

ARTFORUM

London

Sharon Hayes

STUDIO VOLTAIRE

1a Nelsons Row

April 15–June 5

As if stepping into a time-warped consciousness-raising session, you are confronted with five video projections of multiracial performers reading from feminist and lesbian newsletters distributed in Britain and the United States from 1955 to '77. The videos are projected at different scales across a makeshift plywood hoarding that traverses the gallery; on the back of it are pasted pages from the aforementioned publications. Sharon Hayes unearthed this occasionally harrowing material from archives in London and Philadelphia. Had you lived at this wild frontier of political advocacy, she seems to ask, how would you have answered readers' letters asking for help in dealing with the KKK; advised on the institutional repression of lesbian relationships in prison; or responded to African American gay women having to turn to white middle-class groups to counter prejudice from their own community?



View of "Sharon Hayes," 2016.

Hayes's point is that this is less time warp than temporal compression, where the young performers, all recruited from queer and feminist Philadelphia circles, evoke contemporary political struggles by revisiting the origins of gay activism. Indeed, the exhibition (and 2016 multichannel video's) title, "In My Little Corner of the World, Anyone Would Love You," references a song by Anita Bryant, the famous homophobic Florida campaigner, whose treacherous music is played in one scene to direct us inexorably to that state's recent antigay legislation. The actors casually move through the rooms of a house, reading while sitting in the bathroom, lying in bed, spinning records, typing in the kitchen, or folding and stapling publications at a hallway table in a play of domesticity where Hayes points to the home as the fundamental site of sixty years of sexual politics.

— *Mark Harris*