**Aleksandra Gajowy (Newcastle):** “‘That Disgusting Guy who Copulates with Christ:’ Sex, Censorship and Homosociality in the Polish Contemporary Performance Art”

**Abstract**

Historian Maria Janion argues that in Poland, “[n]ationalism enforces homophobic attitudes, since – spectacularly based on male homosociality – it is particularly vulnerable to homoerotic attraction.” In order to secure position of hegemony, the production of homosocial bonds between men is concurrent with reiteration of an idealised image of the Mother so as to exclude “all non-reproductive discourses of sexuality from the national discourse.” The national discourse is meant to be unambiguously heterosexual and focused on reproduction. Janion draws upon Kosofksy Sedgwick, who positions homosociality and homoeroticism on the opposite ends of the same continuum. In order to categorically detach themselves from any homoerotic undertones, men enforce the nationalistic and homophobic narratives inherent to construction of patriarchal systems.

Jacek Markiewicz’s *Adoration of Christ* (1993) was exhibited in Warsaw in 2013. In the piece, Markiewicz uses his naked body to caress a medieval crucifix. Pressing himself against the crucifix resting on the floor, Markiewicz kisses and touches Christ’s face and body. The work, which did not inspire any drastic reactions in 1993, provoked heated debates in the media and the parliament in 2013. The symbol of the cross had been inextricably linked with “Polishness,” and the need to protect “our fathers’ religion” was emphasised repeatedly. This paper explores how queer homoerotic discourses have the potential to threaten the heteronormative systems of male domination in the Polish national culture. It further examines how queering of the male body can not only reveal, but also challenge and disrupt the strongly patriarchal arrangement of the Polish society.