

JESSICA BORGE

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[ORCID PROFILE](#)

Université de Strasbourg
ERC BodyCapital
Département d'histoire des
sciences de la vie et de la santé
SAGE UMR7363
4 rue Kirschleger
67085 Strasbourg Cedex
France

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Twentieth Century contraceptive products, their markets, and related innovations and processes (technical, pharmaceutical, promotional)
- The history of marketing practice incorporating Public Relations and intersection with social and commercial stakeholders
- Media regulation (Advertising, pharmaceutical advertising)
- British television and film (corporate and social interest: trade, advertising, publicity)
- Comparative market cultures and the history of retailing, especially difficult products/services

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

ERC BodyCapital Post-Doctoral Researcher

03/2018 – 03/2020

Research Area: The history of reproduction, contraceptives and television in Britain 1945-1990

Project: "The healthy self as body capital: individuals, market-based societies and body politics in visual twentieth century Europe"

Societies, actors and government in Europe, SAGE UMR7363

Département d'Histoire des sciences de la Vie et de la Santé, Université de Strasbourg

ISSF Wellcome Postdoctoral Fellow

10/2017 - 03/2018

Birkbeck College, University of London

PhD, Department of Film, Media & Cultural Studies

10/2013 - 09/2017

Birkbeck College, University of London

Supervised by Prof. Janet McCabe and Dr. Suzannah Biernoff

Thesis Title:

'Wanting it Both Ways': The London Rubber Company, the Condom and the Pill, 1915-1970.

Examiners: Professor Adrian Bingham, Dr Alana Harris.

Funded by the AHRC

[Abstract attached as appendix]

MA Historical Research [Distinction]

10/2011 - 09/2012

Institute of Historical Research, University of London

Dissertation Title: The Psychosexual Counselling Tapes of Dr Joan Malleson: New Theories

BA Film Studies [1:1]

10/2000 - 07/2003

University of Kent at Canterbury

FELLOWSHIPS, TEACHING, CONFERENCE ORGANISATION**Seminar Leader****12/4/2018**

Visual History in the Twentieth Century: Bodies, Practices and Emotions.
 Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin
 - "But where was the Condom? The predominance of the Pill and its stakeholders in 1960s British Factual Television"

Conference Organiser**15/11/2017**

[From Archives to Modern Lives: Frontiers of Trade and Technology.](#)
 King's College London Archives/ Worshipful Company of Traders
 Bush House, London

Associate Tutor, BA English and BA History of Art**01/2016 - 05/2017**

Birkbeck School of Arts, University of London

Modules Taught:

-*Introduction to Modern Art: Mechanisms of Meaning*
 -*Introduction to Modern Art: Picasso's Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*
 -*English: Writing London (core module)*

Syntex Archive: History of Syntex Fellow**05 – 06/2016**

Roche Historical Collection and Archive, Basel, Switzerland

AHRC IPS Smithsonian Research Fellow**02 – 07/2015**

National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C.

Dittrick Medical Museum Researcher**6 - 10/4/2015**

Percy Skuy Collection, Cleveland, Ohio

Conference Assistant**27/11/2015**

TECHNE Student (un)conference: Kinesis and Stasis.
 Barbican Centre, London

Conference Note Taker**13/11/2014**

Business Archives Council: Let the Right One In?
 Challenging Perceptions of Access to Business Archives.
 Royal Albert Hall, London

Conference Assistant**15-16/5/2014**

Shoulder to Shoulder: 40th Anniversary
 Symposium and Screening.
 Birkbeck Institute of the Moving Image, London

Conference Organiser**12/5/2014**

[Holding Things in Common:](#)
[The Vernacular, Everyday Objects, and Memory.](#)
 Symposium, Birkbeck School of Arts, London

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- "Feminor, Condoms and More: What happens when a Condom Company makes an Oral Contraceptive Pill". Port Talk, Goodenough College, London, February 27, 2018.
- "Britain's Forgotten Condom Industry". Interview [[Podcast](#)], Birkbeck College, 2017.
- "Honest, Sober and Industrious". Academic Job Hunting, Twentieth Century Style". King's College London, [King's Collections Blog](#), May 2017.
- "Made in Chingford: The London Rubber Company and Britain's Forgotten Condom Industry". Talk, Birkbeck's Big Ideas, City & Islington College, November 7, 2017.
- "Capital Condoms". Talk, Wellcome Insights, Wellcome Library, London, May 18, 2017.
- "Making and Marketing Condoms". The Researcher's View, [Wellcome Blog](#), October 2016.
- "Beautiful British Condoms". Talk, Science Museum Lates, February 24, 2016.
- "Prudence and the Pill". Talk, Cambridge Science Festival, March 7-20, 2016.
- "Condoms, pills and more: the contraceptive historian's playground". [Blog](#), Dittrick Museum, Cleveland, Ohio, 2016.
- "Scratching Surfaces: Attractions and Pitfalls of Using Ads as Historical Sources". [Birkbeck Research Blog](#), January 2015.
- "The Oral Contraceptive Trade in Britain: Print Marketing Collateral, 1961 - 1970". [AHRC Image Gallery](#), December 2014.
- "How 'Orals' Altered the Contraceptive Marketplace". [Blog](#), Perceptions of Pregnancy, 2014.

PUBLICATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- [In Draft] "What we have not got": The London Rubber Company, the Condom and *Feminor* Oral Contraceptive Pill, 1955-1970 [Journal Article, 2018]
- [In Draft] Made in Chingford. The London Rubber Company, *Durex* Condoms and the Pill, 1950-1970 [Monograph, 2018]
- "Propagating Progress and Circumventing Harm: Reconciling References to Contraceptives in British Television and Cinema of the 1960s," in [Reproductive Rights Issues in Popular Media: International Perspectives](#), ed. Waltraud Maierhofer and Beth Capo, (McFarland, 2017).

Sub-Editor, *Dandelion Journal*, Vol. 5, No 1 (2014): Violence

INVITED PAPERS

- "Dependency, Exploitation and Resistance: the London Rubber Company and the Family Planning Association in pre-Pill Britain". Institute of Historical Research, History of Sexuality Roundtable, School of Advance Study, Jan 10, 2017.
- "Selling Condoms to Clinics: The London Rubber Company and the Family Planning Association in pre-Pill Britain". CHSTM Lunchtime Seminar, University of Manchester, March 1, 2016.
- "Dependency, Exploitation and Resistance; the London Rubber Company and the Family Planning Association in pre-Pill Britain". History of Medicine Unit Seminar, University of Birmingham, March 3, 2016.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- "Mid Twentieth-Century British Commercial Television Regulation as a Gateway for Understanding Contraceptive Products and Practices in Mass Media". Broadcasting Health and Disease. Bodies, Markets and Television, 1950s -1980s, Wellcome Collection, London, February 19 - 21, 2018.
- "Merchandising Contraceptives in the Age of the Pill: the Retail Pharmacy and Birth Control in 1960s Britain, Canada and America". European Social Science History Conference, Valencia, Spain, March 30 - April 2, 2016.
- "In Secret: The Covert Recording of Sex Counselling Sessions in 1950s London". Hands On History: Exploring New Methodologies for Media History Research, London, February 8 - 10, 2016.
- "Brand Equity and the Commercial Contraceptive in 1960s Britain". The European Association for the History of Medicine and Health Conference, Cologne, Germany, September 2 - 5, 2015. Commentator. Reproduction on Film, University of Cambridge, September 23 - 25, 2015.
- "In the Shadow of 'the Pill': London Rubber Company, the Condom, & the Struggle for Contraceptive Supremacy in 1960s Britain". Joint Business History Conference-European Business History Association meeting, Miami, Florida, June 24 - 27, 2015.
- "The Marketing Problems of a Contraceptive Behemoth: London Rubber Company, Ernest Dichter Associates, and the Condom in 1960s Britain". 17th Biennial Conference on Historical Research in Marketing (CHARM), Crossing Boundaries, Spanning Borders: Voyages Around Marketing's Past, Long Beach, May 27 - 31, 2015.
- Panel Chair, Archaeologies of Media and Film, University of Bradford, September 2 - 5, 2014.
- "Tracing 'the Pill' in 1960s British Film: Censorship, Custom & the Difficulty of Citing Contraception". Paper presented at Perceptions of Pregnancy, University of Hertfordshire, July 16 -18, 2014.
- Panel Chair, Perceptions of Pregnancy, University of Hertfordshire, July 16 - 18, 2014.
- "Tracing 'the Pill' in 1960s British Film: Censorship, Custom & the Difficulty of Citing Contraception". Paper presented at Pill and Pen. Contraception and Unwanted Pregnancy in Literature and Popular Culture. Iowa City, Iowa, March 7 - 9, 2014.
- "Oral Contraception as an Object of Historical Enquiry". Paper presented at FMACS Student Forum, Birkbeck College, London, England, June 6, 2014.
- Panel Chair, Holding Things in Common: The Vernacular, Everyday Objects, and Memory Symposium, Birkbeck School of Arts, May 12, 2014.
- "Visual Narratives of Oral Contraception in 1960s Britain". Paper presented at FMACS Student Forum, London, England, December 2, 2013.

AWARDS

2015 European Association for the History of Medicine and Health [Van Foreest Prize](#)

APPENDIX

PhD Thesis Abstract

The London Rubber Company [LRC] was England's largest ever condom manufacturer. Competition disappeared after the war, and *Durex* condoms became a household name. However, social groups wary of commerce pilloried the contraceptive retail trade. Negative cultural associations dogged the condom's public image, which discouraged competition but also obstructed advertising. When oral contraception was taken up by mass media in the 1960s, LRC and the condom were left behind. LRC survived by reorganising its main trading areas, diversifying, and by sabotaging the oral contraceptive project through an underground marketing programme. This included the marketing of its own infiltrator Pill, *Feminor*.

In the absence of company archives, the thesis assembles a history of LRC's strategic, corporate, sales and marketing activity by presenting new, alternative primary sources including market research and industry intelligence reports, annual reports, patents and trademarks, correspondence, films, television programmes, photographs and interviews.

By focusing on industry-generated sources, this thesis makes the case for examining the cultural problem of the "unmentionable" condom through a corporate lens, explaining how LRC negotiated barriers to communicating sales messages.

The thesis is structured as two halves: before and after the introduction of the oral contraceptive Pill. Section One concerns the condom, cultural problems affecting the public image of for-profit contraceptives, and the rise of LRC as a manufacturer and distributor from 1915 to 1960. Section Two is organised around LRC's awareness of and response to the Pill from c.1957 to 1970. In offering an alternative perspective to the current dominant Social History narratives on British contraceptive habits, this thesis repositions the condom as an adventure in business acumen and media savvy. It concludes that contraceptive practices were influenced by the desires and requirements of commercial enterprise, the circumstances that befell it, and efforts to control the image of a popular but troubled product.