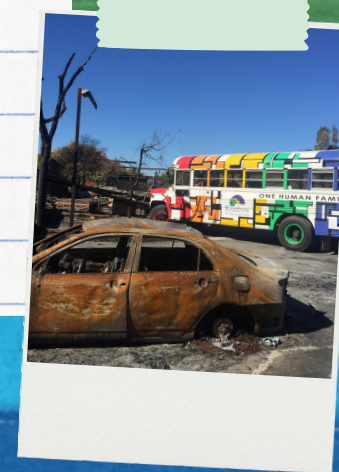




Fire & Flood DocuSeries

Beyond Pride - 2022 Community Fundraising Proposal

Solstice Version - Updated 6/21/22



Proposal Contents

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How to Contribute

[www.OpenCollective.com/
firefloodfilmfund](http://www.OpenCollective.com/firefloodfilmfund)

Synopsis

"Fire & Flood: Queer Resilience in the era of Climate Change" is a collaborative documentary weaving a story of intersectional climate vulnerability and resilience through the voices of multiply-marginalized LGBTQ+ people. The story centers on the near-simultaneity of the 2017 Tubbs Fire in Santa Rosa, California and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, and follows collaborators through the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Project Status

I released a 104-min "Sneak-Peek" draft in fall 2019, which has been shown at over 30 public screenings, raising money for mutual aid and ongoing production. In summer 2020, I invited collaborators into a new set of interviews to ask for their feedback on the project, and to ask for personal media files that could enhance the visual storytelling alongside their interviews. With the onset of the pandemic, the scope of the interviews expanded to include personal experiences through quarantines, curfews, uprisings, elections, and more.

The project is now shifting from a feature-length film to a 10-episode DocuSeries! This fundraiser will allow me to pay animators, artists, and organizers helping me complete this project for release in early 2023!



Hi! My name is Vanessa!
Fire & Flood began with my
personal experience of the
Tubbs Fire, following deep
conversations with two
Boricuas in CA raising funds
for Maria Relief in PR.



From Film to DocuSeries

The collaborator feedback in Summer 2020 and the new material required us to rethink the project's format. As a "DocuSeries", there is more space for the depth of these stories and more possibilities for integration of single episodes into diverse classrooms, youth groups, movement spaces, and beyond.

The updated "DocuSeries" will contain ten episodes organized into three "volumes." These volumes will be hosted publicly online so that they can be accessed for free. The project website will showcase the episodes alongside interactive curricula designed for young adults, undergraduates, and social movement trainers.

Three Volumes & Ten Episodes

Land & Body

Fire & Flood

Slides & Shifts

Prelude: Storytelling

At the Roots

Biocultural Diversity

Queer Ecologies

Shock

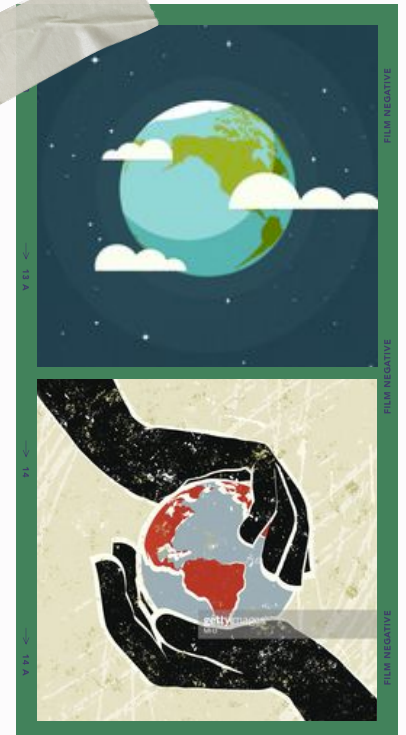
Frontlines

Forefronts

Extraction

Resilience

Ancestral Futures



New Visuals

Many collaborators have shared their personal media files with me, including pictures, videos, and social media posts that highlight their experiences through the disasters of 2017 and the pandemic.

In addition, a 2022 grant allowed me to work with animators on a series of new titles and animated character cards. These new elements will help create visual cohesion across the ten episodes of the new "DocuSeries" format.

Title Animation Still
Sarah Northrup



Character Animation Stills
Rebecca Pearson



I am also grateful to AgitArte for permission to use images from their beautifully illustrated scroll of Puerto Rico's history: "END THE DEBT! DECOLONIZE! LIBERATE PUERTO RICO!"



Climate Justice Representation

Climate change is no longer an existential fear for the future, it is in an active phase of exponential acceleration (IPCC 2018). As climate chaos escalates, transition away from fossil fuels seems inevitable, but as the Just Transition movement explains, this transition has the potential to deepen social inequalities unless immediate and wide-reaching interventions are enacted to address the extractive economy at the root of climate change. As the Oakland-based organization Movement Generation says: “Transition is inevitable. Justice is not” (Movement Generation 2018). The environmental, food, and climate justice movements have repeatedly shown that marginalized communities are hit first and worst by both the causes and the consequences of extractive economies (Lynn, MacKendrick, and Donoghue 2011; Shue 2014; Timmons Roberts 2009; Rice, Long, and Levenda 2021), yet LGBTQ+ people remain largely invisible within mainstream and movement representations.



The climate disaster experiences of LGBTQ+ people are rarely reported in media (McKinnon, Gorman-Murray, and Dominey-Howes 2017), despite the fact that discrimination against sexual and gender minorities is aggravated by climate disasters (Dominey-Howes, Gorman-Murray, and McKinnon 2014). Research on social vulnerability reveals large disparities in preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation based on social, economic, and political power (Lynn, MacKendrick, and Donoghue 2011). The limited research on the disaster experiences of LGBTQ+ people typically focuses on individual-level discrimination, rather than institutional or structural-level vulnerabilities (Pincus 2000), when it is systemic marginalization that are of greatest importance: “vulnerability to disasters is not inherent to particular social groups but results from existing marginality” (Gorman-Murray et al. 2017).

Queering Resilience

LGBTQ+ people are not only vulnerable victims during disaster; in fact their historic social marginalization creates the conditions for capacity and resilience during a disaster (Gaillard 2015; Wisner, Berger, and Gaillard 2017). To combat the entwined forces of invisibility and vulnerability, this project creates representations of resilience.

Movement Generation defines resilience as a “**reflective, responsive, and reciprocal relationship to place**” (Movement Generation 2015). In explaining their definition, Movement Generation describes how neither mitigation (the reduction of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere) nor adaptation (the process of creating new systems and infrastructure to respond to climate disruption) are in themselves sufficient. Instead, they pose the question: “what are the most effective ways to conduct mitigation and adaptation so that they reinforce one another?” The answer, they argue, requires a just transition of all sectors of the economy, including the political and cultural superstructures that maintain the relationships between resources and labor within the economy. In this way, resilience is about a “just recovery” from climate change disasters that challenge “disaster capitalism” and prefigures the new economy (Movement Generation 2018).

The term, “resilience” is also used extensively in LGBTQ+ communities to refer principally to **psychological resilience to oppression, marginalization, and direct interpersonal violence**. Thinking with Movement Generation’s reconceptualization of resilience, I rewrite their poignant question to ask “how can we adapt and heal to ongoing violences in ways that fundamentally transform the power relations driving those violences?” Just as with climate change, the answer may lie in developing “reflective, responsive, and reciprocal relationship[s] to place.”

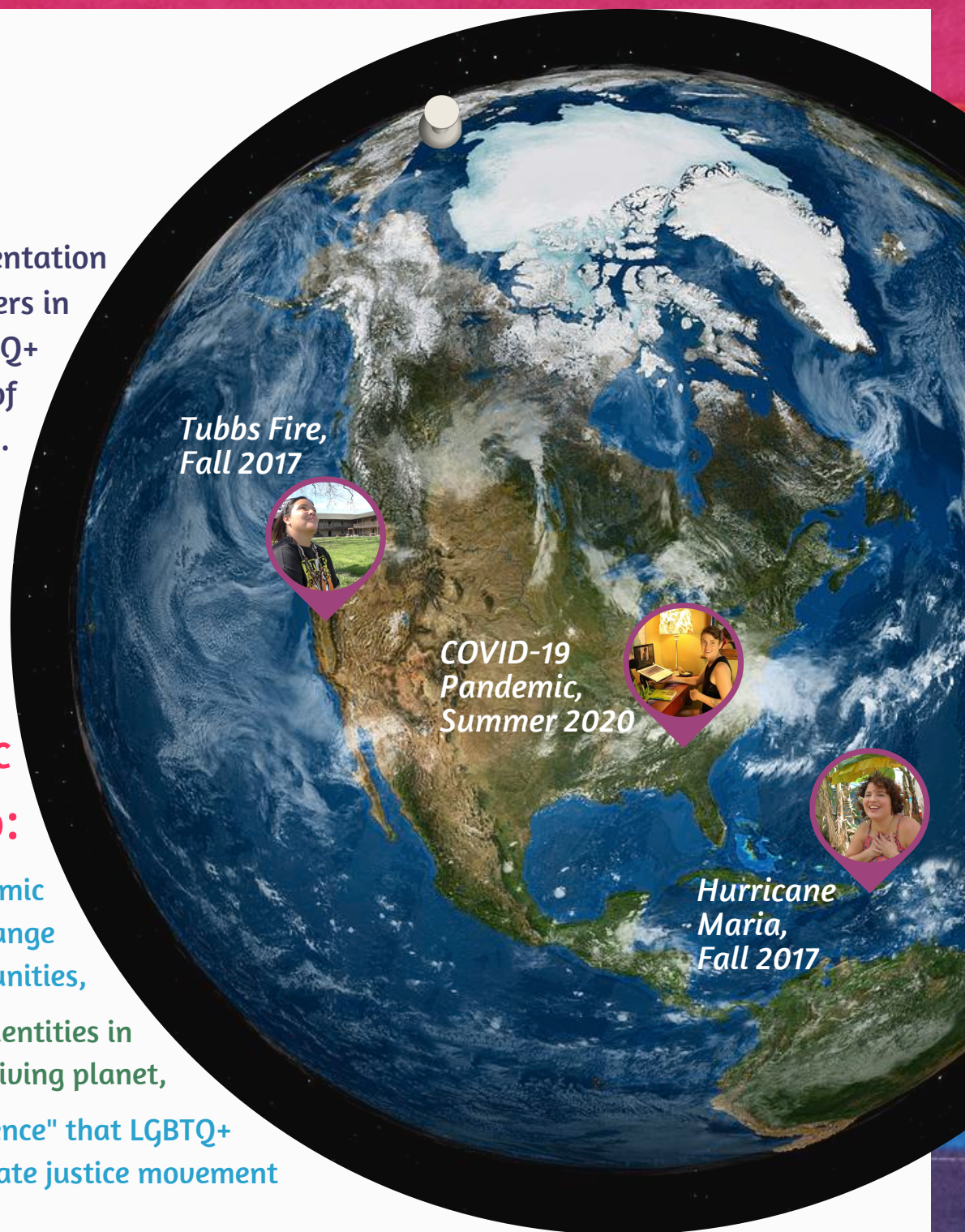


The Story

Fire & Flood fills the gap in climate justice representation by documenting two near-simultaneous disasters in the fall of 2017 through the voices of 24 LGBTQ+ people who led projects for the resilience of their communities and bioregions. The project follows-up with these narrators through their experiences in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic in Summer 2020. Their interviews form the backbone of this bilingual narrative.

Fire & Flood's narrative arc uses this wide-lens to:

- a) portray the interlocking set of global economic and social structures that drive climate change and the oppression of LGBTQ+ communities,
- b) re-root our diverse gender and sexual identities in the biocultural diversity of the living planet,
- c) highlight the critical gifts of "queer resilience" that LGBTQ+ communities bring to the climate justice movement



People

The people represented in *Fire & Flood* span a broad spectrum of experience, age, gender, sexuality, ability, race, and heritage, including a Two-Spirit tribal representative in California; a cuir director of a sustainable agriculture organization in Puerto Rico; a queer disability justice advocate bedridden by smoke; a trans climate justice organizer leading healing projects in the wake of disaster, and many more.

The documentary utilizes narrative storytelling to bring audiences into a personal relationship with the storytellers, alongside critical analytical chapters driven by climate justice frameworks from Movement Generation. These personal and political stories weave to uplift these grassroots storytellers as the expert knowledge holders on intersectional climate justice.



PEOPLE DON'T SEE THE
CONNECTION BETWEEN
CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE
TREATMENT OF QUEER AND
TRANS PEOPLE.

We need to start having different
conversations about how to
address the powerful changes that
need to happen for us to survive
and to thrive as a community, as a
people, as a species.

- Javier Armando Rivera-Rosales
Former Director of Positive Images
LGBTQ+ Youth Center
During the 2017 fires in Santa Rosa, CA

Shared Colonial Histories

Fire & Flood began following my personal experience of community resilience work during the 2017 Tubbs fire. In the days immediately before the fires, I had just met two diasporic Boricuas who were farming in Northern California who shared with me the experiences of their communities on the island after Maria. Their stories shaped the lens through which I experienced the fires. By looking at these two places together, the film visibilizes the similar experiences of LGBTQ+ people across these very different geographies, and points to some common strategies for community resilience.



For the follow-up interviews in 2020, I was not able to return to PR and CA because of the pandemic, and so I began filming myself at home on zoom, which added a third place to the project: Athens, Georgia, the ancestral lands of the Muskogee Creek nation.

In connecting the wildfire experiences of Californians with the hurricane experiences of Puerto Ricans, the film provides a unique view into the shared histories and enduring legacies of colonization: Both Puerto Rico and California were colonized first by Spain and then later by the United States. The collaborators in the film call on us to recognize that the island of Boriken is still a colony of the United States, and that the Ohlone, Indigenous people of California, are still living under settler-colonialism where their existence and traditional ecological knowledge is routinely made invisible.

The documentary emphasizes that the colonial origin of the extractive economic system that drives climate change is also the origin of the marginalization of people with diverse genders, sexualities, and kinship systems outside of the cisheteropatriarchal gender binary imposed through colonial violence.

Neoliberalism & "Disaster Capitalism"



The documentary emphasizes the nefarious impacts of neoliberal austerity on the pace and scale of disasters and the lack of effective public safety nets for marginalized communities. Pushed forward globally under Regan and Thatcher, neoliberalism is a political-economic system that believes that sustained economic growth is the best means to achieve human progress. It emphasizes reduced government spending on social services and deregulation of industry (Harvey 2007).

While neoliberal economists use the rhetoric of "freedom," journalist Naomi Klein has carefully charted the way that neoliberalism's globalization was far from democratic, relying on the literal "shocks" of torture and genocidal dictatorships (Klein 2007). Neoliberalism accelerated fossil fuel extraction globally and siphoned public money towards the growing mega-wealthy, which all together created the conditions for what scholars are now calling "climate apartheid" (Rice et al, 2021).

The documentary focuses on the ways that neoliberalism uses disaster to perpetuate itself, a process that Klein calls "Disaster capitalism." For instance, public infrastructure is sold off in the wake of a storm, public schools converted to charters, and private disaster consulting companies deepen their shareholder profits off of public funds. The rich get richer, and those already marginalized through centuries of colonial extraction pay the price.

Fire & Flood emphasizes how neoliberalism sets the conditions for intersectional social marginalization, and how disaster capitalism reinforces the problems.



"Disaster Collectivism"

Connecting to Naomi Klein's work in the *Shock Doctrine*, *Fire & Flood* depicts these disasters as liminal moments that allow for abrupt change that is unimaginable in the before and after.

The Climate Justice organization Movement Generation emphasizes that to disrupt the forces of "Disaster capitalism," we need to seize the power of the robust bursts of public organizing in the wake of disasters, which they name "disaster collectivism."



Fire & Flood uplifts the importance of mutual aid projects where communities are working to meet each other's needs directly under the philosophy of "solidarity not charity." Interviews also emphasize the need for collective action for structural and institutional change alongside acts of service.

Mutual Aid

Community-led mutual aid is a critical solution to the problems of our time, and it is necessary for the community resilience needed to organize for structural changes. For communities whose needs have never been met by governments or non-profits, mutual aid is the way that we have survived.

Political Action

While our communities have been organizing to meet each other's immediate needs, we have also been organizing to change the structural conditions of our governments and institutions to provide more protections and resources for resilience.

Ancestral Futures

The overall project seeks to understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ communities through climate disasters, and to highlight their visionary organizing before, during, and after these disasters - with attention to prefigurative enactments of ancestral futures.

Amidst these liminal moments of disaster, I focus on the prefigurative acts of queer resilience, which offer windows into the ancestral futures imagined by the queer ecojustice movement and the emergent strategies they create (brown).

The representations of “resilience” in *Fire & Flood* are as diverse as the collaborators themselves: Creating safer spaces in the shelters. Rebuilding farmers' homes in rural PR. Traditional healing clinics. Canning local produce. And charging medical devices while protesting privatized energy. These wildly different examples highlight the diversity of approaches to disaster recovery that build new embodied knowledges of queer ecological futures: prefigurative political acts that repair connections between land, body, mind, spirit, and community - practicing reimagined, regenerative relationships.

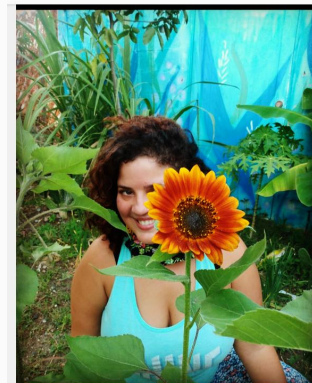


• Making Fire & Flood •

Visual methods are critical to bring visibility to vulnerable communities and to render legible the non-hegemonic ontologies, epistemologies, and praxis of the queer ecojustice movement. However, doing so requires an attention to the ethics and praxis of representational justice. The growing field of visual geography highlights how visual representations have the power to naturalize difference or reveal the historical, social power relations that produce difference (Craine and Gardner 2016; Pink 2013; Rose 2016). Cultural Geographer Carolyn Finney describes how the intertextual process of multiple representations or misrepresentations “creates a “regime of representation” that is “difficult to resist, dismantle, or transform” (Finney 2014). I attend to the criticality of representational justice by employing collaborative documentary film to create new representations by and for marginalized people.

This project began before my time as a graduate student, and the initial process of interviews and editing the first sneak-peek draft did not involve a substantial collaborative design other than reviewing transcripts and the edited draft. To begin collectivizing the process, during summer 2020 I invited collaborators into a new set of interviews reflecting on their representation, soliciting their feedback, and sharing personal media files from the 2017 fires and floods. Collaborators will also be invited to provide feedback and make editorial decisions through a focus group on the subsequent draft before the docuseries is finalized.

Building Long-Term Relationships of Trust and Reciprocity



Representational Justice

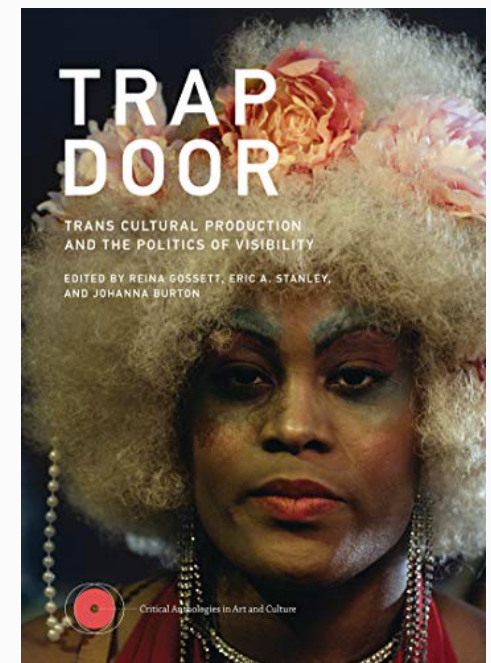
Through the process of collaboratively co-producing this documentary with those interviewed for the project, my intention is to engage in a praxis of representational justice. **Representational justice** works within the sphere of ideological struggle to combat the controlling images of hegemonic culture, and replaces them with a liberatory culture based in self-representations (Collins 2002; hooks 2014; Hall 1997; Finney 2014). *Fire & Flood* seeks to craft a collective representation of queer resilience that can inspire, empower, and contribute to the resilience preparedness of LGBTQ+ communities.

This attention to representational justice is particularly important for the climate justice movement: A key concept of the movement is that the “Frontlines of crisis are the forefronts of change” - as was depicted on a banner by the queer-led organization Culture Strike for the 2014 People’s Climate March (Culture Strike 2014). *Fire & Flood* shines a light on both sides of this statement: the frontline vulnerabilities within the queer community, as well as its visionary leadership.

Yet as dangerous as invisibility is misrepresentation: the current “homonormative” (Puar 2006) regime of representation of LGBTQ+ people as white, affluent, cisgender monogamous couples seeking assimilation into the settler state invisibilizes the many identities and embodiments oppressed under gendered racial capitalism, and explicitly targeted by state violence (Stanley and Smith 2015).

Fire & Flood seeks to offer a richer representation of the LGBTQ+ community through collaboration.

“Immense transformational and liberatory possibilities arise from what are otherwise sites of oppression or violent extraction - whether the body, labor, land, or spirituality - where individuals have agency in their representation.”
- Tourmaline, *Trap Door*



Production Timeline

Winter 2017-2018:

- Video recording with 2 boricuas in Northern CA raising money for PR Hurricane relief, *day before fire*
- Zoom interviews with 4 people from Oakland and Santa Rosa who were part of fire recovery work.
- Released a 45-minute video “panel” of these zoom interviews for the Creating Change Conference.

Spring 2019:

- Fundraising pitch video that officially launched this as a film project by this name.
- Puerto Rico: 6 on-location interviews with 9 people
- Northern CA: 5 on-location interviews with 7 people in Northern California.

Fall 2019:

- Released the 104 minute-long “sneak-peek” draft of *Fire & Flood*
- Interviews with 5 people in Santa Rosa following the Kincadee fire
- Additional B-roll in California



Summer & Fall 2020:

- Zoom interviews and collaborative media-sharing with 11 people over 19 interviews that reflect on the first draft of the film, and discuss 2020 pandemic, uprisings, hurricanes, fires, and fascism.
- Soliciting media from participants: pictures, videos, and social media
- Self-interview recordings of my personal reflections

Steps to Complete Production

Summer 2022: Planning and Fundraising

- Fundraising & fulfilling art rewards
- Return to CA for follow-up interviews and B-roll
- Finalizing animations & outreach to musicians for new music

Fall 2022: Editing & Collaborations

- Return to PR for a month-long editing retreat to accomplish major work on reorganizing the story from a film to a DocuSeries!
- Conducting new interviews, based on the feedback that I received from collaborators in PR during my 2020 follow-up interviews.

Winter 2022 - 2023:

- Fulfilling art rewards & public speaking engagements booked through the fundraising campaign
- Continuing edits & iterative conversations with collaborators

Spring 2023:

- Fulfilling art rewards & public speaking engagements booked through the fundraising campaign
- Confirm final edits on all episodes with collaborators
- Create the *Fire & Flood* curriculum website to host all of the content



GOALS:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Completion by
Earth Day 2023!

Fundraising Goal: \$20,000

From **Pride to LGBTQ+ History Month** help me raise the funds to make the edits and do final check-ins with collaborators so we can release *Fire & Flood* as an online DocuSeries in early 2023!



\$1,000

One month editing retreat in Puerto Rico



\$3,000

Collaborator feedback sessions and focus groups



\$4,000

Artist honoraria for use of music, visual scroll of PR history, and nature footage



\$12,000

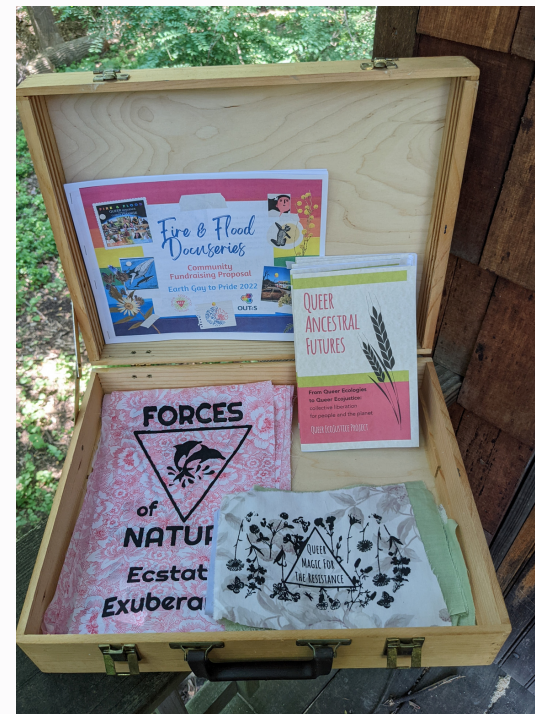
Community Organizing contracts with Sali Ortiz Castro and Natalia Villarón Quiñones in PR to organize Social Media & the Mutual Aid fund

50% Match

Since the beginning, I have given 50% of what I raise to queer resilience projects and to support collaborators, and I will continue this commitment. To do this, I am seeking larger donations as matching funds. Connect me!

Art & Zines

As a thank you for your donation to make this project happen, I am offering a special edition of Queer Ecojustice Project's "Queer Ancestral Futures" zine and hand-printed patches and postcards with original Queers4ClimateJustice art!





Screen the Sneak-Peek



Screen the Sneak-Peek of *Fire & Flood* to help spread awareness & raise funds for mutual aid and the completion of this grassroots media project! Screening fees are sliding-scale to fit any budget, including pass-the-hat. Q&As available.



Teach Queer Ecojustice

The Fall 2019 "Sneak-Peek" release of *Fire & Flood* comes with A curriculum guide that you can use to design a 3-12+ hour unit for your classroom. Content is geared towards undergraduate classes, and would be an ideal complement to online instruction in gender studies or environmental studies.

Includes suggested readings, discussion questions, activities, and complementary films - adaptable to your course theme.

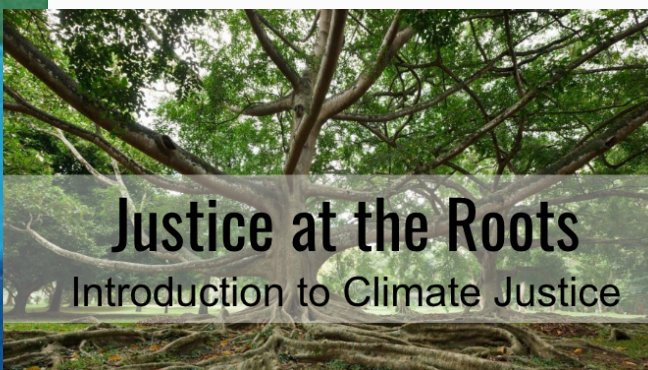
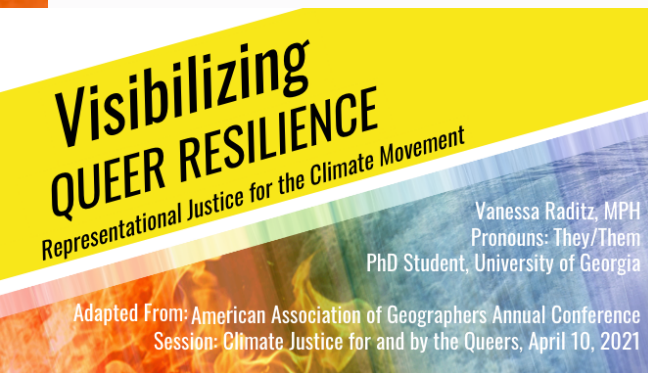
www.queererecoject.org/firefloodfilm

Public Screenings of *Fire & Flood's* 2019 "Sneak-Peek"

Miracosta College - University of Oklahoma - Western Washington University - Boston Public Library - Agnes Scott College | Building a Better World Conference - Loyola University Chicago - University of Illinois, Chicago | Heritage Garden - Harvard University | Environmental Justice in Practice class - Pearson Education | LGBTQ+ Employee Group - Binghamton University - Rice University | Fondren Library - Oregon State University | Spring Creek Project - Intersectional Environmentalism - Lilith Archive and Shado Magazine - Scottish Queer International Film Festival - Sunrise Movement | Queer & Trans Membership - American Library Association | Libraries Respond to Climate Change Initiative - Kansas State University | Hale Library - Sonoma State University | Department of Nursing - Willamette University - Nursing Mutual Aid collective - Newark Public Library - Interlocking Roots - Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Mayagüez - University of Georgia | Global Gender Grad Seminar; Political Ecology Grad Seminar - Yale University | School of Forestry - Merrimack College | McQuade Library - University of Massachusetts, Amherst | W.E.B. DuBois Library - 100% Athens and Athens Queer Collective - Apocalypse Training Collective - Duke University | Gender, Sexuality, Feminist Studies - Georgia Department of Public Health | Journey to Change LGBTQ+ Conference

Book a Guest Lecture or Keynote

Do you need a powerful keynote speaker for your event or a guest lecturer for a course you teach? Reach out to book me for speaking engagements! Topics are customizable to fit your event or course needs.



To request a guest lecture, email: queerecoproject@gmail.com





Gratitudes

Thank you to my brother, Wilson Raditz, for giving me the first donation back in 2019 that made it possible for me to go to Puerto Rico and create this project out of nothing more than a wish and pure stubbornness; thank you to El Wilson for getting me a new hard-drive when the dream nearly collapsed *for the first time*; and thank you to Jess Martinez for reminding me that the fruits are worth the labor and its worth seeing it through to harvest.

Thank you to the University of Georgia Office of Sustainability, Graduate School, and Willson Center for the Humanities for grants that funded parts of this work. Thank you to Julie Velasquez-Runk from the Cultural & Political Ecology lab for use of their equipment, and to Emily McGinn, formerly of the Digital Humanities Lab, for inspiring the online DocuSeries format. Thank you to my advisors and committee members past and present: Hilda Kurtz, Nik Heynen, Jenn Rice, Patricia Richards, Cecilia Herles, and Jamie Ann Lee.

Thank you to Anika Tilland-Stafford for being a champion of this project, and screening the Sneak-Peek for 4 consecutive semesters. The student communities you have nourished through your courses constantly remind me what this work is all about.

Thank you to Movement Generation for the inspiration, mentorship, and camaraderie; to Zephyr Elise for being my cheerleader, Indigenous advisor, lead production assistant, among other hats; and thank you to Desi Fontenot for co-creating that queer ecologies and collective liberation reading group all those years ago and your thought partnership ever since.



Thank you to land. Thank you body. Thank you spirit.
May this work be in service of healing & liberation.

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Contact Me

Vanessa Raditz, MPH

vanessa.raditz@out4s.org

queerproject@gmail.com

How to Contribute

[www.OpenCollective.com/
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