

Bibliothèque Kandinsky's Summer University (Paris, 5-13 Jul 23)

Centre Pompidou, Paris, France, Jul 5-13, 2023

Deadline: Apr 30, 2023

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Bibliothèque Kandinsky Summer University 2023: « Cruising » the museum and its sources: when queerness meets the archive.

"All museums are sex museums", alerts Jennifer Tyburczy, in the introduction of her book *Sex Museums: The Politics and Performance of Display* (2016), suggesting, likely indebted to Michel Foucault, that the museum is a disciplinary institution of sexuality just like the school, the asylum or the prison. Regardless of the typology of its collections, she argues that every museum is a museum of sexuality. Every museum therefore participates in the production of normative discourses on sexuality. This is perhaps even more true when applied to LGBTQ+ sexualities.

Since the starting point in 2021 of the research program "Museum of Modern Art. Section sexualité(s)", supported by the EUR ArTeC and echoing Marcel Broodthaers' fictional museum and its mythical "department of eagles", queerness has been the subject of increased attention in the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Pompidou. The exhibition *Over the Rainbow* (28 June-13 November 2023, Centre Pompidou, gallery 4, curated by Nicolas Liucci-Goutnikov) will be one of the moments dedicated to this ongoing reflection. The ninth edition of Bibliothèque Kandinsky Summer University will try to address precisely what queerness does to the museum, to the library, to the archives, and the other way round, what happens to it once moving in institutional contexts.

The research first took the form of a state of the field, an investigation into what was already there, that scattered material across collections : what do the Museum's holdings, including the Kandinsky Library, keep and can be reread in the light of queerness? A corpus takes shape: from a keyword, an index, a bibliographic description, a title, a classification, a trace, from one artist to another. A self-portrait of Marie Laurencin wearing a tie, enlaced by her lover; an archive photograph showing Anton Prinner posing in a café; an experimental film by Adolfo Arrieta focusing on the Gazolines transvestite group; a queer artists' magazine containing strange objects.

"Cruising" the museum and its primary sources - in the expressiveness of the term, as recalled by Elisabeth Lebovici together with José Esteban Muñoz [Élisabeth Lebovici, « Préface » dans José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruiser l'utopie : l'après et ailleurs de l'advenir queer*, Paris, Éditions Brook, traduit par Alice Wambergue, [2009] 2021] - thus incites us to drill down the depths of the archive - again, bringing out the force of words and images and exploring in minute detail the strata of accumulated books, journals and overlooked archives. Muñoz's reading shows us that the retrospective look

is after all a gate towards the future. If queerness is still to come, if we are not yet queer because this horizon is always indefinitely deferred, our work on the collections has nonetheless been able to nourish an important acquisition process at the Kandinsky Library, and to bring us closer to it.

A unique documentary collection in Europe provides information on the activities of the Californian anti-AIDS activist collective Boy with Arms Akimbo/Girl with Arms Akimbo; several dozen photographs show the first national march for gay and lesbian rights and freedom in Paris on 4th of April 1981; recent exhibition catalogues document the practice of current and former queer artists; a zine features Mont Rose, an open-air sexual meeting place not far from the Calanques in Marseille. Constituting a patrimonial collection, these new documents, among many others, raise new questions, and call for research.

Themes and research perspectives :

The Summer University will come back at the constitution of artistic and documentary collections on representations of LGBTQ+ sexualities, their appropriation, use and misuse in institutional, activist and community contexts. It will also question the practice of research: how do we work our way through these sources? How do we describe them? What place is given to the living/ oral archive, to different histories, to affectivity and care, to the fictional mode we do history?

The Library/The Museum :

The re-reading of the collections and the recent acquisitions made by the Kandinsky Library raise new questions about the conservation and description of these sources. They are confronted to intellectual and technical frameworks - digital catalogues, databases - of the library and the archive, they are confronted to regulated standards of bibliographical description. The same applies, more broadly, to museum collections. How can contemporary, independent structures, autonomous in their management, preservation and transmission of these collections be prescriptive in the way we describe and analyse primary sources? And with what tools?

Exhibition challenges :

Preparing the exhibition Over the Rainbow brings substantial questions at the heart of the Museum concerning the presentation to the public of an art history read through the prism of queerness. The aim is to explore similar institutional initiatives, to question their limits, and to confront these practices with the methods applied by alternative spaces, activist, self-managed and community-based organisations.

What ethics ?

The above issues raise ethical questions related to the power structures and forces at work in the museum, the archive or the library. How can primary sources be displayed and interpreted without wiping off the political charge from them, without retrospective inadequacy and without marginalising again the authors, movements, artists, works and documents?

Writing histories :

In addressing the plurality of modes of expression, the new methods and the new ways of writing introduced by LGBTQ+ ways of doing history, it will be important to redefine the historiographic canons of the discipline of art history, in the light of new tools, living, fictional, influenced by the affects and the militant commitment of their authors. A particular emphasis will be devoted to

printed matter and the diversity of its materiality : militant prints, periodical publications, magazines, ephemera, zines, leaflets and flyers, posters and badges.

Prospective :

In what way the constitution of a collection of archives and graphic and visual primary sources linked to the history of queerness can be an object of inspiration for historians, art historians, curators, exhibition commissioners or young creators and prompt new critical and artistic practices? With the appropriation of the activist, artistic and popular archives, where are the sources of queerness moving towards today and how do they reinvent the field?

The Bibliothèque Kandinsky Summer University will bring together young researchers, curators and artists around documentary material from the library itself—for some part largely unseen—and give its participants the opportunity to put sources “at work”. It also invites researchers from all horizons to bring up their source material and put it into debate, through historical, creative and critical discussion.

Application procedure :

The Bibliothèque Kandinsky's Summer University is aimed at young fellows (PhD candidates, PhDs, PostDocs or equivalent degree and/or experience): historians, art historians, anthropologists, sociologists, psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, curators, librarians, graphic designers, community workers and artists at large.

Application file:

- written proposal (4,500 characters/700 words) either in English or in French, in PDF format.
- CV which should clearly assess the candidate's language proficiency. In order to apply is important to have a good command in both English and French.

Candidates are expected to bring along a selection of sources used in their research.

The proposal dossier will be sent to: recherche@centrepompidou.fr by April 30th, 2023.

The selection committee will retain 25 projects.

A participation of EUR 150 will be required from participants (scholars, professionals affiliated with an institutional/professional/research organization) who will be provided with tuition. The participation will cover transportation on site and institutional entries.

Participants affiliated with non-profit organizations/ or associations, will be exempted from participation fees, on the basis of a written proof of their membership.

For any inquiry, please write to: recherche@centrepompidou.fr, T +33 (0)1 44 78 46 65 or +33 (0)1 44 78 16 66.

Selection committee :

Thomas Bertail, researcher, research coordinator, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris

Mica Gherghescu, head of research and scientific programs, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris

Valentin Gleyze, art historian, associated researcher, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris

Elisabeth Lebovici, Ph.D in Aesthetics, art historian and art critic, activist in fight against AIDS, first president of gay and lesbian film festival in Paris, founding member of endowment fund LIG – lesbiennes d'intérêt général.

Nicolas Liucci-Goutnikov, curator, head of Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris.

Reference:

CFP: Bibliothèque Kandinsky's Summer University (Paris, 5-13 Jul 23). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 24, 2023 (accessed Jun 6, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/38870>>.