



Periodically Queer Episode – COLORLife!: No More Business As Usual – With Lissette Cheng, Mariana Romo-Carmona, Sheilah Mabry, and Vondora Wilson

Audio Transcript

Jaime Shearn Coan (00:04):

Hey there. I'm Jamie Shearn Coan. My pronouns are he/him. I'm the Mellon/ACLS public fellow and communications manager at ONE Archives Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to telling histories and stories about LGBTQ+ communities.

Jaime Shearn Coan (00:21):

You're listening to Periodically Queer, a podcast that explores the stories about LGBTQ+ periodicals, such as magazines and organizational newsletters, as a way to learn about community building. This episode is the third and final episode of our pilot season with a focus on LGBTQ+ communities of color. This season is made possible by a grant from the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. Special thanks to ONE Archives at the USC Libraries for providing research materials for this podcast. In this Periodically Queer episode, we're going to look back at COLORLife!, the Lesbian, Gay, Two-spirit and Bisexual People of Color Magazine, which was published and distributed in New York City from 1992 to 1994.

Jaime Shearn Coan (01:16):

A little about me, I'm a white, queer, and trans writer and scholar in my early 40s. I live in Brooklyn, New York and write about queer performance. I first came across COLORLife! at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. I was there researching the poet and playwright, Assotto Saint. And while digging around in his papers, I came across a black and white issue of COLORLife! Assotto, also known as Yves Lubin, graced the cover wearing sunglasses, pearls, a leather jacket, and leather gloves, and holding a white flower. When I came out to ONE Archives, I was able to read more issues of the magazine. And was so impressed by its radical politics, its international and intersectional approach, and its bridging of news, testimonial, and creative writing.

Jaime Shearn Coan (02:06):

Back in New York, I reached out to the amazing dance critic, poet, curator, and connector Eva Yaa Asantewaa having seen her name in the masthead. Eva put me in touch with Lissette Cheng and things took off from there. All in all, I was able to speak with four people who helped bring COLORLife! into being. Mariana Romo-Carmona, Lissette Cheng, Sheilah Mabry, and Vondora Wilson. Sadly, I wasn't able to track down two of the other key players, Liddell Jackson and Myrna Morales. Liddell, if you're listening, everyone is looking for you. Mariana was the first person I spoke with.

Mariana Romo-Carmona (02:46):

I'm Mariana Romo-Carmona. And I'm here in New York City where I've been since 1983 when I came to join my partner, June Chan.