the absence of social consciousness, art cannot reach its full range of potentials; and without creativity activism risks being one-dimensional and irrelevant”.<sup>47</sup> This concept has in fact developed starting from the awareness not only that the artistic practice can become a means to mobilize and make people aware, but in the same way, that political activism can take creative forms, transforming the traditional representation of reality and perception through the creative

---

<sup>44</sup> Marvin Carlson, 2013. “*Performance: A Critical Introduction*”, London and New York: Routledge, 2nd edn, p.4

<sup>45</sup> Susanne K. Langer, 1953. “*Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art*”, New York: Scribner, p.395-96

<sup>46</sup> Artivism Network, 2012. “Preamble”, *Artivism Network*. Accessed on Apr19th, 2020 <http://www.artivism.de/preamble.htm>

<sup>47</sup> Rodney Diverlus, 2016. “Re/imagining activism” in “*Artistic Citizenship: Artistry, Social Responsibility and Ethical Praxis*”, David J. Elliott, Marissa Silverman, Wayne D. Bowman Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.190

practice and giving everyone the possibility for the creation of spaces of freedom. Asante Jr describes the work of the activist as a combination of “commitment to freedom and justice with the pen, the lens, the brush, the voice, the body and the imagination”.<sup>48</sup>

Looking at the *Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival* from an activist perspective will therefore give greater clarity to the reasons why creative practice was chosen to talk about the rights of the Tunisian LGBTQI+ community. During the interviews the concept of activism is used for a deeper analysis on the creation of spaces of freedom and issues such as the engagement with the public and the question of identity in relation to what are the postcolonial concerns of the community. In this sense, this concept is necessary to clearly understand both the role of the artistic practices taking place during the Festival and the benefits that they are giving to the activist work for the LGBTQI+ community in the Global South countries and inside the International Queer community.

---

<sup>48</sup> M. K. Asante Jr, 2008 *It's Bigger Than Hip Hop: The Rise of the Post-Hip-Hop Generation*, New York, St. Martin's Publishing Group. p.39

## CHAPTER 2 - THE MAWJOUNDIN QUEER FILM FESTIVAL (MQFF)

### 2.1 The birth of the Mawjoudin Queer Festival

*Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival (MQFF)* represents for the LGBTQI+ Tunisian community a successful form of activism, in its union between art and the promotion of individual freedom in enhancing the spontaneous expressiveness of the LGBTQI+ community. Tunisia is a nation characterized by its transcultural population, born from the encounter of many cultures and religions that, thanks to the peaceful climate have settled in the territory coming from about twenty nations.<sup>49</sup> Over the years, it is visible how the need of the Tunisian LGBTQI+ community to affirm and claim its identity has become stronger.

This Festival was born as the result of an increasingly intense work for the claim of LGBTQI+ rights and the experience of a moment of great change and transition in the Country. The years following the Revolution in 2011 were decisive for a change with respect to many civil, social and cultural rights such as freedom of association, with the birth of many organizations including *Mawjoudin* itself and the approval in 2014 of a new constitution that guarantees essential human rights such as freedom of expression, the prohibition of torture and the strengthening of equal opportunities.<sup>50</sup> 2018, in which the *MQFF* sees the light with its first edition, marks a particular moment of political change and social renewal for the entire Tunisian community. The work to achieve the complete adoption of the *Pact for Equality and Individual Freedoms* that reaffirmed certain fundamental rights for all Tunisian citizens<sup>51</sup> and the

---

<sup>49</sup> Transl. Nullo Pasotti, (after 1970) “*Italiani e Italia in Tunisia dalle origini al 1970*”, Roma, Finzi, p.16

<sup>50</sup> Joint Statement by Al Bawsala, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, 31 Jan 2014, “AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL JOINT PUBLIC STATEMENT”, *Amnesty International*. Accessed 30 Apr 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/8000/mde300032014en.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> Human Rights Watch (HRW), 24 Jul 2018. “Tunisia: Pact for Equality, Individual Freedom”, *Human Rights Watch*. Accessed 30 Apr 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/24/tunisia-pact-equality-individual-freedom>

acceptance by Tunisia of a recommendation, within the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), to stop the practice of anal examination provided for in Article 230 about the crime of sodomy of the Penal Code<sup>52</sup> are encouraging events from the point of view of the fulfilment of a path of emancipation such as that begun after the Revolution.

As explains Interviewee 8, in 2018 *Mawjoudin* had the right tools to be prepared and trained for the development of this kind of Festival. If it would have been hard to start a Festival when the organization was just founded, the dream to have a queer festival and the willingness to work with an artistic perspective, foster this vision until the establishment of the *MQFF* that, ideated in just four months, brought together more than 700 people in four days.<sup>53</sup> The opening of the Festival is going to position itself in a year of great change, hovering between the hopes created during 2018 and a year of important political transition such as 2019 during which, these possibilities have changed and have highlighted new needs. If in fact, in 2018 new perspectives and hopes for the LGBTQI+ community had opened up, leading to a desire to push the tension created over the years within society and to make it effective through artistic practice, during the following years an unstable political situation emerged.<sup>54</sup> Facts such as the statements of the newly elected president Kais Saied against the "deviance" of homosexuals and in favour of their criminalization, can be perceived as events that gave to the community a new and stronger motivation to find new means to represent themselves.<sup>55</sup> In this sense, as Interviewee 1 explained,

the Festival is a way to do advocacy in a new way, especially in the last year when we discovered that in the transition between the old and new government there are no

---

<sup>52</sup> Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2018. "Tunisia: Events of 2017", *Human Rights Watch*. Accessed 30 Apr 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/tunisia>

<sup>53</sup> Interviewee 8

<sup>54</sup> Interviewee 8

<sup>55</sup> Amna Guellali, 25 Oct 2019, "A Hopeful Speech, but Will Tunisia's President Deliver?", *Human Rights Watch*. Accessed 30 Apr 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/10/25/hopeful-speech-will-tunisias-president-deliver>

possibilities of change [...]. The combination between art, advocacy and other activities will be the correct tool to explain and show why change is very important.

The creative process is therefore also an effort, which is becoming increasingly necessary and strong within the LGBTQI+ community especially after the realization that, despite the legal commitment, a process of emancipation will still require involvement and determination to claim specific needs.

## **2.2 The artistic process within the MQFF**

The *Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival* was born as the sum of different pushes coming from outside but also from inside the LGBTQI+ community itself and that are found in what is a work of union between the artistic process and the will to encourage the activist commitment, in an attempt to create new possible imaginaries. The choice to use the term Queer to embrace the entire LGBTQI+ community is not only an attempt to be more inclusive but also a need to feel freer and safer. In fact, as Interviewee 6 points out

a peculiarity of the Festival is that it has been called queer because people not within the community do not easily identify this concept. If, for example, it would have been called LGBTQI+ festival probably it would have had more repercussions and problems, so it seems to me a more indirect way to get to the point by opening up more opportunities.

The use of the term *queer* therefore plays a double role in this context. In fact, if on the one hand for the LGBTQI+ community, the will is to reiterate the fact that "they exist", recalling *Mawjoudin*, the name of the organization that founded the Festival, at the same time, the need to protect themselves and make space within society in a more delicate way was perceived, proposing the community under a not yet well known guise that is that of queer. What this name contains is a strong willingness to hide in order to gain legitimization and emancipation from

the present restrictions that criminalize the queer body and, at the same time, to create a space where there is the possibility to subvert the gender and race identities considered normative, through a full and free expression of the self. Existence, therefore, but also resistance (the theme that has been chosen as one of the main themes for the past edition of the *MQFF*)<sup>56</sup> and a concept that can be defined as strongly connected to existence, having the same etymological origin that is to "stay, stop". Especially in recent years the community has in fact well understood that in order to stop in a society where their lives could be at risk and where there is not yet a concrete and close possibility for real change from the legal and political point of view, art can be a means to start a form of provocative resistance and the creation of change.

The *MQFF* becomes therefore an occasion to foster the development of “an inclusive, non-normative, non-binary gendered, activist, sexually and culturally non-biased event”.<sup>57</sup> The creative process turns here into a means to explore important issues for the community but also to make it more united and strong not only internally but also externally with its continuous challenge to prejudice. "The more languages you speak, the more people you can reach" as Interviewee 4 highlights, to explain how the diversity of artistic creations proposed, ranging from film screenings to workshops and dance and theatre performances, wants to speak to the audience through the different languages of the artistic process.

Artistic events that have the aim not only to deepen the daily life of the queer community in the Global South, but also to open a window for everyone to discover the existence of this community and understand the delicate issues it has to face, are present throughout the duration of the Festival. A particularly interesting example is the short film directed by Faraz Aziz Ansari, entitled *Sisak*. *Sisak* is the first Indian silent film on the LGBTQI+ theme and was shown

---

<sup>56</sup> Interviewee 3

<sup>57</sup> Akkadia Ford, 2017, “Regional & Queer: Refusing to be Invisible, Creating queer space in a non-queer world”, *Cybergeog: European Journal of Geography*, p.3

during the second edition of the *MQFF*. In a 15 minutes long silence, where the only sounds are the typical buzzes of crowded stations and trains, this film seems to represent very clearly what the central motivations of the Festival are. It is the symbol of art that does not need words to change the perception of the viewer, and of love, whether physical or only mental, which is expressed through art in small gestures. Sighs, glances, tears and hands that approach, leave no room for dispute, but rather point to the genuineness in the eyes of the beholder. And the spectator can only see the movement of those bodies, losing sight of the bodies themselves, their materiality and identity. Art is capable to show human feelings and bonds that are created and that cannot be controlled just through laws. A phrase by T.S. Eliot that pierces the black screen at the beginning of the film becomes the emblem of how the artistic practice stands in front of its audience with "the word within a word, unable to speak a word".<sup>58</sup>

The artistic practice in this sense is interpreted in the very term of art as a silent, often indecipherable word, which frightens the human mind unable to find clarity in it but which, at the same time, inevitably attracts it. The role of art, as Interviewee 4 emphasises once again, is to expose ideas and speak freely even when words cannot say anything, to reach people and foster their feelings in the attempt to raise awareness about some issues. If through laws it is not possible to stop hatred, *MQFF* fully takes up the activist idea of invoking and putting rights into action through the use of art and emotions.<sup>59</sup> As Interviewee 1 explains, the main purpose is to "cover all the dimensions through art that talks about the LGBTQI+ actions. Art and cinema are very important in people's life and it is a great entry to stimulate their perception and how they feel persons in a context where heteronormativity is the norm".<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Faraz Arif Ansari, 7 Nov 2019. "Sisak, India's First Silent LGBTQ Love Story", *Faraz Ansari*, Youtube. Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020, <https://youtu.be/3s2UuS-Nn8A>

<sup>59</sup> Baycat, 14 May 2018, "Art + Activism = Artivism: Art can Dismantle Hate", *BAYCAT*, Youtube, Accessed 30 Apr 2020, <https://youtu.be/RYQNMAEhDxw>

<sup>60</sup> Interviewee 1



The idea of the *MQFF* is to be an experimental space, which has a vital role in creating opportunities for all and which wants to push for a change in what Hakeem describes as the “societal foundation matrix”.<sup>61</sup> The Festival therefore, as Interviewee 4 points out,

conceives itself as audacious and it deals more with an intersectional approach in the fight against gender-based discrimination and repression. It is a screening program with discovery and stimulates reflection to eliminate basic notions that are blurred or even erroneous in the collective unconscious.

In fact, the Festival’s attention is addressed especially on the Global South countries and opens many scenarios to people from very different backgrounds.

Although *MQFF* takes place in Tunis, it tries to include not only people from the capital or northern regions of the country, with a certain level of education and access to services, but also from the periphery, in the attempt to offer support and recognition for everyone. In this sense, it is important to consider what Halberstam defines as “queer time and space”<sup>62</sup> and how the geographies of bodies and their “dislocatedness”<sup>63</sup> change the needs and issues faced by queer individuals. As explained by many Interviewees, the Festival aim is to guarantee access for everyone, opening some spots “to pay for transportation and accommodation”<sup>64</sup> and funding Tunisian artist work production.

The idea is to use the artistic practice to create an inclusive and safe space that encourages the discovery of new things, the interaction and the sharing of experiences and feelings that it would not be possible to share outside. In this sense, activism is adopted not only for the use of artistic creation to raise social consciousness, but also to stand against

---

<sup>61</sup> Az Hakeem, 2010. Deconstructing Gender in Trans-Gender Identities, *Group Analysis* 43 (2): 141–54, p.150

<sup>62</sup> Judith Halberstam, 2005. “*In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*” (*Sexual Cultures*), NYU Press. p.1

<sup>63</sup> Ibid p.16

<sup>64</sup> Interviewee 7

discriminations and inequalities inside the community itself. Talking about artistic practices that involve activism, Interviewee 4 testifies:

We adopted artivism in the first place to stand against elitist attitudes, policies or practices that privilege educated individuals and those that have access to information and exclude other individuals. In fact, in the beginning of the Tunisian Queer Movement, after the 2011 Revolution the only means of spreading awareness were focus groups and panels presented whether in French or English. Only a few members of the community had access to the information because of the intellectual and linguistic barriers. Admitting that this interests everybody and letting everyone to get the information and have their own subjectivities regardless of their intellectual level is necessary.

If, as Sliwinska affirms, "queer culture is entwined with art and visual culture",<sup>65</sup> in the context of the *MQFF* the creative process therefore plays a dual role. On the one hand it becomes a means for artists to work with hybrid art forms but also with other politicised expressions of the queer body that can be found in social movements but not in the performative process,<sup>66</sup> on the other hand it more easily attracts all kinds of audiences. As noted by Interviewee 5, being an art festival, the *MQFF* has obtained a lot of participation from the public. In fact,

trying to advocate for certain causes through arts is more accessible, more tangible and more accepted by the public. People can be attracted and interested in an easier way than make a talk about an issue.<sup>67</sup>

It emerges here the capacity of art to facilitate engagement and bridge a deeper social encounter among people. In what is the relation between art and its public, the desire of artists is to "get out of the museum and induce alterations in the space of everyday life, generating

---

<sup>65</sup> Basia Sliwinska, 2013, "Art and queer culture: A peephole into anything else you want to be", *Third Text*; 7 (6): 808–810 p.809

<sup>66</sup> Konstantinos Eleftheriadis, 2018. "*Queer Festivals, Protest and Social Movements*", Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, p.103

<sup>67</sup> Interviewee 5

new forms of relations".<sup>68</sup> In this way, in the space of the Festival happens what is defined by Zebracki the "contact with the 'other'" that fosters the connection of different experiences.<sup>69</sup> The artistic practice thus becomes a means that challenge a transformation in the collectivity, with the power to foster the public "to take on different perspectives and to reimagine our worlds".<sup>70</sup>

### 2.3 The artistic process as lived experience

If the artistic process during the *MQFF* in what is the activist idea is seen as a catalyst, which can lead to a strengthening of social change and open not only new dialogues and imagery, but also to a real awareness, the role of the audience and how it lives this artistic experience is essential. Art is in fact the instrument and the audience that receives it has the power to perceive in a specific way and to act in the direction felt and chosen.

Within the Tunisian community, reactions to the artistic process developed in the context of the *MQFF* are not always consistent. Part of the community has wondered whether using a medium such as art to define and initiate change is a real help for the LGBTQI+ community, in a situation where there are many different realities and some individuals have legal and psychological needs that require to be supported. However, from the experiences shared by the Interviewees, it emerges how, on the other side, the Festival is a total and totalizing event, a point of reference for a community that through art finds itself reunited. It is an artistic process through which the community can relate and narrate that, as Bruguera explains, is used not only as a protest, but for an effective change. This artistic and activist process does not take place in a shocking and absolute way but starts from small things, from

---

<sup>68</sup> Jacques Rancière, 2009. "*The emancipated spectator*", London, Verso, p.53

<sup>69</sup> Martin Zebracki, 2014. "Public Art as Conversation Piece: Scaling Art, Public Space and Audience", *Belgeo* [Online], 3 |2014, National Committee of Geography of Belgium, p.11

<sup>70</sup> Suzanne Nossel, 2016. "Introduction: On 'Artivism,' or Art's Utility in Activism", *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 83 (1): 103–5, p.103

the simple establishment of a relationship with those who receive it, from provoking the participants, making them passionate and, for this reason, pushing them to take action for change.<sup>71</sup> The Festival is described by Interviewee 7 as

an opportunity for the people to dress the way they want and freely express their gender, talking about their personal stories and feeling in a safe space. It is very important on many levels for the community here in Tunisia because it is the only time of the year when it gets together and it takes people away from reality.

If the artistic process concerns new discoveries of the self that everyone can make, the link that is established in the context of the Festival among artists, art and audience becomes an essential nucleus for the liberation of the community itself. *MQFF* is considered by the LGBTQI+ community as a “wedding”<sup>72</sup> and art becomes a means of knowledge and expression, thus creating a space for sharing, deepening specific themes but also developing the exploration of the self by those who do not know deeply the world of the community.

From the interviews it emerges how often the community is reconnected to an idea of queer community that is based on a strongly sexualized and stereotypical vision, coming mainly from a film culture influenced by few available resources that often come from the Western pornographic tradition.<sup>73</sup> The Festival thus becomes a platform to show queer art and the community itself. Shows such as drag shows and cross-dressing become a tool to explore important issues, to make people understand that it is not just about sexual fantasies or pornography but about an identity that emerges and needs to be seen and understood. As Interviewee 3 explains, the second edition of the *MQFF* was experienced as something surprising especially in terms of participation by very different people who simply wanted to

---

<sup>71</sup> Harvard University, 3 Oct 2016, “Tania Bruguera | The Role of Ethics in Political Art || Radcliffe Institute”, *Harvard University*, Youtube. Accessed 30 Apr 2020  
[https://youtu.be/\\_x5SYh9x2tM?list=LLRPwHNjhVd9OnsuDKKkQGLw](https://youtu.be/_x5SYh9x2tM?list=LLRPwHNjhVd9OnsuDKKkQGLw)

<sup>72</sup> Interviewee 7

<sup>73</sup> Interviewee 5

join and perceive with their own eyes the reality of a queer event in a place where homosexuality is criminalized.

The people who came and talked to us were way more respectful to what we were doing comparing to the First Edition. They recognized more the art that was showcased in the Festival, they appreciated it more and they respected what we had to say. They even asked questions about the terminology to use, if it was correct, if the use of some words was offensive.

In this sense, the concept of activism as an artistic practice is taken up again, pushing above all to an active participation that requires collaboration and integration between the work of the artistic material but also of the body and perceptions, thus tending to create a new critical knowledge.<sup>74</sup> The artistic process becomes therefore a practice that involves the person as an individual but also as part of a larger community, leading to new awareness and new excitement and drive for change. An experience that, as Interviewee 6 explains, is unique and difficult to share with others because it is necessary to live in person.

---

<sup>74</sup> John Jordan, 2017. "Activism: Injecting Imagination into Degrowth", *Degrowth.de Blog*, p. 4

## CHAPTER 3 - ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND SPACES OF FREEDOM

### 3.1 The Artistic Practice for the creation of a safe space

Deepening the discussion around the prejudices present among the society, a central issue that emerges during the interviews is the performativity of the Festival as a space where artistic practices can be implemented. Through a deeper discussion and analysis with the Interviewees, what I wanted to bring out are especially the motivations and feelings that led the participants to consider the *MQFF* space in a certain way. What is necessary to dwell on is what Lefebvre defines as *espace vécu*, that space that is imagined by the individual, "produced and modified over time and through its use, spaces invested with symbolism and meaning",<sup>75</sup> where the body becomes central to give shape and develop the space itself.

One of the most interesting points during the interviews is how the *MQFF* becomes a space that the LGBTQI+ community uses to relate to part of society that does not belong to the community itself. It emerges that what is created by the Festival is not only a space to experiment in, share experiences and express certain feelings through the use of the artistic practice, but it becomes above all a safe space where people are accepted in their entirety, without having to feel targeted. Each individual not only experiences space but, at the same time, creates it through personal perceptions and imaginations. Space becomes in this sense a *stage*, where bodies can develop common or individual trajectories and where "each living body both is space and has its space; it produces itself in space at the same time as it produces that space".<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Stuart Elden, 2004. *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*, Continuum Studies in Philosophy. London: Continuum, pg.190

<sup>76</sup> Kirsten Simonsen, 2005. "BODIES, SENSATIONS, SPACE AND TIME: THE CONTRIBUTION FROM HENRI LEFEBVRE", *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*. 87(1):1-14; Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography, p.4

The Festival becomes therefore a platform that reflects the situation of the LGBTQI+ Tunisian community, welcoming not only art but also the words and values of the community itself, in a country where its identity is criminalized.<sup>77</sup> As one of the Festival participants explains, while activism is not prohibited in Tunisia and *Mawjoudin* is officially registered as an NGO, the need to create a safe space is mainly due to the presence of Article 230 of the Penal Code and a lack of in-depth knowledge of the LGBTQI+ community by society outside it.<sup>78</sup> The Festival in this sense can offer an alternative to traditional ways such as manifestations which can be problematic, by entering the public space through the use of creative practices.<sup>79</sup>

*MQFF* thus becomes a safe space both for people who are part of the community, who can have access to the freedom to feel and share experiences, but also for people outside the community who can understand more deeply and genuinely the needs of the LGBTQI+ community and the correct way to relate to it. A safe space where, as Interviewee 5 confirms, artistic practice has an important and innovative role to play in reaching people and in creating new images and experiences, where even those who have discordant opinions with the LGBTQI+ community feel safe and freer to express their ideas. Within the space of the Festival participants do not perceive the pressure of society because "they are right there in the story so they don't feel the need to conform to the majority or they might think by themselves through that art".<sup>80</sup> The creative process thus takes on a function of space emancipated from the rest of society with what Lumsden defines as a dual purpose of "*poiesis* - increasing the space for innovation (in thought, practice and production) and [...] *catharsis* - giving form to feelings at the individual and collective levels".<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Interviewee 3

<sup>78</sup> Interviewee 8

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Interviewee 5

<sup>81</sup> Malvern Lumsden, 2000. "Engendering peace: creative arts approaches to transforming domestic and communal violence", in "*Male roles, masculinities and violence: a culture of peace perspective*", ed. Ingeborg Breines, Robert Connell and Ingrid Eide, 257270. Paris: UNESCO, p.258

The safe space of the Festival is therefore essential both for the LGBTQI+ community and for the rest of the society, to develop and foster the creation of a more precise and real knowledge of queer art and culture. In fact, what appears from the various interviews is how outside the Tunisian LGBTQI+ community, there is no real knowledge but instead a strongly traditional image that sees the LGBTQI+ identity as something not legally recognized that is perpetuated especially through the image given by media that often recalls very westernized aspects of the idea of sexuality and an altered gender identity.

As Interviewee 1 explains, the norm within Tunisian society is heteronormative, often linking the LGBTQI+ community to the sexual and strongly stereotyped fantasies of some Western pornography which, as Interviewee 5 notes, is also the only accessible channel. "Did you get the ok to present porn movies?" some Tunisian journalists asked Interviewee 3, who, as later explained, after their participation in the Festival, strongly reconsidered this aspect. The idea of the *MQFF* is in fact to present itself as a window on the Tunisian LGBTQI+ reality and, more generally, on the countries of the Global South, to show an artistic practice that does not necessarily have to be sexualized but that has the purpose to represent a community and to offer it the freedom to express itself.

The creative process that develops within the Festival therefore wants to detach itself from the often wrong representations that come from very different realities than those of Global South and that do not give voice to the needs and problems faced by the community, creating an art that instead comes directly from its voice. If art can reach anyone by conveying emotions and showing how people in the LGBTQI+ community are entitled to "live and coexist with the rest of society",<sup>82</sup> the safe space of the *MQFF* thus becomes a place for sharing and discussion in order to show different aspects of the community.<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> Interviewee 4

<sup>83</sup> Interviewee 8



The role of the creative process is, in this sense, that of a link between society and the Tunisian LGBTQI+ community that aims to create an art specific of the communities of the Global South countries. The films presented during the Festival but also the performances and the competition for the creation of a scenario are specifically dedicated to Tunisian or Global South artists to allow them to show their heritage and diversity compared to other queer communities in the hope of having a protected and recognized queer art within ten years. "No one does it now in Tunisia or even in North Africa", explains Interviewee 8, stressing the importance of art to create a safe and visible space for the LGBTQI+ community, in order to give a correct idea of what the real needs and issues are to be taken into consideration.

The artistic practices produced in the Global South portray the life of queer communities in these countries and for this reason can be an essential experience for people that are not part of the LGBTQI+ community, showing "how people survive and how these people live their lives in a normal way, away from stereotypes, prejudices and what people would think without having much information".<sup>84</sup> The development of an artistic process of this kind has particularly attracted the attention of Interviewee 6, coming from a European country, who notes how especially in live performances there were several influences claiming some more traditional Arab, North African roots, mixing them with more modern issues related to the LGBTQI+ community. In a comparison with a Festival that takes place in the Interviewee's home country, what emerges is above all a very strong interest in the decolonial question that, unlike the European Festival, permeates the whole *MQFF*. For Interviewee 6, it is important to give visibility to this issue especially in Western countries, in order to break the very homogeneous vision present within the Western queer communities and to open contradictions within the stereotypes towards the LGBTQI+ communities of Global South.

---

<sup>84</sup> Interviewee 7

### 3.2 Artivism as alternative means

The artistic practices that take place within the *MQFF* thus become an essential tool not only to create a safe space within the countries that the Festival represents but also to address specific issues in states where a “capitalist world system of power” is strongly present and what is called the “coloniality of gender” has as its central pivot becoming the base for the confluence among gender, class and race.<sup>85</sup> It is important not to leave out this intersection in order to better understand not only the motivations behind the Festival's aims with the emotions and need to claim certain rights from the participants themselves, but also why the creative process was chosen as an important way to express the LGBTQI+ community.

If the idea of the Festival starts from the strong need to create, through the artistic process, a safe space for the LGBTQI+ community that allows a feeling of freedom especially from the impositions of Article 230 and from the pressures of the outside society, the decolonial question has to be considered as the *fil rouge* of the path started by the *MQFF*. Article 230 of the Penal Code is in fact the result of a path of hybridization between local traditions and rules of Islamic law that refer in an unclear way to the theme of homosexuality<sup>86</sup> that were reinterpreted by the colonial administration in an attempt to comply with the local traditions and the contribution given from an imaginary belonging of the French authorities themselves. In the history of French colonies, looking at French perception of what used to be the North African colonies, it is possible to see how the orientalist conception was strong and how there

---

<sup>85</sup> Maria C. Lugones, quoted in Guerrero Marcela, 2017. “‘Yo misma fui mi ruta’: A Decolonial Feminist Analysis of Art from the Hispanic Caribbean”, in “*Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960—1980*”, Edited by Andrea Giunta and Cecilia Fajardo Hill. Hammer Museum. Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020: <https://hammer.ucla.edu/radical-women/essays/yo-misma-fui-mi-ruta>

<sup>86</sup> Ramy Khouili, Daniel Levine-Spound, 2019. “*Article 230: A History of Criminalization of Homosexuality in Tunisia*”, <https://article230.com/en/article-320-eng/>, p.38

were many anxieties towards Arab sexuality, seen as a threat to masculinity and regulated in an almost obsessive way.<sup>87</sup>

Nowadays the pressure that lies at the base of the Article 230 can be felt from the LGBTQI+ community mostly in the government but also inside the nuclear family and in its behaviour that strengthen the need of the LGBTQI+ community to stand against this pressure seeking protection, not only from a legal and psychological point of view, but also through art that becomes an equally important means of dealing with this situation. The artistic process plays a role that, as Interviewee 3 explains, helps to “show all parts [...], the queer community not only needs psychological or legal help, we need to show what we have, how we live, we live also outside the community”.<sup>88</sup> For this reason, the use of artistic practices aims to keep the space safe but also wants to obtain a certain visibility to promote curiosity and to get out from an "underground" life.<sup>89</sup> A life that is marked at all times by the impossibility of not being able sexually to live freely and by the fear of being arrested and consequently losing the entire life and that, thanks to the Festival, can conversely live in a safe space and recover the hope and the desire for the emancipation from positions considered homonationalist.<sup>90</sup>

What emerges from the interviews is that homonationalism hides a contemporary vision of what the “imperial project”<sup>91</sup> was that has led the International Queer Community itself to begin and foster a "civilizing mission" that has become mainstream,<sup>92</sup> which not only uses principles such as tolerance to attract consensus, but exploits the LGBTQI+ identity itself to fuel often Islamophobic discourses inside the LGBTQI+ community, thus justifying

---

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p.43-46

<sup>88</sup> Interviewee 3

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

<sup>90</sup> Interviewee 4

<sup>91</sup> C. Heike Schotten, 2016. “Homonationalism”, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 18:3, 351-370, p. 352

<sup>92</sup> Paul Amar and Omnia El Shakry, 2013. “Introduction: Curiosities of Middle East Studies in Queer Times”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (2): 331–35, p.331

xenophobic positions.<sup>93</sup> In this sense, recounting his personal experience, Interviewee 6 emphasizes how, with respect to the decolonial issue, he realized first-hand the lack of deepening and little interest, often imbued with racist ideas that can be found in some European queer communities and, for this reason, he reiterates the importance of giving visibility to this Festival especially in Europe.

Very often there is a kind of racism compared to African migrants where they are inferior poor and there is a more liberal racism that says that they are homophobic, Maciste. This excuse is used to discriminate them, to repress them and through this Festival it is possible instead to show that they are not a homogeneous culture and that, on the contrary, there are pieces of society with avant-garde ideas.

In what is defined by Grosfoguel as the Eurocentric production of knowledge on race and gender issues in which European states recognize themselves in a "God eye view" self-presenting and declaring themselves the "foundation of all Truthful knowledge",<sup>94</sup> the artistic production that is developed within the *MQFF* becomes a valid alternative that positions itself against this type of representation and discrimination. In fact, the Festival tries to stimulate a collective knowledge that is deepened and produced through art, for the development of central notions for the LGBTQI+ Tunisian community that are often little known or misrepresented. As Interviewee 1 explains, the interpretation that the Tunisian LGBTQI+ community has with respect to certain issues and problems is very different from the typically Western one and the Festival represents the only opportunity not only to meet people from Global South countries, that often share similar traditions, but also to approach through art and deal with "new interpretations and adopted strategies in the region".<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> Interviewee 4

<sup>94</sup> Ramón Grosfoguel, 2011. "Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political-Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality", *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 1(1)

<sup>95</sup> Interviewee 1

The artistic practices that take place within the Festival thus clearly recall the idea of queer artistic practices when developed with the aim of "organiz[ing] a distance to the subject and its compounds, a distance to heteronormativity, to being-white, to being-able".<sup>96</sup> From this point of view, the art of *MQFF* wants to become a bridge to be able to find a compromise with communities that find themselves living very different situations and to understand each other's needs in a more equal and rightful way. As Interviewee 8 explains, "sometimes we would work together but we cannot because we cannot find a connection. [...] With art we can create links with activists from other places, we can work together", showing that art gives the possibility to reveal differences but, at the same time, to reconnect people who even if with different missions can find in the artistic process a starting point.

---

<sup>96</sup> Renate Lorenz, March 2012. "*Queer Art. A Freak Theory*", transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, p.19. Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020: [http://www.transcript-verlag.de/media/pdf/99/15/43/ts1685\\_1.pdf](http://www.transcript-verlag.de/media/pdf/99/15/43/ts1685_1.pdf)

## Conclusion

The analysis on the *MQFF* and the artistic processes that develop within it has allowed a reality to emerge, where the space created through the Festival becomes important not only as an event that brings together the entire Tunisian LGBTQI+ community, but also as a reference point for other communities from the Global South. The *MQFF* becomes a symbol of the starting point for the self-assertion of the Tunisian and Global South LGBTQI+ communities, not only towards the rest of society, but also within the International Queer Community itself. If the artistic practices that gave birth to the Festival can be defined as activist, it is precisely from the desire to use art with a social purpose that the Festival emerges as unique in a country that by law considers homosexuality as a crime.

What emerges from the interviews is a great push for change which, although limited by the difficulty and instability at the political level, sees the queer community at the forefront of the fight against change. A change that, in order to happen, fights for the research for deep on the limits of the community in Tunisia. Within the lived space of the Festival, imaginaries are developed that bring into play the origins and traditions of the community, highlighting issues related mainly to the colonial theme and trying to break those prejudices that have been created. The *MQFF* becomes a free space for expressivity, which allows not only members of the community, but also those who are not part of it to feel outside the political games and pressure from pre-existing normative schemes. In fact, the Festival becomes a space where queer performativity and its art intertwine with themes related to the colonial question and the claim of specific rights. The dialogue through the artistic process therefore takes space, often dropping established prejudices and claiming the legitimacy that the LGBTQI+ community has always craved.

This research has developed the idea that the artistic process is not limited only to an aesthetic aspect but can be used as a place to claim spaces of freedom in contexts where it is not yet possible to achieve change through the use of other means. Especially within a Global South queer community, this emancipation and legitimacy does not only take place within the society in which it lives, but also in a wider context which is that of the International Queer Community often ruled by specific hierarchies and performative norms. It is important to look at the *MQFF* because it is a unique example of a queer festival active in the MENA region that is succeeding in gathering the queer community of the Global South in a representation that is starting to have visibility also at international level. An important reminder which brings us back to what was the beginning of my research and which can be re-elaborated here are Audre Lorde's words:

Being gay-girls together was not enough. We were different. Being Black together was not enough. We were different. Being Black women together was not enough. We were different. Being Black dykes together was not enough. We were different.<sup>97</sup>

This quote highlights the fact that the individual will never be one or unitary, but more differences will coexist together, whether gender, race, or sexuality. It is necessary to understand how each stratification is also a part of the body, of the performativity of it and how it is important not to oppose these parts, but to intersect them and build new spaces of freedom through them. In this path the artistic process helps to rediscover the closeness to the self, the slow rhythm of life and feelings that with time, manages to overcome boundaries and break down barriers often insurmountable through other means.

---

<sup>97</sup> Audre Lorde, 1993. "Zami: A New Spelling of My Name", in "Zami, Sister Outsider, Undersong", QUALITY PAPERBACK BOOKCLUB, p.226

## Bibliography

Aladro-Vico, Eva, Dimitrina Jivkova-Semova, and Olga Bailey, 2018. "Artivismo: Un Nuevo Lenguaje Educativo Para La Acción Social Transformadora", *Comunicar*, 26 (57): 9–18

Alexander, Jeffrey C., and Jason L. Mast, 2006. "Introduction: Symbolic Action in Theory and Practice: The Cultural Pragmatics of Symbolic Action", in "*Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*", ed. Alexander, Jeffrey C., Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Amar, Paul, and Omnia El Shakry, 2013. "Introduction: Curiosities of Middle East Studies in Queer Times", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (2): 331–35

Ansari, Faraz Arif, 7 Nov 2019. "Sisak, India's First Silent LGBTQ Love Story", *Faraz Ansari*, Youtube. Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020, <https://youtu.be/3s2UuS-Nn8A>

Arksey, Hilary, Peter Knight 1999. "Interviews and research in the social sciences", in "*Interviewing for social scientists*", Arksey, H., & P. T. Knight, London: SAGE Publications

Artivism Network, 2012. "Preamble", *Artivism Network*. Accessed on Apr19th, 2020 <http://www.artivism.de/preamble.htm>

Asante Jr, M. K., 2008. "*It's Bigger Than Hip Hop: The Rise of the Post-Hip-Hop Generation*", New York, St. Martin's Publishing Group.

Bawsala, Al, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch, (Joint Statement) 31 Jan 2014, "AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL JOINT PUBLIC STATEMENT", *Amnesty International*. Accessed 30 Apr 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/8000/mde300032014en.pdf>

Baycat, 14 May 2018. "Art + Activism = Artivism: Art can Dismantle Hate", *BAYCAT*, Youtube, Accessed 30 Apr 2020, <https://youtu.be/RYQNMAEhDxw>

Boehmer, Elleke, 2005. "*Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation*", Manchester University Press

Braun, Benjamin, Sebastian Schindler, and Tobias Wille, 2019. "Rethinking Agency in International Relations: Performativity, Performances, and Actor-Networks", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, vol. 22,787–807

Brown, Gavin, Kath Browne, Rebecca Elmhirst, and Simon Hutta, 1st October 2010. "Sexualities in/of the Global South." *Geography Compass* 4, no. 10:1567

Butler, Judith, 1988. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory", *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4: 519-31. doi:10.2307/3207893.

Butler, Judith, 1993. "*Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of "sex"*", New York: Routledge



Butler, Judith, 2006. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York: Routledge, 2nd ed.

Carlson, Marvin, 2013. *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, London and New York: Routledge, 2nd edn

Conlon, Deirdre, 2004. "Productive Bodies, Performative Spaces: Everyday Life in Christopher Park", *Sexualities*, 7 (4): 462–79

Dados, Nour, and Raewyn Connell, 2012. "The Global South", *Contexts: Understanding People in Their Social Worlds* 11 (1): 12

de Beauvoir, Simone, trans. H.M. Parshley, 1974. *The Second Sex*, New York: Vintage

Diverlus, Rodney, 2016. "Re/imagining activism" in *Artistic Citizenship: Artistry, Social Responsibility and Ethical Praxis*, Elliott, David J., Marissa Silverman, Wayne D. Bowman. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Doré, Elisabeth, 1997. *Gender Politics in Latin America: Debates in Theory and Practice*, New York: Monthly Review Press

Eleftheriadis, Konstantinos, 2018. *Queer Festivals, Protest and Social Movements*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press

Elden, Stuart, 2004. *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*, Continuum Studies in Philosophy, London: Continuum

Foucault, Michel, 1976 / 1998. *The history of sexuality vol. 1: the will to knowledge*, London: Penguin.

Ford, Akkadia, 2017, "Regional & Queer: Refusing to be Invisible, Creating queer space in a non-queer world", *Cybergeog: European Journal of Geography*

Freedom House, 2019, "Tunisia", *Freedom in the World 2019*. Accessed on Mar 30th, 2020 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/tunisia>

Goffman, Erving, 1956. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre, Monographs; no.2

Grosfoguel, Ramón, 2011. "Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political-Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality", *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 1(1)

Guellali, Amna, 25 Oct 2019. "A Hopeful Speech, but Will Tunisia's President Deliver?", *Human Rights Watch*. Accessed 30 Apr 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/10/25/hopeful-speech-will-tunisias-president-deliver>

Guerrero, Laurie Ann, 2013. "Birthing the Warrior: Poetry as Illumination", *The Feminist Press*, 40 (3): 306–10

Hakeem, Az, 2010. “Deconstructing Gender in Trans-Gender Identities”, *Group Analysis* 43 (2): 141–54

Halberstam, Judith, 2005. “*In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*” (*Sexual Cultures*), NYU Press.

Harvard University, 3 Oct 2016, “Tania Bruguera | The Role of Ethics in Political Art || Radcliffe Institute”, *Harvard University*, Youtube. Accessed 30 Apr 2020 [https://youtu.be/\\_x5SYh9x2tM?list=LLRPwHNjhVd9OnsuDKKkQGLw](https://youtu.be/_x5SYh9x2tM?list=LLRPwHNjhVd9OnsuDKKkQGLw)

Holden, Philip, and RJ Ruppel, 2003. “Introduction” in “*Imperial Desire. Dissident Sexualities and Colonial Literature*”, eds. Holden, Philip, and RJ Ruppel, ix–xxvi. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press

Human Rights Watch (HRW), 24 Jul 2018. “Tunisia: Pact for Equality, Individual Freedom”, *Human Rights Watch*. Accessed 30 Apr 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/24/tunisia-pact-equality-individual-freedom>

Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2018. “Tunisia: Events of 2017”, *Human Rights Watch*. Accessed 30 Apr 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/tunisia>

Jordan, John, 2017. “Artivism: Injecting Imagination into Degrowth”, *Degrowth.de Blog*

Khouili, Ramy, Levine-Spound, Daniel, 2019. “*Article 230: A History of Criminalization of Homosexuality in Tunisia*”, <https://article230.com/en/article-320-eng/>

Langer, Susanne K., 1953. “*Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art*”, New York: Scribner

Lefebvre, Henri, 1991. “*The Production of Space*”, Oxford: Blackwell

Lorde, Audre, 1993. “Zami: A New Spelling of My Name”, in “*Zami, Sister Outsider, Undersong*”, QUALITY PAPERBACK BOOKCLUB

Lorde, Audre, ed. Joan W. Hall, 2004. “*Conversations with Audre Lorde*”, University Press of Mississippi

Lorenz, Renate, March 2012. “*Queer Art. A Freak Theory*”, transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020: [http://www.transcript-verlag.de/media/pdf/99/15/43/ts1685\\_1.pdf](http://www.transcript-verlag.de/media/pdf/99/15/43/ts1685_1.pdf)

Lugones, Maria C., quoted in Guerrero Marcela, 2017. “‘Yo misma fui mi ruta’: A Decolonial Feminist Analysis of Art from the Hispanic Caribbean”, in “*Radical Women: Latin American Art*”, 1960—1980, Ed. Giunta, Andrea, and Cecilia Fajardo Hill. Hammer Museum. Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020: <https://hammer.ucla.edu/radical-women/essays/yo-misma-fui-mi-ruta>

Lumsden, Malvern, 2000. “Engendering peace: creative arts approaches to transforming domestic and communal violence”, in “*Male roles, masculinities and violence: a culture of peace perspective*”, ed. Breines, Ingeborg, Robert Connell and Ingrid Eide, 257270. Paris: UNESCO.

- Marshall, Eliot, 1998. "DNA Studies Challenge the Meaning of Race", *Science* 282, 5389: 654–55
- Massad, Joseph Andoni, 2002. "Re-Orienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World", *Public Culture*, Duke University Press, 14 (2): 361–85
- Nossel, Suzanne, 2016. "Introduction: On 'Artivism,' or Art's Utility in Activism", *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 83 (1): 103–5
- Parker, Andrew, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1995. "*Performativity and performance*", New York: Routledge
- Pasotti, Nullo, (after 1970). "*Italiani e Italia in Tunisia dalle origini al 1970*", Roma, Finzi
- Punt, Jeremy, 2008. "Intersections in Queer Theory and Postcolonial Theory, and Hermeneutical Spin-Offs", *Bible & Critical Theory* 4 (2): 24.1
- Rancière, Jacques, 2009. "*The emancipated spectator*", London, Verso
- Schechner, Richard, and Sara Brady, 2013. "*Performance Studies: An Introduction*," Routledge, 3rd edn
- Schotten, C. Heike, 2016. "Homonationalism", *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 18:3, 351-370, DOI: 10.1080/14616742.2015.1103061
- Segovia, Fernando F., 2005. "Mapping the Postcolonial Optic in Biblical Criticism: Meaning and Scope", in "*Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*", eds Moore, SD, and FF Segovia, Bloomsbury Publishing PLC
- Sheikh, Simon, October 2009. "Positively Trojan Horses Revisited", *e-flux*. Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020: <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/09/61372/positively-trojan-horses-revisited/>
- Simonsen, Kirsten, 2005. "BODIES, SENSATIONS, SPACE AND TIME: THE CONTRIBUTION FROM HENRI LEFEBVRE", *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*. 87(1):1-14; Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography
- Sliwiska, Basia, 2013, "Art and queer culture: A peephole into anything else you want to be", *Third Text*, 7 (6): 808–810
- Torres De Eça, Teresa, 2017. "*Activist Art Education: Creation of Hybrid Spaces for Learning and Living*", Research Gate
- Tyler, Melissa, and Laurie Cohen, 2010. "Spaces That Matter: Gender Performativity and Organizational Space", *Organization Studies*, 31 (2): 175–98
- Ukaegbu, Victor, 2017. "Post-colonialism and performance: political, cultural and pedagogic legacies and constraints", *Repertório, Salvador*, ano 20, n. 29, p. 12-34

Wilson, Ara, November 2006. “Queering Asia”, *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Issue 14. Accessed Apr 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
<http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue14/wilson.html>

Zebracki, Martin, 2014. “Public Art as Conversation Piece: Scaling Art, Public Space and Audience”, *Belgeo* [Online], 3 |2014, National Committee of Geography of Belgium