

**International
Photo Exhibition 2024**

Queer+
elders and pioneers



**Rainbow
Cities
Network**

International
Photo Exhibition 2024



Dear Esteemed Guests,

On behalf of the Rainbow Cities Network Board, it is our distinct pleasure to welcome you to this year's photo exhibition, "LGBTIQ+ Elders and Pioneers." As we gather here today, we celebrate not only the vibrant diversity of our community but also the remarkable journey of progress and inclusivity that has brought us to this momentous occasion. This exhibition honours those who've walked before us on this journey toward inclusion.

2024 marks a significant milestone for the Rainbow Cities Network, as we proudly announce our exponential growth to 52 member cities spanning across four continents (Asia, Americas (North and South America), Europe). This expansion stands as a testament to the unwavering commitment of our engaged member cities to foster environments of equality, acceptance, and celebration of diversity.

One of the hallmarks of our network is the dedication of our member cities to actively engage in advancing LGBTIQ+ rights and inclusion. Through collective efforts, we have not only created rainbow cities within our countries but also extended our influence to produce policy recommendations for other local governments. We are immensely grateful for the support extended to us by the European Commission, which has enabled us to amplify our impact and reach new heights in advocating for equality and justice.



The board
Rainbow Cities Network

As we reflect on the strides we have made, we are reminded of the invaluable contributions of the elders and pioneers of the LGBTIQ+ movement. Their courage, resilience, and unwavering determination have paved the way for the progress we enjoy today. It is upon their shoulders that we stand, and it is their legacy that inspires us to continue striving for a brighter and more inclusive future for all.

In the spirit of honoring our past while embracing the opportunities of tomorrow, let us come together to celebrate the rich tapestry of our community and reaffirm our commitment to building a world where everyone can live authentically and thrive without fear of discrimination or prejudice.

Thank you for joining us in this celebration of resilience, love, and unity.

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Queer+
elders and pioneers

The RCN exhibition “Queer+ elders and pioneers”

Our communities do look back on long histories that have been affected by fights for acceptance, legal equality and participation. This exhibition brings our LGBTIQ+ elders and pioneers into the spotlight, contributes to the documentation of the queer movement, makes its collective engagement visible and reflects the beauty and the resistance of being who we are in this world.

It tells stories about times, identities and identification, it aims at encouraging exchange across generations and increases the visibility of the colour grey within the rainbow.

While in former times, many had to hide and live their lives in inner prisons, others founded groups, ran bars, clubs and queer dances, which often had to be masked as tea parties, created sportive and cultural activities and Rainbowhouses to celebrate queerness, generational, cultural, physical and gender-based diversity. Today many locations are more visible, but still they do serve as sanctuaries for extraordinary souls, where one can see beyond the surface and experience yourself through others.

And some have been out, loud and very proud activists and pioneers advocating for our rights and inclusion. They came out, got into higher positions inside and outside of politics and became admired role models.

The queer liberation, which so many of us can enjoy today, is a result of their bravery during much more difficult times. A generation who always looked out for each other

as well as found strength in intertwining and different ways they fought and dealt with the negative and the trauma.

Today, these first generations of activists, who started the struggle for sexual freedom and gender identity past common norms, pass their account on to younger generations to defend the rights once achieved and to gain new ones.

But these pioneer generations have to continue to express themselves, since queer elders often face being forced back into the closet. Reclaiming public spaces in senior clubs is a good way to stay visible and to connect queer and straight people.

Today we have to aim to ensure that all queer people can age happily and can age diversely under the rainbow in an inclusive environment free from discrimination.

Although, the recognition of the rights of people of sexual and gender diversity in our cities has risen a lot, there are still challenges. To ensure that these pioneers can live as self-determined as possible - advanced in age and with increasing vulnerability - we have to watch out for them and include them in today's activities. We need to educate professionals and raise awareness about the situation of queer seniors in institutions and in society.

Elderly and old iconic queers stand as pillars of resilience and love, we can call them pioneers, but also our gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex heroes. They are our history and far more than that, they are our chosen family.



Photo: Georg Wilke

Wolfgang Wilhelm, Vienna
Curator of the exhibition



LGBTIQ Stories in and from Vienna

by Lisa Punz & Michael Hecht (Frog Queen Media)

The Viennese Community looks back on a long History (Queer-Story) that has been affected by fights for acceptance, legal equality and participation in society. The project “LGBTIQ Stories in and from Vienna” by the Institute of Conflict Research

(IKF) contributes to the documentation of the queer movement and makes its collective engagement visible by video portraits. Dealing with community building as such, the project aims at encouraging exchange across generations.

Link to the videos:

https://www.youtube.com/@IKF_Wien



I see myself through you

by Léo Áquilla

I see myself through you is a piece of conception about time and identification. The art of living that runs in the blood of two generations of trans women reflects the beauty and the resistance of being who

you are in this world. Through the past knowledge and recognition of gratefulness, they can properly see and know themselves and, consequently, EXIST.



To age happily, let's stay visible!

by Ariane Testori

Members of the "Tamalou" and the "Babayagas", the two LGBTIQ+ elderly groups in Geneva, proudly take a pose with Marjorie Horta, in charge of the project for seniors at the Association 360. This project was launched in 2018 with the support of

the City of Geneva. It aims to encourage mutual aid between peers, to train professionals and raise public awareness of issues related to aging LGBTIQ+ people, but also to fight against ageism among LGBTIQ+ communities.



Legacy of Love: Embracing the Warmth of Home in Chosen Family Reunion

by Tong, a volunteer of the Taiwan Tongzhi (LGBTQ+) Hotline Association

In a bustling city, a gay sauna serves as a sanctuary for extraordinary souls. Among them, “A-Ma” (which means “grandma” in Mandarin), an elderly gay man on the right of the photo, standing as pillars of resilience and love. Despite being estranged from their families for embracing their identities, these souls gather at A-Ma’s sauna for a “special reunion dinner” each Lunar New Year, finding solace in shared dreams and whispered promises of a brighter

future. Tong, on the left of the photo, formerly a lesbian, now identifies as a transman, undergoing a transformative journey that heightened his empathy for others’ experiences. Inspired by his mother, Tong committed himself to preserving the stories of elder lesbians. He compiled these narratives into the book “Grandma’s Girlfriends: The Splendid Youth of Elder Lesbians,” ensuring the preservation of LGBTQ+ history while honoring his own path.



Giving Time

by Andrea Bothe

Around 26,500 LGBTIQ people aged 60+ live in Cologne. Many of them have been involved in the lesbian and gay movement since the late 1960s, demanding equal rights for decades. To ensure that these pioneers can live as self-determined as possible – in older age and with increasing

vulnerability – Cologne’s queer counselling centre “rubicon” has been offering a voluntary visiting service “Begegnung unterm Regenbogen”. Katharina and Inga are among the volunteers who have signed up to offer support.



Iconic elderly people and pioneers of the queer and LGBTIQ+ activists of Mexico City

by Karina Buendía Monroy

In the photo, there are elderly people who have been a reference for the LGBTIQ+ struggle in the city, who today pose proudly in one of the most emblematic spaces of the country's capital: Palacio de Bellas Artes. Although, the recognition of the

rights of people of sexual and gender diversity in the city has been achieved, there are still challenges to guarantee a life free of violence and discrimination in the country, they continue to express themselves.



QUEER TEA DANCE

by Thilo Larsson

The first QUEER TEA DANCE was celebrated one month after the founding of the “queerAlternBern” association in October of 2023 to revive the tradition of queer dances masked as tea parties.

“queerAlternBern” was founded to provide queer elders – the pioneers of old – with a place within the city of Bern to meet people with similar biographies.

Since queer elders often face being forced back into the closet, the association aims to ensure they can age in an inclusive environment free from discrimination.

24.2.2022

GLÜCKLICH ALTERN in Mannheim

Wie ist die Situation? Was braucht es?

Jahresthema: QUEERE VIELFALT IM ALTER
Runder Tisch sexuelle u. geschlechtliche Vielfalt Mannheim

Input 1: ANGELA JÄGER
Sozialwissenschaftlerin PLUS Mannheim

Wir sind hier! Wir sind queer!
Etwas 4.200 ältere LSBTiQ in Mannheim

- Viele leben allein
- Viel Unsicherheit (v.a. Frauen)
- Wenig soziale Einbindung
- Höheres Armutsrisiko
- Geringere familiäre Unterstützung

Hohes Unbehagen ggü. Pflegeangeboten

Inwiefern prägt Diskriminierung die Lebenserfahrung?

Input 2: DR. JENS HILDEBRANDT
Politikwissenschaftler ARBEIT & SOZIALES Mannheim

Wie ist die Situation? Was braucht es?

- Freunde + Familie!
- Einkommen!
- Wohnraum!
- Teilhabe!
- Hilfe + Pflege!
- Lebensqualität im Quartier
- Stationäre Pflege vermeiden!

NEUE FORMEN VON CARE-ARBEIT ENTWICKELN!
INDIVIDUALITÄT

SEX IST IM ALTER KEIN THEMA
VERALTETE BILDER

UNSIHTBARKEIT (z.B. von vor 1945 Geborenen)

LEBEN & STERBEN, DA WO ICH HIN-GEHÖRE!
SELBSTBESTIMMUNG bis zum Schluss!

SELBSTHILFE fördern

VERWALTUNG ändern

SOZIALE ORTE schaffen

VIelfalt fördern

60% der Grundsicherungsberechtigten nehmen die Leistungen nicht in Anspruch. WARUM?

ALT SEIN = EINSAM SEIN? UND ARM!

TOP-QUALIFIZIERT

WIE WÜRDEN GELINGENDE QUEERE ANGEBOTE & PFLEGE IM QUARTIER AUSSEHEN?

24.2.2022

GLÜCKLICH ALTERN in Mannheim

DISKUSSION

Gegen Vorurteile! Für Sichtbarkeit!

SELBSTVERSTÄNDLICHKEIT VON QUEER-FREUNDLICHER PFLEGE...
...UND NICHT-KOMMERZIELLEN STRUKTUREN!
VISION

IN 20 JAHREN...

WERTSCHÄTZUNG ZEIGT SICH AUCH IM BUDGET

DÄNEMARK DEUTSCHLAND

Z.B.: Menschen zuhause aufsuchen

WIE GEHT'S?
Z.B. Modellprojekt „PRÄSENS“

Z.B. Gemeindegewerkschaft

QUEERE THEMEN IN DEN (GEMISCHTEN) SENIORTREFFEN EINBRINGEN!

Offene Räume und safer spaces schaffen

QUEERE RÄUME - ICH LIEBE SIE, ABER WIE SCHÖN WÄR'S, WENN SIE NICHT NOTIG WÄREN...

VERWALTUNG VERWALTUNG VERWALTUNG

SCHULUNG LEITBILD QUALITÄTS-SIEGEL WARTUNG

SELBST-ORGANISIERUNG

EHRENAMT braucht HAUPTAMT!

VERNETZUNG - auch mit KIRCHLICHEN TRÄGERN

Bedarfe ermitteln WG oder alleine

Seniorentreffs/ Pflegestützpunkte

Wohnen mit Versorgungssicherheit

Strukturingesamt

MANNHEIMER MODELL

When it comes to us, we are of course at the table. Kind regards, your queer elders.
by City of Mannheim,
Graphic Recording: ka-schmitz.de

Inspired by the queer community, the topic of queer diversity in old age was discussed intensively in Mannheim in 2022. The exchange between the queer community and the specialist administration was particularly important. One highlight was the symposium “Happy and diverse ageing in Mannheim”, captured here artistically by Ka Schmitz, at which the community clearly and confidently articulated their own needs so that their interests are not overlooked.



Barcelona at the forefront in LGBTI rights

by Fundació Enllaç

The first generations of LGBTI people who started the struggle for sexual freedom and gender identity in 1965, in the middle of the dictatorship, pass their account onto the youngest generations to

defend the rights achieved and to gain new ones. A welcoming city and creator of reference spaces for the collective, putting it at the forefront of LGBTI freedoms. (Sagrada Família Square, Fundació Enllaç)



Des fils et des mains by Maurice Lafaye

As part of the “Des fils et des mains” (Sewing threads and hands) project by La Pangée collective, creation of an inclusive fashion show at the Villa Pia Chapel, in Bordeaux. The clothes were designed to highlight generational, cultural, physical and gender-based diversity. The project has been conceived with residents of the COS Villa Pia retirement home and

100% funded by the City of Bordeaux as part of the 2023 Equality Fortnight.

In this photo, you can see Jean-Paul Lacoste, resident of the retirement home and the artist Drag La Beuchaire, parading together.



Edie Merckx

by Edie Merckx

My life, my prison.
Living as a woman in my male body.

Edie Merckx – Founder of the Rainbowhouse by the sea in Ostend since April 2021.

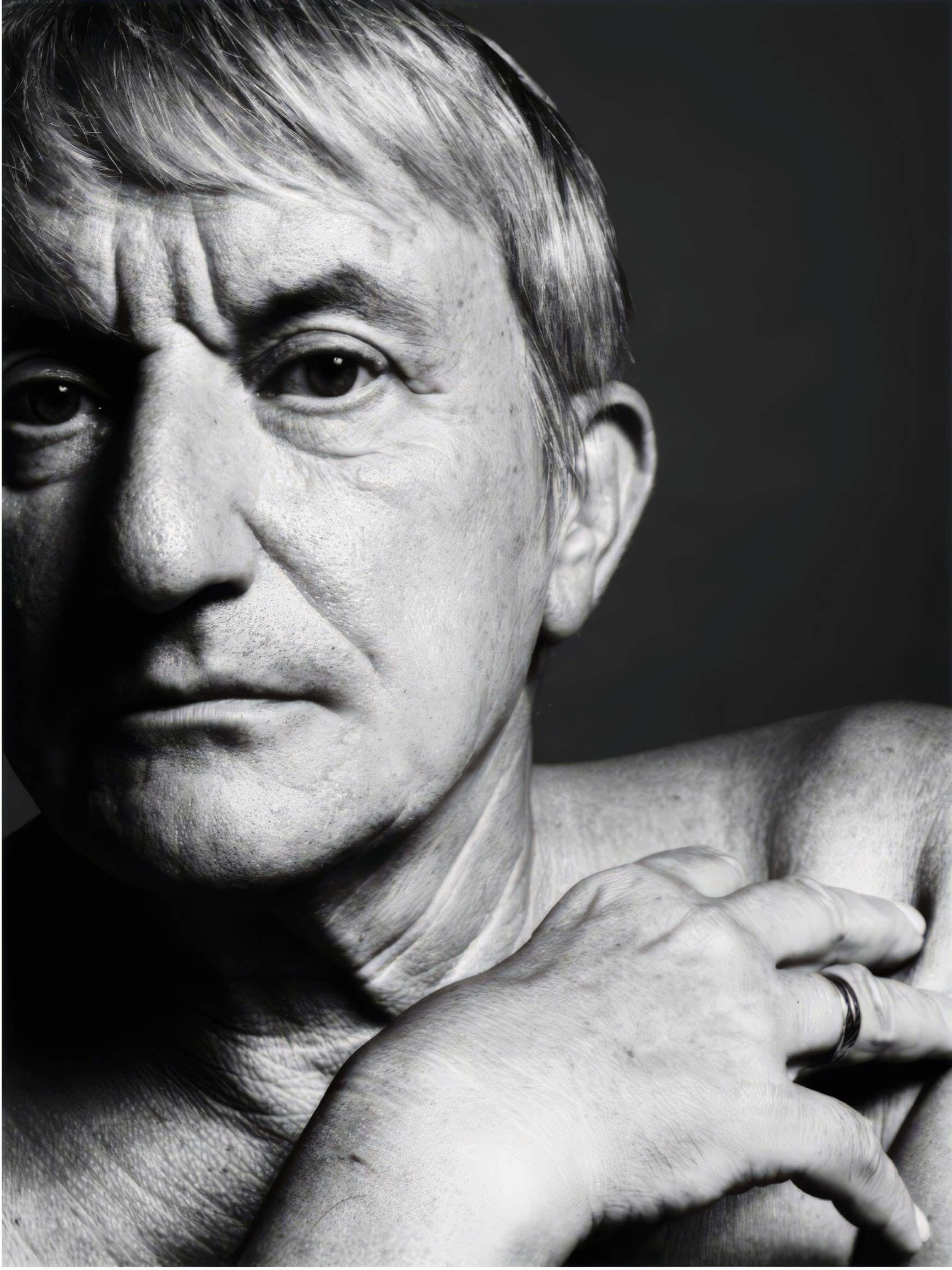


Wolfgang Erichson, former Mayor for Culture, Citizen Services and Creative Industries of the City of Heidelberg

by Philipp Rothe

One of Heidelberg's most prominent queer elders and pioneers is Wolfgang Erichson. In 2007, he became Heidelberg's first openly gay mayor. Before retiring in August 2023, Wolfgang Erichson was head of the "Culture, Citizen Services and Creative Industries" department of the City of Heidelberg.

In 2016, while responsible for the department of "Environment, Citizen Services and Integration", he founded the Round Table on Sexual and Gender Diversity, paving the way for Heidelberg to become a Rainbow City.



Brane & Suzana

by Rick Burger

Brane Mozetič is an award winning author, translator, editor, publisher and a prominent activist since late 80s in Slovenia. Suzana Tratnik is an award winning author, sociologist, translator and one of the founders of the earliest Eastern European

lesbian group Škuc-LL, established in 1987, today she works with the Lesbian Quarter festival. Tratnik and Mozetič also both work with the LGBT Film Festival Ljubljana.



Everyone Different... So What?

by ZWIEP

The photo exhibition 'Everyone Different... So What?' was created in the context of IDAHOT 2022. Connection is central to this photo exhibition, namely the connection between LGBTQI+ people and straight people.

"Everyone is equal," says Marie-Jeanne, "what difference does it make whether you are gay, lesbian or bisexual? A person is a person."

Years ago, Paul and Marie-Jeanne met each other at the seaside and they became best friends. Their friendship transcends orientation or gender identity. They're just best friends!



Reclaiming public space in a Senior Citizen Club

by Carsten Vitt

Once a month, a group of lesbians gathers for board and card games, discussing daily life, future challenges, and reminiscing about the wild days of the past. The 'Älterwerden unterm Regenbogen'

(Ageing under the Rainbow) project focuses on social work and senior centers, aiming to enhance the participation of the LGBTQ+ community.



Ailsa

by Ryan O'Sullivan

Recently retired coordinator of the Gay Project in Cork, Ailsa Spindler has been an out, loud and very proud LGBTI+ activist and pioneer throughout Europe for decades advocating for LGBTI+ rights and inclusion. She is pictured in front of the rainbow

glass balustrade in front of Cork City Hall, a symbol of Cork's commitment to LGBTI+ inclusion, and which would not have been possible without years of campaigning and activism by Cork's LGBTI+ Elders and Pioneers.



Ricky Wild, owner of the world's oldest bar for lesbians*

by Schepp / Hessisches Ministerium für Arbeit, Integration, Jugend und Soziales (HMSI)

Ricky (Erika) Wild is the owner of the world's oldest bar for lesbian, bisexual and queer women* located in Frankfurt am Main. On September 7, 1971, she opened the Club La Gata for lesbian women*.

The opening came at a time when coming out and the visibility of lesbians was much more difficult than today. There were only a few, very difficult to find meeting places for queer women existed.

Even today, at over 70 years of age, Ricky can still often be found behind the counter herself. The photo shows Ricky at the award ceremony of the 'Prize for Lesbian Visibility' of the state of Hessen, Germany in 2022.



Beyond the surface

by Aleksandra Lemke

This is Hanna-Maria Huurinainen, 70 years old. She is physiologically a man but experiences strong body dysphoria. She has dreamt of living as a woman since early childhood. The happiest moment of her life was when she dared to go out into the city in women's clothes for the first time. Today it's routine, but she still has to pretend a man on several days a week due to lack of acceptance from her family and in work environment. She finds transgender life hard and exhausting but is happy when she can open up and fully be herself. She has volunteered as an expert-by-experience at various events.



Kaya 60Plus Colourful and grey

by Morgane Gielen, 'Voicing inclusivity through photography'

Kaya 60Plus offers activities tailored to the active, lively, but somewhat quieter sixty-plus lesbian. Everyone is welcome, age in itself is not the most important thing. We organize talk café, sportive and cultural activities, day trips, lectures and much more. Every year we increase our visibility in the

city of Leuven and surroundings with additional activities during senior citizens month (November). We serve on the Leuven Seniors Council in order to continue to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ seniors in home care and residential care centers.

“

Queere Gleichstellung muss man mit der Community immer wieder selber erkämpfen. Dafür brauchte ich Mut, Humor und Ausdauer.

DAS HAT SICH GELOHNT.

Thomas Niederbühl

”



Fighter inside and outside politics for the acceptance and visibility of LGBTIQ* in Munich

by Andreas Gregor/privat & Schmid:heilig

“Queer equality must again and again be fought for with the community. I needed courage, humor and perseverance. That WAS WORTH IT.”

Thomas Niederbühl has been committed to the acceptance and visibility of LGBTIQ* for 40 years and was the first gay city councillor to enter the Munich City Council via the *Rosa Liste* voter initiative, where he represents the concerns of the community in parliament.



We always looked at each other by Lion Hodžić

Despite the prevalent general public's homophobic attitudes at the time, activists gathered around their common notions of justice and comradery, as well as found strength in intertwined different ways they fought and dealt with the negative and the trauma. It was and still is a complementary effort where they still look in the direction of each other and still find support love, strength and motivation, not only to preserve ones' peace of mind, but continue the fight and share the spark.



Tour d'Amour; A hug before the show

by Sas Schilten

Pink senior Magda and drag queen Victoria False work for Tour d'Amour, a programme about sexual- and genderdiversity developed by author Eveline van de Putte. Tour d'Amour has been performed for the elderly, young people, students, welfare workers

and healthcare professionals over 300 times. Thanks to funding from the City of Rotterdam the Tour d'Amour is able to travel to locations all throughout the city to educate and create awareness about the situation of LGBTI seniors.



A communal grave for the queer community

by Barbara Bosshard

For many queer+ elders, the queer community is the only family they have. Queer Altern, an NGO advocating for the interests of queer+ elders, has asked the City of Zurich for a place for LGBTIQ+ people to express their bond with the queer community

even after death. To meet this request, the City of Zurich has launched the Rainbow Rest project at Sihlfeld Cemetery. Anyone who wishes can reserve a space on the colourfully planted communal grave and will be buried there after their passing.



Ascending Against the Light by Suntan Production

Amusement parks are symbols of joy.
The New Taipei City Government champions gender-friendly values,
Adorning Yuanshan Park with rainbows,
to celebrate diversity and inclusivity.

Amy Chang of AmCham, an LGBTQ+ rights advocate,
And Jay Lin, creator of Portico Media, approach the hill.
Ascending in the backlight, through light that scatters into
a spectrum,
Their strides unique yet unified, persisting,
With allies at their side, ever upward,
Trusting their ranks will swell,
In a world resplendent with color.



References

No. 1, Vienna: “LGBTIQ Stories in and from Vienna” by Lisa Punz & Michael Hecht (Frog Queen Media)

No. 2, Sao Paulo: “I see myself through you” by Léo Áquilla

No. 3, Geneva: “To age happily, let’s stay visible!” by Ariane Testori

No. 4, Taipei: “Legacy of Love: Embracing the Warmth of Home in Chosen Family Reunion” by Tong, a volunteer of the Taiwan Tongzhi (LGBTQ+) Hotline Association

No. 5, Cologne: “Giving Time” by Andrea Bothe

No. 6, Mexico City: “Iconic elderly people and pioneers of the queer and LGBTIQ+ activists of Mexico City.” by Karina Buendía Monroy

No. 7, Bern: “QUEER TEA DANCE” by Thilo Larsson

No. 8, Mannheim: “When it comes to us, we are of course at the table. Kind regards, your queer elders.” by City of Mannheim, Graphic Recording: ka-schmitz.de

No. 9, Barcelona: “Barcelona at the forefront in LGBTI rights” by Fundació Enllaç

No. 10, Bordeaux: “Des fils et des mains” by Maurice Lafaye

No. 11, Ostend: “Edie Merckx” by Edie Merckx

No. 12, Heidelberg: “Wolfgang Erichson, former Mayor for Culture, Citizen Services and Creative Industries of the City of Heidelberg” by Philipp Rothe

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No. 18, Helsinki: “Beyond the surface” by Aleksandra Lemke

No. 19, Leuven: “Kaya 60Plus Colourful and grey” by Morgane Gielen, ‘Voicing inclusivity through photography’

No. 20, Munich: “Fighter inside and outside politics for the acceptance and visibility of LGBTIQ* in Munich” by Andreas Gregor/privat, graphic: Schmid:heilig

No. 21, Podgorica: “We always looked at each other” by Lion Hodžić

No. 22, Rotterdam: “Tour d’Amour; A hug before the show” by Sas Schilten

No. 23, Zurich: “A communal grave for the queer community” by Barbara Bosshard

No. 24, New Taipei: “Ascending Against the Light” by Suntan Production

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