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Urban preservation and the queerying spaces of (un)remembering: Memorial landscapes of the Miami Beach art deco historic district

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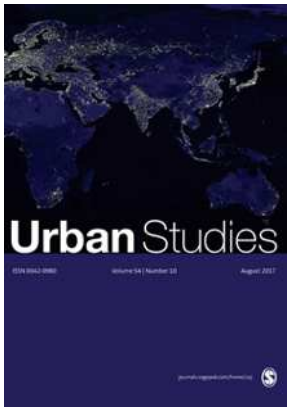

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Abstract

Based on a case study on Miami Beach's acclaimed iconic art deco architectural district, this article critically dovetails intersecting hegemonic spaces of preservation, memorial practices and social and sexual identities. It argues how commemorative narratives are selectively encrypted in the local urban environment and its artefacts deemed of historical significance. It especially reveals the tensions arising between art deco (i.e. architectural) preservation and gay (i.e. social) urban preservation, as well as its under-studied largely entrepreneurial nature and attraction for a mainstream, cosmopolitan class under neoliberalism. Drawing from extensive archival, policy, observational, participatory and interview data over 2013–2015, the article revisits in historical perspective how the art deco area, incarnated in the 1920s, developed across class-, ethnicity-, religion- and age-inflected social fragmentations and how this legacy, from the late-1970s onward, segued into the local gay-led preservation movement and select commemorations of the art deco scene. To this background, the study employs the tenet of 'queerying' to address the under-researched coalescing frictions in preservation between perceived authentic and engineered trajectories of (gay) place (re)makings alongside reminiscences selected over others. The findings uncover and challenge (un)intentional '(un)rememberings' of the local early history and the recent past, where socially fragmented fault lines and the more recent gay-led preservation

track remain overly homogeneously imprinted in dominant preservation communications and performance.

Keywords

art deco, gay, memory, Miami, urban preservation

摘要

本文基于对迈阿密海滩著名地标式装饰艺术建筑区的案例研究，批判性地衔接了遗产保护、纪念活动以及社会身份和性向这些相互交叉的霸权空间。文章分析了在当地城市环境以及被视为具有历史意义的人造物中，纪念性叙事是如何被选择性地编码的。文章尤其揭示了装饰艺术（即建筑）保护与同性恋（即社会）城市保护之间出现的种种张力，也揭示了迈阿密海滩尚未得到充分研究的重要企业家城市性质，以及在新自由主义语境下其对主流的世界主义者阶层的吸引力。本文利用 2013-2015 年间广泛的档案、政策、观察、参与和采访数据，从历史视角重新考察了上世纪 20 年代建成的装饰艺术区如何在受阶层、族裔、宗教和年龄影响的社会碎片化中发展，以及这一遗产自上世纪 70 年代末以来如何继续演化，形成当地由同性恋者主导的保护运动和对装饰艺术场景的选择性纪念活动。在这一背景下，文章秉承“酷异化”信条，讨论了一个尚未得到充分研究的问题：城市保护中真真假假的（同性恋）场所（重新）营造轨迹与选择性回忆之间逐步汇合的摩擦。研究结果揭示并质疑了对当地早先历史和近期历史有意或无意的回忆/遗忘。在近期的历史中，无论是社会碎片化的断层线，还是近来的同性恋主导式保护行动，其占主导的保护沟通和行为表现都明确烙上了同质化的印记。

关键词

装饰艺术，同性恋，记忆，迈阿密，城市保护

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Introduction

This study examines how the preservation of the acclaimed iconic Miami Beach art deco architectural district since the 1970s has been attended by specific rememberings and forgettings in the representations of the local urban legacy. It reveals tensions at the nexus of art deco and gay urban preservation, where preservation opportunities have especially become appropriated in a neoliberal logic, detracting from the articulation of sexual diversity and gay identity in particular. The latter topical yet under-interrogated dimension (see Lewis, 2017) is particularly addressed in this article. Gay (male) pioneers and the larger gay community were recognised as key contributors to the then regeneration of Miami Beach (Fellows, 2004; Stofik, 2005). Various urban scholars have critically discussed the role of gays in preservations initiatives in, notably, the Castro district in San Francisco (Castells, 1983; Kitchin, 2002), Marigny neighbourhood in New Orleans (Knopp, 1990) and West Village and Harlem in New York (Chauncey, 1994), and regarding the preservation of urban queer cultures more generally (Ghaziani, 2014; Gieseking, 2016). However, Miami Beach has largely remained absent from conceptual and empirical debates in this context. I therefore specifically focus on how Miami Beach's gay-led preservation movement guided a dialogue with its social and material heritage, everyday lived realities and imagined urban futures.

Miami South Beach, dubbed SoBe (after SoHo in New York) by art deco pioneer Dona Zemo (Miami Beach Visual Memoirs Project, 2016b), is home to a one-square-mile ensemble of 800 colourful ornamented structures in eclectic post-revival modes, collectively called 'art deco'.[1] They were mostly constructed over the 1920s until the early 1940s, with Henry Hohauser as principal architect, and are recognised as the world's highest concentration of art deco buildings. Considering their memorable, cohesive and essentially unaltered properties, this was the first 20thcentury neighbourhood that the US National Register of Historic Places designated as Federal Historic District in 1979 (Curtis, 1982; Hillier, 1968), with Art Deco District as shorthand (Figure 1). The efforts of the non-profit organisation Miami Design Preservation League (MDPL), established in 1976, paved the way for this classification and its ongoing movement to preserve, protect and promote the architectural integrity of the Art Deco District (Miami Design Preservation League, 2016). However, ensuing predominant memorial practices have remained unchallenged for the extent to which they appropriately render local history and life.

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Figure 1. Art Deco District, Miami Beach, Florida, USA.

Source: Author's own. Art Deco District borders after US National Register of Historic Places in Miami Beach Planning Department (2011).

Inspired by Haraway (1991), I approach both preservation – i.e. acts of protecting something of loss or danger or the state of being maintained – and commemoration – i.e. acts of celebrating the memory of (or functioning as a memorial to) a subject or object – as both socially and spatially situated practices. These practices reveal partial knowledges, strikingly described by Barnes (2000: 743) as being 'grounded in the physicality of specific human bodies and their artefacts', which thus cannot be disembodied by any generic conceptions. I acknowledge the importance of such 'partiality' to grasping the complexities and equivocalities of art deco (re)makings and (re)imaginations. Preservation, hence, holds a

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dialectical relationship between ideas and action (Ashworth, 2011; Bos, 2016; Drozdzewski et al., 2016) and in so doing between episteme (knowledge as such) and techne (practical knowledge) (see Browne and Nash, 2010). Considering that much practical knowledge, by its very nature, remains nonrepresentational and undocumented, it poses both epistemic and methodical challenges to ascertaining what is remembered or forgotten (i.e. 'unremembered'). Considering SoBe's preservation movement's peculiar link with (gay) sexual identity, I have employed the tenet of 'queerying' to unsettle how key preservation actors have prevalently reached out to communities and future generations about present-day place (re)makings through (select) commemoration of objects, events and narratives, which are sometimes problematically taken as representative entities of the past.

Based on extant multidisciplinary literature, I first discuss (gay-led) urban preservation in tandem with memorial practices in the US context. Then I explain the study's research context by dealing with the pedigree of the art deco scene as critical grounding for the analysis. This is followed by a discussion of methods. I assemble my conceptual and qualitative empirical analyses to 'queerly' contribute to a clearer understanding of art deco preservation and (un)rememberings. The key results section scrutinises memorial practices as mobilised at the intersection of art deco and gay urban preservation. The article concludes with remarks on the value of adopting a queerying approach for resisting dominant urban preservation praxes and for progressing fuller, more holistic commemorative heritage.

Urban preservation and commemoration

The tension between preservationists and developers has always been omnipresent on Miami Beach, considering its challenged surface area and hence limited potential for land use development (Fleming, 1981; Shapiro, 2007). This tension had also been dynamically resonated with a twofold 'sense of orientation' in US preservation since the 1970s (Datel, 1985; Sprinkle, 2014). On the one hand, respect was shown for the past by material restoration, highlighting technical achievements and consolidating a cultural legacy. On the other, preservation initiatives allowed some alterations to listed structures and the built environment, although they were limited to ensure an authentic experience of the genius loci (Datel, 1985; Sprinkle, 2014).

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The limited yet significant literature on art deco architectural preservation has overall remained descriptive and emphasised its design and lifestyle features (e.g. Capitman, 1988; Chase, 2005; Curtis, 1982; Gaines, 2009; Klepser, 2014; Stofik, 2005). Curtis (1982) presented an informative account on the historical context of SoBe's art deco. However, this study pre-dates the gay-led preservation movement and is limited to a discussion about the sense of place during the Depression era, when the majority of art deco buildings was built. Furthermore, Drolet et al. (2010) provided a useful update of post-1970s historical preservation actions on Miami Beach. Nevertheless, the implications of the more recent contribution of gays to SoBe's art deco scene and its memorial landscape have remained overlooked to date.

Although Patron and Forrest (2000) and Kanai and Kenttamaa-Squires (2015) discussed the social transitions of SoBe as gay neighbourhood since the 1980s, the art deco scene, despite its ascribed importance to a thriving local culture, remains under-explored. To this background, I hereinafter consider three intersecting dimensions that are pertinent to contextualising the relationships and tensions between art deco (i.e. architectural) preservation and gay (i.e. social) urban preservation: (1) US architectural preservation, where preservation presents 'stills' in time whereas queer history is acknowledged to be fluid; (2) LGBTQ[2] community building and commemoration around the mobility and (in)visibility of gay people; and (3) neoliberal regeneration and its particularly underinterrogated entrepreneurial consequences for preservation, including a mainstream, yet exclusive, cosmopolitan class appeal.

First, urban scholarship on architectural preservation suggests that the desire to preserve – and commemorate built environmental elements of perceived value – is from time immemorial, especially in areas of the world known for long-standing settlements (Ashworth, 2011; Betts and Ross, 2015; Zhang, 2013). Urban preservation efforts are historically more recent in the USA (Sprinkle, 2014), where Ford (1979) argued that the focus had mainly been on the protection of individual, historically significant structures (e.g. patriots' houses recalling watersheds and buildings celebrating architects of national stature). Since the late 1960s, US preservation efforts had been moving away from a singular focus on protecting historicity towards combined property- and area-based preservation, starting to address the whole gamut of functional, spatial and visual elements, as well as broader issues of civil

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rights and social justice (Betts and Ross, 2015; Shapiro, 2007) and urban nostalgia (Bonnett, 2010).

The rise of preservation movements throughout the USA since the 1970s had shown a striking parallel with a widespread doctrine of high-density urban renewal (Shapiro, 2007). Urban preservation and development had been symbiotic poles from the very outset of the country's first historic preservation zoning regulation in Charlston in 1931 (Stofik, 2005). Urban preservation has traditionally relied on voluntary resident involvement, where shared, bottom-up care often collides with profit-driven interests of real-estate developers (Ford, 1979; Sprinkle, 2014). Such process does not exclude any comprises. According to Ashworth (2011), preservation navigates between gradations of protection, conservation and heritage (which I empirically apply to the re-activation of the art deco scene). Ashworth (2011) argued that the act of preservation derives from the idea, or desire, to commemorate. In a strict sense, preservation entails 'a protective intervention to maintain the current condition of an artefact, building or ensemble' (Ashworth, 2011: 4). 'Conservation', then, implicates when the present-day commemorative use of an entity forms an integral element of the decision to preserve – where 'heritage' is constituted through commemorating the past within the present in order to produce a new 'cultural creation of the present' (Ashworth, 2011: 11). This differentiation is useful to explain the ambiguities of preservation (albeit these terms are often uncritically used as interchangeable denominators within urban preservation discourse).

Second, urban and sexuality scholars recognised the oft-major role of LGBTQ people in preservation initiatives in historic districts, usually accompanied with commitments to community building (e.g. Brown, 2014; Fellows, 2004; Forsyth, 2001; Gieseking, 2016; Knopp, 1990). Neighbourhood developments based on especially gay sexual identity, so-called gaybourhoods (or its variant gay villages), as seen on SoBe (Kanai and Kenttamaa-Squires, 2015; Patron and Forrest, 2000), are not an anomaly in US urban history and beyond. Gay men 'of property' played a central role in the preservation-led revitalisation of historic districts such as the Castro district, Marigny neighbourhood, West Village and Harlem, which, as alluded earlier, can be critically rendered as socio-spatial corollaries of urban planning's hegemonic heterosexist focus (Brown, 2014; Frisch, 2002). Fellows (2004) collected stories to evince how bohemian gay men across the USA had historically served as

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'keepers of culture', echoing creative cities theories (e.g. Florida and Mellander, 2010; Markusen, 2014). Below phraseology from Fellows (2004: 30-1) suggestively explained gays' innate relationship with the arts and urban preservation:

> Considering the abundance of artists who are gay, it's not surprising that places where artists have congregated have also been notable gathering places for gays. And so it's no surprise that many of these places have been sites of pioneering architectural preservation . Many gays are strongly attracted to restoring broken, neglected things to states of wholeness.

Urban queer research indicated that marginalised LGBTQ populations historically sought navigable areas, sometimes deliberately called enclaves, for developing community support, affordable housing, cultural exchange, and keeping the memory of LGBTQ communities alive through performance, art and entertainment (e.g. Brown, 2014; Delany, 2001; Gieseking, 2016). It must be stressed that, despite the use of the acronym LGBTQ, gay males have been at the head of or, put critically, dominating preservation movements. The latter concurs with Knopp's (1990) theorem on the male social dominance and economic privilege as replicated in the creation of 'gay' urban spaces. Common documentation and reminiscences not only reflect that but also largely reproduce such gay male dominance (Knopp, 1990).

Lesbians are particularly notable absent 'others' within this purview and their role in creating distinct urban spaces, beyond the prominent visibility of gay male urban spaces and a gay male gaze, should be acknowledged. Scholarship in the geographies of sexualities over the past decade or so has critically addressed the evolution of distinct lesbian urban spaces: e.g. see Forsyth (1997) on Northampton, MA; Nash and Gorman-Murray (2015) on Toronto and Sydney; and Podmore (2013) on Montreal. These studies, each on its own terms, cultivate a plea for both research and planning practice to counter the invisibility of lesbian neighbourhood formation and life by pursuing a politics of visibility. The latter is hoped to articulate and mobilise the roles of lesbians in engaging with and creating urban social spaces so as to attain fuller inclusive urban queer gazes and spaces.

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Moreover, scholarship has indicated that particularly lesbians, bisexuals, trans people, gender queers and LGBTQs of colour often lead a sequestered life remote from their 'official' identity. This has resulted in less visible or even absent reifications of memorial cultures of sexual minorities (within the minority) (see Delany, 2001; Ghaziani, 2014; Myrdahl, 2013). LGBTQ places have continuously been surrounded by transience. That is to say, LGBTQ people often resort to rental, temporary housing and momentary work, and consequently move from one place to another (Gieseking, 2016). In this context, Lewis (2017) argued that urban gay communities have become more socially and spatially disintegrated owing to increasing, yet less achievable, individual aspirations as demanded by neoliberal job and property markets and the related ability/flexibility to move through urban places (Lewis, 2017). But not all LGBTQs are privileged to do so. Nash and Gorman-Murray (2014) identified white gay males as those with a strong motility (i.e. mobility capital) to professionally and socially develop over spatially dispersed networks (although the rise of digital apps has taken away the absolute need to move physically for social relationship building).

Hence, the memorialisation of impermanence, placelessness and absence are crucial challenges for both the preservation and commemoration of LGBTQ places and cultures (Gieseking, 2016: 30). As argued by Forsyth (2001: 352), out of fear of 'public controversy', planners have even refrained from designating historic districts and landmarks for non-conformist populations (i.e. LGBTQs). The New York-based *Gay Liberation Monument* is a salient exception. This public memorial not only commemorates the police raid on the adjacent Stonewall Inn gay bar in 1969 and the resulting gay civil rights movement. It also pays a timeless tribute to the fluid temporal lives and spaces of LGBTQs throughout history, which has nurtured both an international mobilisation of queer politics and the establishment of material, site-specific LGBTQ memorials elsewhere in the world (Thompson, 2012).

Third, a developing body of scholarship has provided extensive critiques of the social exclusionary aspects of many regeneration annex preservation projects based in urban neighbourhoods with a strong LGBTQ presence (e.g. Knopp 1990; Lewis, 2013; Nash and Gorman-Murray, 2014; Smart and Whittemore, 2016). This critique is mainly directed at the power imbalance, where particularly middle- and high-class white gay males are often assumed to take advantage of preservation practice. This presses home the tenability of

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Knopp's (1990) argument about the co-emerging (white) male privilege and social, economic and sexual hegemonies, as embedded within asymmetrical gender relations in society more broadly.

Such asymmetries in urban preservation practice manifest beyond gender and sexuality. Both in theory and practice, urban preservation's parameters are surrounded by paradox and controversy, precisely because it involves policies and politics over a complex amalgamation of resources, land and people (including residents, visitors, officials and developers) (Zhang, 2013). As commemorative strategies that single out identities would simplify reality, scholarship on intersectionality has called for nuanced understandings of urban cultural memories of 'gay' community spaces beyond sexual identity alone (e.g. Brown, 2014; Castiglia and Reed, 2011; Lewis, 2013; Nash and Gorman- Murray, 2014). 'Gay' spaces are mutually (re)constituted along social identity markers, including class, ethnicity and age. As such, they challenge sexual normativities and, hence, also the very nominalism of the preempted notion of gay community or gaybourhood (Mattson, 2015).

Moreover, 'gay'-led revitalisation and gaybourhood remembering should be problematised. They might well simultaneously involve 'straight'-LGBTQ alliances, mimic heterosexist and patriarchal neighbourhood life, and incite 'degaying', particularly when gay pioneers are priced out as upshot of gentrification and areas become recuperated by the mainstream (Brown, 2014; Doan, 2015; Ghaziani, 2014; Kanai and Kenttamaa- Squires, 2015). Another complexion that queries gay spaces revolves around realities of transience, which signal the in- and outmigration and social mobilities within the area. In the wake of ever-advancing mobile digital technologies, it should be stressed that LGBTQ communities have become increasingly socio-spatially augmented alongside mobile, dissipated, embodied and, therefore, fluid realities (Nash and Gorman- Murray, 2014) – and so are queer memories (Castiglia and Reed, 2011; Gieseking, 2016).

The relationships between SoBe's context as gaybourhood and the preservation *cum* remembering of the art deco scene have remained considerably untapped. As wider global trend under the moniker of gaybourhoods, SoBe underwent a transition from a younger to slightly older gay population. According to Kanai and Kenttamaa-Squires (2015) and Lewis (2013), this resulted in unfounded conclusions of gaybourhood 'decline'. Rather, Kanai and Kenttamaa- Squires (2015) illustrated that (gay) SoBe has experienced a symbolic yet overly

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entrepreneurial 'remaking'. This has apparently involved a pro-tourist trajectory, while Knopp's (1990) caveat of male dominance can still be applied in such 'post-gay' era (see Collins and Drinkwater, 2016). Further scrutiny, however, remains needed into the role of preservation and (select) memorial practices in how the art deco scene has been appropriated in ('gay') placemaking.

Particularly in tourism-advocating preservation contexts, Ashworth (2011), Graham et al. (2016) and Souther (2007) criticised the engineering of cultural heritage and, accordingly, cast doubts on the authenticity of the objects of preservation as well as the sincerity of engagements with the subjects of preservation. Souther (2007) pejoratively employed the oft-used term 'Disneyfication' to disdain the renewal of the French Quarter in New Orleans. Chasin (2000) ventilated critique of how gay culture has overly become commodified through the deliberate promotion of gay entrepreneurship. This has encompassed preservation-led marketing of urban areas as quaint world-class tourist destinations, which have become criticised for being detached from original community support principles and, instead, for contributing to social displacements associated with gentrification (Chasin, 2000). Gieseking (2016: 30) reverberated this point by asserting that:

> while there is an excitement to marking history, preservation efforts may also lead to the unintentional and problematic effects of increasing gentrification and tourism that have eaten away at LGBTQ neighbourhoods.

Despite any consequences of an entrepreneurial preservation tack for the (re)production of exclusionary memorial landscapes, urban preservation practice should cultivate its spaces of potential for redressing memories of the suppressed. Following Hall (1999), especially formal tourist communications require a pedagogy that unsettles 'The Heritage' through comprehensive, anti-hegemonic memorial practices, which are based on telling histories and geographies of social difference (see Drozdzewski et al., 2016).

Context: Commemorating the pedigree of SoBe's art deco

This section presents two arguments offering a useful grounding for the subsequent analysis of art deco and gay urban preservation: (1) although dominant outreach communications

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chiefly represent the preservation movement as a novel practice, it is not as recent as conventionally assumed; (2) while these communications largely associate the art deco scene with higher-class tourists and residents, alongside bright imageries of escapism and pleasure, they mostly unremember how the art deco area has been repurposed in response to social fractures over time.

First, diverse key actors in preservation argued that art deco preservation was strongly inspired by the energy and stamina involved in a few notable yet under-highlighted precedents. The Cape Florida Lighthouse (1825), the longest surviving structure in Miami well before the city's formal foundation in 1896, had been subject to a persistent pursuit of preservation. In 1957, a lobby group promoted voluntary community engagement to protect the Italian Renaissance Villa Vizcaya (1914) from demolition (Stofik, 2005) – a bottom-up model that became co-opted by art deco preservationists. Once listed, these structures were promoted as key visitor attractions, similar to how art deco (but then as collective district) is advertised in its contemporary context.

Memorial practices today predominantly portray the art deco preservation movement as a locally distinct effort 'from within' a newly formed gay community. Its embedding within broader institutional and regulatory contexts, largely pre-dating this movement, is less clearly articulated. The Dade Heritage Trust was established in 1972 in aid of preserving historic structures throughout the region. Miami's adjacent municipality of Coral Gables introduced the county's first historic preservation law in 1973 to safeguard early art deco (known as Spanish Mediterranean). There was agreement among interviewed experts that this background served as fertile ground for following preservation efforts and final recognition. Nevertheless, the federal recognition of art deco did not implicate de facto protection. Art deco properties were by and large built with cheap and non-durable prefabricated materials. Various experts conveyed that these properties, in their original conception, were not meant to be kept for a long time, so it was beyond imagination that these properties would receive attention from an assiduous preservation movement roughly four decades later.

Moreover, expert interviews indicated that mostly appreciators from outside recognised the extraordinary qualities of SoBe's art deco architecture in reference to the area's 'human grid', as put by one of the tour guides. That said, not all properties were perceived as equally valuable. Also, the vulnerable condition of art deco properties made

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them prone to the demolition by neglect regulation. When Miami Beach launched the South Shore plan in 1976, making way for high-rise condominiums and offices, concerted art deco advocacy culminated into the establishment of the MDPL in the same year. This non-profit organisation radically counteracted this trajectory. Art deco's precarious material condition, combined with high-rise becoming increasingly lucrative for developers, new local ordinances were introduced over the 1990s to make restoration more profitable than destruction. An additional requirement stipulated that new builts in the Art Deco District should adopt/imitate the design of the 'classical' predecessors to sustain architectural harmony.

Second, the analysed narratives revealed various social fragmentations and historical fault lines. However, I have come to realise that this complex past deserves a more momentous, righteous place in art deco commemorations at present. The social asymmetry dates back from the influential role of the Collins-Fisher-Lummus development trio, who founded Miami Beach in 1912–1918 and connected it to mainland Miami. Although destined for agricultural business, Miami Beach soon turned into a popular holiday resort, described by an art deco tour guide as 'a playground for the wealthiest'. Some notable class differentiations informed the urban layout of SoBe. The Lummus brothers tailored developments to the middle-class on South Beach. This area became host to the highest concentration of art deco buildings, especially small-scale hotels and single-family holiday properties. Collins and Fisher controlled central and northern Miami Beach, where they developed higher-end hotels and rental accommodations for wealthier vacationers (City of Miami Beach, 1992).

The class-divided reality of the art deco scene also intersected with racial segregation till deep into the 1960s. African Americans were prohibited from staying anywhere on the island, except for black servants who had to return to the mainland after work (see 'The Black Experience on Miami Beach' in Miami Beach Visual Memoirs Project, 2016c). Nightlife venues, mostly based in the art deco area, opened their doors to black entertainers and visitors in the 1950s (Cooke, 2016). Although the 1964 Civil Rights Act put a legal end to ethnic segregation and set in a more inclusive politics of race in the South (Winders, 2005), a historian asserted that the art deco scene to date has overly remained reserved for the gaze of mostly middle and higher-middle class, white residents, vacationers and entrepreneurs.

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Experts repeatedly recollected how, on top of black racism, Miami Beach faced significant levels of anti-Semitism. Fisher who developed the middle and north areas was openly anti-Semitic. Hotel advertising included language such as 'Gentiles only', and 'every room with a view without a Jew' (Gaines, 2009: 90). Jewish people were nevertheless 'allowed' to purchase properties and stay on South Beach under the control of the Lummus brothers. Today's materialsymbolic landscape of this art deco-rich southern tip of Miami Beach retains the memory of early Jewish history and the rise and fall of the Jewish community, as covered by one of the MDPL tours. Notably, it features the island's first synagogue, adorned with tropical art deco motives. It was converted into the Jewish Museum of Florida in 2005, which boosted public outreach about local Jewish history and culture. As interesting detail in this context, the figureheads of the art deco preservation movement, art deco advocator Barbara Capitman, who laid the foundation of the MDPL in 1976, and the openly gay designer Leonard Horowitz, were both Jewish – although Jewish connections to art deco's cultural landscape remain in the margin of memorial practice today.

The dynamic economic situation had made various profound impacts over time, where traversing social identity markers of class, ethnicity, religion and age matter to remembering art deco's changing couleur locale. There was a significant dip in art deco property development after the Second World War, ushering in a war-infested disbelief in 'streamlined architecture' (i.e. the machine-inspired art deco style of that time) (Curtis, 1982). The economic upheaval in the 1950s led to the construction of larger hotels in what became known as Miami Modern (MiMo) architecture, mainly on Middle and North Beach, and boosted Miami Beach as destination for middle-class vacationers. Holidaymakers, however, found more appealing places to go, including Walt Disney World (opened in Orlando in 1971), and low-cost travel resorts in the Caribbean. Disinvestment continued into the late 1970s. Younger generations stayed away and, by the end of the 1970s, Miami Beach was dominated by permanent working-class Jewish retirees. SoBe then became notoriously known as 'God's waiting room' (Drolet et al., 2010; Stofik, 2005). This episode was captured by some novels and artworks, including Andy Sweet's notable photography.[3] Nevertheless, this 'ageing' history is modestly captured in contemporary art deco communications, which

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underline values of growth and the attributed positives of thriving artful and youthful cultures.

Uses of the art deco area were particularly impacted by geopolitical forces. After Fidel Castro's provocative Mariel boatlift in 1980, a great number of Cuban convicts, criminals, drug addicts, prostitutes and mentally ill people, problematically generalised as the Marielitos' generation, took refuge on Miami Beach. There was not merely a demographic transition towards a younger, yet underprivileged, class of Cuban descent, amongst whom homosexual exiles (Cápo, 2010). The area in the face of international migration became, in then popular imageries, associated with crime and insecurity. As Capitman appeared to be highly concerned with the marginalised (Proyect, 2009), the then dilapidated properties were re-earmarked as social housing for particularly Latino migrants and Jewish elderly. Although this social vacuum largely prevented art deco properties from demolition, and thus ensured their material existence today, this crucial social repurposing remains under-represented in commemoration today.

Methodology

The key research problem revolved around the tension between art deco and gay urban preservation on Miami Beach. First, my study's aim was to review extant material on this (strained) relationship in specific empirical reference to the study location. This implied a discourse analysis of media narratives and policy reports. I specifically screened print and digital archival material, official representations and oral narrations, as disseminated via, amongst others, tourist boards, walking tours, and the armamentarium of the MDPL, including the museum exhibition and library at the Art Deco Welcome Center as well as online research resources (e.g. Miami Beach Visual Memoirs Project, 2016a).4 The aim of such discourse analysis, following Gee (2014), was to unravel meaning-makings of phenomena, comprising ways of sayings (i.e. informing), doings (i.e. actions) and beings (i.e. identities). Second, I empirically juxtaposed the discourse analysis with the analysis of interviews, which I administered, alongside a coorganised annual residential field class in December over 2013–2015, with actors who acknowledged a distinct relationship with the area and the intersecting ambits of architectural and gay urban preservation (Table 1).

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Table 1. Composition of qualitative purposive sample of research participants.

Sample category and research participant's affiliation	Sample size (N=38)
Expert interviewees	
Chair, Miami Design Preservation League (MDPL)	1
Vice Chair, MDPL	1
Historic Preservation Officer & Public Policy Chair, MDPL	1 (2 interviews)
Planning Director/Design and Preservation Manager, Miami Beach	1
Director of Cultural Tourism, Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB)	1
President, Miami-Dade Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce	1 (2 interviews)
Director, Environmental Coalition of Miami & the Beaches (ECOMB)	1 (2 interviews)
Public Historian, MDPL; Former Chair, Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board	1
Professor of History, HistoryMiami	1
Executive Director, Miami Beach Gay Pride	1
Director of Programs and Outreach, MDPL	1
Special Events & Tour Director, MDPL	1
Art deco tour guide / expert	3
Gay and Lesbian Walking Tour guide	1 (2 interviews)
Focus group expert interviewees	
Member, Art Deco Tour Academy	5
Other interviewees	
Art deco hotel manager	2
Art deco retailer, Official Art Deco Gift Shop	1
Gay bar manager	3
Officer, Stonewall National Museum & Archives	1
Arts gallery manager	1
Visitors	9

Specifically, based on purposive convenient and snowball sampling, I conducted indepth interviews (30–60 min. each) with 16 key representatives in total in local governance, academic, library, archive, museum and hospitality sectors, and LGBTQ organisations. These interviews, eliciting formalist narratives and authoritative voices, were helpful in gaining deeper knowledges of the historiographies of local preservation efforts and developments, and especially the theme of gay involvement in the preservation movement. I moreover convened an art deco expert focus group (c. 45 min.) with 5 members of the Art Deco Tour Academy, which added an interactive component to the data baseline of the interviews.

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I carried out interviews (20–30 min. each) with 17 local people, including visitors, art deco hotel managers and retailers and gay bar managers. While the expert conversations focused on the broader historical and social situational grounding of the subject matter, the local interviews particularly broached the theme of everyday encounter and lived experience – basically, how did people engage with the art deco historic district and reflect on its roles and uses? I moreover performed visual and photographic observations to gain an impression of mundane real-world engagements with the area.

Gieseking (2016) emphasised the importance of walking tours for the commemoration and exchange of (LGBTQ) histories in urban historic districts – especially those histories that have remained hidden so far. I partook in three art deco-related walking tours provided by the MDPL: the Official Art Deco District Walking Tour (its main theme comprised the historical development of the area and its architectural features), South Beach: A Walker's Paradise Tour (its main theme covered SoBe's 'human scale'), and the Gay & Lesbian Walking Tour (its main theme was the evolution of local gay culture). I recruited tour guides and some participants from the walking tours for some go-along conversations; i.e. conversations in place (see Anderson, 2004).

In this participatory go-along method, the theme of everyday engagement was carried further in situ: how did people directly respond to how the area is being (co-)used? While walking and talking through a place, how were memories elicited? The walking method aimed to include a site-specific storytelling practice beyond conventional and spatially 'static' settings of one-to-one interviews, commonly detached from the place being narrated. I used the previously mentioned mixed methods and triangulation (i.e. data cross-corroboration of, in this case, perspectives from experts, laypersons and my own research; see Yin, 2013) to create thick description, i.e. contextualise findings and make them meaningful to scholarship (Geertz, 1994).

On an epistemological level, considering SoBe's queer framework and my own queer research positionality, I adopted the tenet of 'queerying' (in further development of my work on queerying (digitally networked) public art; see Zebracki, forthcoming). Grammatically expressed by the use of the verb rather than the noun, queerying indicates how theory is moved into 'methodological activism' (Jones and Adams, 2010: 203). The term involves an intentional word play and is out for critically examining and uncovering queer histories and

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identities for questioning partiality (see Haraway, 1991) and for instigating alternative thinkings and doings. Queerying, therefore, implies transformation and action and, as such, the deconstruction of the binary between techne (i.e. practical knowledges as gained during the empirical data collection), and episteme (i.e. study outcomes) (see Browne and Nash, 2010).

I describe my own positionality (and hence partiality; see Haraway, 1991) as both queer scholar and white, middle-class gay male person with intimate (practical) knowledges of artistic practices and LGBTQ culture. My personal situatedness facilitated my navigation through SoBe and the sampling of key actors across the arts and LGBTQ scenes (including preservation practice represented by many self-identified (pro-)gay people). Queerying, thus, implicated the embodied inscribing into the research area to generate further inside knowledges. I have put my situated, embodied insights to paper in my own scholar-artist intervention in Figure 2 – a reflective drawing acting as creative guide to the ensuing analysis of key results. By way of transformative experiment, this visual engages with the techne/episteme binary (see Browne and Nash, 2010) beyond textual narration.

Where gays meet art deco and reshape the seashore

In this section, I analyse the ascribed symbiosis between art deco preservation and gay community involvement on SoBe in special relation to recent memorialisation practices. I do this along three intersecting key themes resulting from the analysis: (1) material reappropriations of art deco memory; (2) immaterial, community-based recollections of place identities; and (3) entrepreneurial (re)makings of the art deco scene under neoliberalism. The section shows how the combined play of art deco and gay urban preservation has encountered various ambiguous trajectories of remembering and unremembering cultural legacy and social realities.

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Figure 2. Queerying techne/episteme: Author's visual synthesis of art deco and gay urban preservation.

Material re-appropriations of art deco memory

Art deco preservation has been bestowed with different material commemorative faces by notable (pro-)gay actors alongside dynamisms of the local gay community. Although Datel (1985) and Sprinkle (2014) indicated that, since the 1970s, urban preservation practices had been concentrating on leaving properties entirely intact and, as such, enhancing historical appreciation, the MDPL had been steering a somewhat different course as it allowed significant room for material alterations. Capitman's right hand, the designer Horowitz, who as said was openly gay, developed a pastel-colour palette. This palette reflects a range of colours of the sun, sky, beach and the sea – making a 'distinctive visual postcard for this place', as a MDPL officer phrased. The palette was used for the large-scale repainting of art deco façades and is still consistently applied today. The officer, moreover, suggested that Horowitz conceived of the art deco buildings as living organisms: 'Horowitz was a true window dresser, who held a firm belief in covering buildings like you can cover human bodies'. The regeneration was, indeed, limited to refurbishing facxades of the art deco

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properties – for that matter I have come to discern their rear sides and back alleys as uninviting and aesthetically unattractive. To a great deal, the efforts were geared to a tourist gaze: 'the redecoration was part of a larger plan meant to attract visitors – gay people included', a tour guide imparted.

The lasting impact of the Capitman- Horowitz duo has been commemoratively reified in the shape of local exhibits, street signage renamed after them, and the Capitman memorial, unveiled on Ocean Drive in 2016, which many respondents described as the liveliest and most iconic art deco strip (Figure 3). An expert, nevertheless, divulged that it is frequently referenced by its pejorative epithet 'Tourist Drive', where museumisation awkwardly meets commercialisation; one of the interviewed visitors even expressed this area as 'a chain of tourist traps'. Formal communications about the essential preservation efforts of Capitman and Horowitz took a lot after a hagiography. These communications reiteratively emphasised their role in attracting gay people and enlisting them for voluntary participation, for example through preservation board membership, advocacy activities and practical aid (including redecoration and cleanup). The few documented memoirs by Capitman's nearest and dearest, Andrew Capitman, one of her two sons, buttressed this: 'my mother was always comfortable with gay people, and from a very early time she had a strategy that she would use her warm relationship with the gay community to promote the idea of an art deco district' (Gaines, 2009: 128).

Thus, the art deco's material fabric was inextricably constituted through local gay culture. Fellows (2004), perhaps in an overgeneralising fashion, phrased that 'preservation-minded gays have a penchant for meticulous attention to design detail'. The preservation-led art deco regeneration went hand in hand with the creation of amenities, such as community centres and gay night-time venues, which reciprocally enhanced gay communal building. Entertainment industries and related popular tourist imageries (still) richly portray SoBe's thriving nightlife, characterised by art deco buildings adorned with bold neon lights. The regeneration, overall, worked as magnet for the further in-migration of particularly white middle-class gay people over the 1980s onwards.

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Figure 3. Impression of the art deco built and tourist environment of Ocean Drive, featuring the Barbara (Baer) Capitman Memorial (2016) on the sidewalk (right photo).

Source: Author's own.

Here, it is important to acknowledge that the in-migration of gays to so-called safe spaces in South Florida, including South Beach and Key West, was affected by prevailing homophobia, despite the widespread empowering gay liberation movement following the 1969 Stonewall Riots (Ca´ po, 2010). Gays were not only involved in the local preservation movement but also in political activism for equal gay rights, which set on a collision course with especially antigay activism of the religious right (Fetner, 2001). On account of the efforts of the gay movement, Dade County passed an ordinance for anti-discrimination based on sexual orientation in 1977. However, this was successfully repealed in the same year as a result of the Save Our Children campaign led by Anita Bryant, a popular conservative Christian entertainer at that time (Fetner, 2001). In a sense, Bryant could be considered a historical antipode of the progressive, 'gay-friendly' Capitman.

On SoBe, a white cosmopolitan gay middle-class clearly started to control the preservation-based regeneration. This broke with the area's former profile as a place for the socially marginalised with a large majority of senior retirees. Conversations with experts indicated that, in the early regeneration days, art deco properties offered ample cheap and seasonal housing. The one-bed studios especially appealed to single gay men, many of

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whom did not own a car and therefore appreciated SoBe's walkability. Owing to the urban architectural affordances – that is the relatively small properties and lack of schools – families with children stayed away, which proliferated place associations with a homogeneous sexual identity. That said, Capitman and company actively pursued social housing for the wider lower and middle class. So, although SoBe was the locus for a sizeable gay presence, there was no exclusive, one-issue preservation policy. Knopp's (1990) earlier observation of a 'preservation-based and substantial (but deemphasised) gay identity' in his case study on Marigny (Knopp, 1990: 344) can, thus, to some degree be re-applied to SoBe's community development.

Community-based recollections of place identities

Selective memorial practices within urban preservation have contributed to the formation of hegemonic spaces of social and sexual identities. The abundantly portrayed success and glamour of gay-led art deco preservation particularly stands in marked contrast to the under-commemorated implications of the late-1980s' destructive AIDS outbreak. The local response revealed an interaction with the broader AIDS crisis and queer mobilities at that time (see Castiglia and Reed, 2011; Nash and Gorman-Murray, 2014). 'Some gays literally came here to die', a MDPL respondent said, where strong social support and the immune-system-friendly climate were perceived key benefits. Several experts conveyed that the AIDS crisis became a concern of the preservation movement and that its focus, more strongly than ever before, shifted from material to social wellbeing. An officer at Stonewall National Museum & Archives suggested that little of art deco's renaissance was 'engineered' in this sense. The regeneration coalesced with this health trauma, activating an invested belief in genuinely restoring life in the guise of the art deco scene, both materially and socially. Although this dimension is fairly illdocumented in today's memorial landscape, Patron and Forrest (2000: 18, 29) imparted below enlightening note:

> Artists and restaurateurs who had breathed life into SoHo during the 1970s as New York's vital signs hit a critical low saw a broke – but mendable – urban skeleton in South Beach's art deco heritage. Gay men, both part of and closely connected to this group of pioneers, also seized upon South Beach as a place to rebuild their own

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> broken lives . That a national catastrophe was partly responsible for a community's rapid revitalisation is a paradox that may be unique to South Beach.

Hence, the AIDS crisis translated into a distinct motility (i.e. mobility capital; see Nash and Gorman-Murray, 2014) as well as the ensuing distinct place-based preservation. Despite prolonged global queer memorialisations including World Aids Day, which have addressed the loss and struggle of those lives affected by HIV/AIDS, the aforementioned dramatic paradox has not quite taken up proportionate coverage in art deco memorial practice. What allegedly started as a rather self-centred escape from HIV/AIDS, inmigrated gays on SoBe, by the time improving inhibitors became available, found a second chance to strengthen relationships between gay identity, community and place: 'the original vision of preserving the area's hundreds of art deco structures is being updated to consider the uses to which these restored buildings are to be put, and in the service of what group or groups' (Patron and Forrest, 2000: 29).

I experienced that narrated art deco (e.g. tourist communications, including walking tours and timeline panels at the art deco museum) could have more firmly emphasised the social and material transitions within the specific scope of the AIDS trauma, alongside experiences of those who are no longer living there. This observation feeds into Gieseking's (2016) argument on how queer temporalities of the past too often become detached from present hegemonic place commemorations. That said, I witnessed some 'non-official' testimonials, which lent some vicarious and emotional experiences to me. For example, an art deco tour guide pointed at a house where a close friend, deceased of AIDS complications, used to live. Several experts denoted that the link between art deco preservation and the AIDS crisis became particularly intensified when Horowitz himself met with the same fate in 1989.

A further limiting and selective reminisce relates to the absence of 'non-gays' within and beyond the LGBTQ milieu, as well as to the often incoherent and inaccurate use of non-gay agents. Saliently, in various guided tours and interviews, very often lesbians were bracketed together with gays for their input in preservation practice (see critique of lesbian's invisibility in, e.g., Nash and Gorman-Murray, 2015). There is scant material evidence for lesbians' input, whose social life on SoBe, according to one of the experts, was supposedly

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organised around indoor dinner tables. The same lack of documentation/commemoration holds for the role of 'straight–gay' alliances in preservation. Particularly the latter would 'queery' categorical gender and sexual identities and give way for more fluid, genderqueer constructs of community and place. As another example, in situ discussion during the thought-provoking Gay & Lesbian Walking Tour was facilitated with photos from gay male club culture to explain the past uses of art deco properties and local culture (Figure 4). Similar retrospects that accentuate gay culture might stem from acts of (un)consciously selective memorialising. Accordingly, queer theorems criticised (white and gay) male social dominance (e.g. Castiglia and Reed, 2011; Knopp, 1990), hence calling for a more inclusive politics of queer visibility and commemoration (Gieseking, 2016).

Figure 4. Snapshot of Gay & LesbianWalking Tour: based on photo elicitation, the bygone gay nightclubWarsaw Ballroom was recalled across the extant Twist gay bar (shown in the left corner of this figure) to explain associations between the art deco and gay nightlife scenes. Storytelling was well-nigh exclusively based on gay male history and imageries.

Source: Author's own.

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Entrepreneurial (re)makings of the art deco scene under neoliberalism

Art deco and gay urban preservation have evolved in interplay with, and been challenged by, distinct neoliberal forces. Expert interviews in the hospitality sector suggested an increasing gay-inflected entrepreneurial appropriation of the art deco legacy over the course of preservation, especially since the mid-1990s. Parallel to a proliferating international tourist competition, SoBe's burgeoning gay culture became marketed within colourful imageries of art deco as a 'cultural hotspot, a cool place to hang out', as conveyed by the Director of Cultural Tourism at GMCVB. For some, this devaluated authentic and somewhat nonconformist qualities of the first gay-led preservation wave, resonating with critiques from Frisch (2002) about how heterosexist urban planning has portrayed gays as exotic others and from Mattson (2015) about the commodification of gay bars.

The list at the crossroads of art deco and (pro-)gay culture, as situated within fashion, music, film and broader entertainment industries, is exhaustive and has, judging on object representations, conversations and imaginations, been optimally capitalised and monopolised through popular marketisations of SoBe by the same industries. Tourist communications, over and over again, articulated links between (pro-gay) celebrities and art deco properties. As notable anecdotes, Gloria Estefan was advertised as the proud owner of the iconic Cardozo Hotel and promotor of Miami in her role as the once lead singer of the global trendsetting Miami Sound Machine – an epitome of Miami's growing Latin-American cultural interface (Nijman, 2011). Fashion designer Gianni Versace was murdered on the doorsteps of his Mediterranean-style art deco mansion in 1997, which converted into a site for dark tourism and 'one of the most photographed buildings in the States', a tour guide claimed. The Carlyle Hotel received worldwide fame by the gay iconic film production *The Birdcage* (1996), starring Robin Williams as gay cabaret owner. And there is a plethora of prominent films and music clips, including Will Smith's *Welcome to Miami* (1997), introducing art deco sceneries to the world and promoting Miami as global tourist destination.

Key experts suggested that these artistic productions had deliberately employed the art deco scene for providing positive twists to experienced negatives in the past. This also had currency in art deco preservation's recent past. When the influx of Cuban refugees became associated with a flourishing international drug trade, the film *Scarface* (1983) and

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the *Miami Vice* TV series (1984– 1989) operated as mnemonic transformers, transmuting Miami's crime scene into 'exotic' and 'sexy' cultural values through the rosy lens of the art deco spectacle. This was succeeded by heritage tourism to art deco film locations, consequently boosting tourism and clientele in the Miami area (Meek, 2012; see also Graham et al., 2016).

Respondents, some more than others, critiqued the authenticity of ways in which art deco has been chiefly recalled. Alongside genuine preservation efforts, entrepreneurial initiatives have earned the Art Deco District both a worldwide prestigious reputation and tourism revenues. A MDPL officer argued that the organisation's rationale does 'not just seek to celebrate art deco through musicals, artwork and classic car shows at the annual Art Deco Weekend' (being organised since MDPL's establishment in 1976). The MDPL's core aim is to teach wide public audiences about the value of art deco. Despite this pedagogical claim, there is some apparent tourist-entrepreneurial repositioning. The Art Deco Welcome Center (including museum) and the adjacent Official Art Deco Gift Shop along Ocean Drive in the historic district are situated directly opposite catering establishments – which I have come to experience as busy, noisy and somewhat intrusive atmospheres.[5] I could not escape the impression that much of the 'official' communication style and artefacts imprinted, a` la Bonnett (2010), nostalgic and idealised 'postcard realities' of art deco.

Reverberating with homonormative critiques (e.g. Kanai and Kenttamaa-Squires, 2015; Mattson, 2015), some experts recognised how SoBe's major attractions, including Miami Fashion Week (since 1998), Art Basel Miami (since 2004) and Miami Beach Gay Pride (since 2009) (Figure 5), have increasingly appealed to global tourist markets as well as mainstream gay and arts publics. A few respondents indicated how such ambitious, large-scale events largely used the art deco landscape as de´cor, in lieu of exploring opportunities for inclusive community engagement and articulating diversity. An art deco hotel manager lamented that SoBe has turned into a 'living museum – the spontaneous circuit parties organised by a subset of gay people clearly belong to the past'.

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Figure 5. SoBe's art deco and LGBTQ legacy are co-celebrated through temporary events, notably by the annual Miami Beach Gay Pride (above), and permanent design interventions. The latter include the formally commissioned rainbow signage and pedestrian crossing (below), adjacent to Palace Bar, self-advertised as 'the first and only LGBT[Q] bar and restaurant on world-famous Ocean Drive, in the heart of South Beach's historic Art Deco District' (Palace Bar, 2017). Yet, following the sale of the building, the bar has been forced to relocate (Flechas, 2017; see also critique of the 'post-gay' era in Collins and Drinkwater, 2016).

Source: Courtesy of 2015 Miami Beach Gay Pride (above); Author's own (below).

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Various key experts acknowledged that the unfolding art deco revitalisation is part and parcel of the politics of real estate development and tourist marketisations. In their view, this process has become, to a reasonable degree, a victim of its own success, where one of the experts bemoaned the unequal way in which 'people too have become commodified'. According to the *Miami Herald*, Miami Beach has even grown into 'the nation's most unequal housing market . [where] the ''haves'' have it all' (Nehamas, 2015). Since the 2000s, many in-migrants, among whom a substantial share of gay artists (who initially moved from creative communities on the mainland including Coconut Grove), were subsequently priced out on SoBe. A MDPL officer expressed sorrow over that 'the rents went up precisely because of the historic preservation movement', hence disclosing a selfcritique of the organisation's accomplishment. Owing to this gentrifying knock-on effect, a noticeable out-migration of especially gays directed towards affordable houses, offices and galleries in northwards cities with growing gay communities, such as Wilton Manors and Fort Lauderdale (see Kanai and Kenttamaa- Squires, 2015).

SoBe's post-gay realities of art deco preservation, after Ghaziani (2014), present a dynamic, animated blend of gay acceptance and gay cosmopolitanism. Accordingly, homogeneous gay place (re)makings should be challenged alongside queer critiques of temporality. This can be performed by engaging more profoundly with social transitions and mobilities that intersect identity markers beyond sexuality alone (e.g. Gieseking, 2016; Nash and Gorman-Murray, 2014). Art deco memorial practices could especially make strenuous efforts to both further address and redress lived realities of those marginalised, or even invisibilised, in the (recent) past and present. Such endeavour, at both intellectual and practical levels, would move beyond singular socio-spatial notions of (gay) community and diversify static art deco aesthetics as hauntingly (re)produced by dominant entertainment and tourist industries.

Conclusion and discussion

This research has demonstrated to urban scholars the value of queerying relationships between urban preservation and (selective) memorialisation practices. Drawing from archival, policy, observational, participatory and interview data, the empirical case study on the Art Deco District on Miami Beach has contributed new insights into commemorative heritage at

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the nexus of art deco and gay urban preservation, uncovering fluid power relationships between preservation and development as much as between social and sexual identities.

The local preservation movement since the late 1970s had opened a space of potential for pioneering (pro-)gay agents to co-opt the art deco scene in material and immaterial (re)makings. After Gieseking (2016), this had pointed the variability and transience of SoBe as queer place in its recent past. Beyond the acknowledgement of the fluidity of queer history, findings have indicated the HIV/AIDS crisis and gender divides (alongside the prevailing visibility of gay males) as two more historical tensions characteristic of local urban commemoration practice. The latter has been especially analysed in the light of neoliberalism, which may be construed as a third field of force, which has challenged, or even more so underplayed, gay involvement in art deco preservation. I further revisit this study's conceptual and empirical insights hereinafter.

Critical 'readings' of text, image, objects and oral narrations have largely revealed notable (un)intentional unrememberings of the art deco scene with regard to social fault lines in the (recent) past, which intersect class, ethnicity, religion, age and sexuality. SoBe moved from a holiday resort for a predominantly white higher class in the 1920s to a widely marketed, white middle-class tourist destination till the 1950s, while especially black and Jewish people were discriminated in the everyday life. Since the 1960s, the area became run down and a haven for mostly old Jewish retirees, followed by Cuban refugees after the Mariel boatlift in 1980. Thereupon, the area was salvaged and 'restaged' by gay pioneers in the late 1970s, who shepherded the preservation movement towards the image of SoBe as a queerfriendly place. This turned into a successful entrepreneurial endeavour with gentrifying downsides and the social privileging of a (gay) cosmopolitan class.

This rough outline neither justifies the art deco scene's historical multiplicities and ambiguities nor represents the lived social realities and contradictories of this area and its interstices. However, it reminds the queerying onlooker that SoBe's intersectional conundrum could be more substantially articulated and anatomised in theways inwhich its recent historical context is typically foregrounded as (pro-)gay neighbourhood/community. The art deco scene has been deeply appropriated as de´cor for fashion and entertainment industries. Relatedly, it hosts major, often nonplace- specific events that may partly redraw

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from community building principles. Rather, such events might strongly cater for a wealthy (queer) creative class.

This study, as such, has especially demonstrated the value of adopting a queerying approach to resist dominant urban preservation practices that are conflated by historically recent heritage, social fragmentations as well as sexual identity issues. Each should not be singled out but addressed holistically. SoBe's identities cannot be reduced to positive, homogeneous associations with urban (queer) creativity alone. Problematic aspects of the (deeper) past – including class, ethnic and religious segregation; profound impacts of the HIV/AIDS crisis; gentrification-led displacements triggered by internal homonormative and external forces of economic growth – are at odds with romanticising remembrances of a so-called 'Deco Schmeco'. This endearing descriptor, frequently used by interviewed art deco aficionados, indicates a politics of nostalgia (Bonnett, 2010), which attributes distinctive architectural and lifestyle qualities to the early art deco scene.

This case study is, hence, of relevance to urban scholars who are engaged in challenging implications of (the inadequacies of) neoliberal urban development logics for incorporating social difference (alongside place- and identity-based memories) of those living and those who once lived in the area. This research has uncovered a dimension of pronounced homonormativity in overly entrepreneurial post-gay urban remaking. That is to say, as critiqued by queer scholars (e.g. Mattson, 2015; Sycamore, 2008), a homogeneous, mainstream cosmopolitan style has been composed beyond sexual identity norms alone.

Entrepreneurial re-appropriations, consequently, have pursued local urban preservation as template for capitalising the connectivities between art deco history, queer culture and the arts. This has been noticeably used as vehicle for (re)imagining the city of Miami through glocal artistic productions and vignettes as have been widely shared in popular culture over the last three decades. The findings suggest that hegemonic official memorial practices should be queeried in greater depth through inclusive rather than fragmentary research and policy commitments, which delve into the critical mass beneath. This would expose a diverse and fluid ambit of unremembered, nonofficial lived spaces and temporalities, and might expand extant print and digital archives (e.g. Miami Beach Visual Memoirs Project, 2016a). They may co-exist (in harmony or controversy) with the voices of official agents and concurrently reinterpret them. This calls for a bifurcated critical stance in

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both urban theory and practice: one towards mnemonic practices that write essentialist urban histories, and one towards empowering subaltern voices that have remained underwritten by dominant urban agents.

Thus, enforcing Duncan and Duncan's (2001) point that 'landscapes become possessions for those with the wealth and power to control them' (p. 387), this study argues to be wary of slippery power asymmetries that might creep into memorial practices. 'Official' tourist iconographies in particular commonly represented the art deco scene as a collective monument. Nonetheless, as put by Bos (2016: iii), monuments should not be intended as static markers of the past, but as memorials to changing social structures and 'critical ''documents'' of the past'. Beyond the material surface, the art deco properties are imbued with spatialised social relations, determining axes of perceived ownership, contestation, authenticity, etc. which dynamically constitute urban public spaces (see Zukin, 1998).

As endnote, the queerying approach can be extended to Miami's vexed question of sea level rise, which has started preservationists existentially pondering on commemorating and saving art deco for future generations. Despite cognisance of Miami's vulnerable environmental situation, construction continues at an unbridled pace, paradoxically funding climate change mitigation measures (Meyer, 2014). The recent graffiti text 'your million dollar houses will soon be underwater', across the top of an abandoned hospital on SoBe (see Flechas, 2016), is a harsh reminder of this cul-de-sac. Future research might analyse how this issue is inevitably queerying the pitch for the (im)material efforts of art deco preservation. It might engage with a battery of speculative questions about material elevation or relocation, accepting obsolescence or refusing loss, carrying on as remote museum exhibit or digital archive (e.g. Miami Beach Visual Memoirs Project, 2016a), and so on. Engagement with such post-preservation matters will further benefit urban scholarship on the specific interplays between art deco and gay urban preservation and memorialisation under the yoke of the environmentally challenged global urban condition.

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not necessarily endorsed by the participants. I would, furthermore, like to thank the Editors and three referees, whose incisive comments have helped to develop this article. Any errors are my own.

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Notes

1. Art deco drew inspiration from early 20th-century European styles, including Bauhaus, De Stijl and Vienna Secession, and incorporated eclectic post-classical architectural styles with Aztec, American Indian, Persian, Egyptian, as well as local tropical flora, fauna and ocean references (Curtis, 1982; Stofik, 2005).

2. LGBTQ refers to non-heterosexual people, who identify themselves or are identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (or non-cisgender), or queer/questioning. The common use of this acronym is not exhaustive and should be problematised along intersectional concerns with, amongst others, class, ethnicity and age.

3. The local celebrity photographer Andy Sweet strikingly captured the ageing population on SoBe, see *Miami New Times* (2015).

4. The Miami Design Preservation League (MDPL), in cooperation with the Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority and Close-Up Productions, has been making large strides in the digital video and image archiving of Miami Beach reminiscences, including those of art deco culture, for online research, learning and teaching purposes and museum installations (see Miami Beach Visual Memoirs Project, 2016a).

5. See video snapshot, entitled 'Atmospheric impression of Art Deco Welcome Center and Ocean Drive, Miami Beach, 17 December 2016 (by Martin Zebracki)', at http://vimeo.com/213398358.

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