SWEAT (Sexworkers Education and Advocacy Taskforce) and Women's and Gender Studies, UWC presents

ALIKENESS EMBGDIED: Representations of Sex



Sexwork is still criminalised in South Africa in spite of a constitution that supports gender justice and besides clear evidence that such regulatory and punitive practices are linked to stigma and violence against those who practice sex work as a profession. Discrimination and violence against sex work is powerfully entangled with intersecting inequalities of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, citizenship, and more. Activist organisations like SWEAT and Sisonke have been engaged in a long battle against the criminalization of sexwork and the social discrimination and unhalting violence against sexworkers in South African society and further afield, that reflects gender and sexual injustices and their enmeshment with other inequalities and violences. Sexworker activists have frequently drawn on art and performance to produce critical pedagogies and knowledges that disrupt normative assumptions about sexwork as well as dominant ideas about gender and sexuality.

Alikeness Embodied is one such exhibition of art work. The exhibition includes various mediums that have involved sex workers in its creation either as subjects or creators. The works show various representations of sex workers, often challenging negative and damaging stereotypes and articulating sex workers' desires and agency, including the clear call for decriminalisation. The works included in the exhibition are photographs, videos, posters, stickers, wheat-pastes and zines. Many of the projects that are included, involved SWEAT as a partner. This collection of work was curated by SWEAT for the launch of the SA Sex Worker Theatre project, but the artworks are taken from a variety of projects including:

- "I am what I am" was put together by the "Sex Workers Feminist Collective", shown at the Slave Lodge in Cape Town in 2018.
- "TLDR" by Candice Breitz, exhibited at multiple international art fairs and biennales in 2017 and 2018.
- "Sex worker mothers" produced by Mothers for the Future and illustrated by Gary Frier, pasted up around Cape Town in 2018.
- "The Sex Worker Opera", photographs and texts that documents the work of the Sex Worker Opera from the UK over the past few years.
- And a collection of posters, stickers and zines by MoVe a project that worked with migrant sex workers around South Africa.

UWC's Women's and Gender Studies, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Project for New Imaginaries of Gender and Sexual Justice will be co-hosting the exhibition with SWEAT at the UWC Library Atrium. The New Imaginaries Project is a 5-year project that aims to generate critical research and to develop new forms of scholarship and pedagogy that contribute to challenging hegemonic and oppressive forms of gender and sexual injustice. A key goal of the project is to collaborate across activist, artistic and scholarly projects towards challenging both hegemonic forms of knowledge making and to contribut to the larger struggle against ongoing intersectional gender injustices and violences. The project hopes to co-create, contribute towards, support and bolster a larger decolonial feminist and queer archive, both virtual and material, towards new imaginaries of social justice, freedom and flourishing.

Please do join us for the opening:

Thursday 10 October 2019 from 1.00 – 2.30 pm, Library Auditorium Foyer, UWC



