INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

BUZZ SLUTZKY

Interviewer: Ric Tennenbaum

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**Ric Tennenbaum:** Hello, my name is Ric Tennenbaum, and I'll be having conversation with Buzz Slutzky for the New York City Trans Oral History Project, in collaboration with the New York Public Library's Community Oral History Project. This is an oral history project centered on the experiences of trans identifying people. It is June 29, 2017, and this is being recorded at the New York Public Library's Muhlenberg Branch, in the Teen Space, upstairs.

**Buzz Slutzky:** [Laughter].

**Tennenbaum:** Hi, Buzz.

**Slutzky:** Hi, Ric.

**Tennenbaum:** Um so could you first introduce yourself—

**Slutzky:** Yeah.

**Tennenbaum:** With uh maybe age, um, pronouns, gender identity, what have you?

**Slutzky:** Sure. My name's Buzz Slutzky. I'm 28 years old, I'm about to turn 29 pretty soon. My pronouns are they/them, and well, when I first came out, I identified as genderqueer, and now we have the word non-binary, so that seems all the better.

**Tennenbaum:** Cool.

**Slutzky:** Yeah. I'm sure more words will come in and make themselves relevant to my life, [Laughter].

**Tennenbaum:** Alright so now um I guess first just tell me a little bit about where you were born, your upbringing?

**Slutzky:** Yeah, so I was born in Overland Park, Kansas, outside of Kansas City, to Allison and Richard Slutzky who, um, I'm a second child, I have an older brother who is also trans, named Dane. And um I was born in 1988, and um you know, I'm born into an upper middle class, Ashkenazi Jewish family. Uh my dad originally is from Omaha, Nebraska, and my mom is from Ft. Worth, Texas. So um they met at Washington University in St. Louis, and had a lot in common because they were both from cow towns, as they call it., you know, I'm, in small Jewish communities, and also they were both significantly younger than their other siblings, but had really different experiences with that. Um and we moved to New Jersey when I was 10 months old, so I really don't remember Kansas at all. I used to joke that if, you know, my parents could have been lying to me and I wouldn't have known. So what my first video piece actually was um a talk show where, it was sort of based on, I don't know, Maury Povich or something, you know, some tacky talk show where my two selves, it was kind of sci-fi. It was, there was a fabric of space and time that split, and on one side, I stayed in Kansas and grew up there, and then on the other side I grew up in New Jersey and my two selves met, and for some reason in my mind they both sang, they both had to sing songs. And so the Kansas one sang "Stay" by Lisa Loeb. I
don't know why, this was just my instinct when I was, you know, 20. And um the New Jersey one was super punk rock dyke. This was before you know I was identifying as trans, and there was, this song called “I Fucked Your Girlfriend,” by Chicks on Speed, but I found—I think it was by Chicks on Speed, but I found the lyrics in an old Riot Grrl Zine of my friend's, so I did it without, I didn't really think of it as a rap. I wasn't really thinking of it as, I'm appropriating whatever black culture, but I kind of spoke the lyrics because I didn't know what the tune was. Just because I didn't have that information. And I used my electronic keyboard I had bought at a toy store as the beat. It was really silly, anyway. That's my—you can watch it. It's on YouTube I think. Um—

Tennenbaum: How old were you when you created that?

Slutzky: It was 2009, spring 2009, and I was 20 about to turn 21. And um, yeah, I'll get to that. But anyway. So yeah, I grew up in New Jersey in a town called Maplewood, which is the same community as South Orange. Maplewood and South Orange share a school system and they also share um the Jewish community, the synagogues there, there is very much both, there are two synagogues that shared a Hebrew school, so I kind of always felt, two synagogues or one synagogue, two towns or one town. It was a very hybridized place. Also um Maplewood, South Orange is you know, kind of known for being a very racially and economically diverse suburb as far as suburbs go. Usually you think of suburbs you think of, extremely homogenous or, everyone is the same class or race. Um, but you know, I went to Jewish pre-school, and then you know, most of the people there were Ashkenazi Jews, not all of them. And then from K-12 it was totally mixed, although every—elementary school was totally mixed, middle school there was a little bit of leveling, they would sort kids out into different classes based on their presumed academic level and of course that was racialized. And then it got even more racialized in high school with even more tracking and leveling, but in high school um my class year had been the first—you know, when we were freshmen in high school it was the first year of the new principal who was a white Jewish woman, and she was always saying really problematic things, one time she came downstairs into the lunch room and started yelling at everybody and was, speaking Ebonics to the black kids. And it was super offensive. And then all this, I mean, it was, you know, all these different incidents, a lot of people were experiencing being placed in low academic tracks even though they were academically capable of being in honors just because of being black or brown, I'm, and I think people were just tired of it, and so in 2006 when we were all seniors, we—I mean, I didn't help organize it but I was, part of, you know, white people that were yeah, let's do that, the Martin Luther King Association Organization which was mostly black students, um, organized this walkout for racial justice and you know, against all the racism we were seeing in our school. And, three quarters of the school walked out. It was, a really big success. Amiri Baraka spoke, becse—it's a really interesting town. I guess Amiri Baraka's grandkid was one of my classmates, which I was not aware of at the time. Also, we would always see this orange Hummer drive by and everyone was, that's Wyclef's car, Wyclef Jean, because Lauren Hill went to my high school. Yeah, Lauren Hill's cheerleading coach was my health teacher. Her name was Mrs. Wright. She had these long dreadlocks, and she was the first person that ever said to us, sex feels good, and that it's something you should cherish and just not do yet. And I was wow. She was, you know, she had been at Woodstock, she was a really cool lady. Anyway, it was a really interesting place to grow
up, because also, you know, there were, it was a microcosm of the United States in a way, not that every group was present or whatever, but there were debates growing up about whether the—like in my high school they outlawed the choir and the orchestra and everything from playing any holiday music. even Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer because I guess there had been debates about there being too much kind of Christian hegemony in the music, and then the Christians were probably—it seems what happened was they were well, if we don’t get to have, you know, whatever, then we should just not do anything. And then that made national headlines. There were always these big debates and headlines coming out of Maplewood South Orange, but I forget what I said—the superintendent resigned the day after the big walkout. Yeah, it was a really big deal. And the uh principal didn’t come back to school. she was too afraid. There was all this stuff happening. it was such an intense time. And uh my poetry teacher was having a nervous breakdown—it was just such an intense time. I remember going to a lot of school board meetings to support different causes, which I had never done before. That was sort of part of my politicization, and then also, you know, just being queer in high school was really confusing, because—so I came from a family that could afford to send me to programs that interested me in the summer, which I was really lucky and fortunate to have. I’d go to these artsy weird kid programs and be oh wow, I’m attracted to all these different kinds of people gender wise, and then I’d come back to school and not really have a lot of those feelings because it was this kind of enforced heterosexual place. So I would date these, kind of, in my eyes femmy boys who I could have these queer relationships with, but people would be, is your boyfriend gay? No, no, no, that’s not what they—they’d go, is your boyfriend a male model? Which I feel the subtext was, is your boyfriend gay? And then I always wanted to be no, but I am, you know what I mean? It was really silly, but no in high school I was very high femme in a—like I thought it was this fun, silly thing. I would make a lot of my clothes and put bows on things. It was kind of a little girl thing, and then I think at a certain point I was, but I don’t know how to transition from that to a woman, that really didn’t make sense to me. And I talk a lot about that with my partner lately, you know, being a girl feels easier than being a woman or something. Because being a woman you just have to be, it’s serious. It’s you have to be this serious adult. And a girl you can be kind of—it can be a weird, fun, silly thing. I don’t know. Anyway, um, let me go back though. So my whole childhood I was always drawing, um, my mom went back to school for psychology when I was a kid and if I was sick and couldn’t go to school she would a lot of times bring me with her to class. Um, in Newark, she went to Rutgers Newark. So I would be sitting in the back of these lecture rooms with a big box of Mr. Sketch markers. Do you know those? each of them smell a different thing. One of them smells licorice, they all have different colors that they smell. They kind of—I don’t really know how colors can smell. It’s strange. I have to go look back at that. That’s a big root for me with drawing, because I mean, I also have been drawing with markers a lot over the past few years. Anyway, so I’d have this big box of markers and I’d be terrified of making too much noise because I didn’t want people to look at me. Because that day that my mom brought me, the lecture was about penis envy. And she was mortified. She was this the worst possible day to bring a child to class, but I was just drawing pretty ladies in my book in the back. It was so funny. But anyway, um, when I was a kid I really wanted to be the best at drawing, that was a big part of my identity. My grandma on my mom’s side is an artist, and she did drawing and painting, printmaking, sculpture, um you know all everything. And um everybody always said, ever since I was little, I never remember people not saying this, being oh, Buzz takes so much after Grandma Sib, you know. And my grandma was
still quite cognizant when I was young. I mean, I have this memory of her drawing an eye on one side of the page and she wanted me to draw the other eye. And so she was trying to get me to, in my mind kind of flip the image. And she was very encouraging of me. Um but she um got dementia when I was probably between seven and 10. My mom and I were trying to figure it out. I can’t really remember but um and then she was pretty much you know, in a vegetative kind of state for many years, and then she died in 2005. Um and then I’ll just keep going with this topic—when my grandpa died, when her husband, um my Grandpa Jerry died in 2010, he was a very small man. that whole side of the family is very little. You can’t see on this recording, but I’m, 5’1” and a half. I’m very small. And um I’m tall for that side of the family if you can imagine. My mom, now she’s 4’11. She’s, oh my god, so little. But anyway, so when my grandpa died, it was around the same time my brother and I were sort of exploring trans identity. And all of the sudden we got to kind of keep a lot of his clothing that fit us, and was, it was very 70s golf, Florida golf kind of clothes. a lot of Members Only, it was kind of perfect for the sort of tacky hipster look of 2010. And um you know, it was a nice way to remember my grandpa by, too. you know, when we were sort of exploring our queerness, our parents were often, let’s not tell grandma and grandpa what's going on, we don’t know what their response—they were trying to protect us from our grandparents' presumed homo and transphobia. But then actually our grandpa really helped us find our fashion voice in a really interesting way.

**Tennenbaum:** How old were you and your brother at that time?

**Slutzky:** So my brother is two years and nine months older than me. I turned 22 in July 2010, so I guess we were, it was August, so I was 22 and he was about to turn 25. Yeah. And then um, I don't know that we officially were, these are our name and pronouns. I kind of—it’s getting a little hazy for me at what point all that happened, but I'm pretty sure we had the official conversation with our parents in Portland, Oregon, in June 2011. I think that's when that happened. Um my brother lives in Portland, so it had to be during a family visit or whatever. But then my parents live in New Jersey still, and I'm super close with them. Especially my mom. And so you know, after my brother and I came out, I kind of spent a lot of time explaining it all to my parents. Because I think you know my brother went to Wellsley College, you know, a women's college, and he started exploring trans identity academically. He did his senior thesis on zines that trans people made about their medical, you know, experiences with medical stuff. And kind of critiquing doctors and, the medicalization of transness and all that. Um, and just also networking about procedures and experiences. Um, so that was sort of his way of doing it. And so when he approached my parents, the way he said it was, I'm trans-identified, and I think they were just, “what?” I think, you know, all the mainstream ideas about transness a person trapped in a body, I think my mom knew that those narratives didn't really make sense to her, and um I certainly don’t feel I’m an anything trapped in a body. I definitely had a pretty feminine experience. I’m a pretty feminine person, I don’t, you know, I definitely have a coexistence of gender energy or whatever. And I think um, my brother is similar. we've always, you know, growing up we were always the girls. We always had the same jewelry and things that. It's not surprising to me that we had such a parallel coming out experience because I mean, it was interesting because it really happened separately., I was at Sarah Lawrence and he was getting his—he was in Boston getting his post-bach in computer science. Um, at—the hell? Brandeyes. And um we would be on the phone during spring break, you know, none of my housemates
were around, except for my one housemate who ended up also being trans, which is really funny because we never talked about it at the time. And I was, he was I think I'm trans, and I was, me too. I've been hanging out with all these trans people in New York. But it was, you know, I think he might have, said that while I was thinking about it and then later I was yeah, me too. I don't know exactly. But um, yeah, I don't know. We're just sort of—I don't have any explanation for that. It's just sort of—like I have a very spiritual perspective of, souls and everything. More than a lot of people. So I definitely believe that my soul chose my family, and that this was—these are all the lessons my soul needed to learn on my journey or whatever. And I'm sure that, it's helpful for both of us to have another person in our family, you know? I think it's a nice thing. Even though, I mean, of course we have slightly different experiences. My brother was on T for a few years—I've never been on T, but I had top surgery and he didn't. So we kind of had different strategies for gender stuff. Um, hmm. I kind of went back and forth a lot, but—oh yeah, so, and also I should say that in high school my brother and I were—that was our closest time, um he had this poetry club with his friends and they were super inclusive of me. When we were kids, I think the age difference, he was a little bit go away, you're annoying. And then in high school we were kind of finally in the same maturity level and him and his friends were, very welcoming of me. And so I always kind of spent a lot of time with people older than me, I think partially because I had an older sibling. Anyway we started doing this poetry group and workshopping each other's poetry, and I think that's really where I started learning about writing and how to work with a community of writers, and um, and also kind of an emotional support for each other. But um, but I was also getting a lot of encouragement from art teachers, both in my public school, which had amazing arts, it was really amazing. Anyway. And then the summer programs and everything. So yeah, my family was really supportive of me growing up.

Tennenbaum: And what was your high school called?

Slutzky: Oh, it was called Columbia High School. It's about, I think 2,500 students. It's physically in Maplewood, but it's the Maplewood South Orange School District. And I'm—just for fun, I went to South Orange Middle School, and South Mountain Elementary School. Just for fun. [Laughter]. But yeah, any other questions for now?

Tennenbaum: Um, I guess um, during high school, what were your interactions with other peers?

Slutzky: Oh yeah, um, well, my high school was really weirdly not—like I was saying to you before, my college I felt was way cliqueier than my high school, my high school, I felt it was so diverse and everybody was sort of just into what they were into. I don't know about other people, but my experience of it was that no one, there was no cool group because everybody was cool in their own way, and, I'm sure there was bullying, but I really experienced more bullying in late elementary school from people that I had been really close friends with before,, more backstabbing girl kind of crap., in high school, I don't know whether it was just that I was a cool weird art kid that, nobody really wanted to mess with me, but um, I hung out a lot with the kids that were interested in um experimental music and indie rock and stuff, a lot of my friends were in bands. And I also really connected with um the kind of social justice crowd of
kids. I was really involved with this group called Anytown, which um is kind of a national non-profit that does diversity, it’s kind of I don’t know, it’s sort of an anti-aggression training without any of the tools. It’s just kind of to be wow, you have privilege or not, you know? Um, and then they would, it was delegations of, little groups of students would go to these camps over the summer for a few days and kind of have their minds blown or whatever, talk to each other about their experiences, and then we would all go back to our school and try to, make change somehow. And that was a really frustrating experience because they didn’t really give us the tools for that, but I suspect that they didn’t actually want us to change anything, which was weird. I’m not really sure, it’s interesting. I mean, whatever, I think—oh yeah, and then I also was one of the co-presidents of the Spectrum, which was the queer—we didn’t use the word “queer” at the time, but it was the Gay/Straight Alliance. And then me and the other person that ran it at the time were both identifying as bisexual, and then um we had a lot of, I don’t know, I think that was also another situation where we felt really underprepared to deal with kind of the amount of trauma and desperation students were coming in with as far as they were getting a lot of backlash from their families. Yeah, I was totally unaware of how to deal with that, since, you know, I didn’t have any personal wisdom, because my family was, pretty accepting. So um, but um yeah I found some really nice friendships there, and that’s also how I found just support from teachers, I feel, you know, I had spent so much time with my brother and his friends, especially because I had grown up with some of those kids, and so when they all graduated when I was at the end of my sophomore year, I did have good friends in my class year, but I never really felt quite part of a clique or something. So I think um I would sometimes eat lunch in the art room and the art teachers were super nice and accommodating, and I sort of felt I connected better with people older than me a lot of the time. Um, but I still am close with some of my high school friends. I think that looking back on it, they were more accepting than I realized or, or maybe they’re more accepting now because they know more about what things are or something, you know, what’s what and who’s who.

Tennenbaum: Accepting in which ways?

Slutzky: um, I remember when I graduated high school I stopped talking to my high school friends because I was, I’m exploring my queer identity and, I don’t want to feel pressure to be who I used to be. And same exact thing when I graduated college, but about trans stuff., I think every time I graduated from something, I kind of cut off myself from those people, and then in the past few years I’ve been oh, actually, let me reconnect with folks, because I think the fear was greater than the reality of you know, of people’s biases or expectations of me, if that makes sense. So yeah, I feel really lucky that, you know, a number of my high school friends, they all ended up in public health and stuff, which is really funny. But one of them is super dedicated towards, you know, expanding reproductive health to include trans masc people, and that’s really, you know, these are really nice people that are really thinking about feminism and queerness in a way that I never expected, especially because some of them weren’t out, and so I had no idea of knowing that we were both queer or whatever. So yeah, um, and then um when I got to college I became really close friends with um some people that were really active in the feminist organization on campus. And um—

Tennenbaum: What was it called?
Slutzky: It was called Flux. Which, didn’t really stand for—like we kept coming up with different things for what it stood for. It was, Feminism, Liberation, Unity, Xylophone. It was kind of silly. So yeah, I got involved with that right away because they were making zines and I wanted to be, drawing in a way that was politically relevant. Um, and the campaign work we did was mostly around sexual assault prevention and um basically we figured out that one of my classmates had been sexually assaulted the summer before but when she got to school there were no resources for her and all of the difficult offices were saying go to that office, go to that office. And um it was really traumatic for her, and so we um we were basically—we put up signed around campus that had all of these forearms with fists on the end, punching across the page. And then in-between the forearms it said, “do you know what to do if you’re sexually assaulted? Because the SLC administration doesn’t.” And they got so upset, and so they were okay come talk to us, we’ll do what you want or whatever. And ultimately they didn’t have “enough money” or whatever. I mean, the school literally didn’t have an endowment until, the 70s., they don’t have a lot of money.

Tennenbaum: What school?

Slutzky: Sarah Lawrence. Um, anyway, it’s so ironic because it’s, a very wealthy, it’s a very elite institution, but I don’t know, I guess they try to, whatever, balance out scholarships with people who can pay. I don’t know, whatever. So they didn’t have money to allocate for a specific person that we wanted them to hire for all the sexual assault related stuff, but they did let us really rewrite the policy, the sexual assault policy, and so we tried to do one that was based on the Antioch policy of, consent at every step and whatever. Which is, I think the best you can do in a college, I think that work is really important. I think a lot of people have, are well, I don’t know if consent models are really that practical, privately. I don’t think people publically, no one that I respect publically says—anyway, I’m just going to keep doing an aside. But, um, anyway, and then one of my friends from that time ended up really professionalizing in that area and ended up being that sexual assault prevention person at the University of Austin, in Texas. So that was really cool, being able to see how something we did together really propelled her into her career. Um but yeah, so that was sort of my crew. I also organized through that group a lot of little shows and stuff. I had different bands come to campus and sometimes they would sleep in my living room. That was really fun. I had Mika Miko and um Pre,, I think Pre opened for Mika Miko or something, and I was obsessed with Mika Miko, I was so excited, and my dear friend Spencer who ended up passing away in 2008, he showed up to the show late because he thought he was, being cool and, but he ended up missing all [Laughter] I felt so bad. Ugh, I miss him, but um, and then I also brought—well my friend Megan brought Kimya Dawson and Mary Timony and it was really fun. Because we did have activities fees we could use or whatever. So we kind of figured out how to use the system of the student activities council or whatever to bring really rad people. Then my senior year I brought this, it was called um—oh, and we always organized the Genderfuck Symposium, ever since my first year, and I remember—Megan and I, we laughed so hard because we were trying to come up with names for this Genderfuck Symposium, or all the different events, and I love naming things., I’m really into puns and, whacky languaging. And so we called our dance the Nancypants Barn Dance, and we had a
kissing booth, we got really into the theme. It was really silly. But one of the runners-up was called Rim-O-Rama, [Laughter].

**Tennenbaum:** [Laughter].

**Slutzky:** It was so silly. But um yeah Megan and I had a lot of fun. And then, um, yeah—oh yeah, and then my senior year I brought um world famous Bob, Dave, and Glen Marla and they called themselves, uh, what was it called? It was the Gender Something. But anyway, um, it was a very gender weirdo centric performance evening, and I was really proud of that. Um, yeah. So that's kind of—oh yeah, and then of course I um, my first year I also joined SDS, which was, it was the reboot of Students for a Democratic Society, which was um, a broad-based leftist, you know, multi-issue student movement in the 60s that famously was um I guess taken over by the Weather Underground. basically the Weather Underground had stolen all of the membership records and they burned it all, and they basically forced everybody into this kind of militant organization. Um, and it's kind of ironic because—so SDS was rebooted in 2006 on Martin Luther King Day by also a lot of, white students at private colleges. It was a very similar—I mean, it wasn't all private colleges and it wasn't all white students, but it really suffered from a lot of the same problems of, you know, patriarchy and white supremacy and, heteronormativity that the previous 1960s organization had. And um,, you know, I was really active in the—I was more active—I started in the fall of 2006 I guess, and then I got really active in 2007. It was a really big part of my social life, um, where I would drive multiple hours to different conferences to you know work on these anti-war projects with other universities. Um and I was really active in the Women's Caucus. And then, that was when I first encountered people that use they/them as their pronouns and, and also um, I did this other anti-oppression training called the Peacemaker Training Institute that I found out about through SDS I think. And that was the first time I heard a trans man explain surgeries. I think he was just so fed up with people asking him that he was, I'm just going to give you this really quick lecture on trans surgeries so that you don't ask me again., I was just, oh my God. And so, you know, that whole year I was, oh, I kind of these people., sort of, hmm, could part of me be part of them? Um but I sort of didn't really actively—I didn't really find anyone that saw that in me or that I really identified with until later in college, but I'll get to that.

**Tennenbaum:** At these conferences when you were meeting these people—

**Slutzky:** Mhmhm.

**Tennenbaum:**. Um, did you get to have, one on one talks?

**Slutzky:** Yeah.

**Tennenbaum:** Were you befriending them or was it more just that brief contact?

**Slutzky:** Yeah, they were totally one-on-ones, and also, we would all party together. my first threesome or whatever was with these people, you know? So yeah, I made a lot of friends. I think it was really important to me, especially in the first few years of college that all my friends
be radical. I was really, everyone needs to be radical, and I am judging everybody who is not radical, it was very—I was super stuck-up about it.

**Tennenbaum:** What did radical mean to you?

**Slutzky:** Ah, yeah, that’s such a good question. I guess, um, you had to be against the war in Iraq. And um, you had to, I don’t know, want to have—I guess wanting to have conversations about things, for example if you saw a movie you wouldn’t be mad if someone was, well, I found this part of it really problematic, you know what I mean? Or, or I guess I could—you know what it was? It was, I could trust that someone wouldn’t, I don’t know, make me feel shitty for, being queer or at the time, female-identified or whatever, or I don’t know. I think it was just a feeling of safety that you were with-minded people. But I definitely remember, my parents took me and my brother and my brother-in-law to see, what was that—Avatar. I guess this was more in, this was 2010 I’m pretty—or maybe 2009. And it was so fucked up because it was all 3D so you had to have this, you’re leaning back and looking up and you had these goggles on, and your body was, it was even more out of body than a regular cinematic experience where you’re supposed to be living through this kind of eye of the camera and experiencing yourself through the cinematic time or whatever. Because you had to be forced into this 3D world. And then the plot of the movie was that there was also a person being embodied into another body through this Avatar, and it was this really colonialist narrative where they were taking over this planet. I can’t really remember. Or maybe this island. I don’t know., I found it extremely colonialist, and then so after the movie, my parents were—and it was expensive, you know? It was, maybe $15 more than usual. And they were, what did you think? And we were all, I was, that was so fucked up. [Laughter]. And I think my brother and his partner were yeah, but, you know, those kind of divisions I guess, were a really big deal for me, really alienating. Um, I can’t remember what else. But anyway—

**Tennenbaum:** What about sex?

**Slutzky:** Yeah? What about—

**Tennenbaum:** Did sex also, play a role in the radicalism, or at least—

**Slutzky:** Um—

**Tennenbaum:** How did that play into the space of a radical conference?

**Slutzky:** Well sex at Sarah Lawrence was, so fraught and disappointing., it was such a small school that it was really rare for people to have sex because you really needed friends more than anything. And, so for example, okay, you know, the school is 70% female assigned at birth, and um, you know, so there’s a lot of straight women that are fighting each other for this very small portion of straight men, and then the straight men get to act however they want and still get laid every day of their lives. And, they have this really skewed idea of what the world is because obviously outside of Sarah Lawrence, that’s not what’s going to happen. And then you know, there’s the gay people also are, how do we have sex with each other? It’s just a really—
you have to run into everybody so many times a day that, if you're going to sleep with someone, it might be really awkward for awhile if it doesn't go great. So you know, I had my first girlfriend when I was 19, and she was a year younger than me. And I think I was really attracted to her but, I think it wasn't, you know, it wasn't a love connection, I'm sure. But I think, I was just desperate for it to be a bigger relationship than it was, because there were just so few options. A lot of pressure was put onto relationships, you know? Um, and then, you know, there were times when, I was in love with my male friend who didn't understand, you know, I've had a lot of experiences where, people were, identifying as straight men and, didn't understand me being attracted to them and what that meant. Or they were gay men, or queer male assigned people, and, it was what do we do with—like I think it just gets confusing sometimes for people. Um, I don't know—I had a little bit of sex at Sarah Lawrence. I don't think that anyone had a lot of sex at Sarah Lawrence. I think I was very lucky to have sex at Sarah Lawrence at all. Um, and then I had this really good friend that I was friends with the whole time and in the beginning she had a crush on me. We kind of had an art connection. we were both interested in the same kind of feminist art tradition. Um, and then we ended up dating briefly my junior year, but, she was having a lot of mental health problems, and so it was better for me to just be a supportive person for her, and that was fine, and we're still friends and you know, that's nice. Um, so I had this best friend who was a femme cis woman, and her idea of queer relationships was a femme cis woman and a trans man. And she had this very kind of butch/femme narrow idea of queer sex. And so as I was kind of coming into my queer identity, I kind of fell for at least a year or two that had to be my framework. And so I think that I really tried that, I really gave it my all, I gave it a lot. I tried really hard to be this, femme cis girl that dated trans men, but then, you know, I finally whatever, had sex with a trans man at the end of 2009 and then, when I was actually there with him I was, you know, I kind of admitted to him I was, I've always felt this kind of faggy side. And he was oh yeah, I totally see that in you. he really validated it for me. And then you know, we're friends again also actually, but there was a period where, you know, his ex-girlfriend came back into his life and, whatever, he was kind of in this place where he was really interested in butch/femme dynamics, and I think that I kind of never really fit into that enough for him either, even though whatever, we became kind of, transmasc buds later on, finally when I moved to Brooklyn, just because we ended up being neighbors weirdly., it was cute. Um, [Laughter] and then the friend that was trying to push me into being a femme cis woman fell in love with him, and then, ugh, there were all these times when, my friendships were—my friend group dynamics were threatened by, you know, this idea that, I have to have a trans man, and I have to get him drunk. there was a lot of that coming from my friend. So um, I would say that, even though I really cherish that friendship and the time that we had together, it really—at the same time it introduced me to trans people it also, prevented me from really being able to access my own narrative within transness I guess. And, being able to have trans community in a way. But you know, whatever. I do miss her in a lot of ways because we had so much,, activism together. But um, I definitely am happy that I've found people now that—okay, so here's what happened. So I was um, I was a senior at Sarah Lawrence, there was an event that came to town called the Tranny Roadshow. And it was, all these different trans performers. It was a cabaret act, kind of. And um, I had seen a lot of YouTube videos that year from Red Durkin and, Charlie Arp, and Julie Blair. the three of them, because Red and Julie had known each other in Bloomington, and later I found out that they had worked at this bake shop together. I forget exactly how they met but they started making all these
videos together about being trans, and then they, went to the Bay Area to visit Charlie—I don't know, I had seen these videos though. there was this one that was, um, this would have never happened if I wasn't a transsexual. It was these comedy videos about, you know, how hard it is to take out the trash when you're trans, or things that. Those kind of went viral because it was, the first time trans people were using YouTube to make fun of, cis normativity. And everybody was, really excited about that. Um there was a kind of new vocabulary or media happening for trans people. And then um I went to that show and for some reason I started talk to Red and I was, hey Red,, I've been thinking about a lot about—oh yeah, I was sort of, in the back of my mind I was making fun of my friend who was really fetishizing trans men, and ironically, kind of you know creating these really sexual pressure on them, even though we had done all this sexual assault prevention. It was, really fucked up. But anyway. Um, I was, I was thinking a lot about Grease 2 and how um the femme woman sings this whole song called Cool Rider about you know, there's this preppy guy that's into her and he's Australian. There's always this whatever white outsider person. And then um, and then she's but I want a cool rider. I want a motorcycle guy. And so she sings this whole song about how, “I don't want no ordinary guy, coming on strong with me, no no no.” So I told Red, I was, I kind of feel that song is secretly about how she needs a trans man, and Red was oh my God, you need to be friends with my friend Julie. And so um she gave me Julie Blair's email address and we started G-Chatting, everyone was still using Google Chat. And um, so even before we met, I was just all the time talking to Julie, and I just felt she was a breath of fresh air, and she, totally got all of my, she just was such a genius and she had so many ideas about culture that were so funny and, making fun of gender stuff and, um, and so when we finally hung out—so her boyfriend at the time, Tom Leger was running this um performance space out of his living room called Collect Pond. Collect Pond is, historically this pond in the middle of Manhattan where people would get their water. So he named it after that because it was, we're going to get water and, you know, feel hydrated by trans and queer community. It was cute. But anyway, so I went to that apartment and met her and saw this performance, and I started volunteering for the performance space. But Julie and I would just go in the back and laugh and make fun of trans men, [Laughter]. But she really, kind of was the first person that saw me as a gender weirdo. she could see it in me in a way that, I had never really had as close a relationship with a trans person. I had roommates that their best friend was trans, but they were always butt in this way I never really related to. And um, anyway, Julie made it possible for me to, be still femme and also be trans. And I was oh, that makes sense. And she introduced me to Wesley Flash, who is another friend of mine who, he's you know, a gay trans man. I never met a gay trans man before. And um, actually so this podcast of Morgan M. Paige, the One from the Vaults, she has an episode on Lou Sullivan, who was the first out gay trans man, and he created a lot of, he was a big person that was, went out there and was, trans men can be gay,, you know, it's not everyone is transitioning so we can be straight. And so that's interesting to look at. Anyway. Um, it would have been so cool to know about him at the time, but of course trans history is so esoteric and tucked away. Um, blah blah blah, oh yeah, so Julie and Wesley were really the people that helped me sort of figure out my identity, and I started, mascarading my mustache at school, and, I would go to the library with a mascaraed mustache and I'd come home and be wow, nothing happened, and take it off and, go to class. I don't know. I was, wearing a lot of bows in my hair and, pencil skirts. I sort of went straight from that into, at first I tried to, wear butch clothes, and something about it I just felt so gross,, wearing baggy pants. I was, ugh. And so it sort of took me awhile, but—and then,
so I moved to Brooklyn. Oh, I forgot to say the whole thing about—okay, so—is this okay? I'm just going, okay. So summer of 2009, okay, so let me back up a little bit. So my first year of college I studied religion and painting, and I was sort of what? And I also took this sociology class that—where I first saw Paris Is Burning. That was amazing. My teacher Schnaz Raus, props to her. I mean, there's problems with Paris Is Burning, but it's, you have to see it, you know, to know. Um, and then I started studying economics and labor policy. labor studies. And I got—so my sophomore year I got really interested in um, labor issues and that was something I was working on with my friends. we had, activism we did for class and stuff. And um, and then I got through that class I got involved with—I started learning about the um struggle for domestic workers' rights in New York state, and then I found out with a really chance encounter, I found out about this organization called JFRAEJ, Jews For Racial and Economic Justice, and um they were working on a campaign in solidarity with domestic workers. So they were organizing employers, Jewish, white—mostly white, I mean. I don't want to say that all Jews are white, whatever, a lot of Ashkenazi Jews are white. Um, so Jewish employers or domestic workers. And then helping you know, get with Jewish connections I guess, getting the attention of legislators, and then kind of navigating the legislators' attention to the stories of domestic workers. there was this whole strategy of, kind of leveraging privilege in order to, you know, be in solidarity with domestic workers. Because basically domestic workers and farm workers were the only two groups of workers that were left out of the National Labor Relations Act in the 1930s. And it was because it was a deal that the North struck with the South. basically it was, reinstitutionalizing slavery., there didn't have to be labor regulations on domestic and farm workers. So I was really upset about that, and um and I was kind of looking for Jewish community with queer people. I really needed that. the Jewish community at Sarah Lawrence, I didn't know if it was really safe to be, against Zionism in that space, because, you know, I was really involved with all these radical groups that—there were all these Jews that didn't feel good about apartheid and we were really upset about what was happening in our names. And um anyway, finally I found this group—it wasn't working specifically on anti-Zionist issues, but everybody in the group was anti-Zionist, and we were all queer pretty much and working on this amazing labor campaign. So I threw myself into that while I was still at Sarah Lawrence. I was commuting into the city to go into these meetings. And I was, 21. I was a baby with these adults that knew everything about organizing. But it was really good for me, it was the first time I ever went to queer parties was through JFRAEJ. You know, the first time I, you know, met someone I could buy weed from in New York, or whatever. I probably shouldn't have said that, whatever. Um, you know, so it was really cool, and um, and I would organize—I would use the Sarah Lawrence—I got my license within Sarah Lawrence to drive a 15-seater van. And so I'd check out vans and I would drive people up to Albany for these lobby days where we would lobby for domestic workers' rights. But I got so upset all the time because all the students were, I have class. nobody could conceive of, missing class for doing something important for somebody else, and it really upset me. And um, I think I was sort of, I don't know, I still was part of JFRAEJ my senior year, but a really formative experience I had was um the summer of 2009 I went, I did this study abroad program called the Mexico Solidarity Network, and a lot of my friends from the labor studies class had done that same program. Um, my friends Ellorie and Megan. And um, it just seemed such a cool experience. But I also hadn't really studied Spanish beforehand, so, over the summer before I went or something I took a—oh no, maybe in 2008, summer 2008 I took a Spanish class at the Empire State Building, what? There's a language
school in the Empire State Building. But I didn't really—I don't know I didn't really learn that much. And then I don't know why I didn't take it at Sarah Lawrence, I don't know. But I talked to the people in the program office and they were oh yeah,, Spanish instruction is part of the program. And it will be okay. And then I realized that once I got there that the reason they were saying that to me is because they were under-enrolled because of the swine flu epidemic that was blamed on Mexico and because of the recession. It was supposed to be a group of 18 students, but it ended up only being four to five. there was four of us that were on the program most of the summer, and one extra person that was just there for the um for the Zapatista Educational Center that was the first three weeks. Um, so I did learn a lot of Spanish but I wasn't comfortable enough speaking because the people on my trip were really well-spoken in Spanish, but also it really pissed me off because, I was, I'm so much more radical than them, one of the people there was, it's so radical that I work at a coffee shop and we sell fair trade coffee. it was really facepalm level of, wow. Um, and my whole spiel—I would always say my spiel in Spanish, I'd be, you know, I'm um a member organizer of Jews For Racial and Economic Justice, and we work on domestic workers' rights, and every single time, the Zapatistas were, oh, there's Jews that care about leftist struggle? And I was, what? And I realized, everyone all over the world, oppressed people, think of Jews as all being, huge Zionists that are just interested in state power. And I was, fuck my life. Um, so yeah. I was, I would say my spiel and whatever, but I mostly got good at understanding what other people were saying in Spanish. Um, and I finally got to the point where, I'm more able to, try and make mistakes. one of my best friends is Chilean, so that's been really good, I don't know, just to, I think I realized, oh, I do understand a lot because I overhear what she's saying or whatever. But anyway, getting off topic. So anyway, I had this really formative experience talking to my Spanish teacher in Mexico and basically the message that I got from the Zapatistas that were teaching there were that in order to have revolution you need to create community, and in order to have community you need to have art. And a light bulb went off for me. I was, what am I doing trying to do organizing that I'm not, I'm not doing a good job at, I felt—I look back at my time in JFRAEJ and I was, I spent so much of that time in that room making jokes and, trying to bring the community together. making jokes and, making cool banners and stuff, and I would get so upset when I would have organizing failures that it didn't—like I would just, I would get angry at people. I was, I'm really bad at this. So when I came back to school in the fall, I still remained, you know, active in JFRAEJ for that year, but um most of my—instead of doing also, in addition to printmaking or whatever, instead of doing labor issues or economics, it wasn't my passion, you know, those subjects. It was interesting and I'm glad I know about it, and it's come up in my work, but I really dedicated myself to, contemporary art history and sculpture and video and performance and writing and drawing and kind of all the things that I do. And so that was, I think that was really important for me, and then that next year at Sarah Lawrence I started really making connections with mentors that um, that helped me make the transition into living in New York and you know, being an artist in New York. And um, and really finding actually queer art community because—so actually, so my junior and senior year I took this class from Jeanine Olsen, um, she's a lesbian and a sculptor and photographer and um she teaches at Parson's now, but at the time she taught at—she was a visiting professor at Sarah Lawrence and I took her class for two whole years. And at Sarah Lawrence you meet individually every other week. So I had all this one-on-one time with her, and so she was a really important mentor for me. And she ended up connecting me with Visual AIDS, which is um this organization in
New York City that’s an archive or artists who died of AIDS and also who are living with HIV and AIDS. And also they do projects um, art exhibitions and public programming, um, about you know doing prevention work, but also kind of historical work. It's just a really amazing intergenerational community of artists, you know, mostly queer people or a lot of HIV positive people. So um, I just I'm so grateful for having Visual AIDS as a community to plug into when I graduated, because I just learned so much about my own community’s history through just going to stuff. And I met so many of my friends from after college through that. Um so that was really great that Jeanine connected me with them. And um yeah.

Tennenbaum: What kind of events would Living AIDS have?

Slutzky: Visual AIDS.

Tennenbaum: Oh, Visual AIDS.

Slutzky: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So Visual AIDS, well first of all, the summer I graduated from Sarah Lawrence I was an intern/volunteer person there, and I was mostly—at the time I was mostly, digitizing slides into their archive, but also they had these—they did these editions of little um little kind of trading cards that they would have queer photographers shoot of people. Then they'd put them in these little packets with condoms and lube and stuff, and they would have big bowls of them out at different gay bars or whatever, or different events. So I'd be stuffing these packets, and there would be sometimes other volunteers that would come in that were, you know, and people that weren't doing it for, career development but who were just either artist members who were in the archive or just really nice people, [Laughter]. So I met a lot of people that way. Um, you know, I just love having intergenerational connection. I think it’s so important. And you know, as a Jewish person, I grew up around so much of that,, you know, in my synagogue, there are a lot of generations and there are always a lot of people at our house for holidays and stuff. And then, but as a queer person, you know, you’re not just automatically connected with a legacy. And so I feel really lucky that I connected with that. Um, and then also um it’s sort of related to Visual AIDS, but not exactly. And then at the end of that year—okay, so then also that summer I was interning for Art In General, and so I kind of started moving more—I was trying to, I don’t know, I don’t know it was trying to get a job doing, curatorial assistant work. But you really can't get a job doing that unless you have a masters degree in, either art history or curatorial studies. So I really just did a bunch of internships learning about the museum system and um the art world. And it was actually a really disillusioning experience. And at the same time I started doing childcare, and that was really interesting but also disillusioning and frustrating, um, and then at the end of the year, I had kind of learned how to organize a checklist for an exhibition and the basic administrative tasks required in organizing an exhibition. I worked both for a curatorial department of New Museum, and also for the exhibitions department of New Museum. And so um that was a really good combination of skills because I got this email and um it was looking for artists for a show about queer history that this person, Hugh Ryan was going to curate in his apartment. And you know, it was sort of an informal e-mail, it was um going to be part of this event series called Quorum Forum. And um, so that previous summer, the same organization had made this thing called Queer House Field Day. Have you heard of this?
Tennenbaum: [Negative affirmation].

Slutzky: So Queer House Field Day was sort of a fake field day, from grade school, where—you know, but it was all queer. It was, and the idea was that your team was the people you lived with, and you were a queer house. And um, there were a lot of queer houses at the time. I feel, I don't know how big the culture of that is anymore, but I'm sure it will always be part of the culture as long as people can't afford their own apartments or whatever, but it felt at the time it was a bigger deal. Um, so okay, so everybody—and then if you weren't, if you didn't live in a queer house—like I only lived in a two bedroom at the time so whatever, I had a group of friends and we call came up with a name and we all wore the same color and you would show up with your crew. And then all the activities were, dildo ring toss, or, pin the tail—I don't know, pin the tail on the unicorn or, suck and blow. I was really good at suck and blow.

Tennenbaum: What's that?

Slutzky: I almost won. Have you seen Clueless? Okay, so it's, you take a card out of your wallet—like in Clueless, the way they did it is they have a credit card, and you would go [inhalation] and you would be sucking in so that the credit card was against your lips, and then you'd go to someone and then you would blow while they sucked. And you'd all pass the credit card around, and then, it was whoever could suck and blow the most so that you wouldn't have to kiss someone. Anyway, so we did it with these playing cards that were, uh, The Little Mermaid on the back. [Laughter]. So anyway, it was down to the three of us I think. I think I was second place or something. Anyway, I was really proud. But then it was so funny because at the end of the day everybody got a trophy. this group of people that organized it had made these really—they just took a glue gun and stuck a bunch of objects together. [Laughter]. It was so darling, because nobody knew—everybody was, being kind of competitive and didn't realize that at the end of the day everybody was going to get a prize. And then we were all, aww. And everybody had to go across the field and dance over to your um to your trophy, and then dance back. So then—I think it only happened two years I think, but then the second year I had this umbrella, this parasol kind of umbrella, and I was dancing over to my trophy and then it got flipped around or I dropped it, or it was something embarrassing happened, and everyone was, aww. And then I picked it up and kept going and everyone was yay! It was really cute. Um anyway, so okay, so there was a spirit in 2010, end of 2010 or maybe, I think maybe Queer House Field Day was, yeah, it was summer 2010 and summer 2011. Those two years, there was so much energy for community events that didn't have anything to do with drinking or being at a bar or any business or having to pay for it. it was just kind of—I don't want to say it was anarchist, because I don't—it was very, it's not there was a Black Bloc or something, you know what I mean? It was more people were, DIY. It was, let's just have events at our houses to do skillshares and learn things. It was just amazing. And of course we all burned out really quickly, because we were, we need a funding structure and we don't want to become a non-profit. Um but anyway, okay, I got totally sidetracked. So anyway, I got this e-mail from Hugh Ryan, it was after Queer House Field Day, but it was winter, and um everybody okay, so everybody from Quorum Forum wanted to do something for the winter because it's, oh my God, now that Pride's over and it's cold,, no one sees each other, but we don't want to go to the bar because a
lot of people are sober. And, also bar spaces are really only good for hookups and not as good for, making friends and community bonding. So um, so um Hugh had for many years wanted to do this art show about queer history in his apartment, and then when Quorum Forum sent out a call for submissions, he immediately was, oh my God that would be awesome to do that for this, and then they were oh great, do you want to be our opening event? the first event of the week or whatever. Or maybe it was a whole month. I think the first year was a whole month and then the second year was just a week. But um—and then I e-mailed him and it was hey, I've been interning in the art world and I know a thing or two about curating, would you want someone to help you? And he was yeah, I have no idea what I'm doing, I'm a journalist, you know? He was also, um, ghostwriting the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew. he's a really interesting writer. But he's done some really great um journalistic writing., he interviewed Susan Miller, who is this famous astrologer. It's really—anyway, she had a big following. But um, he's great, he's so great. But um, okay, so then, so yeah, and then we did a call for submissions and everybody submitted, um, so we wanted people to do their own research projects and then kind of have art that used their research in a way. And I was sort of, you know, coming from this art perspective over, the materials and the form, the whole thing about sculpture is, the materials and the form can create meaning, and audiences will learn how to read the work through the materials [inaudible] form. people tend to get a sense of what something is about from the material, you know, whatever—I don't want to go into that. But Hugh's perspective was a little bit more, he wanted them to convey information through the work. And so um, but the first show it was really just, whoever submitted got in. And Hugh at the time lived this loft apartment in Bushwick that was in the same building as the Bushwick Star, which was I guess—I don't really know what it is actually—I guess it's some kind of cultural center. But they had, the same night they happened to have some sort of teen party, and the cops had found out that there was going to be a teen party. And so you know, unbeknownst to us, we were expecting 100 people maybe. And 400 people showed up. And there was this line out the door, and it was cold as fuck, and it was, you know, busy, Busy Barefoot, one of the artists, he was finishing—he was um, doing—he was taping things to the floor. I think it was some sort of, timeline. I forget exactly, but he was, taping it on the floor right as people were walking in. he was still kind of taping. It was really funny. And somebody had made a gingerbread replica of Stonewall. of the Stonewall Riots. And um, somebody else had made another thing about police, I think it was, “throw your purse at the police.” it was something that Velcro could stick to the wall. That was Damien Lux, I think. And then the Stonewall people, the Stonewall gingerbread was Turtle, uh, Mariah, and Katie I want to say. And then um, okay so the cops—the apartment was full of people. You could not move. There were a few performances, but it was getting a little bit tight. And Hugh and I were a little freaked out. So when the cops came, we were sort of relieved, because we were, what if there’s a fire. the whole community would die. And then, they came by to bust this other party, but they got it confused with our party. And so they shut us down and they wouldn’t let people in, and poor Kate Ha was stuck outside smoking without her leather jacket or something. And so there’s a picture of someone holding her and they’re smoking. It’s really cute. It was just such a cute night. But anyway, that’s how it ended. And then it was so funny, after the cops left, we were eating the gingerbread cop car, we were—

Tennenbaum: [Laughter].
Slutzky: there's pictures of us sitting there eating it, being, fuck the police. But also being, thank you for [Laughter] ending this fire hazard, getting people the fuck out of my house. No but it was nice, it was really fun. So anyway, we realized we needed to bring it to a bigger venue so that it could be you know, we were, there's a real need here for the community. You know, nobody really knows a lot about—not nobody, but you know, we need to learn more about queer history. And so we, um, I think I asked Visual AIDS what they thought, where we should go. They usually had their shows at Lamama, but I think for whatever reason Lamama was booked. But we approached Leslie Loman and they agreed to give us I think three weeks in the summer of 2011. And so um, Hugh and I worked our asses off on that show and, I was the—I think he was more of the person that communicated with Leslie Loman, and I was more of the person that was the artist liaison. Um, since I, you know, I knew a lot of artists, and then also, you know, just knew more about art and the whole thing, and I organized all the spreadsheets and everything. And you know, Leslie Loman would say stuff to Hugh in front of me, oh Hugh, you’re doing such a good job, we should hire you. And I was, I literally need a job, you assholes., I felt it was, they didn't even see me. It was, so misogynist. But so you know, I had some mixed feelings about the experience but um ultimately it was super exciting. we had even more people. We had 720 people show up or something. And Leslie Loman doesn’t remember this, but we had a line around the block. it was really deep. Because I remember when I was in this show, Queer Threats in 2014 that was at Leslie Loman, they were, this is the first time we’ve had a line around the block. I'm, biotch, it is not the first time, you know what I mean? But anyway, it was really cool, we had the Hetrick-Martin Institute, which is this queer youth center, they have also the Harvey Milk Academy, is a queer high school. It’s a lot of really cool resources for, queer youth. Um, they collaborated with us and they had their kids to art projects that we hung on the wall and you know, it was really nice. There was some really high quality things that people submitted. Um, that one I think we did have to reject people. Um, because there were just too many applications. People knew about it more by then. And Hugh and I kind of sometimes butt heads a little bit about what constituted historical work. And it was sort of awkward for me because I had to reject people that I had specifically asked them for their applications. Um, where I kind of felt their work was using archives in an interesting way, but he was, oh, but it's not conveying information. So I think we sort of had a few differences on the kind of curatorial side, but and then so the next year I decided instead of curating again, I’m going to—I had an art project I wanted to do. And so um—how are we on time? Oh my God. So—I'm a good talker. So um, so for 2012 the summer show, I proposed a drawing series about the French writer George Sand because I had this poetry teacher in high school that had told us, there was this woman who dressed a man so that she could publish poetry and you know, she was really cool and badass. And I was, huh, that's interesting. But then it turns—I was, there's got to be more to this story. And it turns out that the biographers, you know, I feel literary biographers aren't really necessarily trained in gender theory or whatever, so they were all reading this person as, a woman who was, dressing in men's clothing just so that they could have privilege and which is I feel a pretty common narrative of, transmasc people through history, you know? I feel it's this okay, you're just doing this for privilege. Um, so I did all this research about George Sand, and I read all these biographies, and, even though these biographers were, reporting all this, interesting stuff about, George would write to their lovers, their male lovers and call their relationship a brotherhood or, George would self-refer with masculine adjectives and nouns. There was, all this very obvious to me, you are identifying as
trans—you know, you’re a man, [Laughter]. Um, or at least, you know, a transmasc person. Um, all this kind of data. I mean, also um, the relationship dymanics were really interesting to me between George Sand and Frederic Chopin. Um,, Frederic Chopin was a little bit more of the person that was being cared for and given flowers, kind of the more submissive person in the relationship, and then George Sand was sort of, I'm going to do all this stuff for you. I don't know, it was, I kind of saw how, my “heterosexual relationships” in high school kind of—I was oh, maybe that's kind of what that was for me. [Laughter]. Um, not that someone was sick but you know, Chopin had influenced—anyway, I'm getting off topic. So um, so I made this series of drawings that was within the frame of the Major Arcana, which, you know, in the Major Arcana of tarot,, you know, tarot cards. Um, it's the journey of the fool. So it starts out with the fool, which is zero, and then it goes all the way to the world, which is I think 21. And the world is sort of about, starting over or transformation or completing a cycle. And my friend Wesley, who I mentioned who is this gay trans man, he had taught me tarot and so um, I guess I was thinking of um how the Romantic period in France had so much spiritualism or spirituality that it was trying to bring back into the culture after the Enlightenment. And I don't know exactly if George Sand used tarot cards, but there was all this really macabre stuff, they dug up their father's skull and, held it, and talked to it. You know, there was all this really super gothy stuff. So I was, great. This is perfect. So I did all these very kind of graphic ink drawings that utilized French art history and um also contemporary queer photography, and kind of mashed things up together. And I also used, screencaps from this, you know, film about George Sand and stuff that—like I was kind of creative with my source images. But um, I always kind of was relating— I chose images from George's life, either characters or moments in George's life that related to the different journey of the fool moments, each card. And so um, anyway, that was my pop-up museum project, and at the bottom of each drawing I wrote a little blurb. And the other thing that was part of that project was uh I was reading a lot about Patty Smith and how Patty Smith, first—that was when Just Kids came out. And the beginning of Just Kids, she's, oh yeah, I hated my breasts when I was an adolescent, and she had all these, really kind of transy things that she was saying. And I was, hmm. And I found this unofficial biography of Patty Smith by Victor Bachras, and I'm totally forgetting his collaborator's name, but there's somebody else who worked with him on that book. And um, apparently Patty Smith was also, really misogynist at times, and it reminded me a lot of George Sand, just the way that they were, using kind of pushing women away or feminism away in order to, arrive at some sort of, masculine identity for themselves. And um, so I actually put Patty Smith's face into one of the drawings because, and that's really the first time I started doing historical mash-ups. And um, and getting really interested in the self and how—there's this idea of, so the George Sand project, I was sort of, actually there's a true self inside of that story that's different than this outside narrative. And then, but, that was sort of the argument of that writing a little bit. It was, actually I think this person deserves a closer look within trans history. But um I think subsequently I've—my other projects have been sort of about the other side which is, okay, so there's this assumption in trans, the way that trans people are talking about in the mainstream media of, you're a blank trapped in a blank, or you're a self trapped inside a body. And um, I really don't relate to that narrative.. you know, as I said, my childhood, I don't really recall feeling I identified with men, or—I think my brother, played with LEGOs and everyone was, oh, that's—like when LEGOs came out with, pink colors, we all kind of realized, oh, I guess that's seen as a boy's thing. But I don't really ever—I didn't really have a ton of things that, I don't know. I didn't have a
stereotypical, transmasculine, tomboy childhood at all, it wasn't really my experience. Um, and so I never really felt a self trapped in a body, or a self trapped in a life at all. And um, and then my mom was really confused when we came out, because that wasn't you know, what she had observed. And so I needed to find another way to talk about the way that the self relates with society and with history and with historical situations. And so um the—so I did another project I guess my next historical project technically was Michelle Foucault. It was this viral Tumblr. Have you seen it?

Tennenbaum: Um, I looked it up before you—

Slutzky: Okay, [Laughter].

Tennenbaum: But please describe it.

Slutzky: Okay, so um, so Michelle Foucault is a mash-up I did in the summer of 2014 between um you know, “Michel Foucault” and Michelle Tanner from Full House pictures. So um, it was sort of about, you know, her character on Full House was, she was always saying these things that are not childlike things to say. Which I guess I didn't really think about until after, she was always kind of this precocious little girl. Um, cool dude, or whatever her taglines were. And then so um for her to be saying these, really incisive, academic kind of statements about, you know, the body is the prison of the soul, or [hiccups]. Excuse me. Um, just really tickled me. And that was the summer that Israel was bombing Gaza a lot. And everyone was, at least in my community everyone was, really upset about that, and I got some e-mails that were, oh my God your blog is really, making me feel better and, I kind of felt, okay, it's really important for me to have comedy in my work because I realized that that was more of my kind of role in social justice movements was kind of to make art and make people feel good, I guess. Or at least question things. Um, and then the other historical mash-up I did was the Anne Frank/Justin Bieber project. Um, the video of that is called “Religious Beliebs,” and the installation version, which is up right now at Leslie Loman, is called the um “Justin Bieber's Anne Frank House.” And um basically Justin Bieber went to the Anne Frank house in the summer of 2013—or sorry, in the spring of 2013. And it made, you know, New York Daily News headlines that said “What the hell?” and it was on tax day and I remember sitting on the subway and the person next to me was reading the Daily News, and I was, oh my God. This is amazing. [Laughter]. It was the perfect project for me. And I was living at the time in this um four bedroom you know queer house, and um we always had a German person living with us, I don't know why. But that room was always a German. And um this artist named Marin Karlson was living there at the time, and when I got home from school—I was in grad school at the time at Parson's—she had the copy of the Daily News, and it was amazing. I was, “yes!” because I had been so busy all day I couldn't go buy it. But I was finally able to read it, and she made photocopies of it for me at Cooper Union where she was studying um, she was an exchange student. And it was so funny, being a Jewish person talking about this with a German person, and I kind of realized both, through her and the person that you know, she had a friend from Germany or from Berlin that stayed in the room after she had to go back, and then that person you know, was you know, white, you know, German, blonde person. And she had these fantasies, she was a lesbian, of, of being dominated by a Jewish woman. And, for a long time I didn't know what to do with the Anne Frank and
Justin Bieber together, and then something about when she was talking about that it really clicked for me that Anne Frank would have to dominate Justin Bieber, and um I really was interested in his idea of she would have been a Belieber. he had written in the guest book, “Hopefully she would have been a Belieber.” I should have said that. But um, I just was fascinated by this idea that her identity could be fixed and transposed into another time. And it, to me it had so much to do with transness. And this idea that you were a self trapped in a body, or that you would be the same self within any time period. Um, and that question just really is fascinating to me. And I really go back and forth about, you know, whether there is a true self and I do think that you know the self is the mediation between the soul and the society. I think you know there’s something happening there where the self is kind of negotiating between both. And so I guess that’s what that project was really about was, investigating through satire and really mashing up 1943 and 2013, what would a conversation between Anne Frank and Justin Bieber be? And really ending up on the idea that she’s a bigger celebrity than he is, and he would have to kind of hand over the attention towards her. And um, out of respect for her and also, I don’t know, that he would be kind of more into her than she would be into him was kind of how I ended up. I don’t know that that’s how everybody interprets my work, but that’s definitely my intention is that, Anne Frank is, you know, a badass, ambitious, cool, queer Jewish person who hates Germans and hates her mother and, is just taking no shit. Because that’s who she was. if you read the diary, [Laughter], she—so Anne Frank re-wrote her entire diary on looseleaf paper when—so the government of the Netherlands was exiled when the Germans occupied the Netherlands, and they were in London, and they could still access the people through the radio waves. So the Prime Minister of the Netherlands came on the radio and was, everybody should keep their diaries for after the war because we’re going to create this, National Institute on War Documentation. And so um, everyone said to Anne, oh you should, you know, write your diary for publication. And by this point, she had already aged two years in hiding., she went from being 13 to being 15., she grew a lot. People think of her as this short little girl, but you see the height chart in the house, and she’s much taller than me. She must have been, 5’9” or something um, by the time she died. But anyway, um, you know, she was wearing high heels because she grew out of her shoes. They had to find her high heels. She was a sexual being. She was, almost an adult. Um, so she rewrote her whole diary. She had all this new political knowledge and insight and language from just developing as a human for two and a half years. And um, so there’s this really cool document, this really cool book, I think it’s, the complete edition or something—it’s the something edition of the Diary of Anne Frank. And they have the first version, which is her little plaid notebook. It’s A. And then B is her looseleafe pages. And then C is her dad’s translation. And um, in every different language, they had to take out different things because, for example, they took out all the anti-German stuff for Germany, they took out—and then actually they left in a bunch of the lesbian stuff in English, which I’m really grateful for, because, in the beginning of the book she’s, oh, my friend Jacqueline and I had this sleepover, and I asked her if I could touch her boobs and she said no. Or no, I wanted to kiss her and she said no, but she said I could touch her boobs. Or something that. There was some sort of, same-sex desire happening. Um, but anyway, I really feel my identity feels, the way I think of it is really specific to this time period. we were talking before the interview, when I first came out, I came out as genderqueer, and I had friends that didn’t think that genderqueer was counted as trans people. Which, now I feel is so fucked up, you know? I mean, at the time I felt it was fucked up, but I didn’t really know what to say about it
at that time. And then later the word non-binary came out. Because I guess people were saying that genderqueer was too academic, which I don't understand how non-binary is less academic. To me it sounds more academic, but I get how it's—I think people are, non-binary to people is, we're rejecting something, and genderqueer was, let's construct another gender in a way—I think people felt, started feeling really uncomfortable about conformity that was happening within genderqueer culture, and how, a lot of it was being shaped in, I think at least the visibility of it was being shaped—like there was this really kind of white transmasc I don't know, upper middle class image of it, bowties basically. Everyone was, bowties are genderqueer, you know? Um.

**Tennenbaum**: You talk about that in your Clothes Feelings.

**Slutzky**: Yeah, exactly. So that's what Clothes Feelings was kind of about. Um, and Clothes Feelings is also about this thing of gender being socially formed and being influenced by people in my life and situations and really the site of gender being clothing for me, and how all these little decisions about clothing affect how others see me or don't. And that was really, to me I was trying to use these comedic anecdotes to talk about this kind of social self that um that I feel was talked about by psychologists in the 60s but people don't really apply to trans identity, you know, gender theory as much. I feel you know psychology, Winnicott, specifically, was really interested in this true self/false self thing, but then for some reason we accept this narrative of the authentic self with transness, which is not to say that trans people are being fake, but we're not accounting for, the ways that social life affects self-perception. Anyway, are people trying to use this room?

**Tennenbaum**: Umm.

**Slutzky**: Or are they just waiting for the bathroom?

**Tennenbaum**: I'm not entirely sure. Because the sign does say that it should be open right now, but—

**Slutzky**: Oh.

**Tennenbaum**: We have it reserved.

**Slutzky**: We have a reserve.

**Tennenbaum**: We do.

**Slutzky**: Anyway, I just talked a lot about a lot of things. [Laughter]. Do you have any questions?

**Tennenbaum**: I do. [Laughter].

**Slutzky**: Cool.
Tennenbaum: Um, so in that same Clothes Feelings video, um, there's a point when you talk about when wearing um men's button up t-shirts—

Slutzky: Mm-hmm.

Tennenbaum: And results in people reading you as younger.

Slutzky: Mmm.

Tennenbaum: Do you see that as a similar time transportation thing? Um.

Slutzky: Yeah, totally.

Tennenbaum: And how has that changed as you get deeper into your 20s?

Slutzky: Um, that's a really good question. So, the time I was most violently street harassed, or it was actually in the subway, but you know what I mean, publically harassed about I was being perceived as a gay boy was when I was with my—I was, at the time I was dating someone who looked very young, who was small and had a very round face. I think that was also, a really racialized thing because he was, mixed and Filipino, but um we were both wearing little hats, little kind of baseball hats and shorts and backpacks, and um, you know, we had just spent the night together and we were kissing and everything. Or maybe we were just, one of us had our arm around the other and we were, sitting on the subway close to each other. And this guy stood up across from us and started yelling at us, and it became clear that he thought we were, teen boys. And um, I realized that my gender, the way people perceive me is really based on who I'm with at what time. Um, because I don't know that I would have—I don't know., I've been read as a teenage boy before, I remember one time I was at a diner with Jeanine, my old sculpture teacher, and some of her former students, right after—I think it was a year after we graduated or something. So maybe they thought that she was my mom and maybe that's why they thought I was a little boy, but I was called sir by, you know, the waitstaff, and I was oh, I think they think I'm a baby, a teenage child, [Laughter]. Um, but also, now I'm teaching college, and that has brought up a lot of stuff for me., you know, the person that hired me is a trans man and is also, you know, a short person that's not on T or whatever. And he, when he hired me he was, you should definitely have them call you professor, because you look young., he was, you want them to be able to—like, you want to create a situation where they respect you and don't try to be your friend. Which is really challenging actually, because, you know, I want to create supportive relationships where people can come to me and talk to me about things. You know, when you make art with other people., you want to be able to talk about—I want my students to be able to talk about things that are personal to them, and sometimes, we have to have personal conversations or whatever about, you know, one person for example, her family lived in public housing during Hurricane Sandy and so she made a documentary about how they had to carry her brother, who was, you know, disabled, down 22 flights of stairs. You know., that's personal and also in her work. Um, but I also, yeah, it's but I also need to maintain the student-teacher dynamic in order to create kind of an equal playing field between the students. And you know, my first time teaching I was—I guess I was 27, and um, it was really challenging, you
know? coming into a classroom. I had never—so I started learning video through my sculpture class in college. I was allowed to take out video equipment, and then I had to audit a video class in order to have access to the video editing, and I really just learned video editing from asking other students, and the lab tech. I really never took a class, I just started doing it. I've had a lot of luck with lighting and stuff, I really haven't had to do a lot of fancy things. And a lot of my work has obviously been animation and animatic where I'm just scanning tiny drawings and then recording voiceover with a similar microphone, or with my phone even. It's really no frills. So going in and having to teach camera, light, and sound was extremely, I think it brought up a lot of my gender issues because it's this—you get to adulthood and you're, I don't feel I can be an adult because I never became a woman or a man. And there was no way for me to feel I was an adult without you know, having some sort of legible gender within that., I didn't know how my students would perceive my age, if they would know who the teacher was, you know, I'm a fairly, performative, comedic person but you know, you don't want to confuse that with, you don't have to take me seriously. You know what I mean? So that was really hard for me, and I think I finally have become comfortable you know being in front of people. But I think part of it is also that I started teaching video editing, which I have a—you know, I've been doing video editing since 2009. So that's something I feel more comfortable with than camera, light, and sound. And then I'm going to be also teaching digital photography, which I also do but have never officially studied. So there's a lot of, you know, in the adjunct world you kind of get hired for what you're perceived to be. you get hired, I've personally gotten my teaching jobs through word of mouth., and through you know, networking. So it's never been, oh, there's a something, there's a job posting, it describes me, I'm applying for it. It's always, someone perceives me in a certain way, is you can do this thing. Or or they're, you fit the image of the thing I want in my department because I need another trans person, or you know, I need an artist. You know, there's—it's sort of, it brings up some weird stuff about, you know, and I think any trans people's employment stuff is going to bring up stuff about how they're perceived and how you have to perform professionalism. What is professionalism? Professionalism is based on these, white, wealthy, cisgender ideals. And it sucks.

**Tennenbaum:** How do you find um gender presentation and academic professionalism go together?

**Slutzky:** Um, it's, again it's more button-ups. It's button-ups—no, but, I get a little bit looser with it some—like sometimes I'll wear a nice t-shirt. Also because sometimes it gets—you don't know, you know, you layer. You don't know if you're going to get hot. This is kind of a silly conversation, but you know, I don't wear, leggings, and I don't wear—I sometimes will wear, black jeans. I wear a lot of black jeans. I wear a lot of, uh, Blundstone boots. I don't know. I sort of just go with sort of this androgynous transmasc look. I do my earrings and my necklaces. I wear a lot of, jewel, you know, crystals. I started getting really into crystals and stuff. So I don't know. But I don't wear, a little baseball hat. That's the one thing I will not do when I'm teaching, because I guess that's when people think I look a little boy. But I also started going grey pretty early. I started going grey in my mid-zos. I don't know that it's really that noticeable from afar, but I think it's starting to be—I'm starting to look a little bit more professor-y. Not that I'm a full professor. I'm an adjunct, but I do have the terminal degree in my field, which is the MFA, [Laughter]. Yeah. Does that answer your question?
Tennenbaum: It does.

Slutzky: Yeah.

Tennenbaum: Um, could you speak more to the role of comedy—

Slutzky: Yeah!

Tennenbaum: In your art—

Slutzky: Thank you so much for asking that.

Tennenbaum: How it intersects with activism.

Slutzky: Yeah.

Tennenbaum: Because even going back to when you said your role in college—

Slutzky: Mm-hmm.

Tennenbaum: Organizing was often to make the room laugh—

Slutzky: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Tennenbaum: Then the silliness of the Queer House Field Day.

Slutzky: Mm-hmm.

Tennenbaum: Um—

Slutzky: Well, I didn’t organize Queer House Field Day, but I was gladly a part of it. Um, yeah, so my dad is a really silly person. He makes a lot of puns. And you know, I have ADD and I tend to, tune out a lot of—like when I was a kid I would totally not be listening when my family would tell stories from the day. And then they’d all laugh and I’d say, wait, what happened? And so, you know, I was a really spacy kid., I’m a pretty spacy person. Um, but so I think that, and also I’m the youngest, so as I was getting a grasp of in the English language and, you know, motor skills and all that, I think I saw making jokes as a way to, interact with my family in a way that would—if I made them laugh, it would make me feel good and it made me feel part of the family. And I would kind of bounce it back and forth with my dad. we would just make puns back and forth kind of. Um, and then my mom especially would laugh really hard, and it would always just make me feel good. So I think that’s kind of how I got started with that. And, you know, I think all those early childhood interactions of, being encouraged to draw, being encouraged to make jokes, those two factors have made a huge, enormous impact on my whole entire existence. Um, and um I don’t know, I was always a little bit of a class clown., I never
minded, if I was reading aloud in class and made a mistake, sometimes it be worth it to me if everyone laughed, you know, that kind of thing. And also I think it’s, as a queer young person it was a kind of way to not feel an outcast., um, I was always voted in middle school, “Most Creative Dresser” or “Most Unique,” which was all, euphemistic for, “You are queer,” [Laughter]. “You little queer.” So I don’t know, I think if I, made people laugh, it made me some sort of power or control over a narrative or something. I don’t know, I’m just saying it out loud to try it out. But um, but I also think it really comes from Jewish tradition, and that was the culture I grew up in was, you were, you know, there was a lot of laughter in synagogue and Hebrew School, and you know, Jews have always used humor as a way to get through thousands of years of oppression, and that’s definitely something that I feel is if not genetically passed on, then for sure socialized. there’s a big tradition there. And um, and I think same with queer people, you know?, it's hilarious to me that, people would talk about the Stonewall Riots as if it was, inspired by the queens being upset by Judy Garland’s death. I think camp sensibility is very humorous and you know, I think all of drag culture has a lot of humor in it. And sadness, too, but definitely both go hand in hand very nicely, for Jews as well., you know, I was in this um dinner party of Jews recently. I had a friend that was doing this project about Jewish conversational style, so she got a grant to have dinner and record it. And we sat around telling Holocaust jokes by the end. And it was just, you know, really nice because these were jokes that people told each other while they were living through it, to get through it, you know? And, it was so cool—it felt, in the same way that it was amazing to, during you know when I was [inaudible] with Visual AIDS and the pop-up museum, finding these gems of queer and trans history, finding fucking Holocaust jokes from people that lived through it. That was just, I felt, so connected to my ancestors, you know? Even though you know, technically my direct ancestors are from Eastern Europe and came to the United States because the Holocaust. my mom’s family lived in Texas I think as early as the 1880s, and my grandpa on my dad’s side, my dad’s dad came over in, I think 1908. And um, came through Ellis Island and moved to Nebraska. Or I guess he moved to Nebraska when he was older. He lived in the Lower East Side as a kid. But anyway, um, you know, every time I go to this psychic, she’s, do you have relatives that died in the Holocaust? And I’m no. And every time, I’m, oh, Anne Frank. And she’s, yes. And so, you know, she’s so convinced that Anne Frank is an ancestor of mine. And it might just be that there’s a sort of kinship about being a writer and, you know, kind of a Jewish feminist writer or whatever. Or, someone that’s in a difficult situation or you know, I feel I’m kind of doing this alchemy of history, by kind of pairing narratives together or you know, I really feel quantum physics is on to something, that you know, the logic of space and time is much more you know fluid than what humans kind of experience on this plane that we call reality. There’s a lot more communication between realms than we realize and I’m really committed to doing work that kind of heals historical traumas for people’s experiences in other timespaces. I think they can feel that in a way, and I definitely feel that connection with Anne Frank because of it. It kind of gives me this, it sounds kind of I don’t know, I feel—sometimes I feel a little bit territorial. if I see a picture of—I saw a picture of Anne Frank on an ad across the street from the Whitney Museum. There was some sort of billboard. I was—I get really, upset about it. Because I’m, I feel I don’t know, I have to, protect her or something. It’s really weird, but once you start working with a topic, even if it’s something as global as Anne Frank, she’s such an international literature star, you know, you start to feel a little bit I must rectify this, [Laughter]. So I don’t know. I don’t mean for it to be, egotistical as much as it is, I just, I don’t know. And also I um in the past year
I've been working on learning reiki and kind of healing traditions and intuition, and I'm really seeing parallels between you know, you can send reiki to the past. You can send reiki to people in other timespaces. And it's so connected with this historical mash-up work. You know, and not all of my work is historical mash-ups. a lot of it is autobiographical or you know I do still lives, I do portraits. Things in this timespace, in a very direct way, but I don’t know, it’s nice to have a lot of breadth to what I feel I can work on.

**Tennenbaum:** Mm-hmm. How do you feel about finding trans, transness, transy things—

**Slutzky:** Mm-hmm.

**Tennenbaum:** Or experiences and resonances,, you mentioned um, that Patty Smith bit—

**Slutzky:** Mmm.

**Tennenbaum:** From, especially in history—

**Slutzky:** Mm-hmm.

**Tennenbaum:** Because when people weren’t identifying as trans as such—

**Slutzky:** Right.

**Tennenbaum:** Or even had or were using language as femme, queen, etc.

**Slutzky:** Oh yeah, totally.

**Tennenbaum:** Um, how do you feel sort of mining that transness in that—

**Slutzky:** Yeah.

**Tennenbaum:** Reconnection?

**Slutzky:** I've been thinking a lot about that this week um because I've been listening to this One from the Vaults podcast that Morgan M. Page produces, and she comes up against that sometimes, where um, people identified as transsexual or they identified as transvestites. And I think it’s really respectful that she'll address and acknowledge, this is how this person identified at the time—I’m going to choose to use X, Y, Z pronoun for—or, people used different pronouns for this person, I’m going to just, use she. Because that might be the most respectful thing I can do. You know, it’s, I think it’s really challenging because you know, in any historical situation we only have so many options., you know, George Sand had to use gendered language for adjectives and nouns, which we don’t have to do in English. You know, people still obviously deal with that in, French and Spanish or whatever., you know, I said one of my best friends is Chilean and she's, you know, non-binary. But feels really uncomfortable you know, claiming they/them pronouns because she's, well what am I going to do when I switch back to Spanish?,

I still have to choose between he and she. I think that people are becoming inventive with gender neutral language in Spanish, with, Latinx, you know, with the X and everything. Or I've heard of people using E at the end instead of O or A. But um, you know, there's all these different constructions of language even in the same time period. So of course you know, it's challenging. You know, you just—I guess for me, I just ask myself, is it doing more harm or good to use the same language that they used, and is it doing more harm or good to, project my own? I don't know. I think I just try to do the best I can, because, for example, George Sand—for awhile I was using they/them just because, I feel at certain times they/them has meant I'm not sure what to call this person, and I think the community has kind of gone back and forth about that because I think especially for trans women, being called “they” if someone is not sure is, really insulting. And um it's obviously best to just ask people. But I don't know, I don't know. I sometimes screw up and will accidentally say “she” for George Sand just because no one else in the whole wide world has ever said anything else that I've heard of about George Sand. So it's,, you know, the problem with language is that other people have to use it too. And so, you know, even if I know someone's pronouns and I use them all the time, if someone comes in, especially if it's a straight, cis person, and they start using different pronouns for someone, it becomes really, really difficult to maintain the pronouns I've been using for them the whole time that I know that they want. You know, I think language is social, language is democratic, it's really hard to, change it just by yourself or to make your own decisions about someone in another timespace. But I mean, it would be great to, communicate directly with, you know, someone's spirit, [Laughter], and ask them. I'm down.

Tennenbaum: I'm also interested in your um—you seem to be really about intergenerational contact for relationships.

Slutzky: Mm-hmm.

Tennenbaum: Um, I'm wondering if you could tell me more about that and how that was happening in Visual AIDS.

Slutzky: Mm-hmm.

Tennenbaum: Um, and additionally because you seem very plugged-in to the Internet and what's going on—

Slutzky: Mm-hmm.

Tennenbaum: Um, how do queer spaces on the Internet—

Slutzky: Mm-hmm.

Tennenbaum: What's intergenerational contact?

Slutzky: Mm.
Tennenbaum: Happening you know, [inaudible].

Slutzky: It's so hard to answer this, because, okay, so I think with any intergenerational relationships there's, it's at the same time it's really refreshing and nice to meet someone in another generation and to have that connection. I mean, every generation also has its own cultural norms and ways of doing things, and you know, I think younger generations have such a different relationship with technology than older generations, and so for awhile I had this experience where there was this person who is, you know, a queer artist that I know, you know, we were connected online, and I would sometimes make a post that was just, totally benign and not even—not offensive or anything that anybody was, responding—like, she would just make these long comments in response. And I think she didn't realize that it was sort of socially awkward. there's sometimes social awkwardness that happens, or, I think you know, there's sometimes, and I had to call her and be, just so you know, this is how it comes off when you do these long comments. It seems you're upset about something and, escalating something. And she was oh no, I was just really interested in the topic. I think you know sometimes it's—I think I have an easier time connecting intergenerationally within, I don't know, I think part of the reason I go to Visual AIDS events is so I can, hug and kiss who I feel are my extended family of queer art people in person. Because I don't know, I think that I've tried to have closer intergenerational relationships or friendships, and sometimes it can be a little confusing. Um, just because I don't know, the older people are, the more they've gone through also. You know, I really naively once tried to pursue someone who was a lot older than I was and kind of without realizing kind of what in a traumatic state they were in, and that, you know, they had not only lived through the AIDS crisis and lost a lot of friends, but also had been, divorced after a really long relationship. And I have no idea what that's. And I'm not saying that people can't have those kind of relationships. You know, in some ways I wish, you know, they were more common and easier to have, but I think there's um there's definitely barriers that are difficult to surmount as far as you know just—yeah, sort of that ignorance of I didn't live through the AIDS crisis. I don't—or one time, you know, I was um, I was kind of in a student role in the past few years, and I was talking to this older woman and she said to me oh, I've also had a double mastectomy. And I didn't really know how to respond to that because of course she had a double mastectomy because she had cancer, and I had a double mastectomy because I'm trans and had access to top surgery. And so I said, I didn't know what to say. I said oh, cool. And she said no, not cool. And she started kind of lecturing me about it. And it was just really awkward because I was, why did she try to connect with me about it if she knew that we didn't have the same experience? I don't know. There's just, I don't know why I'm, where to go with this question really. But I think it's, I don't know, I think um I've had kind of some ups and downs with it, because I—and I do have friends that are you know, in their 50s and it's awesome. And sometimes you know we hang out and whatever. But I think it's harder to, make plans with someone. I don't know, I find it challenging to, have kind of more day to day close relationships that aren't—I don't know, I think it's just challenging. I'm really hoping that queer generations to come find an easier way to kind of systematize intergenerational relationships. I think the ball houses, the houses in drag balls, it's so genius, because it really kind of institutionalizes, it structures those relationships and creates mentorship. And um, you know, that's a specific community that found that model to be useful. I don't know that, every community can just replicate that model, but I wish that there was more discourse around this because I'm a little
bit stumped as to, how to have these closer relationships without it just being around going to events or having kind of community public spaces kind of relationships., I don't know. I have at one point—at certain points had closer relationships with people but it sometimes can be confusing. Because in queer culture, you never know if something is sexual or not. It's, how the hell do you know? And then if you ask, you don't know if someone is going to get mad at you, if they're going to still want to hang out with you. So you know, at one point I asked, and it kind of led to the end of the relationship because it you know kind of triggered somebody because they had some anger issues. That sucks. Um, you know. I hope we can be friends. Could be good. And um, but you know, the brief time I did spend being close with that person, I do feel we had some really interesting conversations about trans inclusiveness at Michfest, this person had you know, been a big Michfest person but also really identified with transmasculinity, and, whenever they'd go to Michfest, they would be hanging out with the trans men there. And you know, they're not transmisogynistic. This person believes that trans women should be there. And I had been very judgmental towards people that had gone to Michfest, because Michfest, you know, excludes trans women, or excluded trans women when it was operating, but I think I kind of learned more about what it was to be genderqueer in that generation. Um you know, someone who was born in the 50s or 60s. And um, I don't know, I think I'm—I started being a little bit more open-minded about how challenging that must have been and how, you know, she told a story where, she was hanging out with a group of friends that were lesbians at a queer bar or whatever, and someone had said oh, look over there, that person, you know, took off their breasts, they had surgery, and this person I was hanging out with turned around and was wow, that's really cool, I wish I could do that, in their mind. And then the friend was, how fucked up is that? And so they were having these two completely different responses to somebody's trans identity and presentation. And, she had to navigate that and you know, that sucks. That's hard. How do you, maintain being in community and also, prevent oppressive dynamics? It's a situation that our generation has to go through too., you know? So I think there's a lot of wisdom to be gained through these conversations but getting there, I think there's so much judgment about oh, older people don't understand us or, and I think the older people are wow, young people really don't understand us. So I'm kind of envious of people that have support groups that are intergenerational. I have a friend that goes to—I know it sounds really fucked up but my friend goes to this cancer support group and you know, it's for lesbians that have cancer, or that have had cancer. And it's just so nice to see them all having these intergenerational bonds. It's so nice. I mean, I know it sucks that they had to have cancer. But I wish that there were more intergenerational spaces that, that were kind of a weekly thing. how I used to go to synagogue as a kid, but not necessarily, I don't know if I necessarily wanted to be in a religious community. Not sure yet. But yeah.

**Tennenbaum:** Thanks for tackling that tough question.

**Slutzky:** Yeah. [Laughter].

**Tennenbaum:** Um, on that thread of mentorship—

**Slutzky:** Mm-hmm.
Tennenbaum: Um and yeah, so you mentioned earlier when you first started seeing trans stuff go viral on the internet—

Slutzky: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Tennenbaum: Become popularized, um, do you feel you’re part of a network or community of online—

Slutzky: Mm.

Tennenbaum: Trans artists?

Slutzky: Hmm.

Tennenbaum: Um has the internet helped you find more queer trans artists when before when you were younger you said that there was just nothing available.

Slutzky: Oh. Mm. Not really., I don’t know how to answer that, because, I think that I don’t know, I used to use Tumblr more than I do now. I had a phase in, 2012 or 2013 when I used it more. Actually, and I also, I used Twitter in 2009 before it became Twitter, you know?

Tennenbaum: Mm-hmm.

Slutzky:, Twitter and Tumblr—you know, I think I used those two platforms briefly, in 2009 I used Twitter as just a place to write jokes. I would make rhymes with different words. It was really abstract,, we were all just art school kids. it was so stupid. This was before you know transnational organizations had their own Twitter, or, that you had to have a checkmark next to your name. So we used to use Twitter to be, you know, on campus we would make fake Twitter accounts for the different administrators, and there was no, certified—you know, you couldn’t tell it was a joke account.

Tennenbaum: [Laughter].

Slutzky: And so we really made it seem it was theirs but it was satirical. So that was kind of the moment that I was in college and, um, I don’t really remember how people were using Tumblr at the time. I didn’t really—I don’t think I really got Tumblr that much of the time. I’m going to sound so old to you. And then, I was dating someone that was two years younger than me in 2012 and she got me kind of into Tumblr. And I think I, there was, I mean maybe two or three friends on Tumblr. No one that I’ve necessarily met in real life. But definitely people that I’ve, connected with over Facebook or I’ve met people that started dating that person and then I sort of felt I knew them or, you know, things that. Or my current partner actually lived with this woman that I met on Tumblr on college. they used to live together, and I’m oh my God, that’s my Tumblr friend. So whatever, you know, but I don’t think I had, I wasn’t really necessarily part of—I mean, I probably, wrote some stuff about trans stuff or, reblogged stuff on Tumblr, but I don’t think I really was that big of a mouthpiece on Tumblr until Michelle Foucault, but then I
don't even know if people really associate that with me or people really are aware that that's, that I think of it an artist project. Because I think you know, it kind of blends in with, meme culture that gets kind of dissociated from authorship., I think that's kind of why I had a weird relationship with Tumblr. I kind of felt, as an artist I wanted to put my work out there in a way that, is connected to me, and Tumblr was sort of more about just freeing the images from authorship and just circulation. Which I think has its own merit, but it just really wasn't what I wanted for my own work. Except I think Michelle Foucault was, the people's project of mine. I wasn't actually populist as in it was made by other people, but, I don't know. It was fine that it was just it's own thing, you know? And if people know it's me, that's fine. I love meeting people that have seen it and don't realize I made it. It's the best thing. I think it's, you know, less and less people know about it now, but you know, it's a lot of academics and stuff. So whatever. Um, what were we talking about? Oh yeah, trans culture. I don't know. I think if I had been more of, someone that was interested in testosterone, I think I would have been able to connect with that YouTube moment of, 2009 and 2010 more, because—so this person named Charlie who lives in the Bay Area, might be moving to Philadelphia, I'm not sure. He's now um actually he's a hospice nurse, which is really cool, really cool work. Um, but he was um participating in this YouTube trans community but also critiquing the way that he was perceived and, the way that masculinity you know, was mapped on his body. You know, all the kind of, I feel all the YouTube kind of follow the same narrative. It was, this is week 34, this is what my voice sounds, I now have these physical changes, and people were, I'm so excited to get my dick, you know? I'm so excited to, pass as male so I can, meet straight women, you know? There was a lot of—that was a very dominant narrative, and I think um, Charlie was, really thinking about it in a critical way that was, you know, is this helping me, achieve the gender I want?, what is the point of transitioning?, I don't remember exactly, I haven't watched his stuff in a few years, but I remember at the time feeling so lucky that his voice was out there so that I didn't feel T was the only way to participate in, being a trans person. And that it wasn't even for everyone, and that, and acknowledging that, when you go on T, you get perceived in a certain way, and, I think I knew from the beginning that, if I had went on T and if I was perceived as male, I would have been harassed for being, faggy. You know? Which, is not a reason in and of itself to, not do it out of fear, but I guess—I don't know, I think part of it was, is this going to help me date the people I want to date and, be visible the way I want to be visible? And, I didn't know—I didn't fit into this idea that my friend was pushing of me, the kind of butch person whod femme women. So I think, and I saw so much of that that I think I was, maybe this isn't everything. So I think I was, I'm going to wait a few years and see if I want to go on T. And I just never got around to that. I never felt I need to do it or, I'm unhappy with my—I think I felt pretty much fine other than you know, I how I look better without boobs, my clothes or whatever. But um, I'm trying to think. I think on Facebook, it's a supplement to real life., I think that sometimes people add me that are, trans and, don't know a lot of other trans people, and maybe it makes them feel connected is the impression I get, but I don't necessarily think of myself—like I have friends that really think of themselves as, connectors between people. And I do see the potential for me to be that since I have a pretty wide network, but I don't know that I focus on that, or do it intentionally. But um, I don't know. I mean, it would be great to use the internet in that way. I think for me it's more of a place to follow-up with people and, you know, find intimate connection through, chatting or, meeting up later, or whatever. But I think a lot of
people in my life I really met in real life, at art events. But I find out about these art events through Facebook for sure. So you know, that's a thing.

**Tennenbaum:** So then real life in the city, um, do you feel part of the trans/queer artist community?

**Slutzky:** I forgot to say there's Instagram too. Instagram is a big thing too. I think that—

**Tennenbaum:** How is that used?

**Slutzky:** Well, I using it to show that you don't have to be, you can be femme and transmasc, and I think whenever I make posts about that, people respond, there's a lot of response to that. I think it really resonates with people and it makes people feel good about gender or something. Because um you know, a lot of the hashtags FtM and all that, you know, it's a lot of that dominant cultural stuff. So and I think a lot of it for me is about fashion, and it's about, you know, innovating what masculinity is and what femininity is, and I hate even using those words, but, I guess what is androgynous style outside of a neutral, this idea of neutrality? This idea of neutrality that comes from, white masculinity that's really boring. I'm not interested in that. I love clothes. You know, my whole childhood I just loved to just sit around and dress up in my mirror and, take pictures and then change and then, you know, that was how I had fun by myself, if I wasn't drawing or you know, talking on the phone or something. Or on Livejournal. I loved—oh that's the other thing. I loved Livejournal in high school. I was more—it wasn't really a trans community, but it was this community of girls—so there was this Livejournal community called hot_fashion, and it was people posting about fashion and, their clothes and selfies and you know, kind of, helping each other find where to get cool clothes in, random places in the country. And then it got so big and people were so into connecting that they had to make a whole separate community called off_hf, off hot fashion, and then that community was amazing. It was, all these girls being, you know, just telling their stories and connecting with people about things you're not supposed to talk about and you know, about you know, what do I do about someone that cheated on me or, you know, what do I do if I have this experience with my period? I don't know, it was so nice to connect with people, and I really miss that kind of anonymous connection that's not connected with the ego of, my name. an @ sign in front of it. you could just make a Livejournal and, make friends on it. I made so many friends on there. We had meet-ups, you know? So it would be cool if there was something that for trans people. I don't know if people experience Instagram that way. They might. Because now you can message on it, and that's really cool. Anyway, that's a long-winded answer.

**Tennenbaum:** Um, is there anything you want to talk about that hasn't been touched yet? Um, any current art pieces?

**Slutzky:** Yeah, um, so I didn't talk about my, my art that's kind of more directly about trans stuff. Um, so you know, I studied sculpture, but in my sculpture class I did a lot of video and drawing. I did a bit of sculpture, using cardboard to make clothing or things that, or I made a zoetrope, which is um this early animation technique pre-film where you spin it, and there's these slits and your eye puts it all, there's this spinning thing where the drawings are on the
inside and your eye puts it all together. It was a moving image. It's sort of a GIF that spins. So I made one of those, but then um after I had top surgery, I started grad school maybe a month after. Um and I started working with my old clothing from before I transitioned, whatever transition means, before I decided to change my gender presentation. And um I did a series called Body Party where I made my clothing into body, imaginary body parts. Um, and some of them were hand-me-downs from cousins or things that my cousins have, thrown out and I got out of the trash or whatever, um and so that was really fun. It was just, I don't know, and then I was dating someone and she was, oh, you're making work about the body as a found object. And I was, oh yeah. So I was, thank you ex-girlfriend, and I kept that in my artist's statement. But that feels important to me that, using clothing as material to make imaginary body parts to talk about the body as a found object. to me that was really exciting, and um then a big moment for me—well a big moment for me was when I made a piece out of a shoulder pad that I made into a breast, and I called it Ghost Boobs because, when I—so when I had top surgery, I was friends with all these trans guys, and one of them said to me, did you film the big reveal? And I was, what? he was, saying that people film the moment where they take their bandage off. And I was, what? Because when I had surgery and I got my bandage off, it was, it was Frankenstein. It was, I was, I was in shock. my body was in physical shock, the outer limits of my body were different than they were before and that was, really, it was, I don't want to say it was traumatizing, but it was definitely not this idea of, I finally have the body I always felt—like I never felt I was trapped in a body that was the wrong body. that's not how I felt. And so and it's a question in my mind if there was a different world would I have had top surgery? I don't know. Would I feel fine about tits? I don't know., I'm sure at one point in my life I did feel good about it, but it stopped feeling good when I changed my presentation. So I think eventually, now I feel great about my chest especially because I feel, I'm oh I have really big shoulders and I work out and now I have this, I don't know, I feel good about my body in a way that I never have before, but at the time it was really—like I was feeling itches in places that weren't there anymore because I had ghost boobs. And I had to walk around and sleep with my hands on my chest for a few weeks to, re-train my brain to understand what was going on. And then I read about um, we were reading a lot of theory in grad school Lacan and Elizabeth Gross, and apparently pigeons can't drop their balls unless they see another pigeon do it. And I started—and then there was all this stuff about ghost limbs and how, you have to trick—I don't know, I started kind of understanding what was happening to me on a social and psychological level and stuff, and thinking about, so I don't know, I kind of—like the research actually really helped me. So anyway, I made this piece Ghost Boobs, [Laughter], and then um, I made this other piece, Double Incision, that, they were teaching us how to weld and I was, what the fuck am I going to do with welding? I have to use this somehow. Because I always felt the metal shop was a space I wasn't really allowed in as a woman or a girl or whatever. it was not—I didn't feel that welcome there. It wasn't I wasn't supposed to do it. I felt, shamed for not feeling more empowered to do it in undergrad. I never really wanted to do wood or metal, because I think socialization and stuff. So anyway, I was, thinking about how the weld mark looked my scars, and so I decided to make a chest, a flat, a top surgery chest out of metal. So I did that and then I did another one where I cut into this shop towel that was blue, and I sewed it together and I put these little felt and metal studs. Anyway, I made a craft materials version and a metal version and my friend Phoenix was nice enough to make me little brackets for the metal part. And I called it Double Incision because it's, it's a good pun about, double gender. And then um,
that piece and then this other piece, Softies Get Hard. So Softies Get Hard was an accident because they were teaching us how to use this machine called the Vacuform machine, and it was you put in this plastic sheet, this thin plastic sheet into this machine and you put an object, and it melts the plastic sheet and it suctions it around the object so you get—it's how they make packaging for, you know, any plastic packaging you see. It's all made of a Vacuform machine. They make molds and then they mold the plastic to that, and then they packed you know, the objects they're selling in that. Um so I put this little thing of chapstick, this little um little, those—what is it called?, you know, a screwtop kind of chapstick—

**Tennenbaum:** Oh, the tub?

**Slutzky:** a little tub, yeah. Kind of Vaseline or whatever. And I put that in the Vacuform machine and it didn't melt the plastic all the way, and so it gave it this look of a couch cushion. there were all these suctions kind of. And I thought it looked a couch cushion or something. And you're supposed to—you could use plaster. So they had me use this as the demo for the class. Of course I'm the class clown and I'm, I'll do the demo. And then we did the plaster cast of it, or the plaster um mold. And then I flipped it over and did the other one. So I had these two opposites, and they were sitting on my desk for a year. No, not a year, maybe, four months or something. And finally I was, I'm just going to go instinctually. So I put pillow ruffle, use a pillow to make ruffles around it and a zipper, and then I called it Softies Get Hard. To me, it's a CD case from the 90s where you unzip it around the side and you go this and it fits together. But everybody else sees it a bra, which I think is really weird., they think it's nipples in the middle instead of the lip gloss thing. And then it was interesting to me because when I showed the um Ghost Boob one at Leslie Loman, it was hung a little bit low. for me it was chest level but for other people it might have been dick level. They saw it as, an athletic supporter. And so it taught me a lot, both of those experiences taught me a lot about, how you really have little control over the meaning of your work and, and it's read differently in different spaces. And so that's something I'm going to hold onto, but I wanted to say about Double Incision, I'm so proud, because someone saw it in the show that [inaudible] curated, and they posted on Instagram, they were oh my God this piece makes me feel so good about myself, it's inspiring me to have top surgery. And this person had top surgery because of that piece. And then my yoga teacher told me about it. She was friends with that person because she saw their Instagram. She was oh, I know that person. So my yoga teacher pulled me aside and she was, thank you for being an artist. Keep doing what you're doing. And I was oh my God. So I put that in the little jar of things to remind myself about when I'm sad. Anyway. That's mostly a lot of what I wanted to say. Um, I have more. I also am a writer. I don't know if I talked about this at all. But um I'm writing, I've written a short story called T4T about two trans people having sex and all the things that the narrator is thinking about while they're together and on all the kind of stuff that comes up for them. A lot of stuff from my childhood about being bullied and um and how girls would expect me to give them massages but would exclude me, and it was a way that, my ability to do healing stuff was, kind of exploited. all these things that came up while I was on this date basically. So I'm kind of um building on that. I'm trying to, write more short stories and kind of connect it with family stories and to write about the situations that people find themselves in in their lives, and how they deal with them. And also, I don't know, trans relationships, I think it's really important to have more models for that. and I don't know, I'm realizing, you know, I
have to, kind of be visible. I have to put out there my experiences because I think a lot of people, it resonates with them. So I’m excited about that.

**Tennenbaum:** What audiences do you imagine um—

**Slutzky:** reading my work?

**Tennenbaum:** Taking in your—yeah.

**Slutzky:** Well, I think that obviously trans people, we want to see ourselves reflected back to us. I think that's an important number one audience to have in mind. I also, you know, want cis people to have narratives available to them that aren't, you know, so, whatever. a lot of us have read, Janet Mock, Redefining Realness, and it's super exciting to have this amazing person talk about her experience but also you know, she talks about her whole narrative is I always felt this, and I was always a girl, and it's this kind of very clear binary story that, you know, and she acknowledges in all of her writing that she has, pretty privilege, and that she was able to use that in order to, do sex work and fund her surgery and all that kind of stuff. And so I want there to be more narratives for anyone out there just about, the nuances of trans experience that aren’t so, kind of standardized in that I was always this kind of narrative, both for trans people and cis people. I think it's important because you know, people—I think a lot of people think that they know a lot about trans people but they really just know about this one idea of this binary you know, trans men and trans women. the other day I was watching this video that this media company produced about trans visibility and how there needs to be more trans visibility in the media, in film and television specifically. And I looked at the link and it, you know how they have to label all the articles and stuff shorter? They called it, Visibility: Trans Men Trans Women. And I was, that is not everyone. You know? I was wondering, did they have other versions that were just women or just men?, 'why was it, they felt they had to call it Trans Men Trans Women? why couldn't they just say Trans People? Because I guarantee there's people in that video that are non-binary, you know?

**Tennenbaum:** And it's shorter.

**Slutzky:** Or they should have people. What? And it's shorter! why make it longer if it's going to be more untrue? I don’t know.

**Tennenbaum:** Yeah.

**Slutzky:** So I don't know, I'm hoping that, as a teacher I'm look, at the beginning of every class I say, raise your hand if you've ever met a trans person. Maybe one or two people will raise their hand. And I say now everyone raise your hand because you've met me. And so, I don’t know. Even if I'm not doing the kind of organizing work I originally set out to do, I think for me it's enough to just kind of you know, I do think that it to a certain degree makes space for other people to be visible as myself in a way that's authentically me. Even though I don't believe in authenticity, [Laughter]. So that's what I'm trying to do right now. It might change.
Tennenbaum: Beautiful.

Slutzky: Thank you.

Tennenbaum: Um, I don’t have anymore questions.

Slutzky: Yeah. Um. How long have we been going?

Tennenbaum: Um—

Slutzky: For almost three hours.

Tennenbaum: About two and a half.

Slutzky: Two and a half. Okay. Um, what else do I want to say? Um, I could talk about what I’m working on right now.

Tennenbaum: Please.

Slutzky: So right now um I just finished a residency at the NARS Foundation in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, and I was working on a series of drawings that kind of turned out to be little um almost little storyboards or little filmstrips or something. It’s kind of these little drawings that I mount on the back of acrylic plastic. Excuse me. And I’ve been obsessed with this self-defense manual called Looking Forward to Being Attacked from 1977. And it was made by this police lieutenant in Tennessee, and he has this very weird idea of what sexual assault is, and that it’s this stranger danger thing which is very I think historically specific to the 70s where there was a lot of, serial killers and people abducting women on the street. Um, but, it’s very much targeted towards this bourgeoisie kind of women in these kind of you know shopping mall, or what’s it called, shopping centers and, this kind of domesticated or, office assistant kind of, you know, these kind of bourgeoisie situations. Um, and also, the photographs are so strange because they have these kind of non-actors acting out these scenarios where they’re being attacked, and sometimes people are smiling because it looks it’s an awkward photo shoot. And I sort of feel I don’t trust this, cop, to be you know, doing something on behalf of women., it just makes me feel so icky to think about somebody who we know instigates violence to be supposedly doing this anti-violence work. And it’s, you know, as a cop he’s um you know finding these crime scenes, and then he’s, but let’s recreate it in a photograph. what? he’s recreating these violent scenes so that—for his visual pleasure it almost feels, even though I know that technically he’s supposed to be preventing this stuff from happening. But all the writing in the book feels it’s the language of advertising. it feels copy. it’s, kind of satirical or kind of a knee-slappy—it’s, if you get him this way—he has this kind of victim blaming idea of, if you act really tough, then no one is going to attack you. Which I think that a lot of self-defense people you know promote this idea. But it just feels so gross to hear from this, police guy. Anyway. So I’ve been juxtaposing the images, I’ve been drawing them for a few years, ever since I did this um residency at the Vermont Studio Center is when I started this project. And um, now I’ve been juxtaposing the images with film stills from commercials.
And um, even though I know it's not in the work yet, I feel a lot of where the work is coming from is about kind of um callout culture in queer culture and how um it's the way that people you know, are able to respond to sexual assault can also be really easily utilized by abusers to isolate and exclude their victims. And um, I don't know how I'll get to that, but I'm hoping that the more I kind of follow this line of inquiry in this work, I'm just really interested in talking about—I mean, I loved, I guess my work is a lot about these really fucked up things, the Holocaust and sexual assault and, finding the humor somehow. But, you know, punching up. Not ever making fun of people that don't have power, but, making fun of the powers that be. So um, but it took me such a long time to get to a place where I was allowing myself to make this work because I was so afraid of, someone being, this is fucked up. but also you know, everyone that I've shown the work to that's seen it is, this is so funny and radical and, feminist. So I don't know. It's not always fun and games. it's not always the easiest thing to make art. I think you know, we go through—at least I go through cycles where I feel more or less confident or you know, if I have a block it's often about an emotional issue that I have to then deal with in my work and that's not easy. So um, to everyone out there who is making art, you know, I'm with you. [Laughter]. Keep going. [Laughter]. That's all I have to say.

Tennenbaum: Beautiful. I think that's a great ending note.

Slutzky: Awesome.

Tennenbaum: Cool. Thank you.

Slutzky: Thank you so much.

Tennenbaum: Thank you for your story.

Slutzky: Yeah.