“Sentimental Activism as Queer-Feminist Documentary Practice, or How to Make Love in a Room Full of People.”

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NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

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Where do the possibilities of activist intervention lie in our media-saturated and seemingly activist-saturated present? Seeking inspiration in the recent documentary work of women’s and women-dominated migrant labor activism in East Asia, specifically, Heberer elaborates on how this work engages a particular politico-aesthetic strategy, or what she calls “sentimental activism,” to remain legible to majoritarian decision-makers while insisting on the need for structural transformation.

Feng-Mei Heberer is an Assistant Professor in Cinema Studies at New York University. Her research draws from the fields of media studies, women and queer of color critique, and works on biopolitics to explore the intersection of media, race, and migration. Her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in Sexualities, Camera Obscura, and the edited volume, Asian Video Cultures. Complementing her academic work, she has also been a programmer for several film festivals, including the Asian Film Festival Berlin.