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# Party with a purpose

**BY MICHAEL HOH    SEPTEMBER 26, 2017**

Kiddy Smile. Photo by Sylvain Lewis

**The second Reclaim the Beats festival invites Berliners to dance out their identity politics issues.**

In a Berlin queer scene fraught with arguments over representation and cultural appropriation and what is or isn't racism, even something as supposedly simple as shaking one's ass can become an ideological minefield: witness the recent drama that unfolded when black clubgoers were turned away from Schwuz's "Beyonclicious" club night. Whether you

want to talk it over or just discover some skilled beatmakers outside the cis-white mainstream, the Reclaim the Beats festival is a must.

From October 5-14, Berlin-based American DJ and producer Sky Deep presents a multi-day programme of queer, female-identified and POC hometown and international talents, lectures and workshops. The biggest change from last year is the move away from venues Schwuz and Schwarzer Kanal to larger and less obviously political locations like Gretchen and Burg Schnabel. It won't affect the concept behind the event, though, promises Sky Deep: "Our mission is to educate the community and create more space for us in the booking world."

On opening night (Oct 5), Gretchen showcases the festival's experimental and ambient side with performances by Cubop and R.A.N. before getting frisky with a vogue ball and DJ sets from Mandel Turner, Kiddy Smile, Yuko Asanuma and Sky Deep herself. From Oct 7-13, a workshop and lecture programme curated by artist Shanti Suki Osman pretty much takes over, giving audiences the chance to ruminate on every aspect of being queer and/or POC in the arts, from colonialist practices to body image and fashion. Elsa M'bala will question the mostly white and cis-male sphere of global sound art, while Roberta Jordan a.k.a Roxy will moderate a panel about racism in Berlin's club culture and door policy (also a reason why they chose to relocate to Burg Schnabel, says Sky Deep, but is also quick to point out relations between her and Schwuz remain good).

What about the aforementioned booty-shaking? Local fave Ae'rea Negrot and percussionist RENU,

performing live at Werkstatt der Kulturen on Oct 13, will ensure plenty of it before closing night sees us out with performances by AS//IS, DJs Ford Kelly, Zhao and more.

**Reclaim The Beats Oct 5-14 Gretchen, Burg Schnabel and Werkstatt der Kulturen; full programme at [reclaimthebeats.com](http://reclaimthebeats.com)**

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### "Schwarzer" Kanal

No one at the Kanal refers to it that way anymore, because

it equates "black" with "illegal". It's quite ironic to use that word in an article that is trying to promote an anti-racist event organized by a black person.

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