

LGBTQ+ in Queens

The theme of the **2018 LGBTQ+ Symposium**, held here at York College last autumn, was *Looking Back on a Generation of LGBTQ+: Ideas and Issues*.

The event brought together multiple generations of activists, scholars, students and Queens residents of the LGBTQ+ community to both reflect on a 60+ year history and look forward as the community continues tackling issues in an ever-changing landscape. There were two panels recorded in high-fidelity 8K immersive video/Virtual Reality (VR). The first panel addressed "Activism" in the LGBTQ+ community over the years. The second panel discussed "Gender Fluidity" and how the landscape has emerged and what to expect as our city grows with its people.

The Future American Retrospective, an ongoing documentary project spearheaded by Daniel Phelps (with support from the **Queens Memory Project** and **The Wagner Archives** at LaGuardia Community College) recorded the Symposium's series of conversations in a variety of new technological formats. Those interviews and conversations are featured in the exhibition you see today in York College's Fine Art Gallery.

In the front of the gallery is FAR's first-of-its-kind, 4-screen immersive public VR space, allowing multiple people to experience the Symposium discussions, conversations, archival photos, and LGBTQ+ art in public and welcoming environment.

A VR head-mounted display allows viewers to experience the environmental footage recorded for **The Future American Retrospective Project**. Locations include flying high over the California skyline, Manhattan Rap-Battle events, gun shops, small-town kitchens and more.

In the gallery's two rear spaces are full length videos (presented on 4K-Ultra Hi-Definition video monitors) featuring featuring the unedited conversations in "little big planet" format. This flattened immersive video technique allows viewers to follow the conversation as they see fit, promising context and a deeper understanding of the issues at hand.

These discussions created rich, long-lasting contributions to the LGBTQ+ communities in Queens through art, technology, and modern archival practices.

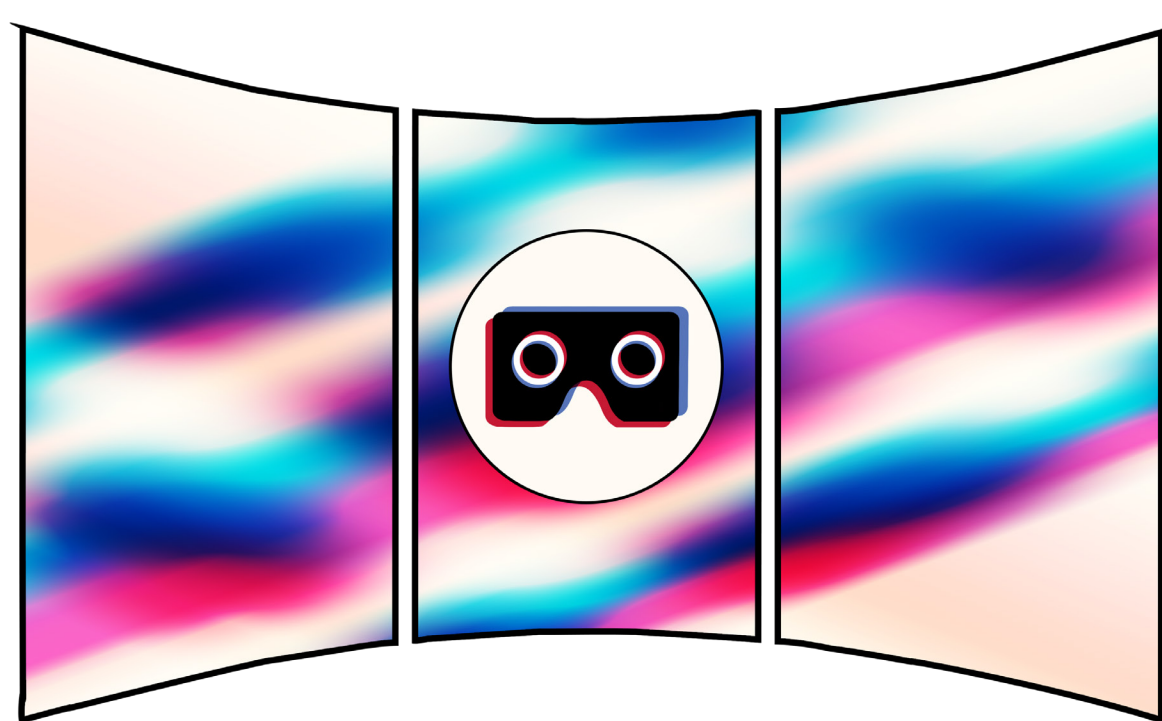
About the artist:

Daniel Phelps is an emerging technology artist and Associate Professor of Communications Technology at York College, CUNY. His integrated media and documentary work has been seen in art galleries, 3D film festivals, the USPTO (United States Patent & Trademark Office), and multimedia installation facilities around the country.

Phelps' projects often blend emerging technology in autonomy, robotics, virtual/augmented reality and other forms of digital fabrication for the applied sciences of modern documentary arts. His research orbits the question, "what is lost as the world changes around us?"

His feature-length documentary, *The Domino Effect*, collected the rich histories and stories of what neighborhoods like Brooklyn's Williamsburg lose and gain in the rush to redevelop public spaces.

With his latest project, **The Future American Retrospective**, Phelps combines Virtual Reality & Robotics to showcase and preserve the diverse and hidden stories of Americana. FARvr attempts to capture the voices, sights and sounds of our culture before they are lost to change. These works, an effort to preserve the stories that define our time and ultimately ourselves, serve as an antidote to historical amnesia.



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