

FEMINIST GIANT

Global Roundup: Armenia Trans Activist, Feminists in Lebanon Parliament, Singapore Gay Rights Rally, Nepal Pride Parade, Virtual LGBTQ+ Museum

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LGBQ+ VR MUSEUM CREATOR ANTONIA FORSTER IN A VR HEADSET AND PATRICIA CRONIN'S SCULPTURE MEMORIAL TO A MARRIAGE IN . PHOTO: COURTESY OF FRASER AND PR via VICE

Devised by Antonia Forster – activist, speaker, self-taught coder – the LGBTQ+ VR Museum offers a cultural exhibition based on contributions across the queer community, from the southwest of England to Denmark and Ghana. Each exhibit is made up of a 3D scan of a particular object and an accompanying voice message telling the story of its significance.

Foster created the virtual LGBTQ+ museum because she realized something like this has never been done before. There was no dedicated LGBTQ+ museum in the UK at the time (Queer Britain has since opened its doors as a physical museum, where Forster's project will be making an appearance in July). Foster's negative experience coming out as bisexual and polyamorous to her family made this project intensely personal for her. Thomas Terkildsen was one of a wave of contributors who responded to a call-out on social media, and it quickly became apparent that his background in VR development opened up possibilities for more in-depth collaboration on the project.

I remember going on school trips to museums where I saw paintings of men and women being in love. I never saw any artworks telling stories of men loving men. I'm sure it would have helped me find myself if that sort of representation existed. And now it does. - Thomas Terkildsen

New York-based artist Patricia Cronin contributed a virtual rendition of the marble statue she created in 2002; titled Memorial to a Marriage, it depicts Cronin and her partner Deborah locked in an embrace to mark their love after death, at a time when they couldn't marry. It remains the world's first and only marriage equality monument.

I rarely see my reflection in white male heterosexual patriarchal culture. When I do see it, lesbians are usually the butt of a joke in a movie trailer or in pornography designed by and for straight men. So, in addition to not seeing women honoured in public monuments and same-sex marriage being illegal in the US at the beginning of the 21st century, I decided to imagine a world where misogyny and homophobia didn't exist. - Patricia Cronin

The museum has become an international success. It won the New Voices Award at Tribeca Festival in New York, where the experience has been augmented by a biometric element – the user wears a device with electrodes that can measure heart rate and skin conductivity, which translates into emotional arousal and engagement with the content. In October, Forster and her team will be working with the Danish consulate in New York to stage a New York version of the museum.