



Queering the Collections

Annual Report 2016



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QUEERING THE COLLECTIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2016

CONTENTS

1 SUMMARY	5
2 INSTITUTIONS CURRENTLY REPRESENTED / NEW MEMBERS	7
3 MAJOR PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN OR ADVISED ON	8
4 PUBLIC EVENTS	14
5 EDUCATION, INTERNSHIPS AND THESIS SUPERVISION	18
6 PUBLICATIONS	20
7 FUNDING	21
8 OTHER ACTIVITIES	22
APPENDIX 1	23
APPENDIX 2	26



Queering the Collection at the Van Abbemuseum (Courtesy: Olle Lundin)



1| SUMMARY

Queering the Collections (QtC) is a network of cultural professionals, researchers, and local government representatives, collaborating to increase the collection, interpretation, and exhibition of queer heritage and histories in the Netherlands. QtC began in 2014, launched by IHLIA, Reinwardt Academy, Amsterdam Museum, and ICOM / Comcol ¹⁾ in cooperation with Joeri Kempen. The group organized an international symposium in March 2015, focused on raising awareness of LGBTQI heritage in non LGBTQI cultural institutions, primarily libraries, archives, and museums. ²⁾ In 2016, key insights from the symposium were published in *Queering the Collections: tips & tricks voor het nog zichtbaarder maken van gender- & seksuele diversiteit in musea en collecties*. ³⁾

¹⁾ De ICOM (International Council of Museums) and Commission of Collecting

²⁾ As stakeholders disagree on the most useful and inclusive acronym to represent queer identities, we use LGBTQI to allow for the broadest possible interpretation. See "LGBT" in Alice Venir with Olle Lundin, *A Queer Glossary* (Eindhoven: Van Abbe Museum, 2016). Available online at https://vanabbemuseum.nl/fileadmin/files/Collectie%20en%20tentoonstellingen/2016/Queering/Queer_Glossary.pdf

³⁾ Riemer Knoop and Lonneke de Hoonard (IHLIA and Reinwardt, 2016). Available online at <http://www.ihlia.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Queering-the-Collections-publicatielight.pdf>



Network members have met regularly since September 2015 and have established an advisory board to develop longterm plans. The advisory board meets monthly, with 4 meetings per year which are open to the broader network as well as anyone else interested in joining the activities. Members develop independent as well as collaborative projects, support student research, provide guest lectures and presentations, and author publications. The network currently includes representatives of thirty organizations, as well as individuals working independently in the cultural sector or researching queer heritage and histories. Anyone interested in participating, in joining the mailing list, or in sharing news of their own relevant activities to the QtC group is invited to contact the coordinator at queering@ihlia.nl

In 2016, the City of Amsterdam awarded QtC a grant of € 5,000 to help build the network. The funding was used to pay for a program coordinator and a webmaster, and additional funding is being sought to continue this work. QtC has also received in-kind and cash funding for the participation of advisory board members and the organization of special events, including funding from IHLIA, Reinwardt Academy, the Amsterdam Center for Heritage and Identity and the Amsterdam School of Historical Studies (both based at the University of Amsterdam), and Amsterdam City Archives.



This inaugural “annual report” reflects on the accomplishments since 2014, and will be followed by subsequent reports released every year at a summer symposium organized by members of the network. This edition will be launched at “The Art of Queering,” held at the Reinwardt Academy on 16 June 2017.

MISSION STATEMENT

QtC aims to foster the wider public acceptance of sexual and gender diversity by finding, studying, interpreting and showcasing records, heritage, and histories of the lives of LGBTQI individuals and their communities in our society’s memory institutions: archives, museums and libraries. We believe universal human rights should include recognition, respect and freedom of sexual and gender diverse expression and behavior, and that these cultural institutions can play a crucial role in fostering these values.



2| INSTITUTIONS CURRENTLY REPRESENTED / NEW MEMBERS

Amsterdam Museum, Amsterdam Gay Pride, Atria, Bijbels Museum, Café ‘t Mandje, Castrum Peregrini, CBK Zuidoost, City of Amsterdam, COC Amsterdam, IHLIA, Imagine IC, izi.TRAVEL, Jonge Historici, Muzeaal Verhalen, Museum Van Loon, Museumn8, Nieuwe Kerk, Oude Wasgoed, Pride Photo Award, Reinwardt



Academy, Rijksmuseum, Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, University of Amsterdam/MA in Public History, UvA Special Collections, Van Abbe Museum.

International institutions: EHESS Paris.

QtC also welcomes the following new members: Van Gogh Museum, Van Gisteren.

All cultural institutions are invited to the general network meetings, as well as individuals working in the cultural sector, students, and others interested in supporting the work of the network. Representatives of the Amsterdam Museum, IHLIA, University of Amsterdam/MA in Public History Reinwardt Academy, COC Amsterdam, and Stadsarchief currently participate in the Advisory Board, meeting monthly to discuss ongoing projects and prepare new material/updates for the quarterly general network meetings.



3| MAJOR PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN OR ADVISED ON (EXHIBITIONS, ARCHIVAL INITIATIVES, DIGITAL PROJECTS)

Queer Van Abbe (2015-2016), Van Abbemuseum

The Van Abbemuseum held a series of innovative events and made queer representation a formal part of museum policy.



*Presentation of the QTC booklet at the Shakespeare Club
(Courtesy: Gemma Rameckers)*

Activities included “Qwearing the Collections,” a strategy for visitors to engage with the collections on self-guided tours following cues from curators and wearing robes featuring the work of queer artists or addressing queer themes, and the introduction of gender-neutral bathrooms for staff and visitors. <https://vanabbemuseum.nl/en/collection/queering/>

Transmission (2015-2016), Amsterdam Museum

An exhibition by and for the transgender community in Amsterdam. Showcased three times in 2015-2016, each time incorporating new material. Contact person Mirjam Sneeuwloper (Amsterdam Museum) established an advisory community board for



the exhibition. A number of 27 events have been held in 2016. This number keeps growing, due to the Amsterdam Museum's 'hosting' function for community activities. Among the events were the weekly 'City Talks' in the exhibition space: visitors met trans* people in the exhibit. The Amsterdam Museum also has an ongoing focus on queering on their online platform: <http://hart.amsterdammuseum.nl/nl/page/48304/queering-the-collections>

Queering Zuid Oost, (June 24 – August 27, 2016), Imagine IC

Together with participants from Amsterdam Southeast Imagine IC investigated the visibility of LGBT's in this part of town. Which organisations were active, which social structures in place. What emancipation movements were there? What role did politics play? The significance of LGBT's in the city district was revealed in the exhibition *Queering Zuidoost* by sharing personal stories, memories, emotions, objects and archives.

The opening of the exhibition at Imagine IC took place during Urban Rainbow. A day was programmed together with other cultural partners in Southeast around the theme of gender diversity. During this event participants from the exhibition read from their favourite writers, cited poetry and shared personal stories.

Also shown at IHLIA from September 9 till November 11 2016

A travel version was shown during the festival "Sorry, we are Open with Strange Fruit", 18 - 20 September.

Queering Zuidoost: <http://www.imagineic.nl/cases/queering-zuidoost>



Urban Rainbow: <http://www.imagineic.nl/nieuws/urban-rainbow-mooie-samenkomst-van-lhbts>

Shakespeare Club (July 23 – August 7 2016), COC NETHERLANDS/ Amsterdam Museum

The Shakespeare Club was based in the inner courtyard of the Amsterdam Museum to host and promote cultural activities during the festivities of EuroPride. Several Queering the Collections members joined in an advisory board, together with the COC (give their full name, an organization that has been advocating



The Amsterdam Museum during EuroPride (Courtesy: Kevin Schram)

for the rights of lesbian women, gay-men, bisexuals and transgender people since 1946, to curate the events. The club was open every day during EuroPride 2016, even after regular muse-



um opening hours. QtC created a “rainbow agenda” of cultural activities, published on the IHLIA/QtC website and advertised on an electronic screen at the Shakespeare Club. Several special evenings and events were organized, with at least five attracting 400 attendees. Attendance varied but was unexpectedly high throughout, and as a result plans are in development to incorporate a regular cultural club into the annual Pride activities.

The Shakespeare Club was also part of a EuroPride project at the Amsterdam Museum, where Queering the Collections’ current program coordinator Kevin Schram completed an internship for his MA in Public History (University of Amsterdam). Also he was asked to join in writing an advisory document for employees at the Amsterdam Museum, regarding community projects.

[IN]visible (2016). Amsterdam Museum

The museum created an audio tour highlighting queer (historical) objects to provide visitors with an alternative perspective on the Amsterdam Museum’s permanent exhibition. The tour was recorded by Ellie Lust, police spokeswoman in the region of Amsterdam. Additionally, several personal tours were given during by community members. A total of 72,685 audio tags were activated during the course of the exhibition (English and Dutch), while there were about 20 objects included in the whole audio tour. The [In]visible audio tour ran until the end of 2016. The Amsterdam Museum currently also has a permanent queering side to



their (online) collection/community: <http://hart.amsterdammuseum.nl/nl/page/48304/queering-the-collections>

Queering the Collections Tour (summer 2016-ongoing): multiple institutions

izi.TRAVEL, working with intern Louise Barendregt, created a queer city audio tour, downloadable to smartphones, incorporating images of artifacts and information from the collections of eight cultural institutions in Amsterdam (Press Museum, IHLIA LGBT heritage, Amsterdam Museum, Museum of the Canals, UvA Special Collections, Museum of Bags and Purses Hendrikje, Amsterdam City Archives, Rijksmuseum). The tour has been downloaded 1100 times and can be found online at <https://izi.travel/en/fa5b-queering-the-collections/nl>

Gay behind the scenes – Mini exhibition about queer theatre personalities (July 21 – August 19, 2016), Special Collections University of Amsterdam.

Exhibition about three Queer Dutch artists, Albert Mol, Lili Green and Wim Sonneveld.

<http://bijzonderecollecties.uva.nl/gedeelde-content/evenementen/evenementen/2016/07/europride.html>





4| PUBLIC EVENTS (DEBATES, LECTURES, TOURS, ETC)

UK conference, LGBTQ+ Archives, Libraries, Museums & Special Collections, *“Without Borders”*, London, June 2016

QtC members gave the following presentations:

Mirjam Sneeuwloper and Valerie Veenliet *“Exhibition Transmission”*,

Manon S. Parry and Hugo Schalkwijk, *“Recreating Heritage to Enrich Histories: The AIDS History Digital Scrapbook Project”*

Lonneke van den Hoonard, *“Queering the Collections Project”*.

Roze Rijks Rijksmuseum, (July and August, 2016)

Freelance concept developer Arnout van Krimpen gave several Roze Rijks tours, highlighting queer objects at the Rijksmuseum.

Queering the Archive, (July 27 2016), Amsterdam City Archives

During EuroPride, the Jonge Historici (Young Historians) organized Queering the Archives, in collaboration with Amsterdam City Archives. A total of 100 visitors attended a public discussion about the challenges and opportunities for interpreting queer archival heritage. See Appendix 3 for an overview by Mirella Gelauf (Head of Archives and Collections of the Amsterdam City Archives). A small exhibition featuring queer objects from the archive was displayed in the *“Treasure Chamber”* in conjunction with the event. Also hosting the International tour with the Rainbow Cities Net-



work with introduction of the Queering the Collections project by Lonneke van den Hoonard (IHLIA) and presentation of the Pink Treasures in the archives by Eric Heyselaar (City Archives).

<http://www.jhsg.nl/reportage-queering-the-archive>

Personal tours at the Amsterdam Museum (August 2016)

The Amsterdam Museum had a series of very well-attended “queer tours” through the permanent exhibit during EuroPride. Personal tours were given by nine volunteers on twelve days, reaching a total of 137 visitors joining the tours. According to the museum, tours received exceptionally positive reviews, by visitors and tour guides alike. <https://www.amsterdammuseum.nl/en/activities/lgbti-guided-tours>

The Amsterdam Museum currently also has a permanent queering side to their (online) collection/community: <http://hart.amsterdammuseum.nl/nl/page/48304/queering-the-collections>

Presentation of “Queering the Collections: tips & tricks voor het nog zichtbaarder maken van gender- & seksuele diversiteit in musea en collecties”, (August 2, 2016), Shakespeare Club

The launch of a publication created by Lonneke van den Hoonard (IHLIA LGBTQI Heritage) and Riemer Knoop (Reinwardt Academy) on the 2015 symposium Queering the Collections, providing tips and tricks to cultural institutions. The Van Abbemuseum received the first copy.



*Presentation of several cultural activities during EuroPride
(Courtesy: Kevin Schram)*

*Queering Architecture, (September 2016), The Nieuwe Instituut,
Rotterdam*

The Nieuwe Instituut had a conference September 15th, 2016 on queering the architectural archives: <http://collectie.hetnieuweinstituut.nl/en/activities/queering-architecture>

*Presentation of "Queering the Collections: tips & tricks voor het
nog zichtbaarder maken van gender- & seksuele diversiteit in
musea en collecties" (September 23, 2016)*

Riemer Knoop presented a copy of the publication to James Bradburne, the new director of Milan's Pinacoteca di Brera, as part of a meeting to discuss a project to "re-read the collections" there.



European Association for Museums of the History of Health Sciences, (September 2016) Groningen

Manon S. Parry, “Recreating Heritage to Enrich Histories: The AIDS History Digital Scrapbook Project”

Historyfestival, (October 8, 2016)

Kevin Schram gave a presentation at the Geschiedenisfestival (History Festival), drawing on his experience with queering, and especially, gay history. Thanks to the Jonge Historici, he was able to bring to mind the necessity of perseverance and changing perspectives, and the need for social inclusion within various fields, based on his experience as a history student, as well as community engagement. The presentation was attended by approximately 30 people.

Future Plans

A symposium in the summer of 2017, called *Art of Queering*, will be organized in cooperation with the Reinwardt Academy.

AIDS Cultures, a festival of cultural responses to HIV/AIDS, to be held in June and July 2018, in conjunction with the International AIDS Conference hosted in Amsterdam. The festival is being developed in collaboration with the Raphael Samuel History Centre in London, England, and will include exhibitions, events, and the exchange of artists and scholars between the two cities, as well



as scholarly symposia in London and Amsterdam. Anyone interested in participating in the festival – either by presenting a cultural activity or hosting one is invited to contact Manon Parry via email (m.s.parry@uva.nl)

During the winter of 2017, the QtC theme will also be taken up within a larger context with the three national/municipal ethnographic museums in the country as part of a focus on “Gendering/Queering the Museum” at the National Museum of World Cultures at the invitation of Wayne Modest.



5| EDUCATION, INTERNSHIPS AND THESIS SUPERVISION

Queering the Collections Practicum (November 2015-January 2016), University of Amsterdam

Students of the MA Program in Public History focused on queer public histories for the course “Special Topics in Public History,” taught by Dr. Manon S. Parry. The class worked in small groups to highlight queer interpretations of objects already included in Dutch museums and to identify new objects for exhibiting queer histories online, posting their complete images and interpretive texts online at <http://publichistory.humanities.uva.nl/coming-up-queering-the-collections-exhibition/>. QtC members Thijs



Boers, Lonneke van den Hoonard, and Riemer Knoop served as advisors to the project and provided feedback on the results.

Course “Diversity, Queering” (October 5, 2016) at Reinwardt Academy, general introductory QTC lecture 2nd year BA students by Riemer Knoop, followed by workshops.

Thesis Supervision in Progress:

Kevin Schram, “A Lack of – Insufficient collections and inclusion of queer stories”, MA in Public History, University of Amsterdam (supervised by Manon S. Parry).

Nina Schuts, Queer Public Histories, MA in American Studies, University of Amsterdam (supervised by Manon S. Parry).

Marin Rappard, Queer Audiovisual Archives, MA in Preservation and Presentation of the Moving Image (supervised by Manon S. Parry).

Thesis advise provided:

Fumi Lennaerts, research: Sustaining Queer in the museum

Thomas Coenraads: Pink Heritage, the Amsterdam story: gaining official recognition for LGBT heritage sites in Amsterdam

Future Plans

Amy K. Levin, Professor Emeritus at Northern Illinois University and editor of *Gender, Sexuality, and Museums: A Routledge*



Reader (Oxford: Routledge, 2010), will join the University of Amsterdam as a Fulbright Fellow August to December 2017. Dr. Levin will teach the course MUSEUMS: GENDER, SEXUALITY, RACE, AND CLASS as part of the MA in Public History at the University of Amsterdam.



6| PUBLICATIONS

- Joost van Beek, *"Het laatste urinoir "*, De Volkskrant, 12 juli 2016, p. V8
- Lonneke van den Hoonaard *"Queering the collections: seksuele en genderidentiteit in erfgoed"* Informatieprofessional april 2015, p 16-19
- Lonneke van den Hoonaard, Riemer Knoop, Richard Parkinson *"Queering the collections : tips & tricks voor het nog zichtbaarder maken van gender- & seksuele diversiteit in musea en collecties"* Amsterdam, 2016
 - the book was immediately announced and made accessible on the ICOM/COMCOL-website <http://network.icom.museum/com-col/publicaciones/queering-the-collections/L/1/>
- Fumi Lennaerts *"Sustaining Queer in the museum"* Amsterdam, 2017
- Manon S. Parry, *"abNormal: Bodies in Medicine and Culture,"* in S. R. Butler, & E. T. Lehrer ed., *Curatorial Dreams: Critics Imagine Exhibitions* 246-264, 331-334.



QtC is collecting information on relevant publications for the network website. If you have a publication or a project to share please contact the QtC coordinator.



The Amsterdam Museum during EuroPride (Courtesy: Kevin Schram)

7| FUNDING

The City of Amsterdam provided Queering the Collections with a grant of € 5.000. Contact person Arnold van den Broek deserves an honorary mention for his support and encouragement of the QtC Network.

Sebas van der Sangen, of Amsterdam Marketing, has also provi-



ded invaluable advice and support in developing the activities of the network and connections between cultural institutions and potential funders.

In the future, the network hopes to establish a LGBTQI task force of young professionals to advise museums on LGBTQI inclusion. The network is currently investigating funding options to establish this task force, so that museums with limited funds of their own could receive expert advice via the QtC network. We are also working on longer-term funding to sustain the positions of coordinator and webmaster.

Fundraising/grantwriting expertise is urgently needed and the network invites anyone with experience and interest in such a role to get in touch.



8| OTHER ACTIVITIES

The QtC logo was created by izi.TRAVEL and Manon Parry. Many thanks to both.



Appendix 1

PRESENTATION AT HISTORY FESTIVAL BY KEVIN SCHRAM

LGBTQI-geschiedenis

Ik neem u mee terug in de tijd, naar een jaar waarbij u in eerste instantie misschien zult denken: wat is daar speciaal aan? We zijn in Amsterdam, bijna 285 jaar geleden: een bruisende stad waarin de economie nog volop bloeide, maar niet meer onaantastbaar bleek te zijn. Een stad die over de hele wereld bekend stond als opslag- en doorvoerplaats van handelsgoederen die internationaal verkregen werden. Een stad geroemd om schilders als Rembrandt en denkers als Spinoza. Een stad die, ondanks de schoonheden, ook duistere kanten heeft gekend. De scheenschroeven, die nu in het Collectiecentrum van het Amsterdam Museum staan, piepten en kraakten, overstemd door hopeloze kreten van verdachte personen, alleen om het uiten van gevoelens, een zoektocht naar de vriendschap van Jacob Israël de Haan, waartoe zo'n mateloos verlangen.

De sodomievolgelingen van de achttiende eeuw hebben in Amsterdam, en heel Nederland uniek bronmateriaal nagelaten, namelijk Secrete Confessieboeken. In Amsterdam voerden de Schout en Schepenen tussen 1730 en 1811 tegen 227 personen procedures waarin sodomie een rol speelde. Van homoseksualiteit had men nog nooit gehoord. Dat zou nog tot het einde van



de 19e eeuw zo blijven, maar ‘de daad van Sodomie’ kende men wel. Het was een onnoemelijke zonde, het crimen nefandum.

Zelfs de hogere klassen werden niet gespaard. In de klas-sensamenleving van die tijd, waren kennissen en diplomatie van groot belang voor de welgesteldheid van de burger. Echter, tijdens de vervolgingen van de achttiende eeuw werden maar weinig welgestelden gespaard. Jacob Cornelis Backer, broer van Jan Backer, hoofdschout in Amsterdam op dat moment, was één van die regentenmannen. Voordat hij viermaal gedaagd werd en verbannen uit Holland en Friesland, was hij al gevlucht naar Engeland. De trots en eer van de familie geschonden, kan men vandaag de dag niets meer in het Stadsarchief over deze man terugvinden. Hoogstens zijn naam op de Schoutsrol, maar in het familiearchief Backer is niets te vinden over Jacob.

Overweging

Wat is de waarheid van onze bronnen, zo trots op onze bronnenkritiek. In welk contrast kan die waarheid staan, op het moment dat zij niet bestaat? Zij beweegt zich onafhankelijk van elke historicus, van elke onderzoeker. Tot het tegendeel bewezen is zeggen we wel eens, maar wat als het tegendeel niet bewezen kan worden? Wat als een stukje identiteit niet ontrafeld of zichtbaar gemaakt kan worden, omdat er lang een taboe op heerste? Als er amper geschiedenis is?

Dan kan men gissen, interpreteren vanuit een bepaald per-



spectief. Hoe wankel dat ook staat in vergelijking met de geschiedkunde, het is noodzakelijk op het gebied van sociale inclusie in musea.

Slot

Spinoza, één des lands grootste denkers zei ooit: “Het doel van de staat is vrijheid”. Vrijheid als norm van menswaardigheid lijkt vandaag de dag van eminent belang.





Appendix 2

STADSARCHIEF AMSTERDAM

Queering the Archives

Tijdens de EuroPride 2016 heeft het Stadsarchief in de Schatkamer van De Bazel een presentatie getoond van een aantal lhbt gerelateerde stukken uit de stedelijke archieven. Onder andere waren te zien:

Uit het archief van Schout en Schepenen: voorbeelden van veroordelingen voor sodomie en tribade (lesbisch zijn). In de periode 1795-1807 zijn er daarvan in totaal 41 te vinden in dit archief.

Uit het archief van de Gemeentepolitie: begin 1941 vervaardigde de Amsterdamse gemeentepolitie voor de Duitse Sicherheitspolizei een lijst van alle in hun administratie voorkomende homoseksuelen met namen, geboortedata en adressen. Te zien waren zowel de verstrekte lijst als de brief waarin de lijst werd opgevraagd en het antwoord daarop.

Uit het Archief van de Beoordelingscommissie Zedelijk Gedrag Gemeentepersoneel (over de periode 1942 – 1959): een voorbeeld van een man die openlijk voor zijn homoseksualiteit uitkwam en daarom door de gemeente Amsterdam ongeschikt geacht werd voor een functie. Hiervan zijn talloze andere voorbeelden te vinden in dit archief.

Stukken uit het archief van Benno Premsele, café Het Mandje en van het echtpaar Wim van Beek en Wout Spies.



Op 27 juli heeft het Stadsarchief in samenwerking met de Jonge Historici een middag georganiseerd met als thema Queering the Archives. Graeme Reid (LHBT director Human Rights Watch, voormalig directeur Gay and Lesbian Archives in Johannesburg) heeft een lezing gegeven met als onderwerp het queeren van archieven vanuit een Zuid-Afrikaans perspectief. Guido Leguit van de Jonge Historici heeft een zeer persoonlijke column voorgedragen over zijn blik op de noodzaak van het duiden van queer erfgoed. Tot slot heeft er een paneldiscussie plaatsgevonden aan de hand van verschillende stellingen rondom het thema. Het panel bestond uit Lonneke van den Hoonard (directeur IHLIA), Thijs Boers (conservator Amsterdam Museum) en Arnold van den Broek (beleidsadviseur diversiteit van de gemeente Amsterdam). De middag is bijgewoond door honderd belangstellenden.

