



Radical Preservation

Case Study:

The Clam House: Radical Preservation of Queer Harlem

What's at Stake?



1

Without new methods, Harlem's official memory is straightwashed.

2

Erasure of Black queer lives and their contributions vanish from public history.

3

How do we preserve a vanished site?
What do we protect?

The building, or the performances and culture it carried?

Radical Preservation Lens

THEMES:

- **Blackness / Otherness:** Bentley as queer, gender-nonconforming, Black woman.
- **Erasure / Futurity:** AR app + speculative archives bring the site back.
- **Preservation vs Heritage:** Memory of performance vs frozen landmark.
- **Tangible vs Intangible:** Building gone; culture survives in stories, drag, music.
- **Capitalism / Market:** Speakeasy nightlife tied to prohibition economy.
- **Animate vs Inanimate:** Preserve practice and joy, not just walls.

