



# Virtual Intimacies: Media, Affect, and Queer Sociality

*Shaka McGlotten*

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*Uses ethnography and cultural analysis to track scenes of intimate connection and disconnection among gay men across an array of media sites.*

*Virtual Intimacies* tells the stories of gay men, including the author, who navigate social worlds in which the boundaries between real and virtual have been thoroughly confounded. Shaka McGlotten analyzes intimate connection and disconnection across an array of media sites, including mass mediated public sex scandals, online spaces, Do-It-Yourself porn, and smartphone apps in order to show the ordinary ways people challenge and rework sexuality and technology. The book frames “virtual intimacy” in terms of the mocking disapproval that looks at using technology to connect as something shameful or as a means of last resort. However, where many see a dead end, *Virtual Intimacies* argues on behalf of more extensive understandings of intimacy, thereby contributing to many feminist and queer approaches that seek to expand the scope of what counts as connection, belonging, or love. The author also highlights the creative and resilient ways that queer people build social worlds using spaces and technologies in ways they were not intended.

“Most poignant are McGlotten’s inclusions, stated in the first person, of his own experiences with contemporary queer sociality and its discontents. Academic writing on sex often leaves little room for the body and desire of the academic himself. McGlotten breaks this silence, insisting on the relevance of his own place in his research.” — *Qui Parle*

“This work is an original and finely crafted contribution, from an important new voice. Incisively reading personal/political longings and laying bare aspects of the author’s own lifeworlds, here, Shaka McGlotten offers a close and compelling (auto)ethnographic account of what it is we look for when we login, cruise (by), remember, and look forward. Chronicling how we live lives of both virtuality and embodiment today—working, playing, desiring, losing, and dying—McGlotten’s work is among the best of what is new in ethnographic writing.” — Jafari S. Allen, author of *;Venceremos? The Erotics of Black Self-making in Cuba*

“While the book deals with a diversity of topics from online games to black identity politics, cruising grounds, and avant-garde porn, it also weaves them together by means of a theoretical argument and a sound writer’s voice.” — Katrien Jacobs, author of *People’s Pornography: Sex and Surveillance on the Chinese Internet*

“*Virtual Intimacies* is a great book, breathtaking in its aesthetic, ethnographic, and attuned attention to the multiple mediations of an affectively attached life. Bodies and play, desire and violence, outreach and evasion, intensity and diffusion: the contemporary world of virtual embodiment is all here, and as a teacher and individual parsing the world I am so grateful to have read this.” — Lauren Berlant, author of *Cruel Optimism and Desire/Love*

Shaka McGlotten is Associate Professor of Media, Society, and the Arts at Purchase College, State University of New York. He is the coeditor (with Dána-Ain Davis) of *Black Genders and Sexualities*.

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