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A PLACE FOR US

by

Dillon Bryant

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
Of the Requirements for the
University Honors Program

Department of Art
The University of South Dakota
May 2020

The members of the Honors Thesis Committee appointed
to examine the thesis of Dillon Bryant
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ABSTRACT

“A place for us”

Dillon Bryant

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“A place for us” explores constructions of the home in relation to the LGBT+ experience through reappropriated and recontextualized found images sourced from articles of print culture such as newspapers, advertisements, publications such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, *National Geographic*, *Time* and others printed from the 1960’s onward. As of 2020, there are no federal laws that provide universal protections against housing or employment discrimination faced by LGBT+ people in the United States. LGBT+ youth and elders struggle with securing housing and this is compounded for LGBT+ people of color. Homelessness increases exposure to trauma, drug abuse, developmental and mental health problems, sexual assault, and other problems. The desire for a home remains a political and contentious ordeal for LGBT+ people at all ages.

KEYWORDS: Photomontage, Collage, Housing Inequality, LGBT, Dadaism

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Untitled (a home for the two of us)
2018
Collage
20x26"



Untitled (we would be so lucky)

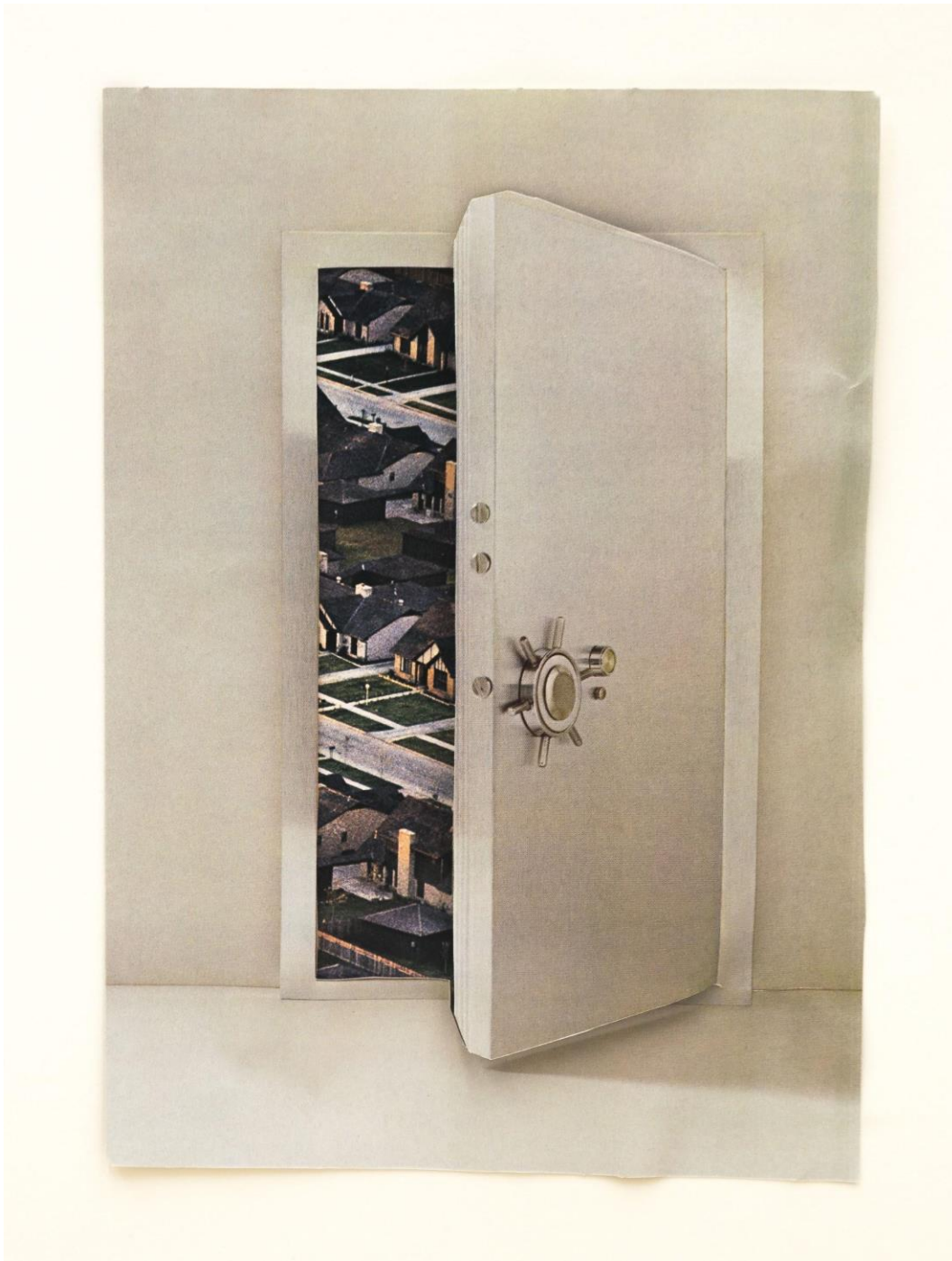
2019

Photomontage

11x14"



Untitled (a spectacle in our own homes)
2019
Photomontage
11x14"



Untitled (is the door opening?)
2019
Photomontage
11x14"



Untitled (red reminds me of you)
2019
Collage
20x26"



Untitled (subtle)
2019
Photomontage
20x26



Untitled (i've got somebody waiting at home for me)
2019
Photomontage
20x26"



Untitled (it's not much but it's ours)
2019
Photomontage
11x14"



Untitled (black sheep)
2019
Collage
12x13"



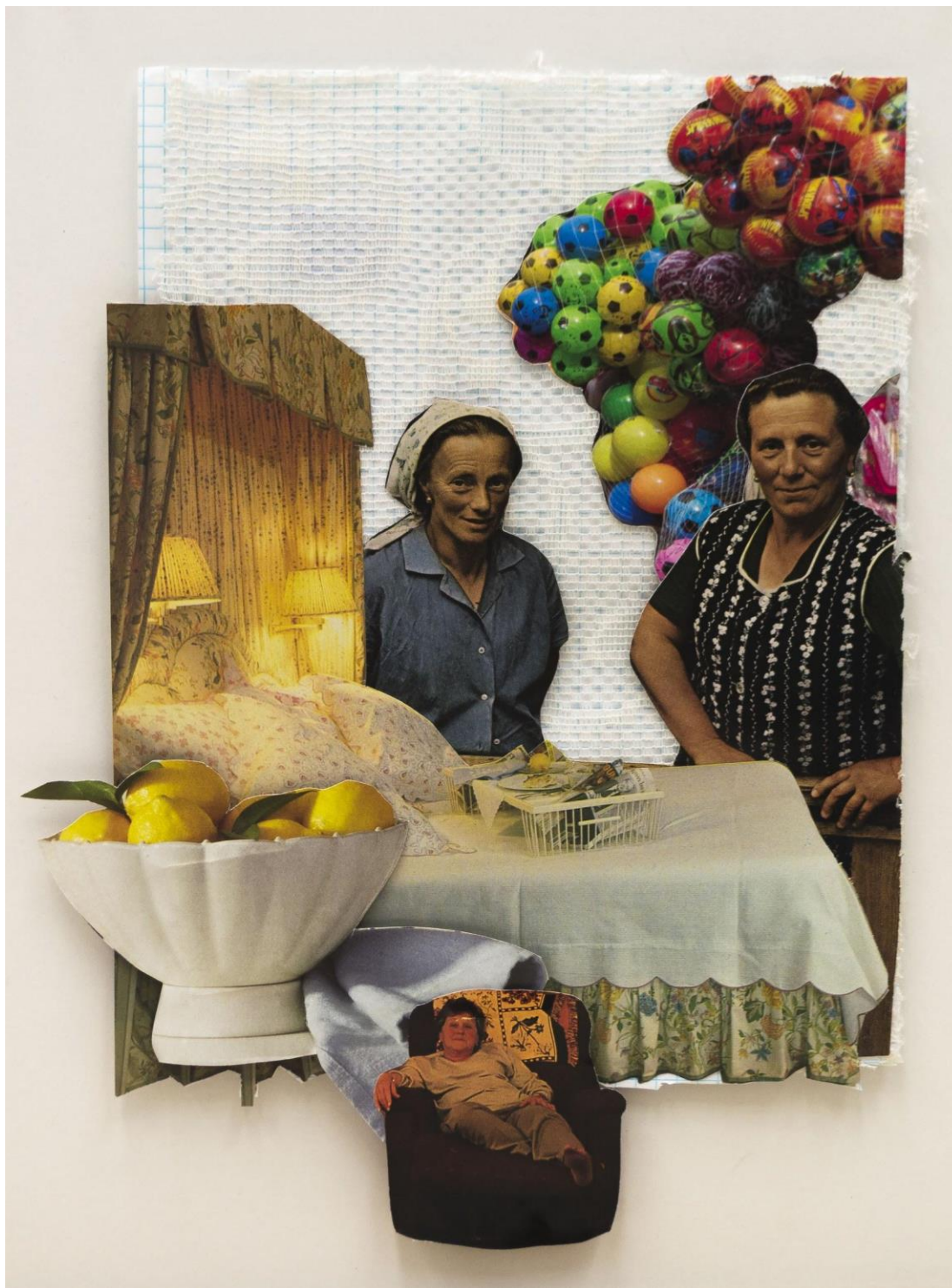
Untitled (we don't talk about it)
2019
Photomontage
12x12"



Untitled (someday)
2019
Photomontage
11x13"



Untitled (no place like home)
2019
Photomontage
11x14"



Untitled (bitter)
2019
Collage
11x14"



Antique with owners Roxanne Allen, left, and Julie Snow.

673

Untitled (wish you were here)
2019
Collage
20x26"



18 Human lip. Magnification 210X.

Untitled
2018
Collage
20x26"



Untitled (it can only go up from here)
2019
Collage
11x14"



Untitled (we will do just fine)
2019
Collage
11x14"



Untitled (homecoming)
2019
Collage
11x14"



Untitled (it'll be messy)

2019

Photomontage

20x26"



Untitled (home with you)
2019
Photomontage



Untitled (her quilt)
2019
Photomontage



Untitled
2019
Photomontage



Untitled
2019
Photomontage



Untitled (his chair)
2019
Photomontage



Untitled
2019
Photomontage



Untitled (it's lonely without you)
2019
Photomontage



Untitled
2019
Photomontage



Untitled (somewhere)
2019
Photomontage
32x40"



Untitled
2019
Photomontage



Untitled
2019
Photomontage



Untitled
2019
Photomontage



Untitled (We are persistent)
2019
Photomontage



Untitled
2019
Photomontage



Untitled
2019
Photomontage



Untitled
2019
Photomontage



Exhibition postcard from *implications*

ARTIST STATEMENT

“A place for us” explores constructions of the home in relation to the LGBT+ experience through reappropriated and recontextualized images sourced from articles of print culture such as newspapers, advertisements, publications such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, *National Geographic*, *Time* and others printed from the 1960’s onward. I presented this body of work for my BFA graduation exhibition *implications* in May 2019 and was featured in a solo exhibition on the second floor of the Muenster University Center from May to September 2019 where I also gave an artist talk to students attending the Summer Accounting Institute through the Beacom School of Business in July 2019. Individual pieces of “a place for us” have been selected for exhibition in the *32nd and 34th Annual Stilwell Exhibitions* as well the Midwest Center for Photography’s *20-2020 Emerge* Fellowship Exhibition hosted in Wichita, Kansas

The home is a locus of inequality. In the United States, there are no federal laws that provide universal protections against housing or employment discrimination faced by LGBT+ people. The discrimination faced by LGBT+ people begins in the homes in which they are raised and imposed by their families through familial homophobia. LGBT+ youth overpopulate homeless shelters as compared to their cisheterosexual peers and the risk of homelessness is compounded for LGBT+ youth of color. Youth homelessness increases exposure to trauma, heightened risks of drug abuse, developmental and mental health problems, sexual assault, and roadblocks to receiving a high school diploma or GED, a college education, and employment. In addition, many homeless youths lack access to strong familial and social support systems as well as safe

and stable housing. The problems encountered by LGBT+ youth do not disappear once they age out of their early years. In their old age, LGBT+ seniors struggle with housing insecurity and maintaining their health and wellbeing due to decades of discrimination and abuse.

The desire for a home remains a political and contentious ordeal for LGBT+ people. The orientation of spaces, institutions, and bodies facilitates certain modes of praxis. The orientation of American housing around privacy, unsustainability, compulsory heterosexuality and gender roles diminishes the possibility of alternative realities. The constitutive photomontages of “a place for us” disorientate these proclivities by presenting scenarios of queer ways of living.

Magazines and images are ubiquitous in today’s world. The imagery used in this body of work was sourced from “iconic” publications, such as *National Geographic*, *Time*, *Better Homes & Gardens*, and several others. Recontextualizing imagery pulled from the glossy spreads of publications such as these highlights the housing disparities faced by LGBT+ people. The home is generally a space where an individual, a group of people, or family has access to privacy. The homes presented in publications such as *Better Homes & Gardens*, and *House Beautiful* are resplendent in furniture and patterns; they include appliance filled kitchens and fully stocked refrigerators. Bedrooms overflowing with blankets and soft pillows. Luxury beds may even feature deluxe canopies. By all accounts, these homes are comfortable, livable, and banal. The homes in these magazines reflect the accepted norms for what a “home” should look like. The ubiquity of images such as these suggests housing accessibility would be just as quotidian.

The photomontages in “a place for us” deconstruct the carefully designed and photographed interiors of these publications. By escaping and queering the standard pictorial layout, these montages imply the inherent possibility of alternative ways of living. The non-square compositions disorientate the rooms of traditional houses. The presence of figures in these hand assembled scenes ground and refamiliarize the spaces. This body of work claims the created interiors and spaces as LGBT+ affirming and asserts the normalcy of LGBT+ people having harmonious familial ties and the right to housing. The use of the blue and white grid in many of these images references the architectural blueprint and the grid’s associations with the construction of space, both physical and pictorial.

A study published by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago shatters the ubiquity and luxury found in the lustrous pages of magazines such as *Better Homes & Gardens*. Chapin Hall reports that there are nearly 5 million youth who will experience homelessness in the United States.¹ Of these 5 million, as much as 40% identify as LGBT+ with LGBT+ youth of color reporting the highest incidences of homelessness.² Youth homelessness carries an increased risk of early death, higher exposure to violence, discrimination, sexual assault, and prostitution.³ The streets can be acutely dangerous and traumatic. The risks associated with youth homelessness are compounded for children who are at the intersections of race and being LGBT+.⁴ The condition of homelessness happens due to a complex multitude of factors. Chapin Hall found that families struggling

¹ Matthew Morton, Amy Dworsky, Sonali Patel, and Gina Samuels. “Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America,” *Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America*, Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2018.

² Morton, “Missed Opportunities”, 2018.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

with issues such as finding affordable and safe housing, poverty, addiction, abuse, and mental health problems, are at increased risk of becoming homeless.⁵ The event of LGBT+ youth becoming homeless is often not immediate. Once a child comes out, familial homophobia and rejection can simmer and build, bubbling over time like a geyser before exploding into situations where the child is removed from their home and cast onto the streets unaccompanied.⁶ Trauma becomes entrenched in environments in which one expects to be safe.

LGBT+ youth are not the only demographic struggling with housing insecurity. LGBT+ elders face unique challenges in securing housing in their older years. For elderly LGBT+ people, the effects of a lifetime of trauma and discrimination have lingered, and this becomes reflected in the institutionalized discrimination faced by elderly LGBT+ when searching for affordable and welcoming housing. The usual effects of aging, the diminishing health, lower incomes, as well as the losses brought on by the deaths of family, friends, and loved ones are exacerbated at the intersections of identity and orientation. For the individuals who lived through the peak of the AIDS crisis near the turn of the millennium, the psychological trauma and social isolation has persisted for decades.

The ongoing AIDS crisis claimed an entire generation. The archive of LGBT+ history is fragmented, perforated with gaps. The CDC estimates that as of 2016, nearly 700,000 Americans have died due to HIV/AIDS complications since the beginning of the

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

crisis.⁷ However, this estimate is most likely conservative due to the stigmas surrounding the condition. The lives of educators, artists, activists, scientists, of ordinary people, of parents and siblings were cut short before they could share their passions and wisdom.⁸ The generation that follows, bereft of elders and an archive to learn from, resorts to navigating the world in darkness. If the present bears the impressions of the past, what does that present look like when a history bears no pulse?⁹ The foundation of a home cannot be set when no blueprints have been drawn.

Social and familial isolation threatens the health and wellbeing of elderly LGBT+ people.¹⁰ Compared to their cisheterosexual counterparts, LGBT+ seniors are twice as likely to live by themselves and half as likely to have life partners in their household.¹¹ Furthermore, LGBT+ older adults are four times less likely to have children who can provide care and support for them in their old age.¹² Institutionalized elders grapple with remaining out and open in their identities and orientations in their old age for fear of discrimination by medical and service providers.¹³ Consequently, this fear of discrimination lead to significant underutilization by LGBT+ elders of services such as having medical staff conduct at-home visits, making use of food stamps and receiving home delivered meals.¹⁴ Poor medical and nutritional care leads to an increase in early

⁷ "Today's HIV/AIDS Epidemic Factsheet," CDC Factsheet: Today's HIV/AIDS Epidemic, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 2016, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/docs/factsheets/todaysepidemic-508.pdf>.

⁸ Sarah Schulman, *Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013 pg 84.

⁹Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts", *Small Axe* 12, no.2 (2002), pg 4.

¹⁰ "Aging and the LGBT Community." SAGE. SAGE, March 11, 2019. <https://www.sageusa.org/resource-posts/aging-and-the-lgbt-community/>.

¹¹ "Aging..." SAGE, SAGE, March 11, 2019, <https://www.sageusa.org/resource-posts/aging-and-the-lgbt-community/>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

institutionalization as well as premature death compared to their peers.¹⁵ Housing discrimination on the grounds of orientation and identity remains a critical threat for seniors. The prospect of growing old and living comfortably with a partner takes on new meaning for LGBT+ seniors.

To address the problems encountered by LGBT+ elders, the service organization SAGE has partnered with the nonprofit HELP USA to construct an LGBT+ welcoming housing development in the Bronx called the Crotona Residencies.¹⁶ The Bronx project will feature over 80 single bedroom and studio apartments intended to suit individuals and couples who are 62 years and older and who qualify for affordable housing.¹⁷ Renters accepted into the building will not pay more than 30% of their total annual incomes on rent, with potential applicants being limited to people whose annual incomes fall below 50% of New York City's area median income.¹⁸ For a single renter, their income must be \$37,350 and for a family of two, \$42,700.¹⁹ The Crotona Residences will be New York City's first subsidized housing development explicitly welcoming for older LGBT+ people and follows similar developments in cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, and Philadelphia.²⁰ Endeavors such as these recognize that LGBT+ elders are particularly vulnerable to homelessness because so many live by themselves, unsupported by their families and with high rates of poverty.²¹ The Crotona development will ensure

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Winnie Hu, "Creating a Home for L.G.B.T. Seniors in New York City," The New York Times, The New York Times, July 3, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/03/nyregion/housing-lgbt-seniors-new-york-city.html>.

¹⁷ "SAGE NYC - LGBT-Welcoming Elder Housing in NYC," SAGEnc.org, SAGE, n.d., <https://sagenyc.org/nyc/housingnyc/index.cfm>.

¹⁸ "SAGE NYC - LGBT- Welcoming Elder Housing", <https://sagenyc.org/nyc/housingnyc/index.cfm>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Hu, "Creating a Home for L.G.B.T. Seniors..." <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/03/nyregion/housing-lgbt-seniors-new-york-city.html>.

²¹ Ibid.

that its tenants receive the care they deserve. The Crotona development will feature in situ health and cultural programming, meal services, and computer labs.²² A community garden will assist in providing for the food and nutritional needs of the building's tenants.²³ The Bronx location is within walking distance of public transportation, pharmacies, grocery stores, and parks.²⁴ The design of buildings such as the Crotona development recognizes the importance of and need for LGBT+ affirmative spaces and housing.

Familial homophobia refers to the discrimination faced by LGBT+ individuals at the hands of their families. Sarah Schulman, in *Ties that Bind*, argues that familial homophobia serves as a reflection of broader discriminatory attitudes found throughout the social and legal landscape that LGBT+ people first experience within the home.²⁵ The nuclear model, of a father, mother, and children assumes heterosexuality is universal amongst family members.²⁶ Compulsory heterosexuality treats deviation with disrespect.²⁷ The family acts as a space where all the judgements of the world are rehearsed within the confines and privacy of the walls of the home. External attitudes are reproduced through the lens of family ties and beliefs. Familial homophobia assumes many forms, ranging from typical acts of violence to other equally subtle and insidious ways. The problems of familial homophobia are often relegated to the realms of the personal and private, as family problems, thus preventing sweeping societal changes from

²² "SAGE NYC - LGBT- Welcoming Elder Housing", <https://sagenyc.org/nyc/housingnyc/index.cfm>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Sarah Schulman, *Ties That Bind: Familial Homophobia and Its Consequences*, New York: The New Press, 2009, 1-2.

²⁶ Schulman, *Ties That Bind...*, New York: The New Press, 2009, , 44.

²⁷ Ibid, 44.

occurring. The sheer volume of homeless LGBT+ youth cast out from their homes by their families reveals familial homophobia to be a critical social issue. Aside from the dangers of homelessness, the consequences of familial homophobia are damaging, confusing, and long lasting. It prevents individuals from forming healthy and full relationships with their birth families and other LGBT+ people as certain discriminatory attitudes become internalized. The victims of discrimination thus perpetuate and reproduce the means of their own discrimination.

A recent personal experience I had concerning familial homophobia occurred while my partner and I were visiting my family to be with my grandfather before he passed away in October 2019. My relationship with my grandfather remains stunted: my mother recommended that I not ever come out to him because it would make things “difficult” for my family. The day of his funeral, my partner and I met many of my mother’s relatives for the first time and I reacquainted myself with family friends. My mother continually introduced my partner to my extended family as just “my friend” despite our marriage and time together. While our relationship of 5 years and marriage were continually brushed aside, my mother had no qualms publicly recognizing the shorter, heterosexual relationship of a younger cousin. My mother declares my cousin’s partner to be a full member of our family. My relationship to my husband is not recognized on the same terms that my heterosexual family members’ are. Following the service, my partner and I decided to leave the following reception early because we did not want our relationship to continually be disrespected. My family reacted angrily. My mother acutely expressed her disappointment with me stating that we would probably never see these family members again. She implied our relationship, and our desire to

have our relationship recognized within this home space, ruined my grandfather's funeral. In our home following the reception, my nephew informed me that "it was gay" my partner and I left early.

The treatment my partner and I faced in this situation was not physically violent. We were not physically battered or bruised, yet we faced trauma all the same. My partner and I faced diminishment for the comfort of my relatives in the space of our family home and at my grandfather's funeral. My partner and I brushed up against an invisible wall preventing us from fully joining my family in processing our grief. Spaces, such as homes, orientate themselves around certain directions, actions, and experiences. The orientation of space becomes a powerful, invisible formative force screening and vetting certain incompatible identities. The contours and orientation of bodies and objects form through contact and association with other bodies and objects.²⁸ The homophobic aggressions by my family in the above example showcase the subtle orientations in which spaces assume. My mother refusing to acknowledge my relationship to my partner in the presence of my relatives strengthens the orientation of the family home around heterosexuality.

The space of the home possesses an orientation around a certain praxis. The private and intimate space of the home connects to public spaces, bringing attitudes both inside and out, orienting itself in relation to them.²⁹ The world is orientated around heterosexuality and allows certain bodies to more easily extend themselves and thrive.³⁰ Consider the ease at which bodies orientated around heterosexuality can navigate the

²⁸ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007, 54.

²⁹ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology...*, 176.

³⁰ Ibid, 51, 102.

world around them. Public displays of affection among heterosexual partners are not met with lingering stares by strangers. Opposite gendered partners can sit at the same table in a restaurant and dine in peace, free from an atmosphere of tenseness from fellow patrons and staff. Heterosexual partners are not denied visitation rights to visit their sick partners in the hospital. Heterosexual individuals do not face the same barriers in obtaining material opportunities based on their heterosexuality unlike LGBT+ people who still face housing and employment discrimination in this country. Until very recently, LGBT+ relationships lacked the state recognition that heterosexual relationships have, by default and without question, through the opportunity of marriage.

The concept of bodies possessing an inherent orientation towards other bodies is a relatively modern concept.³¹ Bodies deviating from heterosexuality are considered orientated away from normativity.³² Deviation implicates the opportunity for alternatives and new possibilities to emerge.³³ Alternative realities require a refusal of present conditions. The prefigurative desire for alternative realities demands rejection of the circumscriptions of the present.³⁴ Tina Campt asserts throughout “Listening to Images” this refusal requires living the future contemporarily for the sake of persistence.³⁵ The montages created for this thesis are exercises in refutation of the reality LGBT+ struggle with homelessness and the traumas of familial homophobia. True equality for LGBT+ people was not achieved in 2015 with the Supreme Court’s ruling on Obergefell v

³¹ Ibid, 69.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, 62.

³⁴ Tina M. Campt, “Quiet Soundings The Grammar of Black Futurity”, in *Listening to Images*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017 (17).

³⁵ Tina M. Campt, “Black Futurity and the Echo of Premature Death,” in *Listening to Images*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017 (113).

Hodges granting marriage equality; no ruling has enacted universal protection of the right to home and job security for the LGBT+ community. The lack of legal protections directly exacerbates homelessness by not protecting home spaces based on sexual, romantic, and gender orientation. Indirectly, the lack of legal protection creates a legal validation of “othering” for the LGBT+ community and intensifies familial homophobia through this validation.

The process now known as photomontage can be traced to the work of Hannah Höch.³⁶ The work of Höch and her contemporaries are associated with Dadaism, a movement which emerged following the social and economic upheavals of post-World War I in Europe.³⁷ The oeuvres of Dadaists, including Höch, are noted for their disenchantment with the horrors of World War I.³⁸ Höch assembled montages from drawing upon the rich print culture of Berlin, incorporating imagery and texts from magazine illustrations, photographs, advertisements, newspapers, and articles of propaganda, including pamphlets and posters.³⁹ Artists of numerous backgrounds, identities, and orientations continue to work in this tradition, pulling inspiration and materials from the archives of print media of the world around them.

Drawing from and rebuilding the world as portrayed in print and digital media can be a vicious and violent endeavor. LGBT+ artists have frequently employed photomontage and collage to recontextualize and reframe the world around them.⁴⁰ The

³⁶Kristen Makhholm, “Strange Beauty: Hannah Hoch and the Photomontage,” *MoMA*, no. 24 (1997), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4381346>, 19.

³⁷Makhholm, “Strange Beauty...”, 19.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 21.

³⁹*Ibid*.

⁴⁰ Zachary Small, “The Quintessentially Queer Art of Collage,” *Hyperallergic*, *Hyperallergic*, November 28, 2016, <https://hyperallergic.com/341239/the-quintessentially-queer-art-of-collage/>.

archetypal action of cutting endemic in photomontage is violent, as body parts are surgically removed, landscapes are rent asunder through the slicing away of rivers or trees, and cities and homes are blown away from their contexts. This conceptual destruction belies construction, as it generates a reconstruction from the synthesis of disparate parts. Elements that do not fit in a given space are put in spaces more oriented towards them. The creation of these new utopias through photomontage and collage flexes an individual's agency and reinstates a sense of control over their circumstances through their imagination and a desire for an alternative world. The photomontage scenes presented in "a place for us" attempt to create worlds in which familial homophobia and housing inequality do not exist. These montages revel in their fiction. Taken and removed from their contexts, they arrange alternative realities juxtaposed against LGBT+ homelessness and trauma. The process of sifting through images and hand creating scenes presents an intervention founded on the democratic and ever shifting nature of photography.⁴¹ I stress the fact that the montages in this body of work are works of fiction because secure housing and a healthy sense of home are not realities for many LGBT+ people.

The concept of a dream house, of possessing a private space for oneself and family remains an illusory ideal. William Levitt's Cape Cod style house, popularized by returning veterans following WWII, has become one of the most iconic symbols of the American dream, silently whispering the possibility of upward mobility through homeownership.⁴² Levitt's house stressed privacy for its occupants through a house

⁴¹ Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance*, 238.

⁴² Dolores Hayden, *Redesigning the American Dream: the Future of Housing, Work, and Family Life*, New York, NY: Norton, 2002 23.

meant for a single family, floating in a grass like sea, cutoff from the outside world save for a driveway. Dream homes such as these remain unattainable to many due to rising housing costs and shortages. Access to a home is predicated on affordability and mortgages and home prices have become prohibitively expensive for many.⁴³ In the year 2000, the price for a single family home was nearly \$177,000.⁴⁴ In 2018, these costs have risen to over \$260,000.⁴⁵ The ratio between home prices and income reflect affordability of homes and in 2018 the national median was over four times the median household income.⁴⁶ In addition, rates of housing construction have slowed, with only around one million units constructed in 2018 and the vast majority of these projects being produced for wealthy buyers.⁴⁷ Affordable housing for the lower and middle class has diminished, with what little houses available locked away behind high costs.⁴⁸ Individuals and families shut out from the American dream turn toward apartments for their housing needs.

Apartment living carries its own problems. Parallel to housing costs, the costs of rent have likewise increased.⁴⁹ Rents have increased so much, nearly 50% of all renters are cost burdened, meaning they pay more than 30% of their total incomes of housing.⁵⁰ In doing so, cost burdened households struggle to afford medical care, groceries, education, transportation, and other necessities. Households of color and the deeply

⁴³ Hayden, *Redesigning the American Dream...*page 29.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵“The State of the Nation's Housing 2019,” The State of the Nation's Housing 2019 | Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, July 11, 2019, <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/state-nations-housing-2019>.

⁴⁶ “The State of the Nation’s Housing 2019”, <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/state-nations-housing-2019>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

impoverished bear the greatest cost burdens.⁵¹ Single parent households, especially those headed by single mothers, struggle with finding affordable childcare, after-school care, and affordable and safe transportation for themselves and their children.⁵² The consequences of high cost burden mean reduced nutrition and health outcomes, especially for children whose development and wellbeing depends on proper nutrition.⁵³ Highly burdened households can only afford to spend approximately \$300 a month on food, half the level recommended by the Department of Agriculture recommends for spending for a family of four.⁵⁴ The reality of this situation means that particularly vulnerable households and parents will grapple with buying groceries to feed themselves and their families or using their greatly drained income to pay the month's rent. Clearly, housing costs have become unsustainable for many people. Homelessness rates have spiked in metropolitan areas across the country, with states such as California, Colorado, and Washington, seeing increases.⁵⁵ The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University predict if current trends continue without some form of intervention, affordable housing will become inaccessible.⁵⁶ Income and housing inequality exacerbate the struggles of vulnerable populations.

In times of uncertainty, familial support proves invaluable. In 2017, over ten million adults between the ages of 25 and 34 lived within their parents' or grandparents'

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Hayden, *Redesigning the American Dream...* page 29.

⁵³ "The State of the Nation's Housing 2019", <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/state-nations-housing-2019>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ "The State of the Nation's Housing 2019", <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/state-nations-housing-2019>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

households.⁵⁷ LGBT+ millennials who were rejected by their families as a result of homophobia and discrimination lack the option of living at home to cut living expenses. Without the support of their families, LGBT+ individuals struggle with the effects of poverty and directly run the risk of becoming homeless. The possibility of millennial homeownership and the associated assumption of class mobility proves even more tenuous for LGBT+ young adults.

The realities of daily life are changing, and the orientation of housing also ought to change to match its contours. Through approaching and understanding the unique problems regarding housing in the 21st century and the rapidly changing demographics of the United States in inclusive and attentive perspectives, new forms of personal and public space must, and will be created.⁵⁸ In maintaining a spirit of refusal, the implication for an alternative can be fostered and pursued.

Housing in the United States remains rife with inequalities, especially for the LGBT+ community. There are no comprehensive protections against housing and employment discrimination for the LGBT+ community and through this vulnerability, individuals remain prone to struggling with the effects of poverty and homelessness. These risks are particularly magnified for LGBT+ people of color. Familial homophobia in the family home often acts as the first exposure to discrimination an LGBT+ individual encounters. The resulting trauma and violence one potentially confronts in their youth possesses effects extending well into an individual's old age. Access to affordable and affirming housing for LGBT+ individuals at all age ranges endures as a key issue facing

⁵⁷ "The State of the Nation's Housing 2019", <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/state-nations-housing-2019>.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 224.

the community. The photomontages in “a place for us” deconstruct the heteronormative home to assert the normalcy of healthy LGBT+ families and relationships by synthesizing diverse and accessible printed imagery to create new and affirming spaces. The images in this body of work are fictional and this fiction reflects the reality that for many LGBT+ individuals safe and affordable housing remains inaccessible and out of reach.

Bibliography

“Aging and the LGBT Community.” SAGE. SAGE, March 11, 2019.
<https://www.sageusa.org/resource-posts/aging-and-the-lgbt-community/>.

SAGE is a national advocacy and service organization committed to improving the quality of life for LGBT+ elders. Many LGBT+ seniors struggle with discrimination, poverty, isolation, in their old age and many consider re-closeting themselves for fear of discrimination. Despite civil rights advances in recent years, LGBT+ elders have been relegated to the margins and have become an invisible and vulnerable population.

Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Sara Ahmed explores and questions our relationship to the world around us through analyzing and queering phenomenology. Ahmed argues that spaces are orientated for certain bodies based on the interplays of gender, class, race, and sexuality. Through the orientation of spaces towards certain bodies more than others, spaces are designed to exclude and impede as much as they are to accept and extend who can navigate them. Ahmed contends that the Western world is orientated around heterosexuality and that nonnormative individuals deviate from this orientation to create something new. The home, seemingly a private space, serves as a bridge between the personal and public arenas.

Azoulay, Ariella, and Louise Bethlehem. *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography*. London: Verso, 2015.

Ariella Azoulay devises an alternative way of viewing photographs of suffering and trauma that opposes the so called aestheticization of suffering through images documenting the destruction of property in the Occupied Territories. Azoulay creates an ontology of photography set within a public conversation linked to how people live, communicate, and see. She argues that photography is a dynamic and unending event that does not conclude at the moment the shutter is clicked or the image is first viewed. The montages in this body of work do not explicitly relate to the Occupation, Azoulay’s writings of violations of private space resonate with my own concepts.

Batchen, Geoffrey, M. Gidley, Nancy K. Miller, and Jay Prosser. *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*. London: Reaktion Books, 2014.

Throughout this collection of essays, photography and photojournalism are destabilized. Who is able to document and to what end and purpose, who is on which end of the camera, the responsibility of viewers in viewing and responding to images of atrocity, which images are able to become “iconic” and which images are afforded circulation and censure, as well as the definition of atrocity are all grappled with. Contributing writer and artist Lorie Novak stages interventions by juxtaposing images from family albums with images of atrocity in large scale installations.

Campt, Tina M. *Listening to Images*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2017.

Tina Campt interrogates archives of diasporic imagery in search of everyday acts of resistance and refusal. Campt stresses the importance of critiquing these images in a historical context as well as by noting one’s physical relation to certain images. Campt proposes a more sensory holistic method of viewing images, of “listening” to them. Campt examines how the sitters of mug shots, of passport photographs, and other ethnographic images subvert the colonial gaze which sought to brutalize and check them. Throughout *Listening to Images*, Campt searches for a futurity bound to happen.

Campt, Tina M. “Black Futurity and the Echo of Premature Death.” In *Listening to Images*, 101–16. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017.

Campt, Tina M. “Quiet Soundings The Grammar of Black Futurity.” In *Listening to Images*, 13–45. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017.

Hartman, Saidiya. “Venus in Two Acts.” *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1-14.

Saidiya Hartman explores the violence and destruction found in the archives of slavery: of the overabundance of graphic descriptions of suffering and the sparsity of information relating to individual victims. As of the writing of this essay, there are no surviving accounts written by women who lived through the Middle Passage on the voyage across the Atlantic. The existing gaps in the archives echo violently. Hartman asks how can we write impossible stories that are circumscribed by the limits and the failures of the archive.

Hayden, Dolores. *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995.

Urban design and architecture have frequently ignored the realities of multicultural communities that live in cities and their contributions to the politics of the construction of a sense of place. Hayden examines the rich urban environment of Los Angeles, California and how throughout the region has changed throughout the city's history, from the first indigenous Tongva settlements to the fissures brought on by global capitalism. The concept of place becomes deeply interwoven with cultural identity and public history, manifesting itself through collective memory. The histories, memories, and labor of people of color and women have been grossly overlooked. Hayden further examines the power of public art to reinvigorate public memory and awareness through a monument dedicated to Bidley Mason, a former slave whose legacy and contributions to the development of the city were in danger of being paved over.

Hayden, Dolores. *Redesigning the American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work, and Family Life*. New York, NY: Norton, 2002.

Dolores Hayden offers a critique on the gendered design of American housing in *Redesigning the American Dream*. In the decades following the Second World War, American housing was presented as a sanctuary for the white patriarchal family. The detached home built for a single family became the most iconic form of American housing and Hayden argues that the ideals found in its design propagate Victorian assumption of women's labor and role in the house. Gender segregation in the workforce increased. The design of the bulk of American housing and cities and towns is not orientated towards the realities of the demographics of the present. Hayden makes no mention of housing discrimination faced by LGBT+ people whatsoever in her arguments, however.

Hu, Winnie. "Creating a Home for L.G.B.T. Seniors in New York City." *The New York Times*. *The New York Times*, July 3, 2017.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/03/nyregion/housing-lgbt-seniors-new-york-city.html>.

SAGE, a service organization geared at addressing the housing crisis faced by elderly LGBT+ people is constructing a housing project that will be New York City's first subsidized housing development targeted at LGBT+ seniors. Projects such as this have been deployed in cities across the United States, such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, and Philadelphia, as a result of growing awareness that aging LGBT+ people are potentially much more vulnerable than their cisheterosexual counterparts and may need extra help in their old age.

Linfield, Susie. *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Susie Linfield, director of New York University's Cultural Reporting and Criticism Program, grapples with the challenges of looking at images of suffering and violence throughout *The Cruel Radiance*. She attempts to expand and move beyond the criticism that images depicting violence solely take advantage of their subjects and strips them of their dignity at the whims of viewers as espoused by Susan Sontag. Linfield argues that by flattening images of violence with the declaration of trauma porn erases the possibility of engaging with them critically. Photojournalism illuminates what is absent in human rights violations and these discrepancies are highlighted in the text by presenting examples of imagery documenting the Holocaust, the China's Cultural Revolution, the increasing use of child soldiers in Sierra Leone, and several others. Linfield urges her readers to remember that looking at such images requires a critical eye and mind to think about what made it possible for a world where such violence exists possible. The implication that in some capacity, an alternative reality where the violence depicted in these images does not exist informs much of the montages and collages of this body of work.

Makholm, Kristen. "Strange Beauty: Hannah Höch and the Photomontage." *MoMA*, no. 24 (1997): 19-23. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4381346>.

Kristen Makholm delves into the biography of Hannah Höch and charts the development of Berlin Dadaism and the avant-garde of the 20th century. Makholm also explores Höch's development and portrayal of the new and modern women in interwar Germany. Höch survived Hitler's rise to power, but she increasingly withdrew herself, for her own safety and during this period, her montages increasingly delved into the fantastical as an escape from the trauma of the time.

Morton, Matthew, Amy Dworsky, Sonali Patel, and Gina Samuels. “Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America.” *Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2018.

This research brief published by the University of Chicago explores statistics of LGBT+ homelessness in the United States. Data was collected from nearly 27,000 phone interviews, thousands other brief youth surveys at centers in counties across the country, and 215 in depth interviews with LGBT+ youth. Findings detail homelessness rates among both Black and White LGBT+ and non-LGBT+ youth, as well as the percentage of youth who have experienced adversity, such as discrimination from members of their family, physical violence, and several other examples are reported in graphs. The report found that LGBT+ youth are at a higher risk for homelessness as compared to other populations, LGBT+ youth experience great rates of adversity, homelessness has multiple causes, and finally safe and validating services are needed to serve LGBT+ homeless youth.

“Movement Advancement Project: Non-Discrimination Laws.” Movement Advancement Project Non-Discrimination Laws. Movement Advanced Project, September 19, 2019. http://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/non_discrimination_laws/.

The Movement Advancement Project maps non-discrimination laws that protect LGBT+ people from unlawful discrimination in the workplace, including measures guarding against discrimination in job termination and employment. The MAP project also showcases laws that offer protections against unjust eviction, the denial of housing, renting an apartment or buying a home on the grounds of identity and orientation. South Dakota is one of several states in the United States which do not offer any protections for LGBT+ people. The city of Brookings, however, does offer city protections against discrimination in employment, and housing.

“SAGE NYC - LGBT-Welcoming Elder Housing in NYC.” SAGEnc.org. SAGE, n.d. <https://sagenyc.org/nyc/housingnyc/index.cfm>.

The Crotona Senior Residences will open in 2019 and will feature over 80 one bedroom and studio apartments for the elderly and is part of SAGE’s mission of alleviating the struggles faced by LGBT+ seniors. Tenants will not pay more than 30% of their annual incomes on rent if they qualify for affordable housing. Located in the Bronx, the Crotona building will feature in situ health and cultural programming, meal services, computer labs, a community garden, as well as be within walking distance of grocery stores, pharmacies, parks, and other green spaces.

Schulman, Sarah. *Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.

Sarah Schulman, Distinguished Professor of English at CUNY, Staten Island, elucidates the numerous changes that have occurred in a gentrifying New York City in this memoir detailing her personal, lived experiences within the LGBT+ community in the epicenter of the AIDS Crisis. Gentrification relates to an inflow of often upper-class people into impoverished parts of cities and the subsequent upheaval of the previous inhabitants through policy changes and being priced out of their neighborhoods. Furthermore, gentrification relates to what is lost when these movements occur. An entire generation of LGBT+ people have been snuffed out since the Crisis began mere decades ago and this loss of history is compounded with the effects of gentrification. Gentrification today exacerbates the housing struggles faced by low income people of color

Schulman, Sarah. *Ties That Bind: Familial Homophobia and Its Consequences*. New York: The New Press, 2009.

Familial homophobia describes a feeling of attenuation experienced by LGBT+ individuals as a result of the actions of their families. This can take the form of a complete exclusion from the family as well as other subtle forms of discrimination. Schulman argues that a society can be understood as a vast collection of the interplays of families and that what is learned at home in a family reflects the norms of society.

Small, Zachary. "The Quintessentially Queer Art of Collage." Hyperallergic. Hyperallergic, November 28, 2016. <https://hyperallergic.com/341239/the-quintessentially-queer-art-of-collage/>.

Zachary Small reviews *Cut Ups: Queer Collage Practices*, an exhibition held at the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art in 2016 and notes the power of collage and photomontage to subvert systems of heteronormativity and discrimination. LGBT+ artists employ the processes to create otherwise impossible worlds in relation to their own experiences. I had the opportunity to see this exhibition in person when I was chosen to attend the Art Department Trip to New York City in 2016.

“The State of the Nation's Housing 2019.” The State of the Nation's Housing 2019 | Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, July 11, 2019. <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/state-nations-housing-2019>.

This report published by Harvard’s School of Design and Harvard’s Kennedy School examines the state of housing in America between 2018-2019. Slow rates of construction have failed to meet demands. Homeownership is tied to mortgage financing and costs and the ever-increasing costs of homes and credits has put accessibility in jeopardy for many people. Nearly 50% of renter households continue to be cost burdened, paying more than 30% of their incomes on rent, preventing them from investing in other necessities. Rates of homelessness continue to rise, particularly in states like California, where housing costs are already high. The Harvard Report suggests that if current trends continue, future costs of housing will increase beyond reach for many Americans.

“Today’s HIV/AIDS Epidemic Factsheet.” CDC Factsheet: Today's HIV/AIDS Epidemic. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 2016. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/docs/factsheets/todaysepidemic-508.pdf>.

This factsheet published by the CDC reports that as of 2016, 675,000 people have died from HIV/AIDS complications since the beginning of the Crisis. It is important to remember that this number may be much lower due to the stigmas surrounding HIV deterring people from seeking treatment. The findings report infection rates based on race, gender, heterosexuality, men who have sex with men (MSM), and people who inject drugs (PWID) through a series of graphs and charts. The CDC also details that infection risk is influenced by several factors, including poverty, inaccessible health care, homophobia, discrimination, the rate of imprisonment among men, and several others.

“Your Rights & Resources.” SAGE. SAGE, August 3, 2018. <https://www.sageusa.org/your-rights-resources/>.

SAGE details some of the unique challenges that LGBT+ elders face as they age in this fact sheet. Decades of institutional and familial discrimination act as a deterrent, keeping many LGBT+ seniors away from seeking medical care. Many older LGBT+ people live alone and do not have families or children to support them and struggle with higher rates of poverty.