

Libidinal Landscapes. Exercising Sexuality as Queer World-Making in 1970s and 1980s New York

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Abstract

This essay explores how New York's post-industrial landscape—particularly the abandoned piers along the Hudson River—emerged as a vital site for the formation of queer communal life in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Until their demolition at the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis, these piers served as liminal spaces where gay men, trans individuals, and sex workers enacted forms of sexuality that were deliberately “non-conforming,” contesting and reconfiguring the heteronormative frameworks imposed by broader society. Drawing on Michel Foucault's notion of “heterotopia,” this essay interrogates the subversive power of this libidinal terrain through a close reading of homoerotic imagery created at the piers by artists such as Alvin Baltrop, Leonard Fink, and Frank Hallam—figures who were both integrated members of the community and its silent, intimate chroniclers.

"Why do gays love ruins?" I said to my friends when we emerged into the crisp autumn sunlight of a Sunday afternoon. "The Lower West Side, the docks. Why do we love slums so much?"

"One can hardly suck cock on Madison Avenue, darling."
(Holleran 1976-83 ca.: 67)

Unnatural Acts among Art and Urban Ruins

Starting in the 1970s, as happened to many Western metropolises, New York City underwent a broad process of urban restructuring triggered by the crisis of local industry. Over the course of the decade, a series of systemic transformations – including the containerization of goods, the automation of production, and the relocation of industrial centers – led to the gradual abandonment of manufacturing districts in the southern part of Manhattan, particularly along the Hudson River waterfront. Once a vital hub of manufacturing and food commerce, the Meatpacking District increasingly took on the features of a derelict neighborhood, marked by a deep urban and social decay. It is no coincidence that, in those very years, New York was often described with the emblematic nickname *Fear City*,¹ a testament to the widespread crisis that profoundly shaped its public image. The collapse of industrial infrastructures and the consequent disuse of buildings, however, opened the area to "a range of uses and activities previously impossible" (Weinberg 2019: 11) – in the words of the American artist and scholar Jonathan Weinberg. The neighborhood became an unexpected gathering place for new forms of social life, particularly those tied to the artistic and homosexual communities. These groups found in the post-industrial landscape of the Meatpacking District both a refuge and a fertile ground for cultural, political, and aesthetic experimentations. Abandoned piers, decaying warehouses, illegal clubs and bars were re-signified as spaces of artistic production and as settings for non-normative sexual practices. These locations helped to define a truly alternative geography where desires, artistic practices, and identities unfolded outside the social and spatial canon of the city. Joan Jonas,² for instance, used a site near the piers as the stage for her performance *Delay Delay* (1972); the artists of the *Pier 18* project,³

curated by Willoughby Sharp, alternated their performances on the eponymous pier;⁴ Gordon Matta-Clark intervened on the architecture of Pier 52 with his iconic *Day's End* (1975); and street artist Tava (pseudonym of Gustav von Will) painted his monumental homoerotic murals on the pier walls. While all this was happening on the artistic front, the homosexual community – silent yet insurgent – was experiencing a peak of sexual liberation, practicing its "unnatural acts"⁵ amid art and urban ruins. The piers, above all, together with the adjacent parking lots, became:

a conglomeration of abandoned warehouses (...) predominantly frequented by persons (mostly gay males) seeking to satisfy their sexual appetites, and also a shelter for child and teenage runaways, drug addicts, the homeless, the mentally ill. It wasn't unusual to see groups of people having sex there in broad daylight. It also wasn't odd to come across someone being mugged, bludgeoned, stabbed, or much, much worse. (Wilcox 2004)

The libidinal vocation of these sites, intertwined with illicit practices and often perceived as threatening, remained intact until the second half of the 1980s. During the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, municipal authorities initiated a process of clearing and demolishing the piers. Despite the progressive disappearance of these spaces as they had flourished in the 1970s, the artistic, sexual, and communal experiences that unfolded there live on, embodied in a vast visual archive produced by artists who were not only witnesses but also active members of the vibrant queer community and participants in cruising practices – that is, anonymous sexual encounters in public or semi-public spaces.

The photographs taken by Alvin Baltrop (1948–2004), Leonard Fink (1930–1992), and Frank Hallam (1925–2012), together with the vast pornographic material produced in the same years, depict not only explicitly homoerotic scenes but also reveal a physical, emotional, and a performative landscape in which bodies and spaces are co-constructed in radically alternative ways. This article argues that these practices of non-normative sexuality on the piers were not just acts of pleasure, but forms of queer world-making – embodied, affective gestures that reshaped places through sensory, lived, and dynamic

interactions. Through these practices, the piers were transformed into what Foucault defined as “counter-sites” (Foucault 1984: 4) enabling the creation of an alternative queer world. The photographs from this period go beyond mere documentation, capturing the atmospheric and emotional intensity of these landscapes and rendering visible a geography that is at once material, sensorial, and political.

Cruising as Queer World-Making: Non-Representational Landscapes and Marginal Heterotopias

A picture [Fig. 1] taken by the American photographer and former Navy medic Alvin Baltrop – perhaps the most iconic among the hundreds he produced at the Hudson River piers between 1975 and 1986 – captures the interior of a dilapidated structure, reduced to a carcass of wood and steel. Collapsed beams, a torn-up floor, and crumbling walls compose a mechanical, post-industrial landscape whose elements evoke the gears of a derelict technology. Within this scene – almost merging with the shadows – the bodies of two men emerge, one kneeling before the other, caught in the act of a fellatio. Far from being a merely homoerotic image, Baltrop’s photograph encapsulates the ambiguity embodied by the practice of gay cruising, constantly suspended between visibility and invisibility, desire and risk, exposure and secrecy. While Baltrop images often do not explicitly depict erotic acts but rather solitary figures – half-naked or

clothed men wandering, lingering, or hiding among the urban ruins – this shot unmistakably highlights the significance of cruising. Historically stigmatized, criminalized, and relegated to the margins of society, cruising has been an essential mode through which queer subjectivities assert their desires, generate ephemeral communities, and construct alternative geographies. These practices are not merely about sexual gratification but are performative and subversive acts that reinscribe the urban landscape according to codes, temporalities, and intentions divergent from dominant norms.

In line with theories of the more-than-representational landscape (Lorimer 2005; Waterton 2019), in images documenting such practices, the landscape surrounding the act is no longer understood as a passive backdrop or romantic object of visual contemplation, but as a dynamic, affective field of interaction between bodies, matter, senses, and memories. The residual space of the piers – physically decaying and invisible to the city’s official narratives – appear as an embodied landscape, taking shape through the repetition of gestures, the circulation of bodies, and the intensity of sensory experiences. From a photographic documentation point of view, the very materiality of these places – corroded walls, collapsing structures, graffiti, odors, noises, and other visual elements – contributed to generating an environment rather than a mere representation. As suggested by the seamless continuity between the rubble and the two men’s bodies in Baltrop’s image, physical space becomes an extension of the body – a porous membrane through which queer subjectivity is formed and transformed.

Already in the 1970s, French philosopher Michel Foucault argued that every individual, and by extension every society, carves out moments and utopian sites within the spaces where it lives and works. These “counter-spaces” (Foucault 1967: 4), or heterotopias (ivi: 3), are places that society organizes at its margins. They overlap with other sites usually considered incompatible and are reserved, as Foucault notes, “for individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm” (ivi: 5). The French philosopher identified heterotopic qualities in institutions such as psychiatric clinics, nursing homes, and brothels; yet it is not difficult to recognize an affinity between this typology of spaces and those depicted



Fig. 1 | Alvin Baltrop, *The Piers (blowjob)*, n.d. (1975–1986) silver gelatin print, Courtesy Galerie Buchholz.

by Baltrop. The piers were undoubtedly “queer heterotopias” (Anderson 2015; 2019; Birnaire Ziff 2024; Jones 2009): contexts of radical alterity suspended between legality and criminality, eros and danger, invisibility and desire. They were liminal spaces where social, sexual, and spatial norms could be suspended, rewritten, or subverted. Their material decay and social marginality were not obstacles but conditions of possibility: in particular, the absence of institutional surveillance ensured unprecedented freedoms for the community, turning the piers into genuine counter-spaces in which to experiment with ways of living beyond normative control.

This radically experiential vision also connects to the concept of “queer world-making”, central to the thought of José Esteban Muñoz. In *Cruising Utopia* (2009), Muñoz argues that practices such as cruising contain “an anticipatory illumination of queer world, a sign of an actually existing queer reality, a kernel of political possibility within a stultifying heterosexual present” (Muñoz 2009: 49). In other words, just as for more-than-representational landscapes, queer landscapes are not merely aesthetic backdrops, as cruising acts are not merely erotic devices but occasions of utopian prefiguration: modes of existence that anticipate and reveal, in the present, a queer world already taking place, albeit ephemeral and marginal. Interpreting Muñoz’s thought, the performativity of cruising – with its implicit rituals, its spatial codes, its expanded temporality, and its attentiveness to bodily detail – constitutes a true practice of queer citizenship, or, as the philosopher Leo Bersani has argued, “a more authentic relational invention” (2002: 27): a form of existence that contests the heteronormative imposition of public space and opens up alternative symbolic and political relations.

To demonstrate this interpretation, both in *Cruising Utopia* and in his seminal essay *Ephemera as Evidence* (1996), Muñoz analyzes a series of images by artist Tony Just, who photographed public bathrooms located in well-known cruising sites (the so-called tearooms). After meticulously cleaning them, Just captured them in photographs that while visually austere, carry deep significance. According to Muñoz, these images go beyond their sterile appearance – they do not merely represent the physical remnants of anonymous encounters or Just’s own narrative presence. Instead, they embody an authen-

tic act of documentation, preserving both the haunted essence of these spaces and the spectral traces of the queer histories that unfolded within them. Muñoz underlines that it is an exemplary “queer act” (Muñoz 1996: 5), one that rendered a normally shadowed space legible, allowing for the rewriting of minoritarian histories (cf. *ivi*: 5–6). As with Just, one can argue that Alvin Baltrop’s photographs do more than document a marginal urban scene; they enact a process of valorization and world-making. Those bodies, those places, those shadows are not merely traces, they reveal the co-presence of sexuality, creativity, and resistance, delineating the concrete possibility of a queer existence lived through desire materiality and the politics of intimacy.

Witnesses: between Professionalism and Amateurism

Alvin Baltrop is only one of many authors who documented and narrated both the unfolding cultural and spatial appropriation of the Meatpacking District. Writers such as Andrew Holleran, Edmund White, and John Rechy, and photographers such as Leonard Fink and Frank Hallam, to name a few, gave shape to a queer memory of the piers, drawing from different yet deeply intertwined experiences and languages – capable of conveying the affective, erotic, and political complexity of these spaces and of the bodies that inhabited them. As suggested by the quotation used at the opening of this essay, Holleran’s novels and stories – such as *Nostalgia for the Mud* (ca. 1976–83) or *Dancer from the Dance* (1978) – evoke a melancholic and ironic awareness of the transient, decaying beauty of the piers. In texts such as *The Beautiful Room Is Empty* (1988) and *City Boy* (2008), Edmund White describes further both the initiatory and existential dimension of cruising, portraying the Meatpacking District and other gay meeting places as spaces of transition and transformation (heterotopias, indeed), where encounters with others become occasions for reflection on identity and marginality. In *Rushes* (1979), meanwhile, Rechy – also author of *City of Night* (1963) and *The Sexual Outlaw* (1977) – offers a more explicitly political and narrative perspective on the body inhabiting the city, on the performativity of desire, and on the nomadic dimension of sex in abandoned spaces. Delicate and raw, violent and realistic,

these narratives could serve as eloquent captions for the images taken in those same years by photographers like Baltrop, who documented life on the piers not merely as observers but often as active participants in that erotic and human landscape.

Leonard Fink, for instance, with his affectionate and militant gaze, immortalized scenes of queer everyday life – sunlight, concrete, and half-naked bodies – composing a visual archive that restored intimacy and dignity to subjects often erased from official memory. Known among friends and cruisers as “the unofficial Mayor of Christopher Street” (Weisberg 2019: 135), Fink was a New York lawyer and amateur photographer, a devoted chronicler of the many gay liberation marches that took place throughout the 1970s in the West Village (cf. *ivi*: 134). On weekends, he frequented the piers in search of casual sex, which he documented with his camera, often posing nude and presenting his own body as a participant within the scenes he captured.

A diptych gathering two of the most iconic and daring shots from this vast repertoire presents two self-portraits taken inside a room of Pier 46. The scene unfolds beside a window, in a space marked by decay – with debris scattered on the floor and peeling walls – where Fink portrays himself partially nude, engaged in a moment of intimacy with a partner. In the first image, he is kneeling, giving pleasure to his companion; in the second, he is bent forward, engaged in anal intercourse.

In another series of shots, Fink, wearing only a jockstrap, socks, and shoes, moves seductively through the interiors of the pier, establishing an almost intimate relationship with the space he traverses: in certain photographs, he stands in a doorway, showing front and back; in another, he mimics a cat-walk strut along a suspended plank; in yet another, he steps through a fissure in a graffiti-covered wall. Among the inscriptions, one stands out in bold capitals: “This Is Serious Too” [Fig. 2], perhaps reaffirming the seriousness of the world constructed in those derelict spaces or of the sexual practices characterizing it, which were usually stigmatized and demonized. More broadly, in these and other photographs, Fink quite literally stages himself, becoming part of the landscape, offering himself to the gaze as both subject and object, author and witness.

The fact that these photographs were intend-



Fig. 2 | Leonard Fink, *Untitled* (1975-1986), Courtesy LGBT Archive New York.

ed solely to enrich a private archive and were never publicly exhibited – except for a few erotic shots turned into postcards and circulated among close friends and acquaintances – shows that, unlike pure homoerotic imagery, the body here is not a spectacle of desire but an expression of a personal subjectivity that takes on political significance. As Dennis Alman emphasized in an article published in *The New York Native* – a well-known gay magazine of the 1980s – “The Personal Is Political”.⁶ Fink’s act of cruising also becomes a performative act, a gesture that speaks on behalf of a hidden community, resisting through alliances with other bodies (Butler 1993).

A similar experience is documented in the hundreds of images captured by another amateur photographer, Frank Hallam, who during the same years was creating a visual autobiography of communal life on the piers and in other New York contexts – ranging from the many gay bars of the West Village to pride events and the naturist beach at Riis Park. Almost never developed and intended to remain in the form of slides, his photographs record the posture of an attentive reporter, whose gaze moves discreetly and silently among the nude bodies of the men who inhabit and animate the piers: from cruisers engaged in sexual acts to the so-called “sunners”,⁷ sunbathing among the rotting boards of the industrial waterfront buildings and captured in no less erotic poses.

As evidenced by the low-angle perspective – often at ground level or at the photographer’s torso – many images appear marked by an apparently casual framing, not fully controlled, almost suggesting a

furtive or discreet snapshot. At other moments, however, the camera's gaze appears to invite an explicit complicity: the subjects do not shy away, but rather seem to offer themselves to the lens, implying the existence of a trusting relationship between photographer and subject.

While Hallam does not openly declare his own involvement in this universe of desires, it becomes evident that in his photographs the piers and other gay gathering spaces were not merely sites of non-normative sexuality, but true "sanctuaries of friendship and community" (Weisberg 2019: 128) [Fig. 3]. The reference to the piers as "sanctuaries" echoes Edmund White's characterization of them as "ruined cathedrals" (White 1984: 135; White 2025: 158) in which appear "isolated men at prayer" (White 1984: 137). While the sacred vocabulary draws an ironic and provocative parallel between cruisers and worshippers – each gathering in ritual gestures and genuflecting before different icons – the piers emerge as profane temples of flesh and community, spaces where a visceral sense of belonging to an underground, vulnerable, and radically human urban landscape is reaffirmed.

Cruising as a Performance of Spatial Construction

From the examples presented so far, photography has proven to be one of the most valuable tools for documenting, transmitting, and preserving the experiences of the gay community and its now-disappeared spaces. Alongside this vast – and largely unknown – visual production, moving images also



Fig. 3 | Frank Hallam, *Untitled* (1975–1986), Courtesy LGBT Archive New York.

assume fundamental documentary significance, and take on a unique "testimonial force" capable of capturing both the real and the ephemeral (Kracauer 1960). If we consider the pier landscape, the camera's gaze – whether amateur or professional – vividly captures the spatiality and temporality of cruising practices, allowing one to grasp the performative aspects, cultural codes, and symbolic structures of gay sexuality that helped shape these places.

When analyzing today the footage taken between the 1970s and 1980s by Nelson Sullivan⁸ (1948–1989) – a self-taught filmmaker who documented the everyday and political life of New York's queer scene with a diaristic and subjective approach – it appears clearly that he gives us access to a performative archive in which individual desires and collective practices intertwine, reflecting norms, fears, aspirations, and shared languages. Observing today the pornographic films produced in the 1970s too, enables us to consider sexuality as a cultural and political device, capable of articulating identities, affiliations, and alternative spaces to those of dominant normativity. More than fifty years later, these works, far from being mere objects of erotic consumption, constitute a genuine visual archive, carrying historical memory and cultural knowledge. Following Laura Kipnis's reflection, according to which pornography represents a "space in the social imagination" (Escoffier 2021: 47), such films should be read as instruments of situated knowledge. Often created with an aesthetic close to *cinéma vérité*, halfway between fiction and documentary, these productions not only stage explicit sexuality but also make it a vehicle for the expression and affirmation of alternative sexual subjectivities, showing the spaces that the community has colonized.

Numerous filmmakers in the 1970s chose the Hudson River piers as preferred settings for their pornographic films, transforming them into true libidinal landscapes. An emblematic case is *Piers Group* (1979) by the American director Arch Brown (1955–2012), which tells the story of an engineer sent to inspect the piers in anticipation of their demolition and who unwittingly witnesses a day of sexual encounters involving his neighbor. Set at Pier 52, the film also becomes a valuable document for art history, as it represents one of the few audiovisual records of Gordon Matta-Clark's famous *Day's End* (1975) (Weinberg



Fig. 4 | Jacques Scandelari, *New York City Inferno* (1978), color, 92 min, video still.

2019: 5; Escoffier 2021: 50).⁹

Equally significant is *New York City Inferno*¹⁰ (1978) by Jacques Scandelari (alias Marvin Merkins), a French queer pornographic work distinguished by its hybridization of documentary, narrative, and explicit pornography [Fig. 4]. Following the journey of the young Jérôme in search of his lover Paul in late-1970s New York, the film constitutes a veritable urban atlas of desire, in which the city is mapped through queer spaces – from sex clubs to the piers, from leather bars to public baths – revealing an erotic and political counter-geography. The montage of fictional scenes, voice-over letters, documentary inserts, and musical moments – such as the performance of drag king and poet Camille O’Grady – gives the film a dual value: on the one hand a historical and cultural document of the underground gay community; on the other, that of a refined cinematic construction reflecting on the connections between desire, urban space, and the archiving of minority cultures.

The sequence set at the piers, for example, emerges as a highly significant moment where pornography, performance, and ritual overlap, perfectly conveying how cruising practices contribute to the construction of a queer landscape. Beyond what emerges in Baltrop’s, Hallam’s, or Fink’s photographs, the cinematic language here makes visible the interaction between bodies and spaces, highlighting the performative value of sexuality as a practice of appropriation and re-inscription of urban territory. Jérôme’s erratic walk – through the piers and other

sites of public sexuality – maps an alternative world where desire moves the body and simultaneously produces forms of subjectivity and new spatial configurations (cf. Turner 2003: 15).

Timeless Utopias

The photographic and filmographic examples cited here – only a few among many available – have shown how New York’s urban landscape in the 1970s was at once an attractor and a product of the subordinate cultures that inhabited it in a subterranean and rebellious way. In the abandoned piers along the Hudson, urban decay opened gaps in the official geography, and the queer community invented alternative landscapes: spaces suspended between eros and ruin, secrecy and celebration, risk and intimacy. Fifty years later, Baltrop’s, Fink’s, and Hallam’s photographs, together with the pornography of that time, reveal that cruising practices were not mere sexual acts but performative gestures of spatial writing, capable of transforming industrial ruins into heterotopias pulsating with life.

With the emergence of the health crisis linked to the spread of HIV/AIDS, however, this revolutionary horizon was challenged, and the realization of alternative worlds seemed once again to be utopian. Within the gay community, fear of contagion fueled a narrative of suspicion toward casual sex. In March 1982, for instance, an article in the gay magazine *New York Native* asked whether promiscuity was dead – “Is Promiscuity Dead?” – alluding to cruising activities as the fruit of “sexual addiction” and arguing that, although the sexual liberation process had allowed people to satisfy their sexual needs, “being gay is more than exercising our legitimate freedom to be sexual creatures”.¹¹ Other articles from the same year bore titles such as “Promiscuity Is Bad for Your Health”¹² and “We Know Who We Are, Two Gay Men Declare War on Promiscuity”,¹³ contributing to the spread of a negative narrative about sexual activities previously practiced within the community and demonizing casual sex.

On a different front, the piers and other sites of this new queer geography were closed and opposed by local governance, which considered them dangerous spaces for disease transmission. Also in 1982, while other meeting places for homosexuals – such

as saunas and private clubs – were seized or closed, the *New York Native* reported the demolition of the piers,¹⁴ already under the control of security officers and guard dogs.¹⁵

Indeed, even though governance had acknowledged that “New York’s gay community would like to see the piers remain as cruising spots despite the seedy and hazardous nature of the area”,¹⁶ official demolitions began within a few years, leading to the definitive disappearance of these heterotopic spaces. Once again, the images by Baltrop and other photographers document this process of erasure, further attesting to the intense political and social bond the queer community had woven with these landscapes.

Yet there is more. This epilogue also reveals a significant aspect for the history of sexuality within the gay community, still relevant today. Despite the deep connection the community had forged with the piers, gay cruising practices did not cease with the disappearance of urban ruins or the onset of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. These performative, libidinal practices merely migrated to other locations and contexts, constructing new landscapes in which queer subjects could recognize themselves.

A clear demonstration of the community’s resilience can be found in numerous articles in the *New York Native*, which offered readers guidance on continuing to engage in “recreational sex”¹⁷ during the epidemic and proudly defended promiscuity.¹⁸ This resilience is also confirmed by activist campaigns led by figures such as curator and art critic Douglas Crimp, who in 1987 published an article titled *How to Have Promiscuity in an Epidemic* and, as a founding member, promoted the *Sex Panic!*¹⁹ campaign, supporting the community without demonizing its non-conforming sexual practices even at the height of the health crisis.

If it is therefore true – and here demonstrated – that the visual material produced in 1970s New York documents a world that, though vanished, continues to cast its oblique light on the present, it is equally clear that the creation of new points of attraction recognized within the community is always possible. In different ways – scaled and contextually adapted across various geographies of reference – any place can become, again and again, a landscape of resistance and imagination.

Note

¹ See <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/may/18/welcome-to-fear-city-the-inside-story-of-new-yorks-civil-war-40-years-on> (last accessed July 24, 2025).

² The original *Delay Delay* performances took place in outdoor settings, such as the banks of the Hudson River in New York, and it was then translated into a 16mm film titled *Songdelay*. In these performances, the audience observed from a distance, creating a sense of detachment and altering the perception of the actions. Jonas's interest in how distance affects perception is evident in these early works, where spectators stood far from the performers, emphasizing the disconnection between action and observation.

³ *Pier 18* is a collective intervention from 1971 in which 27 artists temporarily transformed an abandoned pier in New York into a creative space. Documented by photographers Shunk and Kender, the project explores the ephemeral and performative potential of art in the urban environment. The project was presented at MoMA in July 1971. <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3524> (last accessed July 25, 2025).

⁴ The list of artists includes: Vito Acconci, David Askevold, John Baldessari, Robert Barry, Bill Beckley, Mel Bochner, Daniel Buren, Jan Dibbets, Terry Fox, Dan Graham, Douglas Huebler, Lee Jaffe, Richards Jarden, Gordon Matta-Clark, Mario Merz, Robert Morris, Dennis Oppenheim, Allen Ruppersberg, Italo Scanga, Richard Serra, Michael Snow, Keith Sonnier, Wolfgang Stoechle, John Van Saun, George Trakas, William Wegman, and Lawrence Weiner.

⁵ It is the subtitle of the issue n. 26 of the gay magazine *Straight to Hell*, which recites: *Straight to Hell. The Manhattan Review of Unnatural Acts*, 1975.

⁶ "The Personal Is Political" (1982), in *New York Native*, 40, June 21-July 4, p. 19.

⁷ The inscription appears to be written in pen on the cardboard backing of the many slides cataloged at The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center in New York, where the author conducted research in June 2025, focusing on the collection dedicated to the artist Frank Hallam.

⁸ The author had the opportunity to examine the material produced by Sullivan in the archives where it is preserved, namely the NYU Special Collections, in June 2025. https://findingaids.library.nyu.edu/fales/mss_357/ (last accessed: August 8, 2025).

⁹ In 2010, curator and art critic Douglas Crimp dedicated an event to the relationship between Arch Brown's film and the work of Gordon Matta-Clark at the Lighthouse space in Brooklyn, NYC. <https://www.lightindustry.org/piers> (last accessed: August 20, 2025).

¹⁰ The full film can be viewed at the following link: <https://archive.org/details/new-york-city-inferno-1978-vhsrip-xvi-d-z-pz-cg-mp-4-yandex-video> (last accessed: August 7, 2025).

¹¹ "Is Promiscuity Dead? Suggestions for Dealing with Sexual Addiction" (1982), in *New York Native*, 33, March 15-28, p.18.

¹² "Promiscuity Is Bad for Your Health. AIDS and the Question of an Infectious Agent" (1982), in *New York Native*, 46, September 13-26, 1982

¹³ M. Callen, R. Berkowitz, R. Dworkin (1982), "We know Who We Are,

Two Gay Men Declare War in Promiscuity", in *New York Native*, 50, November 8-21, pp.23-25.

¹⁴ "Sex Pier Due for Demolition" (1982), in *New York Native*, 28, January 4-17, p. 7

¹⁵ "Pier Demolition Postponed" (1982), in *New York Native*, 39, June 7-20, p. 10.

¹⁶ "Pier Demolition Postponed" (1982), in *New York Native*, 39, June 7-20, p. 10.

¹⁷ "How to Have Sex. Risks and Responsibilities of Recreational Sex. Healthful Guidelines for Gay Men" (1982), in *New York Native*, 36, April 26-May 9, p. 11.

¹⁸ "In Defense of Promiscuity. Hard Questions About Real Life" (1982), in *New York Native*, 52, 6-9 Decembre, p. 27.

¹⁹ The documents related to the *Sex Panic!* campaign are available in the collection dedicated to Douglas Crimp at the NYU Special Collections and Archives, which the author personally consulted in June 2025. https://findingaids.library.nyu.edu/fales/mss_600/all/ (last accessed: August 20, 2025).

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