Cellph Reflection:
Learnings from audience engagement, education, and cellphilms

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Abstract

This major portfolio is a culmination of a research project which shared participatory visual work with diverse audiences to assess the promise and impacts of participatory visual methodologies. The research project that was developed became an offshoot from the Celling Sex study, which brought together 15 cis, queer, and racially diverse young women to share their experiences trading sex in Toronto. They shared their experiences and strategies to stay safer through cellphilmming (brief videos made on a cellphone). Key themes from participants' cellphilms were brought together in an edited film to convey the project's findings. Screening events were then organized with eight target audiences which the participants identified— ranging from community organizations, youth groups, health providers, and the general public. My research was guided by the following question: How do cellphilms and participatory visual methodologies more broadly, open up spaces for dialogue and (re)education as part of their aim in addressing social change?

Here, I tie together three journal articles that document the research process, beginning with, *"Staying Safe: How young women who trade sex in Toronto navigate risk and harm reduction"*. This article is a precursor to the audience engagement research and explores the agentic harm reduction strategies which the young women involved in Celling Sex implement. This paper, in a sense, is a documentation of one of the primary findings which are taken up in the Celling Sex composite film. *"Screening Stories: Methodological considerations for critical audience engagement"* is a paper exploring the considerations, tensions, and ethical dilemmas that come with critical audience engagement work. Very little is documented about how to assess audience response to the products of participatory visual methodologies (PVM), this paper fills that gap and serves as a resource for other PVM researchers to consider. *"Screen(ing) Share: Cellphilms, Audience and Social Change",* documents the pedagogical promise that can result from engaging in audience work and reception. My portfolio is rounded out with two pieces of work that presents the findings from the project and process in more accessible ways. The first is a short booklet which presents the thematic findings from the screenings to share with the communities and organizations which were involved in the research. The second is a cellphilm which I made after the research was said and done, to reflect on what I learned through the process of setting up and facilitating screenings.

Foreword

I began this program intending to gain a deeper appreciation for what it means to build intercultural relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, as a non-Indigenous person, to create meaningful change. It was this starting point that charted a path that opened up to unexpected landing places. While my final research project was not centered in Indigenous and settler relations in an obvious way, the understandings which I have garnered as a result of this question were the invaluable seeds that I carried throughout the research. Excavating the histories of who I am and who I know myself to be, what knowledge I have and what knowledge I privilege, is an ongoing process which directly impacts my ability to show up in relationship. I was introduced to teachers whose lessons accompanied me as the research unfolded. One such teacher was Shaun Wilson and his book, *Research is Ceremony,* where he writes: "if research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right." (135)[i] These words acted as both forewarning and counsel, which took on new life and meanings when I transitioned into the practice of research.

Two out of my three areas of concentration involve conducting academic research ethically and understanding the role of arts and storytelling in fostering social change. Through the screenings and critical audience engagement, I had the opportunity to explore these questions beyond the theory of "how", and into the realm of action.

Being invited into the Celling Sex project two years into its inception, I needed to draw upon my tools of reflection, integrity, and provide my time to develop relationships with the team. This was a key objective that I set out. Yet funnily enough, I wasn't actively thinking about the "how" to make relationships across my role of researcher with the Celling Sex participants while doing research together. Instead, I showed up with: patience, dedication, a listening and learning ear, and the spirit of unlearning. It was a joy to work alongside the women of Celling Sex and I am happy to have built a rapport with them. We were able to move through divergent views and sticky conversations when they arose, and I am appreciative for their openness and willingness to engage with honesty, vulnerability, and respect. Knowing the histories and legacies of unethical research— an extractive process that privileges limited knowledge and experience and can leave long-lasting community trauma— is key. That way, I understand what I inherit and represent to act in mindful ways in an attempt to diverge from that path. Building relationships and carrying out ethical research is not a box that you check off— it is an ongoing process, which can be murky at times.

When it came time to carry out my research project, I drew upon these same understandings of relationship building to organize and facilitate the screenings. The screenings became a collective space of exploring preconceived ideas, our connection to the work, and a strategizing space of how to integrate the messages of the film into our respective every day. Holding space with a diversity of audiences—

from youth to service providers, and other professionals— to engage with participatory generated media directly responded to my hypothesis of integrating arts and storytelling to create bridges across experience. The Celling Sex film, through its composition and centering participants' voices, allowed audience members the opportunity to reflect on their own lives, values, and beliefs. The screenings demonstrated that it is possible to open up a reflective space where people can ask questions and connect across differences, real and perceived. The question then becomes, how to make these spaces sustainable.

Knowing the legacy of "helicopter" research, and what I represent as a master's student, I wanted to produce something which drew together what we found across all eight screening events for our partners in research. The book that I created was done in the spirit of returning back. In setting up the screenings with different community organizations, I was touched by the willingness and patience to work with me, and the Celling Sex project. Creating the booklet was also an opportunity for me to fulfill my goal of translating academic concepts into a format that is accessible to wider audiences. When I think on a personal level about the people in my life who have supported me in this process, I wanted them to be able to get an insight into the work that I have been a part of. Extending that thinking, it's not only important to create an educational resource for the people in my life, but it's important for anyone who comes across it to create a document that is easy to read and appreciate.

A thread that has run through every class, every assignment, and all my learning is that of process and self-reflection. My cellphilm was another place for me to practice reflexivity: on the research process and what personal understanding I was able to reach through that process. While the final product is important, how the process unfolds, and how we get to the destination also matters. Making a cellphilm was a way for me to be accountable: to what I value, as a researcher, and to my teammates. It felt important to express in a non-academic medium, what I came to understand about myself as a person interested in relationship building and social change.

Ethical research is a process, just like re-learning and making change. All of these processes ask us to be in a deep relationship— with ourselves, and with others. It is how we continue to show up which makes the difference.

"With the *anam cara* you could share your inner-most self, your mind and your heart. This friendship was an act of recognition and belonging. When you had an *anam cara*, your friendship cut across all convention, morality, and category. You were joined in an ancient and eternal way with the "friend of your soul." The Celtic understanding did not set limitations of space or time on the soul. There is no cage for the soul. The soul is a divine light that flows into you and into your Other. This art of belonging awakened and fostered a deep and special companionship."

John O'Donohue, *Anam Cara* [ii]

For Laura— you are with me every step of the way

Acknowledgements

While my name is attached to this portfolio, it could *not* have been possible without the support, encouragement, and guidance that I have been shown. From my first day in the faculty, sitting on blankets in the quad, Lisa Myers, you provided me a sense of belonging and the relief to be myself. I was nervous and unsure to begin this journey, but after that day, I knew I was in the right place. You provided a space for me to feel at ease and cultivate, to expand what I thought was possible. It has been a privilege to be an advisee, a student, and a friend of yours. Thank you for all that you do.

The gratitude that I have for you, Sarah Flicker goes beyond words. You provided a multitude of opportunities for me to practice and develop my thinking, writing, and be in relationship. Your encouragement, kindness, vibrancy, mentorship, and wholehearted zeal that you extended to me (but not only to myself) has been such a gift. To echo my remarks above, it has been a privilege to have worked and learned alongside you. I hope that this is only a beginning for us.

I am humbled by the trust and welcome I received from the Celling Sex team: Katie, Mesha, Lelo, Friesa, Crystal, Daisy, Sophia, Halimo, Erica, Ciann, and the rest of Celling Sex who I didn't get the chance to meet. You inspire me, and I am grateful for you.

To my teachers and classmates, you brought life into course requirements and expectations. I am grateful to have shared time, space, laughter, tears, and agitation with you all.

I thank my close friends, family, and chosen family. This research, this degree, did not happen in a vacuum and you helped fill my cup. I graciously thank the unknown people who have helped me (whether I knew it or not) along the way.

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Staying Safe: How young women who trade sex in Toronto navigate risk and harm reduction

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Background: Trading sex is a viable economic strategy available to young women that can put them at risk for a variety of poor health and social outcomes. Celling Sex is a community-based participatory research project that used a strengths-based approach to explore (a) the agentic harm reduction practices employed by young women who trade, and (b) learn about their experience accessing health and social services. **Methods:** Fifteen racially diverse young women who trade sex participated in interviews about: their trading practices, how they stay safe, and their advice for other youth, and people who work with youth. Each participant also individually made a brief digital video (cellphilm) to tell their story. Participants were invited to a private screening where cellphilms were screened and common themes identified. Harm reduction and stigma emerged as chief concerns. The data were subsequently coded and analyzed using NVIVO qualitative data management software according to participant-generated themes. As a form of member checking, youth advisory committee members vetted preliminary drafts of this paper. **Results:** Participants' identified a several trading risks including: physical risks (unwanted pregnancy, STIs, and violence), social risks (racism and fetishization), and mental health risks. To mitigate these risks, participants detailed their harm reduction strategies which the included use of technology, screening measures, boundary setting, and actively incorporating sexual health protections. **Conclusions:** Young women who trade sex are keenly aware of the risks inherent in transactional relationships and are proactively negotiating and navigating harm reduction strategies in the context of deep systemic barriers. Further intervention may be necessary for them to actualize their strategies and access important health and social supports.

Keywords: Transactional sex, harm reduction, stigma, youth health, community-based research, trading

Introduction

Recent qualitative work by Wilson and Flicker (2015) found that despite being highly stigmatized, transactional sex is likely widely practiced amongst young people in Toronto, Canada. Participants described relationships with transactional elements that transpired both in the context of committed, loving relationships and others (often with older men) that were motivated largely by material concerns. According to Seeking Arrangement (2020), there are nearly one million female sugar babies in Canada engaged in finding "mutually beneficial" relationships through their platform. Transactional sex may offer a range of benefits to young women, including facilitating access to necessities or luxury goods

while exerting some control over the rates, timing, and conditions of exchange. Despite the ubiquity of the practice, there is a dearth of literature that explores transactional sexual relationships in Canada across these varied formations.

The phenomenon of transactional sex has been most widely studied in the Sub-Saharan African context. This literature highlights how the transactional elements of sex for material gain is often present but goes unrecognized, in normative dating relationships (Shefer et al., 2012). Nevertheless, transactions have been flagged as a risk factor for both HIV infection and unintended pregnancy (Choudhry et al., 2015; Chatterji et al., 2005; Ranganathan et al., 2017; Stoebenau et al, 2011, 2016; Dunkle et al., 2004), as well as poor mental health outcomes and gender-based violence (Kumar et al., 2001; Middlekoop et al., 2006).

North American literature has largely framed these transactions in the context of sex work. It has explored in great depth the connections between stigma and poor health (Benoit, 2015; Lazarus et al., 2012; Sanders & Campbell, 2007; Valdiserri, 2002; Koken, 2012) Stigma, and the fear of being labelled as undesirable, presents itself differentially according to gender, race, class, sexuality, and culture (Lazarus et al., 2012). It can also act as a deterrent to seeking support. Consequently, unique public health concerns emerge. This paper picks up on Wilson and Flicker's (2015) findings to explore the risks associated with sexual trades and the agentic harm reduction practices young women employ to mitigate these risks.

Harm Reduction, Sex Work, & Transactional Sex

Harm reduction, as a concept and set of principles, emerged in response to HIV concerns amongst injection drug users. Rather than promote unrealistic abstinence approaches that have largely failed to reduce morbidities and mortalities associated with injection drug use, a harm reduction approach focuses on reducing the potential risks (Marlatt, 1996). Interventions to curb needle sharing (e.g. needle exchanges, safer consumption sites) have proven far more effective than abstinence promotion (Marlatt & Witkiewitz, 2010; Wilson et al., 2015). Similar approaches have been adopted in sexual health. For instance, evidence suggests that comprehensive sexuality education works better than abstinence-based approaches to improve sexual health outcomes (Kirby, 2008). The concept has also been applied to sex work (Sanders, 2004; Shannon et al., 2007).

There is a vast literature that describes the risks which female sex workers in North America navigate (see for example: Betzler, 2014; Benoit, 2016; Cusick, 2005; Krüsi et al., 2012; Pyett & Warr, 1997; Rekart, 2006; Sanders, 2004; Shannon et al., 2008; Handlovsky et al., 2011). However, the voices of sex workers detailing their responses to these challenges are understudied. As a result, the positive elements and agency of sex workers are often ignored, perpetuating what Tuck (2009) calls, "damage-centered research" (p 409). There are some important exceptions to this trend. Some of the tactics chronicled in research that has engaged sex workers voices include: developing community-generated materials (e.g. maps, bad date books), separating work and personal lives, and integrating safer sex behaviours (Reckart, 2006; Sanders & Campbell, 2007; Sanders et al., 2017; Roche, et al., 2005; Shannon et al., 2009).

Notably, most young women who participated in our project felt that the term "sex work" did not encompass the nature of their relationships. While some saw it as a 'job,' others did not. Some used the term client, others did not. Instead, transactional sex was defined by participants as "getting a range of stuff (money, food, gifts) in exchange for virtual or in-person interactions." It can include having sex with someone, but it can also be the idea of sex which is traded. Participants included a mixture of young women who were intentionally and actively trading and others who sometimes awkwardly found themselves in transactional relationships. Some pointed out that all relationships are somewhat transactional (and operate on a continuum). Participants used a range of vocabulary to describe their relationships, including sex work, sugaring, selling nudes, having a sugar daddy, finessing, being in a "strange" or "hypergamous" relationship, or simply going "after people who can support me." There was both diversity and fluidity in the trading experience. Nevertheless, participants all responded to a poster inviting those who "trade sex" to participate.

Building on the approach to harm reduction practices in the lives of adult sex workers in North America, the Celling Sex project welcomed young women who trade to name and describe their practices and experiences on their own terms. We asked young women in Canada's largest metropolitan area to share their stories in the form of interviews and short films, and dialogue with others who shared similar experiences. Our goal is to shed light on this ubiquitous dynamic that largely goes unacknowledged by mainstream models.

Methods

The Celling Sex project began in 2016 as a community-based participatory research partnership between York University, Laurier University, Black Creek Community Health Centre, and Planned Parenthood Toronto that underwent institutional ethical review. To recruit participants, posters were put up in youth- and health-serving organizations, and universities and colleges across the city of Toronto. Digital posters were shared on social media and via notices sent to a variety of listservs. Snowball sampling techniques were also employed.

In total, fifteen female-identified or gender non-conforming youth participated in this study. (Using preferred gendered pronouns, we refer to participants as either she or they throughout). Participants ranged in age from 19 to 25. Some had traded for years; others were newer to this experience. Participants were diverse in terms of backgrounds: seven identified as Black or mixed, two as Asian, one as South Asian, one as Columbian, and another as Pakistani. Two identified themselves as White, and one person as 'Non-white.' All involved, regardless of their sexual orientation, identified their clients/dates/transactional partners as male. Their trades were mostly set up online (e.g. Seeking Arrangements or Backpage), or via apps (e.g., Plenty of Fish or Name Your Price). Some had experience working in strip clubs or at escorting agencies; some moved between freelance and agency work. Others were in less formal arrangements. At least one participant found herself in a transactional relationship somewhat by accident. Here, we use the umbrella term "trading" to encompass these varied dynamics.

Participants were screened and then took part in confidential one-on-one, semi-structured recorded interviews. During each interview, participants were asked "how do you stay safe?" and "what do you want other people to know about trading?" Immediately following their interview, they were supported to make an individual cellphilm to share their key messages. Cellphilming is a participatory visual method whereby participants make videos with a cellphone in response to a research prompt. The method offers participants greater control over how they are represented (MacEntee et al, 2016). An analysis of the cellphilms is described elsewhere (MacEntee, 2019). Interviews were audio-recorded, and summary notes were compiled that documented their overall narratives; key quotes were transcribed verbatim.

Participants were invited to participate in a screening and participatory analysis meeting. Ten participants (66%) attended this meeting. With permission, we screened the cellphilms and identified common themes using the DEPICT method (Flicker & Nixon, 2014). This included using a worksheet and sticky notes to track ideas and responses to the videos. The sticky notes were collectively organized into key themes. Interviews were subsequently coded by themes using NVIVO. To member check,

preliminary drafts of this paper were circulated for participant feedback. To preserve anonymity, we use the names that the participants chose; some are pseudonyms. Drawing on Roche's (2005) idea that stories told sex workers are "some of the small ways in which women exhibit power and choice" (164), we centre participant voices and experiences.

Results

In order to stay physically, mentally, and emotionally safer while trading, participants employed a range of measures at each stage of their trading processes: from pre-screening potential dates to ending a relationship. A cross-cutting theme that emerged was "boundary setting." While there was variation amongst participants in terms of the level of risk they were willing to hazard, they each had their own "lines" that they were unwilling to "cross." Herein we describe the risks they identified and the strategies that they adopted to mitigate these risks (see Table 1) and stay in their personal comfort zones.

Risks	Harm Reduction Strategies
Physical risk: Pregnancies and STI's	• Using barrier and hormonal contraceptives • Discussing STI's and testing with sexual partners • Setting personal boundaries • Trading the idea of sex
Physical risk: Violence & the "Bad Date"	• Meeting in public places • Using mobile technology • Screening dates and trusting your gut
Social risks: Racism and Fetishization	• Knowing your own boundaries • Screening sexual partners
Mental health risks: Stigma and Discrimination	• Separating trading from their personal lives • Carefully managing disclosures • Seeking non-judgemental services • Finding support networks

Table 1: Trading Risks and Associated Harm Reduction Strategies

a) Physical Risks of Trading: Pregnancies and STIs

Given the physical risk of sexually transmitted infections (STI) and unintended pregnancies associated with unprotected sex, most participants described using both barrier (e.g. condoms) and hormonal (e.g., IUD, pills) contraceptives, often in combination. They talked about the importance of using condoms for penetrative and oral sex. April purposely did not share that they had an IUD because they did not want "to invite condomless sex." Some cycle monitored (e.g. Daisy used an app to keep track of her fertility as a backup to her other barrier methods). While there was a general consensus about the importance of protection, not everyone took the same precautionary measures. For instance, only two participants used condoms for both penetrative and oral sex. Most did not use condoms for oral sex.

Reducing the risk of STIs included strategically managing careful and frequent testing protocols. Most participants got tested regularly themselves and proactively talked with their sugar daddies or other sexual partners about being tested. To ensure that their potential sexual partners are STI-free, Daisy and April would either suggest getting tested together or ask their dates to provide the test results as documentation. Participants recommended that 'the testing conversation' be had in the context of negotiating various other health and safety boundaries, such as identifying what sexual acts (if any) they are comfortable doing, and the terms of the relationship. When the time comes to negotiate sexual acts, Kay shared: "you have to be very upfront. And it's not all about you— you need to see what this person wants 'cause you don't want to put yourself in a situation where you're meeting with someone who let's say has a fetish for… ass play and you're not comfortable with that. Just don't put yourself in that situation and don't work with them."

Some participants privileged and prioritized their safety over monetary gain. For instance, Mel identified risky clients as men who "are going through multiple girls." She preferred to keep long term and 'lower risk' clients by reducing what she charges them. If her client is married or "if I know that on a monthly basis, I'm the only person they're seeing, then I don't mind [my rate] being lower." Chrystal shared that despite being offered significantly more money to have unprotected sex, she regularly declines the proposition because "it's really unsafe for me." Rather than risking her wellbeing, she explained that she would rather wait and "be patient" to make it up over time while using barrier protection.

Other participants noted that financial need was a barrier to harm reduction. Not knowing how to budget, insufficient student loans, the high costs of living, tuition, and other necessities, were all trading motivations. For instance, Anabelle and Cheryl both described challenging instances when they needed cash quickly. Consequently, they engaged in riskier sexual acts to make ends meet. Anabelle described difficulties with finding clients who will use condoms. Because freelance work online results in

inconsistent income flow, she felt like she could not afford to turn down work when clients were only looking for unprotected sex. Anabelle recalls one situation where she "was very, very desperate to find somebody to see" and after sorting through responses, she felt there was one person who seemed "accountable" and "he wasn't used to condoms because he was married… [it was] one of the only times when I decided I would take the risk and not use a condom."

While some of the participants traded sex, others traded the idea of sex. These women reduced physical risks by camming (e.g. interacting with clients virtually through webcams) and/or selling photos of themselves. This way, they could sell the commodity of sex without the risks that come with physical contact. For instance, April will not send photos without being paid first and will not include their face or visible tattoos to better safeguard their identity. Four participants shared that they traded intimacy, photos, or the idea of a girlfriend/companionship, and never penetrative sex. Risk was assessed differently across participants in our study. For some selling photos was a safer option than an in-person meetup; for others, selling photos was riskier for fear of them getting leaked.

b) Physical Risks of Trading: the "Bad Date"

All participants worried about violence when meeting a male stranger in the context of a sexual trade. Cheryl, whose trading work instilled a paralysing fear due to bad experiences, shared how this anxiety has impacted many relationships in her life. She "can't go out with guys, cause I'm scared they're gonna hurt me. I don't put myself out there anymore. Like I don't go out of my house."

Participants described looking for men who seemed 'trustworthy.' They had several strategies for judging trustworthiness. Anabelle said that she looks for more detailed messages from men because "if it's very short, then it kinda feels harder to trust because like I don't know who you are." Several participants said that they prefer men who are married or have a family because "it would feel scarier" to go out with someone who lacks significant partnerships in their lives. Janet remarked: "your gut feelings are probably right!" April suggested that married men tend to have fewer concurrent partners and are less likely to want to "take you home," which they identify as a risky scenario. Similarly, many participants said that they prefer not to bring dates to their own homes.

Before proceeding with a relationship, participants wanted to see an alignment of interests. Cat remarked that her best partnerships have been with men where there is no pretense of a "real relationship" because "the guys who were like 'I want there to be a real connection between us', it felt to me like they

would then be less willing to hold up their end of the bargain." Similarly, April states "emotional intimacy does not change the terms of the relationship." Keeping the relationships professional provided some participants with a sense of their rights in the exchange.

Several participants adopted a strategy of careful advance planning, decision-making, and communicating regarding if, when, and how various sexual activities will happen. This negotiation helped to manage expectations and mitigate risk. For instance, when Daisy got requests for nude photos that she was not inclined to provide, she told dates: "if you want to see my body I have no problem goin' into Victoria's secret tryin' on the bras, you can see the underwer on me." In this example, Daisy shared how she communicates her boundary using a strategy designed to elicit excitement rather than disappointment. Rather than deny the request, she counters with an invitation that may be (more) desirable. Moreover, by negotiating to meet in a public albeit 'sexy' place, she mitigates her risk.

Mobile technology played a central role in eight participants' harm reduction strategies. Daisy, like six other participants, asks her dates to send a picture of their license plate number. She believes that this is 'trackable information,' which gives her increased peace of mind. She will not compromise: "if they fuss about that, I don't meet up." While on a date, Cat turns on her phone's *Find Friend* app. She explains, "people I've allowed access can see the location of my phone." On first dates, Anabelle shares her date's picture, Facebook profile, and/or location with her friends. However, internet and media literacy were not universally high. For instance, location services were inadvertently attached to photos that some sent to men, or real names and/or numbers were sometimes unwittingly or mistakenly shared.

Technology-based harm reduction practices can also be limited by systematic barriers. Online platforms, like *Seeking Arrangements,* charge extra to access user reviews of dates. Paid memberships are, Cat notes, "the only way you can see what other people have written [about users], which I don't love." This paywall marginalizes new users and "people who are doing it more casually probably wouldn't have the paid membership." If one is trading because of financial necessity, they also may not be able to afford a paid account. This is a barrier to accessing important 'bad date' reviews. While technology can be used to reduce harm, limited media literacy skills or unsupportive online platforms undermine this potential.

c) Social Risks of Trading: Racism and Fetishization

Social risks of trading refer to how transactional relationships may amplify overarching systemic marginalization and violence. One participant attempted to go to the police several times because she was being harassed by a date. Only after the situation escalated dramatically (a dead animal was left on her doorstep), did she finally receive help. Even then, she described being treated in a condescending and judgmental manner that was exacerbated by anti-black racism. She reflects, "if I didn't look like me, would you have given me a different service?" Another participant wanted to report being molested but was afraid of being victim-blamed, so she avoided going to police altogether.

Anabelle spoke about experiences of fetishization and witnessing inequities at strip clubs and at her employing agency: "it's very clear that the White women that work there are going to be the ones to make the most money so [owners are] going to invest in them the most and treat them better, and they are very open about that." Because White women's bodies are literally valued more highly than the bodies of women of colour in these establishments, racialized participants sometimes endured additional risk and dehumanization to make the same amount as their White counterparts. Anabelle said that it depends on the club and the circumstances, but in some cases, White women can make "twice the amount." At the same time, "most paying clients are White, they have more money. And if you're not White, there has to be a reason why they're seeing you, and often it is 'I want to try this kind of girl' so it's like you have to play into […] being curvaceous, sexually open, down for anything and like playing on those [Black] tropes." As a Black woman in a predominantly White town, Luna described "struggling with people seeing me as a fetish of some kind" and receiving "gross" comments from men online. In contrast, Cat as a White-identified woman, remarked she wasn't "super conscious [of race] most of the time, because I guess I didn't have to be."

Racialized participants described employing various screening practices to counter racism and fetishization. April screened dates for "liberal views, [and] to view women as people, to view […] Black people as people. I need to know that because those two things can exist separately— but it's really important that they don't." Kay described encounters with clients who were interested in slave play fantasies and others who wanted to use the "N" word while having sex. She notes, "I was never comfortable with that. There's people who do it, shout out to them, but that's not something I would ever be comfortable with." Fresia avoids profiles that explicitly fetishize East Asian women because "not only do I not want to play into racist tropes, but playing into these caricatures— of being submissive, petite, innocent— would mean that the man is already thinking of me as inferior, lesser than, and is more likely for them to think they can try and take advantage and dehumanize me." For racially diverse participants, harm reduction meant reading potential trades to avoid racial violence.

d) Mental Health Risks of Trading: Stigma & Discrimination

Most participants talked about the stigma and discrimination that they experienced or feared as a result of trading. This judgement came from friends, family, and society. Consequently, many tried to keep their trading practice a secret or had very few confidantes. Five of the participants described separating their work life from their personal lives as a key strategy to prevent being "found out." However, trying to find balance can be taxing on participants' mental health. Kay remarked that when her personal life and her work life were "starting to collide [… I became] extremely depressed, not motivated at all, I've always struggled with suicide but definitely that heightened [my] sense of being suicidal. The anxiety, the paranoia, like forms of hypervigilance. I was always on edge." Four participants spoke about the loneliness and isolation that they sometimes feel as a result of not having people in their lives to share and confide in about their trading experiences.

Several participants encountered stigma when accessing formal healthcare supports. Cat, Fresia, and Anabelle all express hesitancy in disclosing their trading experiences to their health care practitioners. They fear judgement from the medical professional and suspect it would impact the quality of service they would receive. Kei Marie felt shamed by her ex-therapist after sharing her experiences of being taken advantage of during a trade. The experience with the healthcare provider left Kei Maire feeling like she was "not worth giving quality service to […] the type of client you could insult and get away with it. I felt worthless." In contrast, April, Chrystal, and Daisy described positive, safe, and comfortable interactions with their health providers.

Interestingly, the stigma was not always due to transactional sex, but sometimes simply concerning any sexual activity. Fresia explained, "I have experienced judgement before and not even mentioning sex work or anything—just regular stuff about sex." Sophia, an international student from Pakistan studying in Toronto, expressed similar frustration and limited ability to access confidential health services internationally "if I go to my gynecologist [in Pakistan] and [say] 'I've been having casual sex I need you to help me out', they're going to be like 'what the hell—call your mom', I'm not even joking that is what happens." Here, we see how transnational realities can shift depending on geographical location.

The harm reduction strategies participants used— keeping their trading separate, trying to find a therapist or going to clinics— did not always work, nor were they equally accessible to all. To manage the shortcomings of the healthcare system, participants formed support networks and sought non-judgmental

service providers. Some participants cultivated supports and confidantes amongst peers and family members. Mel turned to online communities of sex workers, traders, and club workers. Having support, in person or online, helped participants feel empowered.

Discussion:

Participants in our study displayed a nuanced awareness of the physical, social and mental health risks involved in trading, and actively engaged in a number of harm reduction strategies to mitigate these risks (see Figure 1). From screening men online (for their age, desires, marital status, and fetishes), to setting boundaries and using protection, to making use of technology and public spaces, these participants were thoughtfully taking precautionary measures to maintain their well-being.

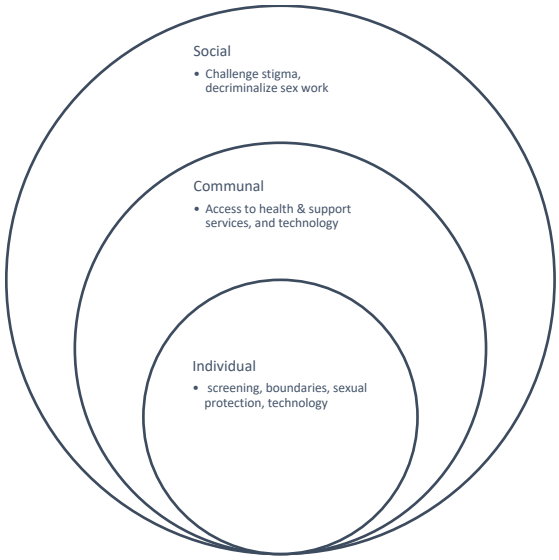

Figure 1: Levels of Harm Reduction

The self-determined harm reduction strategies that participants deployed challenges the body of *literature on women* who exchange sex for money (Motyl, 2010; Miller, 2011; Betzler, 2015) that describes their behaviour as singularly dangerous, inappropriately gender transgressive, and at risk of disease transmission (Lazurus et al, 2012; Benoit, 2018). More recent attention to the "phenomenon" of sugar babies has similarly employed deficit models and promoted stigmatised portrayals of women who trade as ignorant of the risks involved (Motyl, 2010; Betzler, 2015). This literature perpetuates the stigma that the Celling Sex participants described. By contrast, Celling Sex findings reveal that young women

who trade are savvy to many of the risks associated with trading and actively engaged in developing and using strategies to keep themselves safer.

Despite few participants identifying their trading as sex work, their practices mirror many of the existing community-generated harm reduction strategies employed by sex workers (Rekart, 2006; Sanders and Campbell, 2007; Roche, et al, 2005; Shannon et al, 2007; Shannon et al, 2009). Unfortunately, those who did not identify as sex workers were unaware of the community supports that have developed within sex working communities. Making the internal distinction between transactional sex and identifying as a sex worker is a politically charged one and might reflect the greater stigma of sex work. This distinction can also shed light on the nature of the young women's relationships, whereby young women are not engaging in "survival sex" as it is formally understood. The different identifications that the young women make have an impact on the stigma which they encounter and act as a barrier to accessing appropriate resources, networks, and supports. Therefore, taking a transactional sex lens to this work can identify groups of highly isolated young women who, while working hard at protecting themselves independently, might benefit from opportunities to connect, build networks, and support each other.

We highlight stigma as an under-addressed cause of emotional, mental, and physical ill-health of young people who trade. These findings echo the work of Bennoit et al (2015; 2018). The Celling Sex findings underscore that trading is complex. It has both negative and positive impacts on young women's lives. However, participants reported few effective harm reduction strategies in their arsenal to help mitigate the impact of stigma. Celling Sex participants advocated for stigma to be challenged and saw this research as one means to amplify their voices in ways that promote destigmatization, especially amongst healthcare providers.

The harm reduction strategies participants employed were not equally effective. Sharing real names, or photos with geolocation information, left some participants open to unwanted visits and violence. Taking a photograph of a person's license plate can help track someone, but likely only after matters have taken a turn for the worse. The ineffectiveness of some of the harm reduction strategies employed suggests that while technological apps and smartphones can be tools of mitigation, they must be paired with media literacy awareness and skills. Other practices, such as insisting on documentation of STI tests do not guarantee that potential partners are indeed STI-free. Websites like "fakestdtest.com" have made it easy to access fake personalized testing results. Some participants were unaware of these services until it was brought to their attention by others in the participatory research team. A side benefit of our data analysis meetings was that the young women became an ad hoc support group. Many decided to stay

connected via a What's App chat group where they continue to seek advice and share experiences. This underscores the importance of connecting and learning from others.

Beyond individual barriers to harm reduction, systemic barriers persist. Results should be interpreted within the rapidly increasing cost of living and higher education in Toronto (Hulchanski, 2007; Statistics Canada, 2018, Table 11-10-0072-01). Economic vulnerability was a driver for some participants to both start trading and take greater physical risks in their trades. It also frames the inability of some to access the security benefits of having a paid subscription to online transactional spaces. Online transactional spaces should not overlook the safety of their users by establishing exclusionary access to protective user reviews. Unfortunately, the trend of increasing living costs, stagnant or unliveable wages, and pared-down social supports are not unique to Toronto.

The findings highlight the ways that entrenched systems of discrimination impact trading, particularly for racialized women: ranging from the amount of money they would earn to navigating fetishizing comments and sexual requests. Both factors have compounding effects on emotional and mental well-being. The connections between experiencing racism and poor mental and physical health are well documented (see Brondolo, et al, 2009; Paradies, 2006; Williams & William-Morris, 2000). When some of the women attempted to access support in the form of healthcare, counselling, or police, they were further marginalized. Others avoided seeking support altogether due to the fear of being dismissed. Whether participants began trading in response to systemic pressures or experienced interpersonal racism while trading, the risks which come with being a woman of colour are difficult to mitigate individually.

In democratic and neoliberal societies, there remains a pervasive premise of individual choice and autonomy. People are assumed to be "free" to choose their work and level of acceptable risk. They are then responsibilized for those decisions (LeBesco, 2011; Teghtsoonian, 2009). However, our findings demonstrate that young women's decisions need to be understood in the context of the restraints of systemic inequities. The harm reduction strategies employed by participants demonstrate their agency, their awareness of some of the risks, and their sense of empowerment and resilience of being able to handle these risks. Where the participant's harm reduction strategies fall short, we see shortcomings in the social safety net meant to support them. Legislation that criminalizes sex work means that they are afraid to seek help from authorities. Many of the services they sought to mitigate risks (e.g. responsive police, health, and social services) were unavailable or inaccessible. Being invisible, or stigmatized by professionals, means that their health-promoting choices remain constrained.

All of the women negotiated and mediated social and systemic risks to survive and thrive. To echo Shannon et al (2008), "at the micro-level, the lived experiences of sex workers document several important attempts to assert individual agency in the face of meso- and macro-level inequities and pervasive social and structural violence" (919). When looking forward to social change and policy, we underscore the importance of including the voices and experiences of young women who trade sex. As hooks (1989) writes, people who know, occupy, and move between the space of the margins offer "the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternative" (20). We see these results as a starting point for further dialogue on transactional sex and reducing risk.

Strengths and Limitations

While providing insight into harm reduction methods and transactional sex, our analysis should be interpreted with care. Our small sample of self-selecting participants may not be generalizable to all young people who trade. Nevertheless, the intersections of harm reduction practices voiced by this diverse group of fifteen young women offer nuanced understandings of sex, relationships, and trading. Future research could engage larger cohorts of young people. Recognizing the high rates of shame and stigma associated with trading, further exploration of how best to reach isolated young people who trade is required. For instance, despite our best efforts, we were unable to recruit trans-identified women in our study and cannot speak to the unique challenges trans women may experience while trading.

Conclusion

This was one of the first participatory qualitative studies to engage with young women between the ages of 16-25 who engage in transactional sex in a North American context. The resulting interviews and films provide rich evidence to support the notion that young women are actively engaging in nuanced harm reduction practices and negotiations and redefining the parameters of sexual labour and ethics. As the Celling Sex project brought participants together to analyze data, we became a harm reduction practice community, where participants had opportunities to gather, share, and learn together. Research findings draw attention to the agency that young women who trade have, as well as underscore the myriad of harm reduction barriers that they encounter. Participants clearly articulated their level of control around their physical and emotional well-being, while also vocalising the risks that derive from their social and structural environments. The stigma which surrounds sex and trading has an impact on the social determinants of health and health-promoting possibilities. Expanding the definition of harm reduction to include transactional sex may help situate transactional sex as a global phenomenon, with contextually

specific nuances. Critically, there is a need for social support and non-stigmatizing health services for young women who trade and further outreach to support optimal harm reduction approaches.

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Screening Stories: Methodological Considerations for Critical Audience Engagement

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Background: The products of participatory visual methods projects yield creative materials that have the educative potential to catalyze social change. Yet, little is written about the impact(s) of mobilizing these products and engaging diverse audiences.

Methods: Fifteen young women who trade sex each created individual cellphilms to share their perspectives on trading and harm reduction. A participatory analysis process identified key themes and messages, which were highlighted in a 17-minute composite film. Screenings of the composite were organized at a variety of community, health, and education settings. Each audio-recorded screening was co-facilitated by the participant filmmakers and engaged audience members in interactive writing, drawing, and discussion activities. Copious field notes were taken. Notes and transcripts from 4 screenings were analysed and coded in NVivo.

Results: The dilemmas, tensions, and ethical considerations that were raised during the process of audience engagement are discussed and brought to the fore for other participatory visual researchers to consider. The key concerns which arose from the four screenings included: the echo-chamber effect, role of participants, audience participation and non-participation, expectations and attendance, as well as accounting for what typically is unaccounted for.

Conclusions: Sharing the products of participatory visual methodologies is an important aspect of the methodology for all involved— researchers, participants, and audiences — whether the reception is positive, critical, or otherwise. To address the considerations listed above, researchers are encouraged to integrate a sense of deep listening and speaking with both participants and audiences, as well as reflexivity.

Keywords:

Participatory visual methodologies, audience engagement, audiencing, analysis, screenings, cellphilms, ethics, trading sex.

Introduction:

The Celling Sex community-based participatory research project invited young women who trade sex to create their own cellphilm (brief video made on a cellphone) about their experiences (MacEntee, forthcoming). In the fall of 2019, the team of researchers and participants gathered to watch a rough-cut edited compilation that knit together the fourteen individual stories into one 17-minute film. The movie

highlighted key project themes; it explored harm reduction possibilities by offering peer-led advice for youth who trade and the service providers who support them. Despite recommending a few edits, the group was keen to share the work far and wide. A sense of pride and accomplishment buzzed in the room. The energy prompted the question: now what? how did we want to approach screening the film? Who do we want to see it? There was a clear collective desire to share our work; the vision for *how* was murkier.

Participatory Visual Methodologies have been lauded for their ability to create compelling products that can promote social change and advocacy efforts (Liebenberg, 2018; Mitchell et al, 2017; Walsh et al, 2013; Gubrium & Harper, 2013). There is a strong evidence base to support the positive impact that making and sharing participatory visual products can have on community-based producers across a variety of contexts (Botfield et al, 2017; de Jagar et al, 2017; De Vecchi et al, 2016). There are also important publications that guide researchers on grappling with the ethical conundrums which may arise in the process (Gubrium et al, 2014; Clark et al, 2010; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001; Wang et al, 1998). However, there is far more limited literature exploring how best to disseminate and engage audiences with the products. Audiencing, the act of sharing products and analysing engagement with participatory visual research among audience members, is a relatively understudied area. Consequently, sharing our *Celling Sex* film became an opportunity to both share our findings and think through the mechanics of audiencing. This paper compares and contrasts four screenings to illuminate lessons learned and methodological considerations related to audiencing.

Participatory Visual Methodologies, Cellphilming, and Audiencing:

Cellphilming is a newer development in the longer history of participatory video methodologies (MacEntee, et al 2016). It is a democratizing process (Fine & Barreras, 2007), that mobilizes cellphone technology to tell let novice filmmakers tell their own stories. Cellphilming, alongside other participatory visual methodologies, is thought to: assist with minimizing power differentials between researchers and participants, facilitate participants to tell and represent their stories in frames of their own, and be empowering for producers (see Flicker et al, 2017; Gubrium & Harper, 2013; Mitchell, 2011a; Maclean & Woodward, 2012; Packard, 2008; Pink, 2006).

The ethical considerations which arise from utilizing participatory visual methodologies are well documented. Gubrium et al. (2014) discuss issues ranging from: blurred boundaries between participants and researchers, navigating ongoing consent, challenges related to confidentiality, and permissions for sharing the media created. To grapple and approach these ethical issues, a range of considerations are

listed for researchers. These include the importance of open and critical discussion of participation and risk, reflexivity, and guidelines for harm reduction (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008; Gubrium et al, 2014; Smith et al, 2010).

Several scholars have made important claims about the potential of arts-based and participatory visual methods to catalyze social change (Boydell et al., 2012, Schratz 1995, Flicker et al., 2019, Walsh 2012, Walsh, et al., 2013; Mitchell et al., 2017, Liebenberg 2018) As Hergenrather et al. (2009) argue participatory visual methods "can identify concerns and priorities that empower participants to become advocates of change for themselves and community, providing data to help influential advocates and policymakers understand the needs of their community" (p697). Moreover, Flicker et al. (2019) have outlined how digital stories have been used to shift conversations at the community level and influence public health decision-makers.

Nevertheless, the study of audience engagement with the products of PVM is still nascent. In line with Mitchell, de Lange, and Molestane's (2017), thinking, "if we are to take seriously participatory visual research and the potential of this work to influence social change, we are obliged to go full circle to study the idea of engaging audiences" (p 22). In her book *Participatory Visual Methodologies: Social Change, Community and Policy*, Mitchell develops a three-tiered framework for engaging audiences critically: audience engagement, political listening (considering the politics that comes with sharing and listening through the power differentials which exist between researchers, participants, audiences, and stakeholders), and reflexivity (on the part of the researchers and participants). Taken together, the possibility of community and policy dialogue may be realized (Figure 1.1., p 25 2017).

Outside of Mitchell's work on audiencing, there is relatively little theoretical guidance on how to critically engage with the reception of participatory generated media, as well as what considerations (ethical and otherwise), arise in that process. Within cultural, literary, and film studies, audience reception is a stand-alone area of study. Livingston and Das (2013) look to review theoretical texts to contextualize audiences and their interpretations and categorize audiences as critical, creative, playful, or resistant (2013). As cultural and communication theorists, they document that messages (be it in the form of text, image, or other media) are understood through the political, economic, community, and everyday lenses that people have. Other researchers in cultural and communication studies have highlighted the study of audiences whereby the relationship between media producer and viewer are analysed, and the reproduction of cultural, social, and political realms at the site of consumption are considered (Fiske, 1992; Jensen & Rosengren, 1990; Livingston, 1998; Meadows, 2009, 2010). Audience studies texts have

offered a starting point for participatory visual researchers, and have been adapted (Mitchell et al. 2017, Mitchell, 2011a).

The tensions and complexity of audience reception with participatory visual work have been taken up in recent years. MacEntee and Mandrona (2015) document feelings of discomfort which emerged for South African teachers when screening their cellphilms on HIV education with their students. Through discussions were the teachers able to reassess their abstinence-only prevention strategies, and challenging topics were discussed, from condom use to sexual violence. Kindon, Hume-Cook, and Woods (2012) acknowledge that audiences and their readings can be unpredictable, despite the intention and frame of participatory products. As a result, questions are raised about how participatory visual products travel, and "trouble assumptions that traveling with such products is inherently empowering for those involved in their production" (p 360, 2012). This paper stands on the shoulders of these texts and looks to document methodological considerations that arose in the process of audience engagement with the Celling Sex film.

Methods:

Celling Sex is a community-based participatory action research project which involved 15 racially diverse cis- and queer-women sharing their experiences of trading sex and harm reduction. Due to the stigmatized subject matter, members of the research team met with participants individually to conduct semi-structured interviews and assist them in creating brief (1-6 minute) cellphilms about their experience. Once all the cellphilms were created, participants were invited to participate in a group screening and participatory analysis meeting. Ten of the fifteen participants attended. We followed elements of the DEPICT method (Flicker and Nixon, 2014) to identify key themes that cut across the cellphilms. The group decided that the most effective way to highlight these themes for wider audiences was to collate their individual stories into one longer film.

A 17-minute composite film was created to stitch together individual narratives. Composite videos are described by Mitchell (2011b) as participatory media with a "clear beginning, middle and end. It includes a narrative (conveyed through voice-overs, captions, subtitles, or textboxes), samples of the actual visual data (photographs, participatory videos, drawings) plus the contextual data in the form of video footage taken during the research process" (p 161). Once again, we met as a team to screen the composite, make recommendations for further edits, and seek consent to share the work more widely. Participants also identified several key audiences that they wanted to engage, including students of health, social work and education, health and social service providers, other youth who might be (considering) trading, and "the general public." We sought and received ethics approval to study audience reactions.

To set up screenings, we reached out to university colleagues who taught in relevant programs and to places where we had initially recruited project participants. In total, twenty organizations and ten professors were contacted. Eight confirmed screenings that were a part of the data set. Another seven screenings were organized before or after our formal data collection period.

Each 60-90-minute screening was co-facilitated by at least one academic members of the research team and one peer researcher (aka original participant filmmaker). We began by introducing ourselves, the project, and sought written consent for participating in evaluation activities. Audience members were handed a blank index card and invited to share their demographics on one side (age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and profession or area of study) and on the other to write or draw their initial ideas or impressions of transactional sex. The composite was screened. Audience members were then given a brochure that highlighted key themes and a handout that asked the following questions:

- What did you think about the video? What were its key messages?
- How does the video speak to your original definitions of trading sex?
- What questions remain about trading sex or sugaring for you?
- How does the video compare with the pamphlet?
- How does the video impact you in your personal or professional life?
- How does your impression now differ from your initial thoughts you jotted on your cards?
- Are there any other reflections or thoughts you would like to share?

They were given a few minutes to write down their initial responses and then participate in a facilitated discussion. In some cases, all audience members gave their consent to be audio-recorded. In others, we broke out into smaller groups and only recorded where there was permission.

Copious field notes were taken after each screening. Audio recordings were transcribed and uploaded to NVivo for thematic analysis. In this paper, we focus on four exemplar screenings to highlight the range of experience, key considerations, ethical issues, and challenges related to studying impact (Table 1).

Audience	Group focus	Organizing the screening	Number of Attendees	Key Takeaways
Screening one: Underhoused youth group	A weekly drop-in group that is focused on harm reduction	Organized via email, posters were shared via listserv and on location	6 audience members (4 youth, 2 service providers)	Participation and non-participation of audience members Expectations of screenings— what conversation is considered "generative" or worthwhile
Screening two: Young moms' group	A weekly drop-in group for young mothers	Referred to by another community organization. Communicated via email and phone calls. No poster was put up.	9 audience members (4 mothers, 5 service providers)	Communication The "echo chamber" effect Challenging stigma in the moment Role of the participants— for researchers? For themselves? For audiences?
Screening three: Sex shop customers	Screening open to the public	Organized through phone calls and emails. Poster and event information shared on the social media. Participants could register on their events webpage.	4 audience members	The risks which come from sharing "insider" harm reduction strategies Public event registration— 15 people registered, yet only 4 people showed up
Screening four: HIV + youth support group	A weekly drop-in youth group	Organized via phone, email, and in-person meetings. Poster was put up on location.	5 audience members (4 youth, 1 service provider)	Having partners who go the extra mile Investment of time and resources is not always equal to audience turnout

Table 1: Background of the four screenings and the key considerations raised

A Tale of Four Screenings

Out of the eight screenings that we organized, these four were the ones that our team kept coming back to discuss. Similar to Claudia Mitchell's (2011b) experience, there was something about these screenings which were "haunting" (p199). We are revisiting these moments using a frame of reflexivity, where attention is paid to both personal reactions and the socially situated, and co-constitutive dynamics at play (Finlay, 2002). The lingering impacts these screenings had were signposts for us to reflect more deeply on what they meant for the larger project of critical audience engagement.

Underhoused Youth Group

This screening was set up with an organization that provides shelter, transitional housing, and programs for youth navigating homelessness. It was scheduled during a weekly drop-in program focused

on harm reduction. Planning went smoothly, however, we did encounter a few technical and logistical challenges upon arrival. That evening, only one woman came for the drop in. The lead of the program canvassed the building to see if other youth would be interested in joining. Another three youth and organizational staff arrived. Immediately, one young woman began asking very practical questions about staying safe while trading. The reception to the film was quite positive overall; the predominant themes that arose from this conversation included the transferability of the harm reduction strategies and re-thinking what transaction(s) might mean. One of the service providers confided that she was a former sex worker, and she appreciated the opportunity to reflect on how her programming could be more inclusive of those who might trade. Some audience members were quieter throughout the conversation.

Young Moms Group

Several perplexing miscommunications relating to the date, time, location, and preferred audience members hindered the planning of this workshop with our community partner. When our group finally arrived and introduced the project, we were met with rude comments about trading sex. Partway through screening the film, one of the staff members approached us and whispered that a program participant wanted to know why we were teaching them to become whores. This was a difficult audience; program participants and staff continued to use derogatory, insulting language throughout. We quickly realized that our follow-up discussion needed to unpack assumptions and challenge stereotypes. The conversation lasted 45 minutes and ended somewhat abruptly. Right before our departure, however, one of the women in the group asked if we could return to another one of their sessions to share the film with other members of their group who weren't present that evening.

Our team spent an hour debriefing. Many expressed hurt and frustration with the ways they were disrespected. We debated our responses and asked ourselves whether (or not) we successfully challenged stereotypes. We didn't come to a consensus but felt that we did our best given the nature of stigma that we felt was in the room. We also strategized tactics for future reference in the event of a similar reception: leaving the room, redirecting questions back to what was shown in the film, and using language that the whole group is comfortable with, were some of the suggestions discussed. After the screening happened, we sent a follow-up email to the screening organizers thanking them for the opportunity to share our work and invited them to continue the conversation over the phone. We did not receive a response.

Sex Shop Customers

This screening took place at a sex shop where people of all genders, sexualities, and desires are welcomed. It often holds educational events to explore and learn about sexuality. Together, we planned to

hold a "movie night" in their workshop space. It was advertised on their web event calendar, alongside the Celling Sex social media pages. Fourteen people registered for the free event.

On the night of the screening, our team set up and waited for our audience to arrive. At showtime, only one person was present. Eventually, four more people arrived, and we started. The recorded discussion lasted an hour. There was one woman in her early 20s who worked at an escort agency, one engineer in his late 30s, a cisgender couple in their early 20s, and one woman who chose not to participate in the research.

The conversation began by answering questions about the research project and the methodological approach. Once there was a better understanding of what led to the creation of the film, the conversation shifted to harm reduction strategies: sharing other tips, asking questions on what was not raised in the video, as well as other resources to consider. There was an odd question from the engineer about whether we knew any "horror stories" which involved sex workers. From there, the conversation shifted to highlight the structural invisibility of women who engage in sex work and the dehumanization that they face. When the conversation finished, we spent 15 minutes debriefing. We generally felt good about the screening even though there was some discomfort with the sorts of questions that were asked by the engineer.

HIV+ Youth Support Group

This screening was held at a community organization that offers diverse programming to people living with HIV and AIDS. After the initial email, a phone call was made to follow up and we were invited to come for a tour of the space. Immediately there was a good feeling about the partnership, and there was excitement for the screening that was to happen a month later.

Once we set up, we began our screening with an intimate group of 5 gay male-identified people. When the film finished, we launched into conversation. Our team was moved by the vulnerability, openness and honesty of audience members. Some people spoke to very personal moments in their lives and articulated how the stories of the young women impacted them. There were thoughtful reflections where audience members connected the themes with their own experiences and lives. The conversation was 45 minutes in length. When it came time to debrief, we all felt appreciated and valued.

What can be drawn from these experiences?

These four vignettes demonstrate the range of contexts where we screened our films and associated audiences and reactions to our work. They are a starting point to explore key issues and tensions that may be useful for other PVM practitioners as they contemplate knowledge dissemination.

Dialogue and Echo Chambers

In all four of the screenings, it was evident that the conversations which followed the composite film were important to have, albeit for different reasons. In all but the Young Mom's screening, most audience members expressed their appreciation for the film and the content. Some audience members had experience trading and they were especially excited to have a non-judgemental space to reflect on their experiences and see themselves in a film. Other audience members made connections between the subject matter and their personal and/or professional lives and felt that the information shared with them was important.

At the Young Mom's group, while the reception we received was not as positive, arguably, it was just as important. Given the resistance and judgement that was encountered, the research team had to find ways of engaging that teased out and respectfully debunked myths and stereotypes. Scholars have written of the dangers that come with an echo chamber, a phenomenon whereby content shared online within networks of people with similar political leanings are reproduced (Garimella et al., 2018; Quattrociocchi et al., 2016; Williams et al., 2015). As a result, dialogue and debate across political difference do not happen to the same extent as conversations within a community; this reinforces polarization across groups of people with differing viewpoints (Garimella et al., 2018; Quattrociocchi et al., 2016; Williams et al., 2015). In some ways, while this screening was the least comfortable, perhaps it was the most important for meeting our goal of trying to challenge stigma. Being asked to return demonstrates that the group we were working with found something valuable in the film and discussion, despite (or in spite of!) their personal views of transactional sex. This desire and willingness to dialogue and learn from each other is a promising gesture when considering the aims of social change in visual methodologies.

Role of Participants and Facilitators

While it is worthwhile to have difficult conversations with people who hold differing viewpoints, it does raise an ethical concern about the safety of the research participants who are present and, for the most part, identifying themselves as young women who trade sex (the target of the stigma). With community-based research projects, participation and control over representation are one of the key tenants of the methodology (Cornwall & Jewkes 1995). However, when it comes to sharing the products of participatory video, with the stigmatized subject matter, having participants who represented themselves and their experiences move into facilitation roles may put them in an uncomfortable and unsafe position.

The Young Moms screening was the first time that blatant judgement and stigma had to be addressed head-on by our team as a collective. Consequently, it was difficult for the team to challenge on the spot. This meant that some participants outed themselves to defend their work out of exasperation or frustration. Even if participants did not out themselves, to have discussed stigmatization and the harms that it causes in their film, only to be met with more stigma was emotionally taxing. When moving into environments where the audience members and their views are unknown, how can researchers consider and account for the safeguarding of participants? This dilemma is also raised by Hume and Cook (2012). Given that participants need to be provided with informed consent, a deep understanding of the risks which come with participation (Flicker et al, 2007), how do we as researchers ensure emotional safety when we do not know the views and attitudes of the room we are walking into? In the three other screenings, participants felt degrees of affirmation through engaging with others on a matter that is important to them, affirmed their knowledge, and contributed to a sense of community. The positive receptions that were felt were one of the reasons why participants continued as facilitators. But the Mom's Group posed a lasting challenge.

Another consideration that arose was representing the differences in personal definitions of trading within the Celling Sex team amongst participants. During public discussions, some vocal participants equated trading sex with sex work, while others chafed at that categorization. While participants who felt they were not represented appropriately did raise this to the team's attention, the question of representation and voice emerges. When the products of participatory visual research are brought to the realm of the public, and each member of the team is representative of the larger project, how are individual voice and values contextualized? The power of representation that PVM lends participants is nearly a given (Gubrium & Harper, 2013; Flicker et al., 2017; Maclean & Woodward, 2012; Packard, 2008; Pink, 2006): but it is less clear how to uphold individual representation within a group context. When misrepresentation arises, who should step in to moderate? Would moderation sideline the voices of individual participants? How to interpret Molestane et al.'s (2008, para 28) call where the "'least harm' must also contribute to the 'most good'"? For our team, we were able to have an open and honest dialogue about what it means to step in and step back. The academic research team voiced their conflictions about moderating, when considering the power dynamics of race and social location at play. For participants, they voiced their appreciation for moments where the researchers stepped back and also acknowledged that there were moments where we could have stepped up.

The above concerns also elicit the question of the role of participants— are they present for themselves? For the researchers? Or for the audience? Jacobs (2010) critically assesses the concept of "participation" in community-based participatory research and examines tensions between participation for empowerment, participation as important to academic quality, and participation as practical usefulness

to the goals of the project (p 377-378). These motivations can be happening all at once in varying degrees and can be examined in the context of the Celling Sex screenings. At screenings, there were regularly questions of who amongst our group had experience trading. Audiences wanted to know that we were doing research "with" and not "on" people. However, a question that was not asked as often, was what the process of participation provided for participants. Our approach to navigating this tension was to highlight the nuance and continuum which exists with transactional sex. We would flip the question back to audience members to normalize trading and challenge ways of being in relationship that is "us" versus "them". As researchers, it is critical to be aware of and honest about motivations and decisions to balance the (at times) competing interests.

To participate or not to participate?

A key consideration that arises when assessing audience feedback is how this information is collected. For our project, discussions happened in groups. This was an effective method of hearing a diversity of perspectives in a short time, but it also presented a limitation in the sense that not everyone necessarily felt comfortable speaking in front of a group. Discussing stigmatized subject matters, with strangers or with peers and colleagues, can raise feelings of discomfort or apprehension. To provide opportunities for those who might not feel comfortable sharing their thoughts or opinions out in the open, handouts with the same discussion questions were passed out.

At Underhoused Youth screening, there were moments where the conversation would stall. The staff who worked at the organization were primarily the ones who would share their reflections and thoughts. The two men who joined our group came after the coordinator of the program went around the building to recruit interested people; during the discussion, they did not actively participate and appeared to be disengaged through their body language. While it cannot be said conclusively why the young men joined the group, or if they in fact were engaged despite personal observations, it felt as though they were simply enticed by the honoraria.

While the young men did consent to being recorded in the discussion, informed consent becomes less clear when considering the larger context of consent. Fisher (2013) terms compromised voluntariness due to social, economic and political contexts as "structural coercion". Given that the screening took place at a non-profit which serves young people navigating poverty and homelessness, participation for honoraria could be considered a factor. While our audiencing research was not high risk, nor was the honoraria substantive (a $5 gift card), it is important to consider the broader realities which go beyond the individual researcher and study participant. Again, while there is not an easy answer on how to navigate situations where audience participation and consent might be ambiguous, we take

inspiration from Milne (2012) who encourages researchers to "make publicly visible the absences, silences, and resistances that are currently (not) present in the literature" (p 258). With the power dynamics in mind, it is important to recognize that those participating in the research are not powerless. As Humphries and Martin (2000) write, "power engenders resistance and is always being resisted" (p 74)— where non-participation can be a way for participants to exercise their power in the research dynamic (Switzer, 2018). Without participation, researchers do not have data to represent the participants in reports. Non-participation, just like rates of participation, tell a story worth investigating.

Expectations and Attendance

Across the screenings, there were varying levels of attendance due to the different sizes in organizations. In some cases, like with the Sex Shop Customers, our team didn't know how many attendees would show up. Organizing screenings required a significant investment of time and resources: communicating with partners, with our team, preparing materials, honorarium for our team and audience members, set-up, tear-down, and follow-up, to name a few. We learnt that the deep level of commitment to research partners required in community-based participatory research (Flicker, 2008; Strand et al., 2003), extends to include the process of audience engagement. For our project, consent was not granted for online distribution, which meant that we needed to invest the time and energy required for in-person screenings; no matter the group size, to be accountable to the rest of our team. Organizing the HIV + Youth Support Group was the most time-intensive, and that evening only four youth attended; at the same time, it was also a screening that felt very rewarding because of the extensive communication at the outset, and rich discussion that resulted— perhaps in part due to the small group size. While it might be frustrating to have low turnouts, it is also a part of the territory of doing community-based work.

Hand-in-hand with the expectations of turn-out and work which goes into setting up screenings, is the expectations which researchers might have on what constitutes a "good" or "successful" screening. At the Underhoused Youth Screening, there were different readings on how the screening began— practical questions made by a participant right at the beginning of the screening were categorized as a conversation that was difficult to get going by another team member. My reading of the situation was that the film inspired curiosity around the important logistical considerations around trading. Defining conversations as successful or difficult is rooted in subjectivity—it is important to unearth one's expectations of what kinds of discussion is considered worthwhile. Having an awareness of the setting and audience and recognizing that not all screenings will be the same, are just a few of the reflective practices that researchers can integrate into approaching and audience engagement events.

Another important factor when considering audience engagement and attendance is the risk that comes from knowledge sharing. The Sex Shop Customers were our first public screening and the first experience we had with an audience member who made our team feel apprehensive; particularly with their interest in "horror" stories and demeanour; something felt out of place. While we do not suggest that this man's intentions were malicious in attending, his presence motivated us to reflect on the gravity of sharing harm reduction practices and advice. In the film, particular strategies such as screening tactics and discrete ways of collecting their dates' information sometimes work because they are not known by the women's clientele. There is the risk that harm reduction strategies could be undermined if they are shared with people who could exploit that knowledge. Just as researchers and academics have been criticized for being expropriative with Indigenous and local community knowledges (McGregor, 1999; Robbins, 2013; Simpson, 2001; Tuhiwai Smith et al., 2016) who would then use knowledge to "interpret […] data and make wise decisions on behalf of"— resulting in further violence and erasure (Robbins, 312), there is a risk that making public community-generated, "insider" knowledge could be used against those whom it benefits most.

Accounting for the Unaccounted

Each of the screenings were unique. As outlined earlier, there were considerable differences in how smooth the planning went, and upon reflection, often felt indicative of the screening to follow. Audience members' body language, silent exchanges, perceived resistance, welcome, and set up of the room were all important clues to how the screening would 'go'. This raises the question of how to account for the process of sharing products of participatory video? While the discussion from the screenings were 45 minutes, the feelings in the room were not captured through what was audio recorded, nor was the relationship building which took place before the viewing. For Broom et al. (2016), the process of qualitative research is one characterised by relationships. Broom describes similar encounters with the difficulty of accounting for the incommunicable aspects of data collection. The authors speak to the processes following transcription where "data becomes disembodied and dis-embedded when archived thereby increasing the likelihood that subsequent researchers would 'misinterpret' those data as a result" (p 1170). While there are accounts of the limitations that accompany interviews and transcriptions (Oliver et al., 2006; Poland, 1995) there is not a current standard framework for integrating data that cannot be captured by recording devices alone. In our documentation here, we are aiming to do just that.

Furthermore, audience members bring their own lived experiences and layered identities into the room, and with the 45 minutes of conversation, there was not time to contextualize and investigate

comments or reflections. One aim of audience engagement is to in part assess the impact of the visual. A judgemental comment might be representative of personal financial and work opportunities, internalized shame, or reflective of social and cultural environments. Situating audience members' comments to account for layered identities can provide insight into the many ways in which ideas, values and beliefs are formed and how best to dialogue with people across differences. While contextualising audience members' comments may not always be a realistic endeavour for researchers, it is a consideration to account for when thinking of the limitations of audience engagement. Another critical aspect to consider is the role of facilitators, and how their different visible and assumed identities affected the space and the conversation which followed. Similar to accounting for the organization, environment, and layered identities of the audience members, it is difficult to quantify or express how assumed identities impacted what was shared with mostly white cis-female academics and primarily racialized female peer researchers.

What does this mean for other community-based, participatory visual researchers?

These considerations arise as a result of accounting for what is not typically accounted for while investigating the products of participatory visual methods. The logistical organization, the environment, and the power differentials which exist across audience members and the research team, all impact how the visuals are consumed as well as the conversation which results. To grapple with the above considerations, we return to Mitchell, de Lange and Molestane's (2017) framework for critical audience engagement. Some of the questions that we raised— from balancing individual representation and group representation, the role of participants, and audience participation and attendance— can be addressed by political listening, training opportunities, and reflexivity.

The tensions which arose in the Young Mom's screening exemplifies the significance of political listening which Mitchell et al. (2017) describes— whereby the

> "communicative interaction— speaking and listening together— does not necessarily resolve or do away with the conflicts that arise from uncertainty, inequality or identity. Rather, it enables political actors to decide democratically how to act in the face of conflict, and to clarify the nature of the conflict at hand" (Bickford, 1996 as cited in Mitchell et al. 2017, and Alexandra, 2015, pp. 44).

At this screening, we believe all the actors involved would have benefited from taking a moment (before and during the screening especially) to clarify any resistance or accumulation of tension. The screening also exemplified the importance of clear communication with all parties involved. Our team eventually came up with plans on how to respond to judgement and how to prepare for possible scenarios,

but for other researchers concerned with sharing participatory visual works, we recommend that this be done at the outset. In this way, the ethical considerations which inevitably impact participants' consent is grappled with in advance. Clear and informed consent is ongoing and should be assessed each step of the way but having conversations about what could happen can allow participant-facilitators time and space to consider how they feel before they are put in a given circumstance.

Carving out training time for facilitators to discuss considerations— strategies to deal with critical or judgemental feedback, best ways to balance divergent internal views, and encouraging personal reflections throughout the process, is a valuable aspect to consider when sharing products of participatory visual methods. Engaging in difficult subjects in a safe(r) space, where there is not pressure of being on the spot can help all team members before entering situations where judgement, resistance, or otherwise might be encountered. Taking inspiration from Boal (1985), rehearsing and practicing is a way for all actors to "ask questions, to dialogue, to participate" (p 120). Engaging with ideas and potential situations can allow team members to refine and gain clarity on how to best represent and situate our personal views and ideas alongside our team-mates. Training opportunities will not prepare facilitators for every situation or consideration which might arise in the process of sharing participatory visual works, but it can provide some tools which may assist facilitators in responding in-the-moment.

Maintaining a reflexive stance—considering the relational nature of research, reciprocity with participants and communities in an iterative fashion (Cordner et al., 2013)—throughout the process of setting up and showings is another important consideration for researchers. Understanding your interests and motivation in the work, the knowledge, and biases you bring with you is what will allow for interactive discussions and collective relationships to be made. Examining expectations of screenings, as well as being transparent about the roles of participants in the sharing work are other important aspects that need to be grappled with. The analysis stage also requires researchers to be attuned to what was happening leading up to events and power dynamics that were unfolding at the site of dissemination. A practice of reflexivity asks us to take time to reflect on our own positionality, and how it changes throughout the research. In the words of Wilson (2008), "if research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right" (p 135)". Reflexivity does not dissolve the tension of contextualizing reflections made by diverse audiences, nor how a researcher's presence affects the space, but rather acts as a way to acknowledge and address how identity and power are manifested in the process and as a form of social critique.

Strengths and Limitations

While there is a plethora of literature documenting the use of participatory visual methodologies in community-based research, there is very little in the field which documents if, and how it was shared

with wider audiences. As a result, we are heavily inspired by and draw on the work of Claudia Mitchell, who raised the question of critical audience engagement with participatory visual methodologies. This paper is a documentation of what was raised in the process of sharing visual media and are observations, reflections, and interpretations. The topics raised are a starting point for further reflection and action, and do not represent the totality of considerations researchers might need to reflect on or encounter.

Conclusion

Greenwood et al. (1993) refer to participatory action research as "a process and as a goal"— this statement is also true when investigating the products of participatory methodologies. In the words of Mitchell et al. (2017), participatory researchers can "go full circle" when tending curiosity— towards oneself, one's relationship with co-researchers, and with audiences— in sharing visual works and assessing the impacts and ripples that visual work can have. The process of taking what is typically the end point of research as another beginning is a worthwhile process to explore. For this project, the process encouraged us to reflexively lean into discomfort, seek out diverse audiences, deeply listen and engage with difference.

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Screen(ing) Share: Cellphilms, Audience and Social Change

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Background: Stereotypic representation in popular media contributes to the social imagination of women who trade sex. Recent research has shown that young women who trade sex in Toronto experience stigma in varying degrees from friends, family, and service providers. Participatory visual methodologies (PVM) demonstrate promise in their capability to challenge narratives and open up a dialogic space when sharing the products with audiences. Yet little is written on the process of sharing these products and the pedagogical work that they lend.

Methods: Fifteen young women who trade sex created cellphilms (short videos made on a cellphone) to share their harm reduction strategies and experiences accessing health care supports. A participatory analysis process identified key messages, which were used to edit a 17-minute composite film. Eight screenings were organized with diverse community and health organizations. Screenings were co-hosted by participant filmmakers, and audiences were led through a series of interactive writing, drawing, and discussion activities to capture their feedback. Sessions were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed in NVivo.

Results: Dominant and challenging narratives that surround young women who trade sex were discussed in depth across the screenings. The four main impacts of the composite film that were observed included: consciousness- raising, commitments to change, representation and ownership, as well as the re-inscription of stereotypes.

Conclusions: In mobilizing the products of participatory visual methodologies, there is the potential to create a space for audiences to reflect on their ideas, as well as consider pathways to enact change in their personal and professional lives. Sharing the products of PVM is an important aspect of the methodology which can lead researchers and participants to new understandings of what it means to engage in social change and interrupt narratives.

Keywords: Participatory visual methodologies, audience/audiencing, critical audience engagement, cellphilms, stigma, trading sex, pedagogical impacts, social change

Introduction

When searching the term “sugar babies” on the internet, some of the results include the sensational headlines— “Sugar daddy secrets!” (Cosmopolitan, 2019), “Inside the sugar world of dating”

(Gregyek, 2019), "the New Prostitution Economy" (Sales, 2016), "Confessions of a College Sugar Baby" (Elliott, 2016). The articles that follow, speak to fast and easy ways for young women (who, more often than not, are students) to make money, and get designer high tag items, or trips around the world. The young women in the photos are overwhelmingly White, hyperfeminized, and have nice bags, low cut tops, phones, and drinks. From the headlines alone, there is the suggestion that sugaring is an underground activity that is simultaneously exclusive, glamorous, and shameful. The sugar baby lifestyle capitalises on the interest in young women's (White) bodies, sexualities, and the taboo idea of concomitant relationships. In these articles, discussions of how trading is balanced with other life commitments and how young women can stay safe are glaringly absent. Popular media, such as these described above, contribute to the social imagination of young women who trade sex. These portrayals contribute to the stigma which the young women of the Celling Sex study responded to through cellphilming.

Celling Sex is a community-based participatory research project which invited fifteen young women who trade sex to share their experiences and harm reduction practices through the creation of their own cellphilm. Cellphilms are brief films made on cellphones in response to a research prompt (MacEntee et al, 2016; MacEntee, forthcoming). A 17-minute film was edited together from participants' individual stories to capture the range of experiences shared, participants' advice for other young people, and things that professionals who work with youth should know. The group wanted to share their film in the hopes of educating, re-framing, and challenging stigmatized portrayals of young women who trade. The literature surrounding the promise of participatory-generated visual work in creating social change and interrupting narratives is burgeoning. However, there is little research that has explored what impact(s) the visual work has on communities and various stakeholders. This paper takes up this gap by discussing our experiences sharing the Celling Sex film with eight different audiences to explore the pedagogical possibilities of participatory visual products.

Media, Meaning Making, and Methodologies

Academic understandings of the re-production of dominant knowledge in mainstream media have largely come from cultural and media studies (see Hall, 1997; Woodward, 1997; Carpignano et al., 1990; Grossberg et al., 2006). Mainstream media—television, magazines, news outlets, films, and the internet— are sites of power where social knowledge is made through the process of representation (Hall, 1997; Woodward, 1997). Readers, listeners, and viewers learn and form common-sense understandings of identity (Hall, 1997; Davis & Gandy Jr., 1999; Mahtani, 2001, Mackay, 2000). With a limited

representation of people who occupy spaces of the margins, and mainstream media acting as a common background of assumptions, 'knowing' is derived from what is represented (Mahtani, 2001; Hall 1995). The study of mainstream media in cultural studies is in part, what developed the turn to audiencing (Fiske, 1992), where audience interpretation, reception, and resultant social effects are analysed (Rose, 2001; Livingstone & Das, 2013; Meadows, 2009).

Thomas King (2003) writes on the power that stories have in controlling lives; he argues that stories are deeply instilled and irreconcilable. As an Indigenous man, King writes, "there is a part of me that has never been able to move past these [colonial] stories, a part of me that will be chained to these stories" (p 9). The space of everyday storytelling—of media— is particularly pernicious in embedding these ideas. For women who trade or sell sex, they too face irreconcilable ideas of "who" they are. Some popular representations portray these young women as carriers of disease (Hallgrimsdottir et al., 2009), a social plague (Van Brunschot et al., 2000; Strega et al, 2014), criminals lacking in morality who transgress social and sexual norms, as well as victims who need to be saved (Janzen et al, 2013; Hallgrimsdottir et al., 2009). Strega et al. (2014) review depictions of sex workers in Canadian media and found that through the dominant portrayal of women as "vermin-victim" binary oppositions emerge of "us" and "them" (p 10). These narratives embed themselves into the social subconscious, and without critical reflection, create identities of the self and Other (Janzen et al., 2013; Jensen, 2011; Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012; Bannerji, 2000; Zhang & Haller, 2013). These become, as Stuart Hall (1995) puts it, "the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves" (p 8). While the women involved in the Celling Sex project did not all identify as sex workers, they most certainly spoke to navigating stigma which surrounds women who trade sex.

The stigmatized narratives which young women who trade sex face are a significant factor that impedes on their health and well-being. As explained by Petraglia (2007), we all make and carry associations between our past experience, knowledge, and attitudes. These narratives shape how we see, interact, and make decisions. For those in positions of authority and power, like healthcare providers or professionals, these conscious or unconscious narratives impact the decisions and treatment of their patients and clients (FitzGerald & Hurst, 2017; Blair et al., 2011; Smedley et al., 2003). There is a wealth of literature that documents the stigma which sex workers receive from health and service providers in Canada (Benoit, 2015, 2018; Lazarus et al, 2012; Sanders & Campbell, 2007; Valdiserri, 2002), and the social stigma— both real and perceived— which has detrimental effects (Socías, M et al., 2016). For the Celling Sex project, varying levels of stigma proved to be a significant barrier to accessing support services (Kendrick et al., forthcoming). The women involved hoped that their voices and cellphilms

would be one way to provide advice for other youth and act as an educative tool for professionals who work with young people. The media which was created from the research process responded directly to the dehumanizing narratives of women who trade or sell sex.

Participatory generated media does show promise in challenging the dominant narratives where participants are thought to have greater ownership of their representation and stories (Flicker et al., 2017; Gubrium & Harper, 2013; Mitchell, 2011a; Maclean & Woodward, 2012; Packard, 2008; Pink, 2006; Burgess, 2006). Cellphilming is an evolving methodology within the longer history of participatory video whereby videos are made, and edited, using cellphones in the hands of the producer (MacEntee et al., 2016). Participatory visual methodologies (PVM) have been used as educative tools (Flicker et al., 2018; de Lange & Mitchell, 2012; Cammarota & Fine, 2008). The process of art-making in supportive group environments can challenge stigma through reflection and dialogue (Francis & Hemson, 2006; de Lange & Mitchell, 2012; Bresler, 2006; Mnisi, 2015; Walsh et al., 2013) and has been shown to have a variety of positive effects on mental health and self-esteem (De Vecchi et al., 2016). In public health and education research, digital storytelling has served as a form of narrative intervention where participants were able to identify the stigma which surrounds them, and collectively reframe those conversations (Gubrium et al., 2019; Gilliam et al., 2012; Gazarian, 2010).

The products also show tremendous potential as teaching and learning tools. Nevertheless, there is comparatively less research on the pedagogical impact of sharing the products. As Roberts & Lunch (2015) state, "the fact that an issue has been voiced does not mean that it has been heard, and the fact that it has been heard does not mean that it will be acted upon." But what happens when an issue has been voiced, but not disseminated (and consequently, heard)? What could happen when non-dominant narratives are shared with wider audiences? Mitchell et al. (2017) layout a framework for critical audience engagement with the products of participatory visual methodologies. In order to promote reflection and dialogue, they encourage research teams to consider: How are the works shared? Who are the audiences? What relationships unfold between viewers and producers? What are the power dynamics which are unfolding? And, how to negotiate a diversity of power dynamics and interests in one place? (Mitchell et al., 2017). This study of Celling Sex film screenings was inspired by these questions. It explores the pedagogical work that can happen in the process of disseminating participatory visual works with target audiences. It was completed in the spirit of circling back to the promise of participatory visual work for social change.

Methods

Celling Sex is a community-based participatory action research project which brought together 15 young women of diverse racial and sexual identities to share their experiences of trading sex and harm reduction strategies. A member of the research team met with participants one-on-one to conduct semi-structured interviews and supported them to create brief cellphilms about their experience. After all the individual cellphilms were made, participants were invited to a group screening and analysis meeting, where the DEPICT method (Flicker & Nixon, 2014) was employed to identify the key themes across the cellphilms. 10 out of the 15 participants were present. Collectively, they had a strong desire to share the key messages gleaned from their work with wider audiences. They agreed that the best way to achieve this goal was to stitch their stories together to create one composite film.

Based on the key themes that were identified, a 17-minute movie was created which edited together narratives to create a composite film. Composite films are ways to create an overarching narrative, using segments of participants' videos (see figures 1.1, 1.2 for stills). The final cut weaves these segments with captions, titles, and voiceovers, to create a clear storyline (Mitchell, 2008; Mitchell, 2011b). Once the first cut of the film was made, the team got together for a private screening to provide edits, feedback, and consent to share the film more widely. The target audiences which participants pinpointed included health and service providers, youth who are (or are considering) trading, as well as the "the general public".

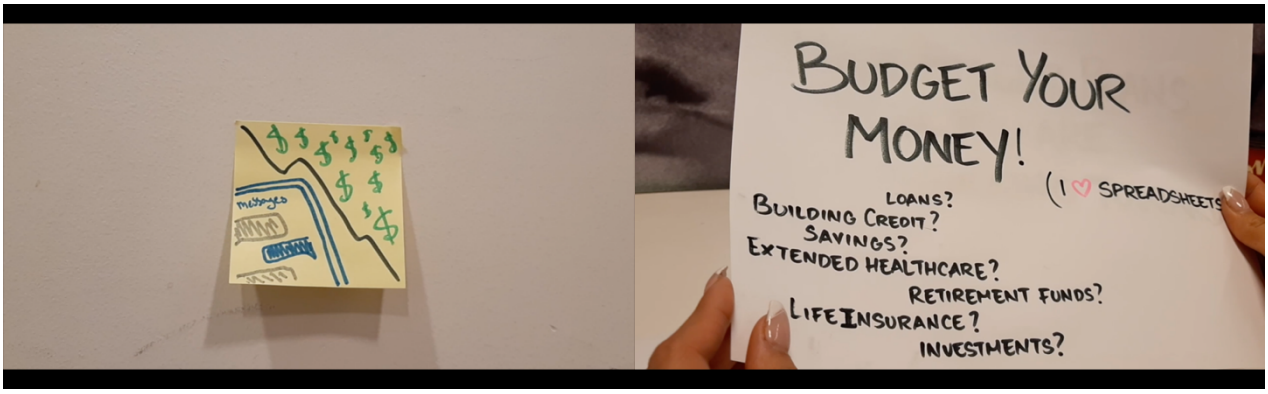

Figure 1.1— Stills from the Celling Sex film.
Photo on left: "For every $500 date I would spend hours searching through profiles on Seeking Arrangement or messaging weirdly needy guys"
Photo on right: Advice to other people who trade, or who might consider trading.

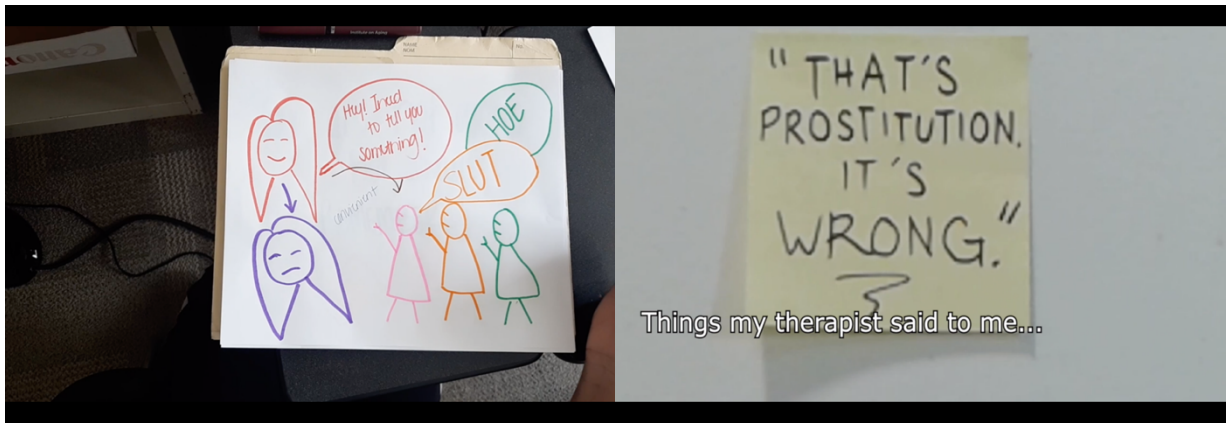

Figure 1.2— Stills from the Celling Sex film.
Photo on left: When the participant was looking to confide in her cousins she was met with the response, "You are such a slut, such a hoe. How could you be selling sex for material like that? Do you not have any self-respect? Do you not have any shame? What is wrong with you. Has the Western culture completely changed you?"
Photo on right: One of the judgemental remarks that a participant received from her therapist.

The Celling Sex film guides viewers through the background of the project, beginning with the different ways that trading was defined for the women involved, as well as their motivations for trading. Viewers are then given insight into what one might expect: navigating user profiles on Seeking Arrangements, the amount of time that is invested into setting up a date, emotional impacts, as well as advice on setting boundaries and negotiating sexual acts. Some participants share the violence that they have experienced— manipulation and harassment from dates, professionals who shamed and victim-blamed, as well as police who were unsupportive until violence escalated. Others discussed the toll that trading had on their mental health: where some were alienated from their families, felt the weight of secrecy and isolation, or started to view all their relationships as somewhat transactional. Strategies to navigate the physical, emotional, and mental risks are shared as advice to reduce harm for other people who already trade or are considering it. Some of these strategies included: conducting reverse image searches to verify identity, checking in with a friend before and after a date, setting your personal goals and boundaries, and having realistic expectations— as one participant says "it's like any other job— it's not always going to be this amazing experience, it's not always going to be a terrible experience either." The film ends with advice for allies and supporters to listen to the voices of young women who trade and unpack, challenge, and end the stigma that surrounds trading and sex work. The film takes a desire-based approach in its representation— a frame that is "concerned with understanding complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives" (Tuck, 2009, p 416).

There is a range of techniques participants used to maintain anonymity and relay their messages. Some decided to draw and write out their scenes on cue cards or sticky notes. Other participants chose to re-enact what it is like to find a date on Seeking Arrangements or strategies employed to stay safe while

on the date. One participant decided to show her face. Others opted to film their surroundings and do voice-overs. The composite film's aesthetic is reflective of the diverse visual choices that were made by participants and demonstrates both the flexibility and myriad of approaches that cellphilming can take.

An ethical review protocol was submitted and approved to study audience response. Screenings were set up initially through university colleagues who taught in relevant programs— health, social work, and education— and to organizations that were originally involved in recruitment for the project. In total, twelve organizations and ten professors were contacted. Eight confirmed screenings are reflected upon here. Another seven were organized before or after or the formal data collection period.

Each screening was facilitated by at least one member of the academic research team, and one peer researcher (or original participant cellphilm maker). They were between 60-90 minutes in duration. After introducing the project, written consent was sought to participate in the evaluation activities. Audience members were given a blank index card which allowed them space to share their demographic information (age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and profession/area of study) on one side, and their initial ideas or definitions of transactional sex on the other (see Figure 2). The composite film was then screened. Brochures that highlighted key themes were distributed (Figure 3). Audience members' were given a few minutes to write down their initial responses to the following questions:

- What did you think about the video? What were its key messages?
- How does the video speak to your original definitions of trading sex?
- What questions remain about trading sex or sugaring for you?
- How does the video compare with the pamphlet?
- How does the video impact you in your personal or professional life?
- How does your impression now differ from your initial thoughts you jotted on your cards?
- Are there any other reflections or thoughts you would like to share?

A facilitated discussion followed. In some cases, all audience members gave their consent to be audio-recorded. In others, we broke into smaller groups for discussion so that only the responses of participants who consented could be recorded. Field notes were taken after each screening. Audio recordings were transcribed and uploaded into NVivo for thematic analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). To maintain anonymity, audience members' have been given unique pseudonyms. A list was compiled of all the audience members real names, and new names were given to reflect gender (female, male or gender-neutral) and cultural background where possible. In this paper, we discuss four themes that emerged from the post-screening discussions: consciousness-raising, commitments to change, ownership and representation, and critical response.

Figure 2: Index cards describing some audience members first impressions or definitions of transactional sex.

WHAT IS CELLING SEX?

Celling Sex is a research project that learnt from 15 cisgender and queer young women between the ages of 19 and 25 who trade sex in Toronto. We did interviews. The young women also made cellphone videos explaining (a) how to stay safer while trading sex and (b) what it is like to go the doctor and get mental health support.

WHAT'S TRADING SEX?

Trading sex is the exchange for virtual or real interactions to get stuff, like money, food, and gifts. It can include having sex with someone, but some people just trade the idea of having sex. Young people might actively choose to trade sex, whereas others find themselves in transactional relationships unexpectedly. There are many different names for these relationships: sex work, escorting, sugaring, selling nudes, having a sugar daddy, finessing or being in a strange relationship. Some people find emotional connections in these relationships, while other are in it for the money and the stuff.

chopped money
finessing
sugar baby
boopsing
your zaddie
sugar momma, Daddy

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO TRADE SEX?

» **Don't believe everything you see in the media**

Not every good thing that happens to you will feel amazing, empowering or 'I wanna write a Vice article about it' amazing. (ANNABELLE)

It's fast money, not necessarily easy money because it's a frickin difficult job to convince someone to give you the money. (MEL)

» **Playing a part**

I would dress differently, I would talk differently, I would walk differently, I would behave differently because it fits what they want, like the perfect princess. (CHERYL)

» **Feeling pressure to do something you don't want to do**

It's easy to get into a mindset where it's hard to define your own boundaries because you feel like you're beholden to the other person. (CAT)

» **Judgement**

Like I just did not have a successful experience when it came to therapy...[there was] quite a bit of shaming. (KEI-MARIE)

» **Wait times and the doctors**

The wait time [for a doctor's appointment] kind of sucks because I have to like plan weeks in advance to see them. (FRESIA)

TIPS

1. Set personal boundaries

- Set a limit to how much time you spend sugaring and maintaining your sugar relationships;
- Make time for yourself and to see your loved ones;
- Decide before you go on a date how physical you want to get with the person;
- Getting money or gifts from someone does not entitle them to anything;
- You can always say no;
- If you feel uncomfortable leave and cut contact;

[A sugar daddy] will sometimes send me like very sexual like sexts sort of thing and I realized I don't have to keep this up, like I'm not getting paid for this time. (FRESIA)

2. A relationship and/or sex will not always bring you happiness

- You don't have to have sex;
- Having sex with someone shouldn't make or break a relationship.

It's you withholding what they want that's gonna give you what you want. (DAISY)

3. Find a support network

- Find at least one trusted person who accepts you regardless of if you trade or not;
- If you don't feel ready to tell someone, there are supports like maggiestoronto.ca; survivethecLub.com; teenhealthsource.com

I was lucky ... I didn't ever have a feeling that [my friends] would judge me for it one way or the other. (ANNABELLE)

4. Put your health first

- Your safety is your #1 priority;
- If you are having oral, anal or vaginal sex, use condoms;
- Get tested for STI and HIV
- Plan ahead, schedule regular visits with your healthcare provider to avoid long wait times for appointments.
- You are not alone, if you are feeling anxious, depressed, or just uncertain about things, there are supports available that are confidential, inclusive and non-judgemental.

I always use protection [condoms], that's a big one for oral as well. (CAT)

Figure 3: The youth brochure handed out at screening events which shares advice and harm reduction tips for those considering trading.

What did we find?

Over two months, eight screenings were set up with fifty-eight people who partook in the research, though there were more in total attendance. The screenings were organized with community organizations and youth groups, service providers, and the general public (see Table 1 for the full list of audiences). Of the demographic information that was returned 69% of audience members identified as women, 6% as non-binary, and 25% as male. Black and White women made up the majority of audiences at 32% respectively. South Asian, Asian, Latina, Mixed, and Middle Eastern women made up the remaining 36% of audiences. Audiences also ranged in age, with the youngest person being 17 and the oldest at 59. Due to the diversity of audiences, conversation varied widely. Nevertheless, screenings opened up spaces for critical narrative intervention where the four key themes emerged: consciousness-raising, commitments to change, ownership, and representation, as well as reinforcing stereotypes.

Audience	Who attended	Organizing the screening	Number of attendees
1. Young mom's screening	A weekly drop-in group for young mothers	Referred to by another community organization. Communicated via email and phone calls. No poster was put up.	9 audience members[1]
2. Underhoused youth	A weekly drop-in group that is focused on harm reduction	Organized via email, posters were shared via listserv and on location	6 audience members
3. Sex shop customers	Screening open to the public	Organized through phone calls and emails. Poster and event information shared on social media. Participants could register on their events webpage.	4 audience members[2]
4. HIV + youth support group	A weekly drop-in group for HIV+ youth	Organized via phone, email, and in-person meetings. Poster was put up on location.	5 audience members
5. Peer health volunteers	Peer volunteers who work at a youth health centre	Organized through network of colleagues after a screening was held for staff at the same organization.	10 audience members[3]
6. Public screening	Screening open to the public in partnership with an art gallery and LGBTQ community centre	Organized via phone, email, and in-person meetings. media pages. Stills from the Celling Sex film were put up in the art gallery a month before the screening.	9 audience members
7. Staff from a multiservice agency	Staff at the centre	Organized through network of colleagues	7 audience members
8. Professional sex workers	A weekly drop-in lunch	Organized via phone, email, and in-person meetings. Poster was put up on a community board	8 audience members

Table 1: Constellation of screenings: who, where, and how.

[1] The young mom's screening was not audio recorded.
[2] 15 people registered online, however this did not translate into attendees.
[3] This group was broken into two. Both conversations were recorded, however one recording file was corrupted resulting in one transcribed discussion.

Consciousness Raising

For many of the audience members, the film was a catalyst for personal reflection. Audiences commented on how the screening helped them think differently about (a) relationships in their lives; (b) their cultural understandings and connections to transactional sex, (c) the transferability of harm reduction practices to their own lives, and (d) confront their own stereotypes.

At six of the screenings, audience members described how the film helped reveal a fuller spectrum of transactional behaviour that happens in all relationships and made comparisons to their own lives. Lucca from the HIV + youth support group remarked that the film displayed "the intimacy, the conversation […] which goes to show how much parallel there is with our regular relationships." Evan from this same screening connected to a woman in the film who shared,

> "'we've all done things that we don't like to do for money.' My mind goes to those jobs that I hated— like I felt like I was selling myself for. […] But because it was a legit job and I could file it in my taxes and this and that, society is going to think that there's nothing wrong with it."

Jayden felt that the film "hit close to home. Cause for me I kinda questioned everything that I do. Like what kind of relationships, I have." (HIV + youth support group). At the screenings with the peer health volunteers and the underhoused youth group, many audience members found the vetting practices employed by women who trade to be relatable to online dating and discussed how the harm reduction practices portrayed were "not just for people who trade." Ramona, who attended the underhoused youth screening remarked that "navigating the dating world—like everyone is right now— Seeking Arrangement or Tinder, doesn't matter what the end goal is; if you're getting a money exchange, the risks are exactly the same of the danger of getting in someone's car or meeting someone." These remarks suggest that audience members were paying close attention to the film to make connections with their own lives and experiences.

For some audience members, the film pushed them to reflect on cultural definitions and dimensions to transactional sex. Bahisa from the public screening said, "[In Pakistan] wealthier families are sought out to give the girl or bride a better life, a climb up the social ladder. There's some very, very transactional elements around those kinds of marriages actually." At the underhoused youth screening, Cedella reflected on how her ideas about transactional sex formed: "I come from a Caribbean background, if I [trade sex], they're gonna look at me as no good. Somebody who doesn't have a life, somebody who doesn't care for their life. But I came to North America and I see things differently, I haven't done it but maybe who knows, it's new experience." This conversation continued where the paradox between the acceptability of men exchanging sex was discussed within Jamaican culture, where

"rent-a-dread" or sex and romantic tourism is a socially accepted reality. These reflections contextualize trading as a practice already happening in nuanced ways across cultural and geographic contexts. These understandings add a layer of complexity and challenge the idea, as one of the women in the Celling Sex film puts it, that transactional sex is misunderstood as a result of moral corruption through exposure to Western culture (Figure 1.2).

Audience members were also able to identify the damaging effects of stigma that are embedded in institutions and held by larger society. For Bahisa, the film was a way for her to realize that "these stigmas aren't just around sex workers—I notice anyone that isn't fitting into this capitalistic mold— displaced people, sex workers, when it comes to gender, trans folks" is subject to its discourse. The deficit-based characterizations of people who trade sex and the economic and political systems which shape these characterizations were exemplified in a conversation at the public screening. Dev felt strippers (and by extension other women who sell the commodity of sex) do not like their work and are exploited. Yvette responded by saying, "under a capitalist system, if you are doing sex work voluntarily, and you're doing it because you have to make a living— I don't think its necessarily different from doing any other job because you have to make a living." (Public screening). This was not the only conversation where audience members brought up the exploitation of women who sell sex. In fact, at four screenings, topics of trafficking and the lack of agency experienced by some women were raised. This offered an important opportunity for debate and exchange. The Celling Sex project sought out young women who were trading sex on their own terms. While exploitation and trafficking are a reality for others, our focus was to engage young women who choose to trade and explore how they stay safer while trading. This became an opportunity to challenge stigma and assumptions which surround sexual work (that rely upon the false understanding that the people who do engage *must* be exploited, as no one would want to choose sexual work).

At screenings where there were people in the room with trading experience, the stigma which was discussed in the film resonated. Daryn felt,

> "When you look at it, it's the oldest profession known to man. And everybody seems to like, as you say, bad, bad connotations towards it. […] you don't know why [people are] doing it and their circumstances." (Professional sex workers).

Carter, another professional sex worker, spoke to the empowerment and perspective he receives from his work—

> "I love my job because I can sit and tell people— 'yes, I have done that. I know how you feel.' And my empathy is not fake— it's not something I've read in a book, its lived experience and there's no substitute for lived experience. Kay? I can read about prostitution till I'm blue in the face, and go [tsk, tsk, tsk] and make a judgement call myself, and be judgemental like 90% of

> society is. Okay? But, having lived it, I have a whooooooole fresh new look on it." (Professional sex workers).

For Leilani, the film helped in "normalizing this type of work" (Peer health volunteers), where "the young women used [strategies] in terms of thinking about this in respect to their larger life plans and goals." (Allison, Public screening).

The film also challenged other stereotypes of women who trade an uneducated or incompetent. Some audience members were surprised to see that young women in the film used spreadsheets and budgeting tools, and upon reflection felt that the film was "a good tool to kind of disrupt our own preconceived conceptions" (Allison, public screening; Olivia, Multi-service agency staff).

Commitments to Change

The Celling Sex film raised challenges that young women had when trying to access social and healthcare supports. At six of the eight screenings, there were service providers in the room—ranging from social workers, healthcare providers, program organizers, and peer volunteers. Many of the first responses to the film were the disappointment that "in this day and age there is still this stigma and um victim-blaming… It's just… it leaves a bad taste in my mouth." (Janelle, Multi-service agency staff). However, the discussions moved beyond frustration and disappointment towards spaces of strategizing for change. There was an acknowledgement of the power and responsibility that service providers have; Evan, the facilitator of the HIV+ youth support group felt that "the issue isn't what people choose or choose not to do with their body— the issue is how we societally are structured to not treat that with respect. And like, it's my job to do what I can to help change that system." Evan's reflection encapsulates the reason why participants chose professionals and service providers as their intended audience: so providers can see themselves as implicated in the perpetuation of stigma (directly or indirectly), and to recognize that they have a role in offsetting the continuation.

Audience members wrestled with the question of how they can provide non-judgemental space. The peer volunteers felt that it is important for service providers to become more aware of the judgments they hold, how their assumptions might enter the space, and focus on reducing those judgements. Kaia reflected that "judgement can come out in like all forms, even if you don't want it to. It could be like a face you make in response to a question right." (Peer health volunteers). They continued to say that workshops like the one they were attending would help assist people to become aware of their ideas and possible judgements. Sonya from the multiservice agency problematized the idea of creatcreating non-judgemental spaces: where the recommendations put forward by the women in the film,

> "are much easier said than done on the part of health care workers and health care providers. As much as many people try to be non-judgemental, and compassionate, and all those good words, but when you're dealing with people whose realities are outside of your own, it is much harder to be able to understand what puts people in those positions."

Another layer of complexity was added when peer volunteers considered the finite resource of time. They described how the amount of time that service providers have with patients is already limited. This can make it difficult to forge the type of relationship and space that feels welcoming. For Nadine, "it's not so much a doctors' issue, but a system issue." (Peer health volunteers). Participants in the film asked service providers to commit themselves to the work of unlearning. However, the process of changing instilled beliefs and unspoken assumptions does not happen overnight. These conversations highlight that the work begins with opening a space to air thoughts, obstacles, and tensions to chart a path forward.

Other audience members felt that the video acted as a reminder— to not make assumptions, and to question their intentions when working with young people (Ramona, Underhoused youth). For Madelyn at the underhoused youth screening, a program coordinator and former sex worker reflected, "I'm going to go sit at home and [ask myself] 'hey, am I doing everything to make sure I'm not saving anyone and meeting people where they want to be met at?' So [the film is] a good self-reflection as a worker". Olivia from the multiservice agency reflected that the film was a "reminder to think about this as […] someone's potential career so to speak" and "ultimately like the fact that they're getting money for it doesn't really change the medical piece of it, um like in terms of getting tested for STI's." Madelyn offered a practical suggestion to create safe(r) spaces by re-thinking their programming—

> "Generalizing [my workshops] so those in the space who have the experience can get the info and get info that keeps them safer, and others can get info maybe it's not Seeking Arrangement but Tinder— how do we navigate online dating?"

While service providers do not always have the power to shift entire systems, this suggestion highlights the control and capacity that is within reach: starting with one's programming offers potential for social action and generative dialogue.

Ownership and Representation

A point that was emphasized across screenings was how the voices of the women, and the ways that their experiences were represented, were the stars of the film. As Gavin from the HIV + youth support group noted, "I've seen a lot of short films and stuff on sex work, and I haven't seen something like this where the workers themselves [are] in control." They continued to elaborate saying, "it's coming from

people's thoughts rather than peering in through the windows [and] it doesn't need a hook" (HIV + youth support group). This reflection was echoed by Zuri, a peer volunteer—

> "I think a lot of times when we talk about sex work, in like media or wherever, its either sensationalized— like 'oh you can make so much money and be rich and it's amazing and no work!' And then there's another story of it where it's like 'broken people do it', and like it's really dangerous like… after listening to like lived experience of it, it paints a picture of like it's those two things and everything in between" (Peer health volunteers).

Nadine another peer volunteer, felt that the film "gives back some of that agency and autonomy" which is often taken away from stereotypic representations of young women who trade; demonstrating the danger that lies in narrow portrayals. For Lyla who attended the screening at the sex shop, many parts of the film were relatable including both the content and composition. For instance, the musical backtrack is a song that she has used to get herself "pumped up" before her escorting shifts. Audiences were able to recognize that through the medium of cellphilming, and our method of composite filming, dominant portrayals of young women who trade were challenged.

The diversity of experience and how it was represented was another point which struck audience members, whereby the different mediums—writing, drawing, speaking, role-playing—could help facilitate different understandings for different people (Zuri, Simone, Peer health volunteers; Sonya, Multiservice agency staff; Cedella, Underhoused youth; Lucca, HIV + youth support group; Amir, Quinn, Yvette, Kathryn, Public screening; Aubree, Sex shop customers). For Lucca seeing the diversity of tactics of maintaining confidentiality was a way for them to think about their own experiences, and how to represent them— "I think there are some parallels there with how, the different levels to which we disclose our [HIV] status and the different mediums that we might tell our stories through. Um, whether it involves your face. I think about that all the time." (S4). Having the strengths of the method— where cellphilming lends the producer control over their story and level of confidentiality— recognized outside of academia as a medium that might work for others who face stigma is a galvanizing prospect.

At the screenings, the brochures were another tool to present and disseminate the project findings. Several audience members across screenings felt that the brochures that were handed out were effective as they can be distributed and "you never know who is going to read it." (Cedella, Underhoused youth). This was echoed at another screening where an audience member commented that they felt the "brochure is really cool because it is harm reduction tips for sex work, and where do you see that? Would your doctor's office have this, like 'here's what you need to know if you're going to do sex work', it's really hard to find that information and I think that would be really radical and helpful to give this kind of thing" (Quinn, Public screening). Alison felt that

> "the brochure and the videos are complementary, but they serve very different purposes. One of the things that I think is great about the brochure, they can be left around, and someone can pick it up and there aren't a lot of material out there for folks who trade sex that are young people from a harm reduction lens. […] I think the video helps to break down stigma. Because it is so personal, you hear those stories. And you're like 'oh these folks are real; they are real people with complex lives', and you can't get that in a brochure" (Public screening)

The approach and method of storytelling, alongside other ways of representing information, proved to be effective for audiences to expand their ideas of who trades, and what trading can look like.

Re-inscribing Stereotypes and Stigma

While the majority of audience members across screenings shared how the film impacted their definitions of trading, challenged their ideas and taught them something new, this was not the case for all.

Some audience members felt that the perspectives shown in the film privileged certain voices over others. At several screenings, audience members asked why young men were not included in our project. There was the desire to see and hear from young men who trade: "there's a lot of young men who are doing it, and we don't really talk about it, [because] it's always centered around young women trading." (Madelyn, Underhoused youth). This sentiment was raised repeatedly and often opened discussions about the gendered nature of this work.

Professional sex workers offered a different critique. Based on their life experience, they felt that the film contributed to a "romanticism of [trading]" (Noa). Participants in the film were all young women who were mostly 'newer' to trading. Most were students. Many did not identify as sex workers. Nevertheless, sex working audience members did not necessarily appreciate the identity distinction. Daryn, for instance, felt like the film offered an unrealistic portrayal of sex work. He said:

> "in the real world, as I said, there's various types of individuals who sell sex and they weren't covered there, and the reality is there is a lot more violence, a lot more threats, you know there isn't this $300 dates, I mean people are addicts and they will pull a date for $50 bucks or less".

Likewise, Noa pointed out that "having children, having a family wasn't really represented. Like I support my kids through sex work, which is something, which is a whole other stigma." Here, both Daryn and Noa felt that the film represented a sanitized or middle-class view of trading which did not encapsulate their experiences of poverty and survival sex

Similarly, Carter, another sex worker at the same screening, was judgemental of the cellphilmers' decisions to engage in trading sex for luxury items (rather than subsistence).

> "it's all about me, it's all about the video games, console for that… you know the nice clothing, the shoes, or this phone, everything. […] They're willing to lower themselves and degrade themselves for materialistic goods…people doing it cause they want material things."

Building off of Carter's remarks, Michaela stated,

> "[Then] there's people like me. The reason I started doing it is because this is my bank balance— $20.80— I'm on ODSP [Ontario Disability Support Program], and […] its barely making enough to get by […] I think it's designed to make people live under the poverty line.".

This discussion echoed Yvette's remarks at the public screening, where she talked about how one's ability to consent to work cannot be discussed without recognizing the greater capitalist context. While there certainly were women in the Celling Sex project who chose trading in response to their financial realities and pressures, this was not the reality for all. The sex working audience members did not feel that this perspective was highlighted enough in the film.

Wanting to see a distinction in perspectives was echoed at other screenings as well. Leilani, at the peer volunteer screening, also wanted more information about "the hierarchy that exists within trading sex … the different backgrounds that people come in [and] how it affects their stance in the hierarchy as well." By alluding to hierarchies, Leilani may be inadvertently contributing the judgemental attitudes.

At the screening with staff at the multiservice agency, four out of seven reported not learning anything new. Besides the screening with professional sex workers, this was the only audience where over half of the group felt that they already had a good understanding of trading and all the film encompassed. While disappointment was expressed regarding the treatment that the young women received from health care professionals, their general response was that the film confirmed what was already known.

Finally, after the screening with young moms, a staff member made a derogatory joke towards the women in the project. This was particularly disappointing and disheartening after screening a film about challenging stigma. These sorts of responses demonstrate that perhaps, the film— either through its composition, aesthetic, or general messaging— was not a method that worked for these audience members in prompting reflection. At the same time, this response could be explained by any number of factors, demonstrating the complexity of assessing audience engagement.

Discussion:

Setting up screenings with a diversity of community members became a way to assess the impacts of participatory visual products. Screenings were opportunities to evaluate the possibilities for narrative intervention and educative potential. The impacts which resulted from our audience

engagement are tempered with questions and limitations which arose in the process. While we heard from a diversity of audiences, our study had several limitations.

First, the reach of our screenings was limited to one time, in-person events. Celling Sex filmmakers did not consent to have their work shared online (Gubrium & Harper, 2013). This limited the potential reach of the film. Second, audiences were each small, self-selected groups that represented particular community positions. Findings may not be generalizable across wider populations. Third, the Celling Sex film was a highly edited product that brought the strongest elements across the cellphilms to create a strong and cohesive narrative. If we decided to screen participants' stand-alone cellphilms, would audiences still have been moved in the profound reflections that they gave? It is possible, but most likely, screening all fourteen cellphilms would lead to some form of disengagement due to the length of time, overlaps in messages, as well as aesthetic fatigue. The composite film acted as a gateway for audience members and service providers to dialogue and reflect on the collective shortcomings, challenges, and possibilities for change.

Fourth, even though these discussions were promising, we were unable to determine if they translated into later action or concrete acts of allyship, as we had no mechanism for following up. As Switzer (2018) writes on the limitations of participatory visual methods, the methodologies "are not a short-cut to patiently built relationships, nor will these methods single-handedly undue the legacy of damaging research done on the backs of communities" (p 200). Similarly, sharing participant-generated media with an audience for an hour, will not necessarily or automatically translate into action. While audiences were able to recognize commonalities and changes that they *could* integrate to be an ally, translating this awareness to action(s) takes time, commitment, discomfort, and practice (Hill Collins, 1993; Horowitz et al., 2009; Catalani & Minkler, 2009; MacEntee, 2015). For other visual researchers who are concerned with measuring impact from the products of participatory generated media, it may be worthwhile to organize a longitudinal study. For instance, if organized with service providers, this could lead to some mechanisms of measuring accountability. Fifth, because team members (including filmmakers) were present at all debrief sessions, it is possible that audience members may have been pre-disposed to provide more positive reviews and feedback.

Nevertheless, we found the method of cellphilming, where the participant's voices and experiences were centered, was a way to change the conversations and dominant stories of young women who trade. At screenings, audience conversations centred around personal reflection and reassessment of preconceived ideas about who engages in transactional sex and what the practice might look like. Some audience members were able to confront their preconceived notions and were forthcoming about how the film lent them a more nuanced perspective. Our successful mobilization of the cellphilms as educative tools to challenge stigma echoes the findings of other projects that have shared the products of

participatory visual methods for similar purposes. (Flicker et al, 2018; Francis & Hemson, 2006; de Lange & Mitchell, 2012; Bresler, 2006).

It appeared that many audience members were able to dissolve some of the perceived divisions between the women they were seeing in the film, and themselves through their assessment of their relationships, and work experiences. In recognizing that there is a spectrum of transaction, audience members could find similarities in their experience, and in theory, this can be a starting point to creating internal change, empathy, and solidarity building. As Patricia Hill Collins (1993) argues, to change, "we require new categories of connection, new visions of what our relationships with one another can be" (p 27). These new ways of connecting across social identities begin with the difficult work of personal interrogation, acknowledging power, uncovering commonalities, and building empathy (Hill Collins, 1993; Wiley & Bikmen, 2012; Gray, 2004). The pedagogical work then, of sharing participatory visual methods does hold potential for viewers to re-assess what they know to be true— of themselves, and others.

Not all audience members, especially those who occupy privileged positions of power, will necessarily approach any film with an open and curious mind. A presumptive mindset is an insidious challenge. This was exemplified by the staff who reported that they did not learn anything new, and the service provider who made a judgemental remark. Different strategies may need to be tested to see which will work best in these contexts. For instance, most audience members valued the 'take-away' handout that went alongside the film. Other strategies could also be explored.

We asked audiences to bear witness and as Giroux (2012) puts it, "[soar] beyond the immediate confines of one's experiences, entering a dialogue with history, and [imagine] a future that would not merely reproduce the present" (p 119). Bearing witness is an approach that is informed by a commitment to learn and understand to "activate a sense of injustice" (Deutsch, 2004 as cited in Fine, 2006, p 86). It is an active, iterative process whereby one attempts to step outside of programmed and complacent responses. Deep listening, a humble approach, and a vigilant eye on one's personal beliefs are the precursory steps to being moved to take meaningful action. The stigma and assumptions that service providers (ranging from physicians, social workers, and therapists, hold) has already been shown to impact the quality of service sex workers receive (Benoit et al., 2015, 2018; Lazarus, et al., 2012; Logie et al., 2011; Socías et al., 2016; Duff et al., 2015). It is troubling that there was no real takeaway for some of the service providers, as it demonstrates a foreclosure in critical reflection and discussion. The women in the film emphasized that professionals should be listening, asking questions, and not making assumptions. While the service providers "knew" this, it is unclear if whether and how they put these lessons into daily practice.

Another consideration is the impact of images and representation. It is often assumed that due to participant-generated representation, that participatory visual products "travel unproblematically within, across, and between cultures to effect constructive change for those involved in their production" (Hindon et al., 2012, p 350). In practice, we saw that the issues which were raised by the Celling Sex film did not represent people who trade or sell sex in totality. At six screenings, audience members appreciated the approach and gaze of the film. In contrast, the feedback that we received from the other two was that the film inadvertently reinforced particular stigma and stereotypes.

In hindsight, it is probable that the young women in Celling Sex and the professional sex workers would likely find common ground in other contexts. However, some of the choices made in filming, editing, and screening may have inadvertently created barriers to solidarity possibilities. For reasons of safety, confidentiality, and brevity, most of the young women's backstories, class, racial, and social identities were not contextualized in the composite. This information was glaringly missing by the audience of sex workers as they offered feedback on what was shown (and not shown). While the film was meant to act as a starting point for discussion, it is important to recognize how representation "almost always involves violence to the subject of representation" (Said, 2005, p 40). The professional sex workers felt alienated from the portrayals, and when participants heard their feedback (namely that the film romanticized trading, and represented middle-class experiences), they were upset and defensive about this characterization. This screening highlights the spectrum which exists across transactional sex and raises important questions about how to represent and narrate experience. It also shows how positionality is an important dimension of audiencing.

These considerations show us that mobilizing the products of participatory visual methods require researchers and participants to deliberately assess their approaches to audience engagement. Reflecting on potential audiences, how to represent the project, making room for moments of discomfort, and holding cautionary optimism towards the ability to spark change, are all part of the process. In attending to these choices, researchers and participants can begin to appreciate the slow machinations of consciousness raising and social change. The space of dialogue and learning is not limited to the audiences who engage with the visual work, but to the producers as well. Our research team had the opportunity to engage in eight different conversations, which gave rise to eight different moments in time where we could engage our ideas, the ideas of the audiences, and perhaps come to deeper, nuanced understandings. Muhammad et al (2015) share their reflections on community-based research and developing "a continual, co-learning environment promotes community ownership and co-governance, an essential element of any change or improvement targeted for complex systems" (para. 55). Re-engaging with the visual work, and opening the circle of people who engage, allows for researchers and participants to think more deeply about the knowledge and agency they have, and how this informs their consecutive engagements (Mitchell, 2011b).

Conclusion

In *By Any Media Necessary: The New Youth Activism,* Henry Jenkins speaks to the political landscape which surrounds the concept of "voice" and what it means to tell "stories that matter" (p 20). Jenkins draws upon Nick Couldry's (2010) understandings where the politics of voice demands going beyond an individual "celebration of people speaking or telling stories." (Couldry, 2010, p 130 as cited in, Jenkins, 2016, p 20). Rather, voice needs to be "placed in a larger political context that describes the forces that enable or block certain voices from being taken seriously as part of ongoing struggles over power" to actively listen and integrate voice into social and political change (Jenkins, 2016, p 20).

The young women involved in the Celling Sex project represented their realities to speak back to the stereotypical images that are found in popular media and culture. We took Mitchell, de Lange, and Molestane (2017) up on their call to take participatory visual methodologies "seriously" by assessing our composite film's pedagogical impacts with audiences. In gathering the responses and reflections to the Celling Sex film, it became evident that there is a role for the products of participatory visual methodologies to have in educating and challenging dominant narratives. Gathering response also allowed us to engage with the limitations of small-scale audience engagement. We encourage other participatory visual researchers to do the same: researchers and participants alike can benefit from engaging with communities in critical conversations about social change.

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Booklet: **Screening Stories: Community engagement with the Celling Sex Film**

"Everytime we come together, we defy a system that tells us we're better apart.

. . .

We must be the disruptors of truth. We must be the diviners of change. We must imagine differently and make it true. We don't need people to see the light. We must be the light."

JANAYA 'FUTURE' KHAN

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Caterina Tess Kendrick

Cover art and booklet design by author

HOW TO CITE THIS BOOKLET:

Kendrick, C. (2020) Screening Stories: Community Engagement with the Celling Sex film

IMMENSE THANKS TO:

Sarah Flicker, Katie MacEntee, The Celling Sex team, Ciann Wilson, Halimo Abdi and Erica Marrison. A big thank you to all of our partners and supporters along the way.

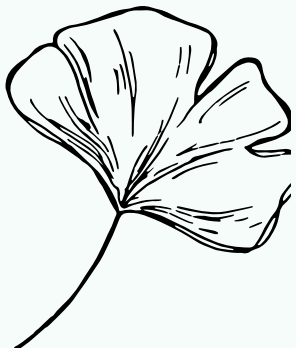
What is this Booklet?

This booklet is a culmination of the audience engagement study with the Celling Sex film. We were interested to find out what impacts the film could have when brought into community settings.

We want to share our findings with the people and spaces which we visited— in order for you to see yourselves and your contribution to the larger project.

This booklet can also be a resource for other community-based, and participatory visual researchers, to share what might be possible when taking the end points of research into new beginnings.

You will be guided through the background to the project, and then introduced to the who, the how, and the 'so what's' of the screenings.



Celling Sex

A BACKGROUND

Celling Sex is a community-based research study which invited 15 young women, of a range of racial and sexual backgrounds, to share their experiences trading sex in Toronto.

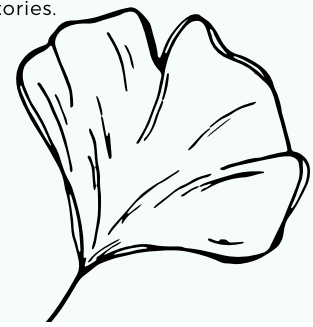
In a recent study, transactional sex has been found to be a widespread practice amongst young people, but there has been little conversation happening out in the open: about how it is defined, or how to stay safe(r).

Research in Sub-Saharan Africa has shown that transactional sex contributes to higher rates of HIV, STDs, and unintended pregnancies due to low condom use. It has also found that young women who trade sex may also be at increased risk of poor mental health and gender based violence.

In North America, academic studies have primarily focused on sex work. The stigma that sex workers encounter from friends, family, and professionals is well documented. This stigma can have adverse health effects.

While it is important to identify the health disparities, issues, and violence that women who sell or trade sex experience, often there is a lack of agency and self-representation in telling these stories.

There are a range of benefits which can be experienced as well— control over rates and hours, a source of networking, and a feasible way for people to achieve necessities and goals, to name a few.

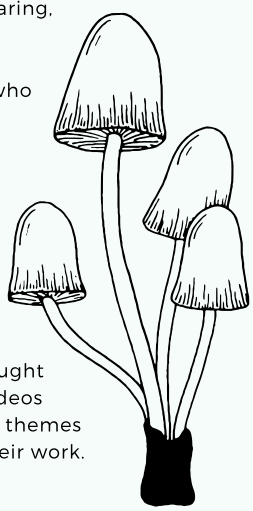


The Celling Sex study developed out of these understandings, in order to answer the questions:

- How do young women negotiate their sexual agency?
- What are their harm reduction strategies, and experiences accessing health supports?
- And how might media they create be used to address their health needs?

The women participated in interviews and created their own digital stories (cellphilms), responding to the question— "what is the most important thing that people should know about being a young woman who trades sex in Toronto?"

There were many ways participants described their choices: sex work, sugaring, selling nudes, having a sugar daddy, finessing, being in a 'strange' or 'hypergamous' (e.g. "I go after people who are able to support me.") relationships.



There was a diversity and fluidity to their relationships and a recognition that all relationships are somewhat transactional. The project takes on "trading" and "transactional sex" as it allows space for all of the above identifications.

A 17-minute film was made, which brought pieces of the participants individual videos together. The movie highlights the key themes which participants identified across their work.

Screen(ing) Share

A BACKGROUND

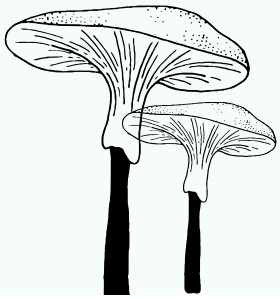
In community-based research, visual methods such as photography, video making, collaging, drawing and others— are seen to be good ways to educate, challenge stigma and mobilize social change. These forms of expression can allow for sharing perspectives that often go unseen and unheard.

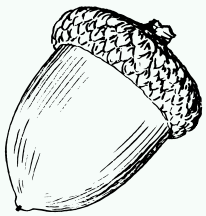
However, there is little documentation of what happens when participant-made visual works are shared with wider communities.

What *is* the capacity that visual stories hold for educating, reframing and transforming narratives? This was the question which guided the screening process.

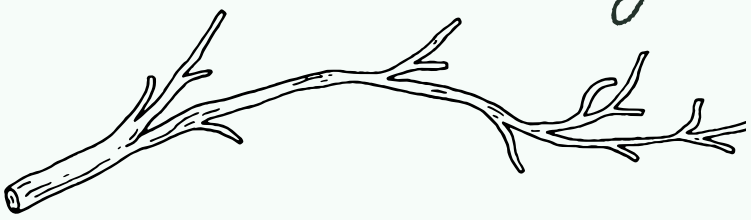
In the film, young women shared their range of experiences. From the benefits trading has shown them, as well as the challenges: accessing non-judgemental healthcare, the issue of policing, and the isolation that can be felt without support from friends, family, or community.

Our team learned a lot through this process— about ourselves, about facilitating, and about community engagement. Here, we focus on the main themes which emerged from the eight screenings that were held.

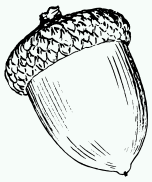




Ecosystem of Screenings



The Celling Sex team wanted to show the film to young people who (may) trade, social service and healthcare providers, students, and the general public.



Organizations that originally helped us with recruitment three years ago were contacted.

It was important to us to return and share what blossomed from the research. Not only is the film relevant for programming and staff knowledge, but all too often researchers enter into communities, get what they need, and are never to return.

WE VISITED...

- Staff from a multi-service health care provider
- A drop-in lunch at an organization by and for sex workers
- A harm reduction group for youth who experience housing insecurity
- Peer volunteers from a social service organization
- A youth group for young people living with HIV
- A young mom's group at a health centre
- A public screening with sex shop customers
- A public screening partnering with an 2SLGBTQ+ art gallery and community center who serves LGBTQ communities

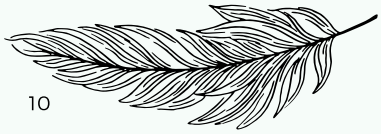
Elements of a Screening

At each screening we would—

- Introduce ourselves and the project
- Audience members would fill out cue cards, reflecting on the question — "what does trading sex mean to you?"
- Watch the 17-minute film
- A semi-facilitated discussion

All discussions which were audio recorded were transcribed and anonymized.

Then, we looked through the transcripts to see what dominant themes emerged.



Field Notes

THESE WERE SOME PEOPLE'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND IDEAS OF TRANSACTIONAL SEX

hey gorgeous
Looking for a generous guy ;)
...

I am unsure how I feel about trading sex. I am not sure about whether it is harmful or beneficial to people who trade sex.

finding ways to get your needs met

hard work!
stigma
police violence
invisible
but also... just a job

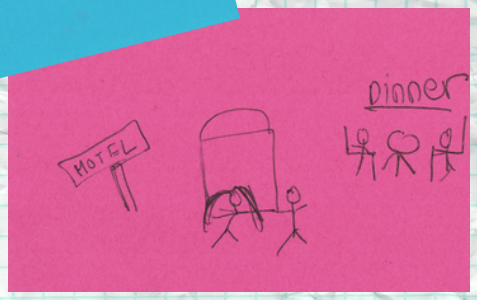
- Stigma
- Violence
- Safety Concerns
- use of words
  - ↳ further harm
  - ↳ health
    - addiction
    - mental
    - emotional
    - physical
    - Sexual
    - financial

harm reduction

identify ✱ barriers

At first...
- Transactional sex work was immoral

Later
- Something that is done out of necessity and is actually the world's longest profession.



A THIRD OF CUE CARDS THAT WERE RETURNED WERE BLANK

12

I have, ~~trading things for sex~~ sex for things when I was younger, particularly, when I first came out and was having many family issues. I needed to support myself and being in school and working PT was not enough to support myself. I have known about this for a while. And remember feeling really dirty about it at first.

Food & Luxury

AS FAR AS I KNOW IT'S A JOB LIKE ANY OTHER... SOME PEOPLE LIKE THE JOB, SOME DON'T, SOME DO IT FOR THE $$$$.

- financial freedom
- sex positivity
- bodily autonomy
- self-love
- offering intimacy for those in search for/need it/lack it
- community & sisterhood

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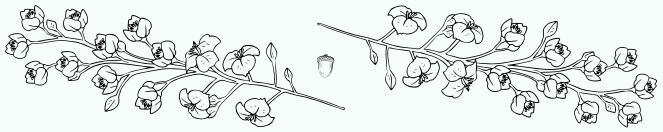
Summary of Findings

FOUR KEY THEMES EMERGED ACROSS ALL EIGHT SCREENINGS:

Personal reflection, commitment to action, ownership and representation, as well as responding back.



1. Personal Reflection

For many of the audience members, the film was a catalyst for personal reflection.

At six different screenings, audiences felt that they were able to see transactional elements in their own relationships.

"[The film] hit close to home. Cause for me I kinda questioned everything that I do. Like what kind of relationships, I have."

"We've all done things that we don't like to do for money.' My mind goes to those jobs that I hated— like I felt like I was selling myself for. […] But because it was a legit job and I could file it in my taxes, society is going to think that there's nothing wrong with it."

Other audience members connected the stigma and judgement the women spoke to in the film, to judgements they have received in their life and relationships.

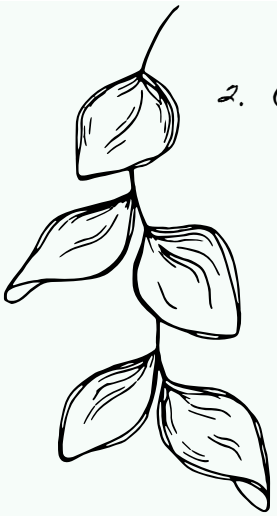
"I was in polyamorous relationships and I got that question a lot— 'do you not respect yourself? He/she/they are just using you for sex.' […] It's interesting that that question just seems across the board for many— if not all— women who are in any sexual or intimate relationship."

For some audience members, the film allowed them to reflect on their cultural definitions and connections to transactional sex.

[In Pakistan] wealthier families are sought out to give the girl a better life, a climb up the social ladder. There's some very, very transactional elements around those kinds of marriages actually."

Audience members found many of the harm reduction practices were not just for people who trade.

"Navigating the dating world—like everyone is right now— Seeking Arrangement or Tinder, doesn't matter what the end goal is; if you're getting a money exchange, the risks are exactly the same of the danger of getting in someone's car or meeting someone."



2. Commitment to Action

The Celling Sex film raised challenges that young women had when trying to access social and healthcare supports.

At six of the eight screenings, there were service providers in the room—ranging from social workers, healthcare providers, program organizers, and peer volunteers.

For service providers, it was troubling and disappointing to see the stigma and barriers the young women in the film encountered from other health care providers.

"The fact that in this day and age there is still this stigma and um victim blaming... It's just... it leaves a bad taste in my mouth."

There was an acknowledgement of the power and responsibility that service providers have in confronting the stigma and biases in the workplace.

"The issue isn't what people choose or choose not to do with their body— the issue is how we societally are structured to not treat that with respect. And like, it's my job to do what I can to help change that system."

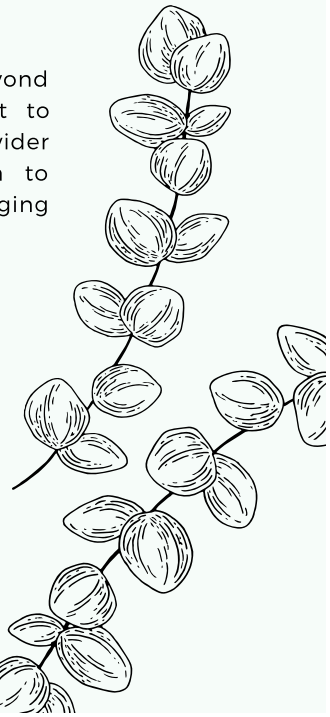
Service providers reflected on the difficulty of creating non-judgemental space—

"The recommendations [in the film] are much easier said than done on the part of health care workers and health care providers. As much as many people try to be non-judgemental, and compassionate, and all those good words, but when you're dealing with people whose realities are outside of your own, it is much harder to be able to understand what puts people in those positions."

"Judgement can come out in like all forms, even if you don't want it to. It could be like a face you make in response to a question right."

Discussions moved beyond frustration and disappointment to strategize. One service provider offered a practical suggestion to keep spaces safe(r) by rearranging some of their programming—

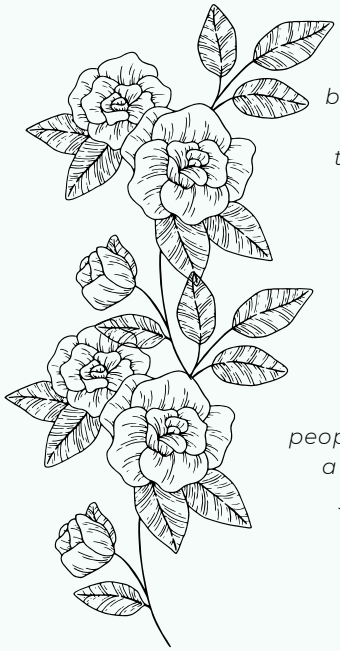
"Generalizing [my workshops] so those in the space who have the experience can get the info and get info that keeps them safer, and others can get info. Maybe it's not Seeking Arrangement but Tinder— how do we navigate online dating?"



3. Ownership and Representation

A point that was emphasized across screenings was how the voices of the women, and how their experiences were represented, were the stars of the film.

“I think a lot of times when we talk about sex work, in like media or wherever, its either sensationalized— like ‘oh you can make so much money and be rich and it’s amazing and no work!’ And then there’s another story of it where it’s like ‘broken people do it’, and like it’s really dangerous like… after listening to like lived experience of it, it paints a picture of like it’s those two things and everything in between”



“I think the video helps to break down stigma. Because it is so personal, you hear those stories. And you’re like ‘oh these folks are real; they are real people with complex lives’"

"I liked the intimacy of the storytelling. Like with the handwriting, and seeing people’s everyday spaces, it was a very sweet perspective that you don’t usually see on sex work."

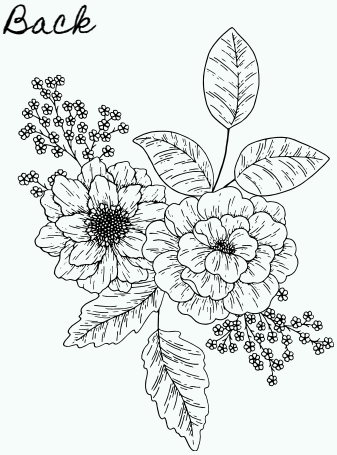
Seeing the diversity of tactics of maintaining confidentiality was a way for some audience members to think about their own experiences, and how to represent them—

"I liked that there was a lot of different mediums used so like drawings, um speaking and like writing things down. I feel like that could help facilitate different understandings for different people, so I think it was great. And also, in respecting people’s anonymity."

“I think there are some parallels there with how, the different levels to which we disclose our [HIV] status and the different mediums that we might tell our stories through. Um, whether it involves your face."

"I liked that you used Cardi B in the background [group laughs] that’s literally like my work playlist. [laughs] I have to use that to get myself pumped up. So it’s very relevant."

4. Responses Back



While the majority of audience members across screening shared how the film impacted their definitions, challenged their ideas, and taught them something new, this was not the case for all.

The screenings were spaces where audience members offered reflections on what was not represented, and what they would have liked to see.

The Celling Sex project didn't include young men who trade, and many across screenings felt that their perspectives should also be showcased.

At the screening with professional sex workers, there was a general sense of critique.

"The reality is there is a lot more violence, a lot more threats, you know there isn't this $300 dates, I mean people are addicts and they will pull a date for $50 bucks or less"

"Having children, having a family wasn't really represented. Like I support my kids through sex work, which is a whole other stigma"

Some from this screening felt the film contributed to a romanticism of transactional sex—

With the younger generation— "It's all about me, it's all about the video games, console for that, you know the nice clothing, the shoes, or this phone, everything. […] They're willing to lower themselves, and degrade themselves for materialistic goods"

"I would definitely say it's a middle-class look of sex work"

Other responses to the film included wanting issues expanded upon, for instance, the topic of policing.

Other audience members were interested in learning more about the lateral prejudice across the continuum of sex work.

"The next step is breaking down stigma, but also involved is breaking down the divide between sex work and people who are just in a relationship that is transactional in some way. Who are doing emotional labor that's reciprocated through their partner supporting them or something that is not explicitly transactional."

So... what does this mean?

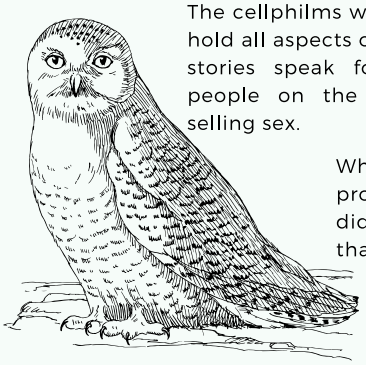
Across screenings, audience members reflected on their definitions and preconceived ideas about who trades sex, and how trading sex looks like. Some audience members were forthcoming with admitting their own biases.

There was a general recognition that the stories told by the women in Celling Sex project are ones that are needed to be heard. Audience members felt these stories have a role in challenging stereotypes, educating, and act as a resource for other young people to keep themselves safer.

For some audience members, they were able to dissolve some of the perceived divisions between themselves and the women in the film, by assessing their own relationship and work experiences.

However, there is no guarantee that these reflections and understandings will translate into actions or acts of allyship.

There are limitations in one-time screening events, where time, trust, accountability, deep listening, are not able to be developed.



The cellphilms were limited in their ability to hold all aspects of the women's stories. These stories speak for themselves, not for all people on the spectrum of trading and selling sex.

When we shared the film with professional sex workers, many didn't feel represented and felt that it reproduced stereotypes.

At another screening, the stigma which the women described experiencing, was reinforced by audience members. There is a spectrum of representation, and challenges when representing. It is important to take time to understand the different dynamics and perspectives in order to create deeper and nuanced understandings.

There are a few key takeaways that we have learned from this process: taking time to reflect on audiences, how to represent the project, making room for moments of discomfort and holding cautionary optimism in the ability to spark change.

There is power and importance in gathering and listening together— in a way that is respectful, and deep. Online activism is opening doors to communicate and have a wider reach. It is a thread in the wider tapestry of engaging in social change. But there are important lessons to learn from community relationship building and engagement. This was a small project, with limited capacity, but the communicative space which opened up speaks volumes.

For myself, this has been a process of understanding my own ways of seeing and moving through the world— staying curious, not foreclosing discussions, and learning how to dialogue across difference. I am inspired by the willingness to engage with the Celling Sex film, team, and challenges which we raised. It is this willingness which shows the possibilities to create discursive spaces in order to build more just, inclusive, equitable and mindful worlds.

References and further resources

Quote on page 1:

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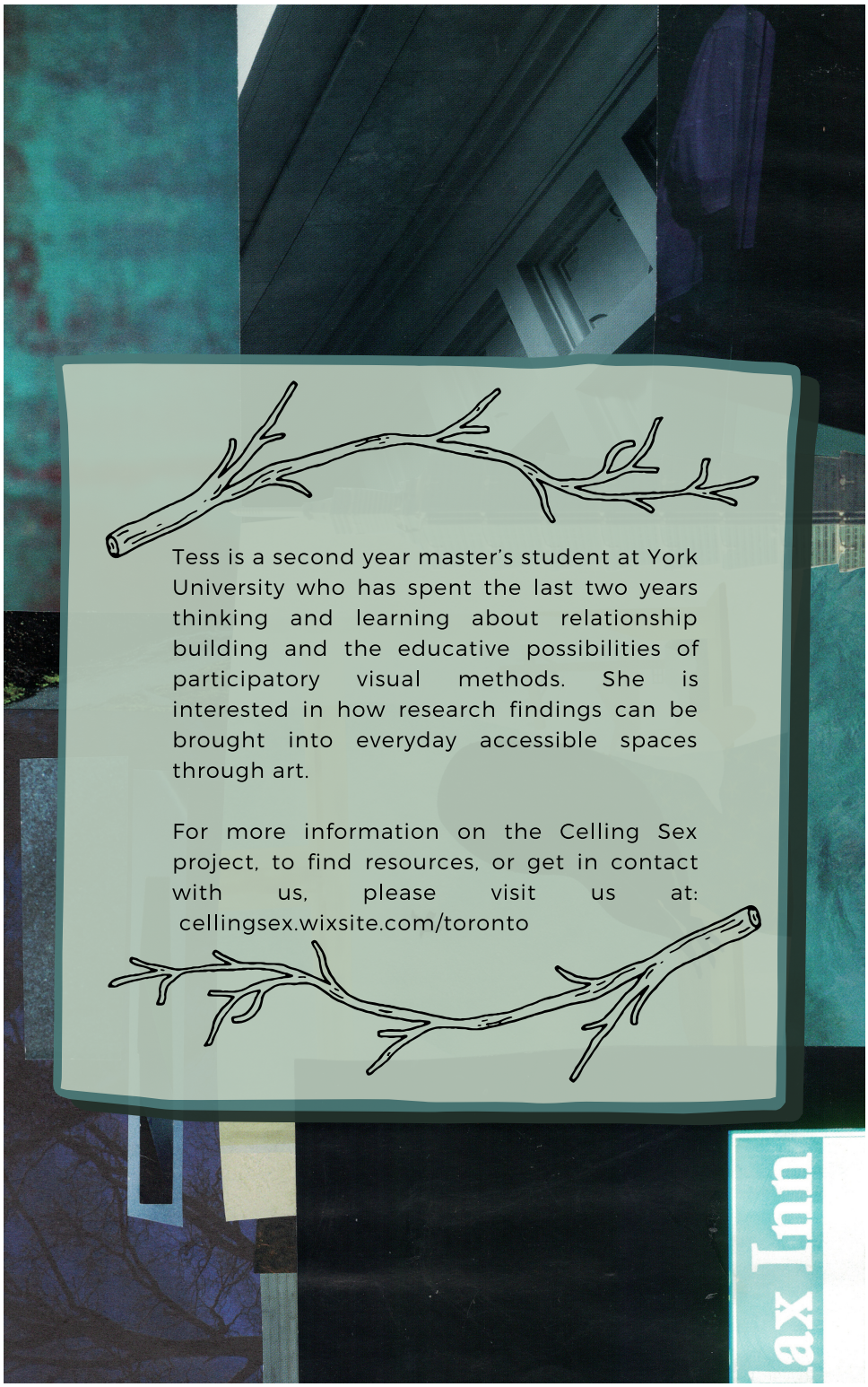

Tess is a second year master's student at York University who has spent the last two years thinking and learning about relationship building and the educative possibilities of participatory visual methods. She is interested in how research findings can be brought into everyday accessible spaces through art.

For more information on the Celling Sex project, to find resources, or get in contact with us, please visit us at: cellingsex.wixsite.com/toronto

Listen and Learn— Cellphilm Statement

"My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you. But for every real word spoken, for every attempt I had ever made to speak those truths for which I am still seeking, I had made contact with other women while we examined the words to fit a world in which we all believed, bridging our differences."

— Audre Lorde [iii]

When I was approaching my research proposal to do audience engagement with the Celling Sex project, I decided to make a cellphilm of my own after the research was completed. Across all of my courses in my first year, I kept returning to the practice of reflexivity. I also found that working creatively and with different arts-based mediums was a way for me to start to privilege other ways of learning and coming to know. The women involved in the Celling Sex project made cellphilms to share their experience of trading sex and provide harm reduction strategies. Over the past year, I have had the pleasure and privilege to get to know some of these women, their work, and learn alongside them. Turning Wilson's statement around on myself— "if research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right" (135)"— I asked myself, what has changed for me throughout my research?

One thing that I was quite struck by after all the screenings I attended was seeing how people listened, raised questions, were vulnerable, were honest, and listened some more. It was also interesting for me to see how tension, judgement, and disagreements unfolded as well. At times, I did notice that it was difficult for me to find the words on the spot to address different sorts of commentary, and I was grateful to have so many others on our team, or in the audience, who were able to find the words at the moment. This is where I decided to dig a little deeper and is the focus of my cellphilm.

The cellphilm opens describing a conversation I overheard while getting lunch last fall, where three university boys were discussing their lack of respect for Cardi-B because she was a stripper in the past. I got quite frustrated listening to them and all the reasons why they were wrong were going through my head.

At the screenings, though, that was a space of dialogue— I wasn't necessarily expecting judgement or areas of complete disagreement with the subjects of the film. But when it came up, I didn't have the same immediate reaction— namely of annoyance— like I had when overhearing that conversation at the pizza shop. But also, being in a position where I could respond, I lost the immediate argument or response which I had that day. Reflecting on this paradox, I began to realize that I tend to want to shrink myself; if there is a general sense of agreement in the room, I won't stand out. In papers, it

is easy for me to take a stance and craft an argument: there is time for me to sit and think, and I am not in the room when it is time for others to read. However, this thinking limits the integrity which I walk into the room with: at a personal level, as well as my solidarity to team and our work together. Realizing this, I felt embarrassed and unsure if I should make my cellphilm on this realization, but that is also part of the work. To acknowledge my actions, understand where they may stem from, bring it to the fore, and then practice actively integrating into my behaviours moving forward.

Link to view cellphilm found here: https://vimeo.com/438235833
Password to watch: Ce11ing$exReflection
(note: the two "l"s are the number one, and the "s" is a dollar sign).

Endnotes

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[ii] O' Donohue, J. (1997) *Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom*. Cliff St. Books, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishing: New York, NY, 13.

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