

EN

We are back at Nest

Winter/Spring 2026

NESTING

HABITS

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Nest is a space for contemporary art in The Hague, the Netherlands. Since its founding in 2010, Nest has dedicated itself to exhibiting, publishing and discussing the work of artists and thinkers.

WRITING

AND

WRITING

LANGUAGE AND DESIRE
SINCE 1864

Curated by
Philipp Gufler

9 Jan. – 5 April 2026, Sharan Bala, CAConrad, Philipp Gufler, Eli Hill, KRIWET, Cosy Piëro, Rory Pilgrim, Sophie Serber, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs and Louwrien Wijers

WE ARE BACK ON OUR NEST

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Urning and Urningin

Language and

Desire since 1864

An introduction by Philipp Gufler

Language and desire remain alive because they are never complete—the same words, repeated again and again, yet each time differently felt and spoken. This reflection might resonate with **Karl Heinrich Ulrichs** (1825–1895), into whom I have been conducting research for years now. Ulrichs was a German lawyer and conceived new and original words to describe same-sex love and desire in a time when this was largely understood as a punishable act.

The title of the exhibition at Nest refers to these new words, used as positive descriptions for Ulrichs himself and for people with queer desire—*Urning* and *Urningin*,—first publicly used by Ulrichs in his series of twelve pamphlets *The Riddle of Man-Manly Love* from 1864 to 1880. Four years before the term “homosexuality” was established, Ulrichs coined his words, derived from Aphrodite Urania: the goddess of love, who according to Greek mythology, was created from the severed genitals of the god Uranus. Ulrichs’ writings were discussed inside and outside of Germany, and reached the Netherlands for the first time in 1870. The words *Urning* and *Urningin* became a positive self-expression, used by artists such as Oscar Wilde and Claude Cahun. This was groundbreaking, because queer desire was not supposed to be named in western society at that time, rendering it “silent sins.” In legal texts, it was treated on a par with sodomy and punished by death.¹ Although the

terms *Urning* and *Urningin* did not catch on, Ulrichs and his writings have become a central source of inspiration for queer theory.

Karl Heinrich Ulrichs was born in 1825 at Westerfeld near Aurich in East Friesland. He became the first to advocate for queerness as an identity and wrote and spoke fervently about the position of Urnings in society and, as a jurist, fought for the abolition of their criminalisation. He published his first five pamphlets on “uranism” under the pseudonym Numa Numantius. After publishing the first two pamphlets, he received numerous autobiographical letters, which he published in subsequent editions. This became the first empirical study of the lives of queer people, forming an early network of solidarity. Through lively correspondence with doctors and researchers, he built up an international network from Germany that laid the foundation for the emancipation of queer people—a foundation that is still felt in society today.

Ulrichs’ aim was to win impunity for mutually consensual sexual acts between men, which he amongst others plead for at the German Jurisprudence Day in Munich in 1867. His now-famous speech has been described by historians as the first “coming out” in the western world. From then on, Ulrichs published under his real name. However, his attempt in Munich failed, and Paragraph 175 was passed in 1871 (shortly after the founding of the German Empire), which criminalised same-sex love between men. When the harassment of homosexuals drastically increased in Germany, Ulrichs emigrated to Italy in 1880. In a small city named L’Aquila, he continued his interest in language and published pamphlets on Latin as a means of cross-border communication in Europe in the

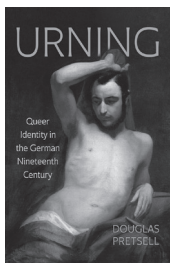
1. The last such execution on the European continent took place in the Netherlands in 1803.

face of emerging European conflicts. Ulrichs died in 1895 and was buried in the L'Aquila cemetery.

Philipp Hofstetter, René Hornung, *Der Uring. Selbstbewusst schwul vor 1900*, 2024, Zürich (Hier und Jetzt Verlag).



Douglas Pretsell, *Uring. Queer Identity in the German Nineteenth Century*, 2024, Toronto (University of Toronto Press).



This exhibition and publication departs from Ulrichs' legacy, but also pays tribute to all the researchers and self-organised queer archives before us, who have kept his life and work alive. For instance, sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld—whose theory of gender and sexuality as a spectrum known as *Sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (sexual intermediate types)—drew heavily on Ulrichs' ideas and republished his pamphlets and personal letters. In addition, we also take a critical look at the limitations of Ulrichs' thinking in the exhibition and publication. As Paul B. Preciado writes in *An Apartment on Uranus*, Ulrichs 'cut subjectivity in half, after Plato, separated the soul and the body, and imagined a combination of souls and bodies that authorized him to reclaim dignity for those who loved against the law,' referring to the binary language that Ulrichs came up with in order to decriminalise same-sex acts.² The exhibition thus questions the limitations of both historical and contemporary vocabulary in describing desire, and calls for intergenerational and intersectional solidarity. The dialogues and exchanges with the artists and writers have been vital in this nuancing and critically reassessing of Ulrichs' legacy.

2. Paul B. Preciado, *An Apartment on Uranus*, 2020, London (Fitzcarraldo Editions), p. 32.

About the exhibition

For *Uring and Uringin. Language and Desire since 1864*, I invited eight artists with whom I share a particular affinity: Sharan Bala, CAConrad, Eli Hill, KRIWET, Cosy Pièro, Rory Pilgrim, Sophie Serber, and Louwrien Wijers. Through prior collaborations, admiration, or friendships, I have created a constellation around the planet Uranus (where Ulrichs lended the term 'uranian' from), together with the team of Nest and its curator **Eva Burgering**, with whom I also worked on this introduction. At the centre of Uranus, Ulrichs' ideas are on display, varying from his writings, letters and other memorabilia, radiating outwards like planets in a solar system to the artists. We are gratified with their participation in the exhibition, each invited for their sharp, layered works that engage with questions of identity, solidarity, and the role of language therein, altogether emphasising the importance of exchange and collaboration across generations and through history.

This intergenerational interest is evident in **Eli Hill's** work (p. 12). In recent research, Hill explored the life and legacy of the transmasculine philanthropist Reed Erickson (1917–1992). Erickson is best known for founding the Erickson Educational Foundation (EEF), which enabled pioneering trans-positive medical and research initiatives. In his series *EEF Drawings*, Eli Hill imagined his own educational foundation and continued for the exhibition new works inspired by Ulrichs' silkworm business. After Karl Heinrich Ulrichs was no longer able to work as a lawyer, he financed his life by breeding silkworms in Stuttgart before his exile in Italy.

The connection between art, life, and community is also evident in the work of **Cosy Pièro** (p. 15). Her life and work are inseparably entwined: art, language, and community flow into one another continuously. After making large installations, drawings and paintings on the human body in the beginning of her career, Cosy created pieces with text and language in the centre from the 1990s onwards. In works like *Ich liebe nur die Illusion* (I just love the illusion), she uses words on paper, leather or objects to deal with language with great sensitivity and humor, while also sharing her personal doubts and fears. In her unfinished project *Draft for a New Language*, she explored an utopian form of communication in which words of violence, hate, or command were absent. With this she pursued, like Ulrichs, a language that unites rather than divides.

CAConrad (p. 10) has been working with the ancient technologies of poetry and ritual since 1975. The exhibition includes three new poems by CAConrad, as well as a wall text and revariant sculptures that curve and undulate on the page and in space. Written from a place of somatic inquiry and rituals, alongside animals surviving in the Anthropocene, Conrad states: 'My poems are breathing wild creatures. They stand on the bottom of the page, vibrating in the center of their bodies.' Their poem-sculptures are scaled to the body and, collectively, resemble a forest or a gathering of mysterious creatures.

KRIWET (p. 14) worked with text, sound, and concrete poetry. For his series *Text-Signs*, he created aluminium panels reminiscent of car number plates, with words and circular texts playing with the boundaries of meaning. He broke away

from linear structures of thinking and writing: words and syllables collide, merge, or dissolve into new meanings. In 1965 he painted *Schwuler Frühling* (Gay Spring) on a three-metre-long canvas. Here, the word *Schwul* was presented prominently, a deliberate act of reclamation long before it became a term of empowerment, and while homosexuality between men continued to be criminalised under Paragraph 175 in West Germany.

Karl Heinrich Ulrichs' plea for identification forms the starting point for my (**Philipp Gufler**) (p. 11) two-channel video installation *The Beginning of Identification, and Its End*. The work is made up of my performance, and film scenes of archive material relating to queer content throughout history: the reverent smile of early transgender activist Charlotte Charlaque, people enjoying a dance at a lesbian party, and the polemical speeches of extreme right-wing, homosexual politicians. In my quilts, built up from layers of silkscreen prints on fabric, a *moiré* effect emerges in which not all information is visible at once, emphasising the fragility of history itself. Especially for the exhibition, I made two new quilts dedicated to the honey merchant Jakob Rudolf Forster (1853–1926) and the theatre director Friedrich Conrad Anton Feldmann (1834–1884), who were both in close contact with Ulrichs.

How we see ourselves and others is the subject of **Sophie Serber's** (p. 17) video essay *Success Breeds Success or You Need to Be a Friend to Get a Friend*. In the work, Serber has removed the bodies from fragments of pornographic films. Her digital overpainting is not censorship, but an attempt to remove the body from the consuming gaze. The voice-over in the video, made from a script Serber based on her own

database from 2018, concludes with a philosophical stream of consciousness on self-identification: 'Living in chaos, in this chaotic relation to ourselves where we are constantly becoming different people based on the hormones rushing through our bodies.' Serber examines the economy of desire, in which bodies are reproduced, edited, and consumed, until nothing remains but data. Visibility becomes paradoxical: the more we show, the less there is truly to see.

A same sort of tension between identification, seeing, and being seen is palpable in the work of **Sharan Bala** (p. 9). For their installation *trying not to know is an active process of denial and forgetting, don't forget to forget*, Bala printed their entire medical file from the Amsterdam UMC. This simultaneously marked the public disclosure of their intersex identity, detailed and analysed across 160 pages in clinical language. The medical terminology objectifies their body, attempting to bind it within binary frameworks and revealing the numerous unsolicited surgeries performed. Opposite the file, Bala positions a video based on the iconic Roman *Sleeping Hermaphrodite*. Bala inverts the gaze: the sculpture is no longer passive but an active actor, not asleep but awake, watching the viewer engaging with the medical dossier.

For **Louwrien Wijers** (p. 22), art resides in the intangible: in what hovers between us as we communicate. Words, sentences and texts are as much sculptures as marble or bronze. Her mental sculptures invite us all to participate, offering a way to approach one another more closely: 'We live in language,' Wijers asserts. Before developing her mental sculptures, Wijers worked with metals, a phase inseparable from her later practice and foreshadowing her

immaterial work. In 1977, she created *With Detachment*, a tall yellow-copper table with a yellow-copper bird and book, inscribed with texts about the relationship between two girls.

Rory Pilgrim (p. 16) shares a deep trust in the connective power of language and intergenerational exchange. This dialogue manifests in Pilgrim's film *Sacred Repositories no. 3: The Open Sky*, created in collaboration with five women who experienced the radical feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Through their words and poetry, the film weaves together language across generations, exploring time, family, and solidarity, and creating a home for language: a space where words can be instruments of transformation and action.

In addition to the participating artists, we have invited **Simon(e) van Saarloos** (p. 25), **Gürsoy Doğtaş** (p. 5) and **Hendrik Folkerts** (p. 29) to reflect on Ulrichs in the present day for this publication, which is designed by **Bart de Baets**. With the exhibition *Urning and Urningin. Language and Desire since 1864* at Nest in The Hague and this corresponding publication, we are celebrating Karl Heinrich Ulrichs' 200th birthday, but are also finding ourselves at a time when the far-right is rising, queer rights are under pressure worldwide and language is being hijacked by fascist tendencies. We therefore aim to have this exhibition become a living archive of solidarity. The return to historical figures like Ulrichs is not out of nostalgia; it becomes a form of intergenerational care, a tangible connection between past, present and future.

E-17

by GÜRSOY DOĞTAŞ

...in the narrow booth of the cruising area of an erotic shop, *Mystery Hall in St Pauli*. There's hardly any space between the screen and my chair. It feels as if I could step right into the scene on the monitor. Every channel plays a different porn film. To the left, in the wall, a glory hole—large enough that even from the corner of my eye I can see what's happening next door. On one screen, *Men of Istanbul* is playing.

Scene. Orhan is showering after masturbating on the hotel bed. Warm water runs over his face. He looks thoughtful. The camera moves in. He turns away. The next sequence begins. After Orhan comes Ahmet, then Erol—then Murat, Mustafa, Deniz, Erdal and Uğur. Unlike other porn films, *Men of Istanbul* doesn't excite me; it makes me silent. I think the young men barely knew what they were agreeing to. It feels as if I am part of their exploitation.

'At last, on lawful ground!' General B. Stein shouts as he crosses the border into the Ottoman Empire. In Karl Heinrich Ulrichs' *Urnische Liebe in Constantinopel* (1865) he appears as a 'great admirer of male beauty'. In Austria, the general lived under constant threat; one denunciation could mean

imprisonment. He joins the Turkish army. General B. Stein becomes Ferhat Pasha. For a gay man (even though they did not yet use that word), this transformation meant freedom. Within Ulrichs' twelve-part series *Forschungen über das Räthsel der mannmännlichen Liebe* (*The Riddle of Man-Manly Love*) (1864–1880), *Urnische Liebe in Constantinopel* serves as a key case study underpinning his central aim: to present male–male love as a natural variation of human sexuality and to free it from notions of pathology and criminalisation. Ulrichs frequently supported his arguments with historical, literary, and cross-cultural examples. The text takes the form of a short



Gürsoy Doğtaş, *Broken Dreams*, 2025, collage. Courtesy of Gürsoy Doğtaş.

ethnographic essay, combining travel reports, correspondence, and moral reflection. In that, *Urnische Liebe in Constantinopel* functions as a pragmatic, real-world illustration of his ideas.

Next to Ferhat Pasha, *Urnsche Liebe in Constantinopel* also features Ahmet Bey—a Turkish general who was once Gustav von Fritsch, a lieutenant colonel in Hungary. For Ulrichs he is a trusted source in Constantinople. In a letter from November 1864, Ahmet Bey writes about male–male love in the Ottoman capital. As a dioning, Ulrichs says, he speaks without hostility towards such love. For Ulrichs, “Dioning” refers to heterosexual love—the counterpart to “Urning,” which denotes homosexual love. With this distinction, Ulrichs defines two forms of love and, through this terminology, establishes an equal, non-moralising system: “Dioning” and “Urning” represent two equally natural variants of human love. Ahmet Bey describes a society where wealthy *effendis* keep handsome young men as companions, sometimes several at once.¹ These young favourites are cared for, privileged, and influential in their patrons’ households. Many of them later enter state service, some marry their benefactors’ daughters. The form of same-sex love described in Ahmet Bey’s letters is not one between equals; it depends on inequality.

1. An *effendi* in the Ottoman Empire was an educated, cultured man from the urban middle class—a title signifying learning and dignity.

...on the dance floor at Gay Oriental Nights.

Biz iki çılgın sevgiliyiz

Delicisine sevdalıyız

Öyle büyük ki bu

sevgimiz

Biz ayrılamayız...

**We are two crazy lovers,
madly in love.**

**Our love is so immense—
we can never part...**

Zeki Müren, Biz ayrılamayız (We can never part)

I ask Tufan whether he, too, has come out to his parents—at least to his mother. I tell him that, unlike me, he can choose whether people see him as gay or not. Because I cannot, my Turkish friends—and not only them—made life difficult. Too difficult for an insecure teenager. But that was no reason not to fall unhappily in love with one of them.

I remember sitting next to him in Year Five and complimenting his hands.

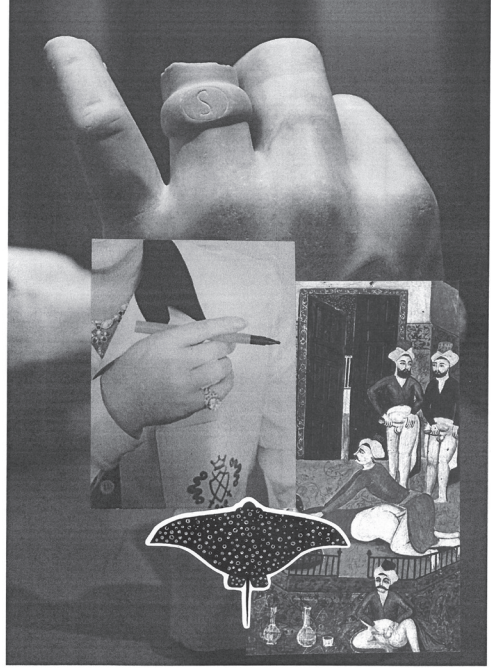
In Year Eight I sat on the luggage rack of his bike and held his sides—as if I needed to in order not to fall off.

...I remember how good Fahrenheit smelt on him—and how, every time the advert came on TV, I thought of him. When Dior launched the men’s fragrance Fahrenheit in 1988, it used strong imagery and sharp slogans: L’homme infiniment (‘the infinite man’) and What never ends, begins here. Ridley Scott directed the 30-second spot: a man walks along a pier that seems to lead into the sea. But when he reaches the end, he looks out over an endless desert—as if he’s reached the edge of the world.

Urnische Liebe in Constantinopel opens the final chapter, *Ara spei*, of Ulrichs' fifth pamphlet in the series *Forschungen über das Räthsel der mann männlichen Liebe*. Ulrichs published his early writings under the pseudonym "Numa Numantius," which served both as protection and as a declaration of intent. The name combines the wise lawgiver Numa Pompilius with the defiant city of Numantia—symbols of Ulrichs' aim to found a new ethics of love and to resist the prevailing moral order. From this moral vision, Ulrichs' gaze shifts toward the East, where he imagines another ground for love and freedom. *Ara spei* translates as *Altar of Hope*. Ulrichs finds hope in the idea that male–male love—condemned as "unnatural" in Europe by Church and law—is, a normal and accepted part of social life in Constantinople: widespread, socially integrated, and not shunned. Not only the ancient world, but also the gaze toward the Ottoman Empire opens up, in Ulrichs' time, a space in which utopias of same-sex love become conceivable and livable. Constantinople becomes a site of longing. The "Turkish man" becomes a projection for gay desire—a weave of othering, exoticisation, and fetishisation.

Graffiti I. On his seventeenth birthday, I sprayed F-17 on the wall in the Falkenstraße, right next to the workshop where he was training as a

car mechanic. It was meant for him to see every day—to know he was admired. The letters were for him, but also for everyone else passing by. At the same time, I was trying to hide a lot. I couldn't say to him that I was gay—even though I'd been called Schwuli (poof) since primary school. I knew that if I ever said it aloud, everything would suddenly end.



Gürsoy Doğtaş, *Broken Dreams*, 2025, collage. Courtesy of Gürsoy Doğtaş.

**Son bir defa göreyim Uğruna
can vereyim
Kollarında öleyim
Başka bir şey istemem**

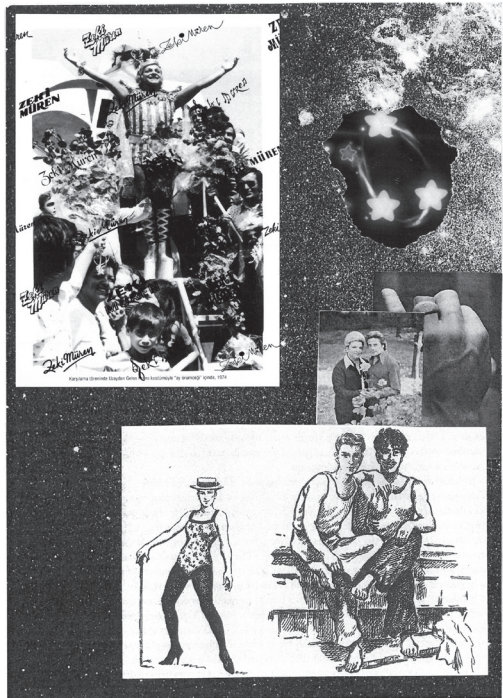
**Let me see you once more,
let me give my life for you.
Let me die in your arms—
I ask for nothing more.**

Zeki Müren – Kollarında Öleyim (Let me die in your arms)

Ulrichs left Germany in 1880 and settled in Italy, where he lived until his death in 1895. For other prominent figures, the Ottoman Empire became an important destination. Again and again, men travelled there in search of male-male love—and, in their longing, became “Turks” themselves.² Among them was Pierre Loti, a French naval officer and ardent Turkophile who served in the empire from 1876 to 1877. In *Aziyadé* (1879), his epistolary novel, Loti tells an autofictional love story set against the decline of the Ottoman world. The writers André Gide and Jean Cocteau read the forbidden love with the young harem woman *Aziyadé* as a coded same-sex narrative.

The protagonist transforms into an Ottoman gentleman, who takes the Turkish name Arif-Effendi, and adopts Ottoman dress, manners, and language. Later, Loti returns to his family home in Rochefort, creating a “Turkish Room”. In a black-and-white photograph, he sits in the centre, in Ottoman costume, calmly on a sofa, gazing into the distance. To his right, another man, also in costume, prepares a water pipe; his face blurred by motion. In those sumptuous

costumes of yesterday, Loti becomes a living figure of an Orientalist painting. Before his death, he destroys any clear trace of his homosexual inclinations; his son further purges the archive.



Gürsoy Doğtaş, *Broken Dreams*, 2025, collage. Courtesy of Gürsoy Doğtaş.

Graffiti II. As a teenager I cruised in the *Ilhme-Zentrum* in Hannover, just round the corner from the *Falkenstraße*. I knew my love would not grow out of a circle of friends, as it did for my mates. I sought encounters in places where people stayed only as long as necessary. There I hoped to meet someone like *F*. I wandered through the department-store toilets of the *Ilhme-Zentrum*, peered through small holes in the thin cubicle walls, and waited for a miracle. The walls were covered in graffiti, some like personal ads: ‘I’ll be here on ..., at ..., looking for ...’ Sometimes there were phone numbers. Some were specifically looking for a Turk to take them. I too looked for a Turk, yet I couldn’t be their Turk. On some toilet walls you could also read: ‘Turks out.’

2. British writers, scientists and diplomats like Henry Blount, Paul Rycaut, John Covel, Lord Byron, Richard Francis Burton and the American poet Bayard Taylor all travelled to the Ottoman Empire to become what they desired.

On these pages **Sharan Bala, CAConrad, Philipp Gufler,**
Eli Hill, KRIWET, Cosy Pièro, Rory Pilgrim, Sophie
Serber, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs and Louwrien Wijers





IV

I (previous page)
Sharan Bala, *trying not to know is an active process of denial and forgetting* (detail), 2022, installation.
Photo: Sharan Bala. Courtesy of the artist.

II (previous page)
Speech Sharan Bala Pridewalk Amsterdam, 2023.
Photo: Nine Geertman.

III (previous page)
Sharan Bala, studio sketches of (untitled) self-portraits, 2023. Photo: Sharan Bala. Courtesy of the artist.

IV
Sharan Bala, still of documentary *Kiezen, Snijden, Zwijgen*, 2024. Courtesy of the artist.

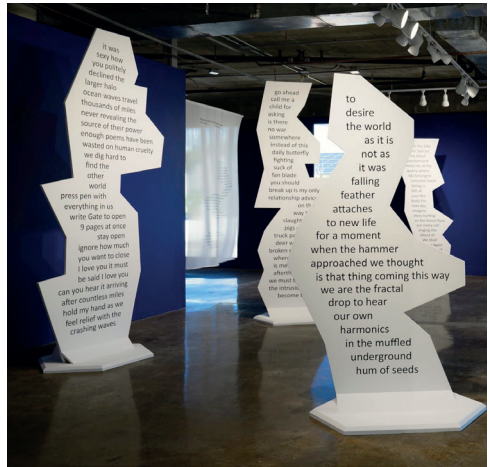
COC ONRAD

you need a
temperature of
1800 to turn a
heart to ash
fire needs no
fork at the
feast
mourners are
a collective
memory
under
stood
by my 9th
funeral of
friends who
died of AIDS
I'd like to see
you try telling the
heart it has to leave
we get new feet when
we reincarnate
I'm always
so excited
to see them
aren't you



I
CAConrad, *First Light: Frequency 888*, 2025.
Courtesy of the artist.

II, III



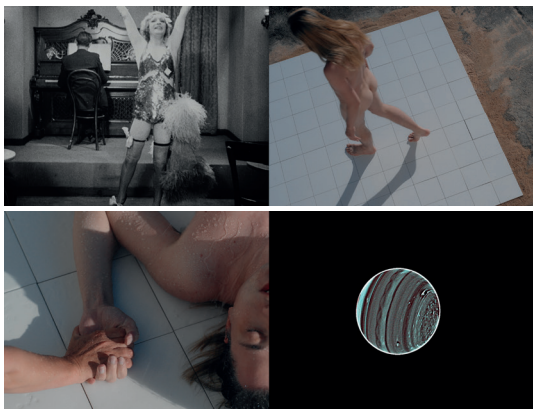
II
CAConrad, n.d. Photo: Sarah White.

III
Installation view, *CAConrad: 500 Places at Once*,
MOCA Tucson, 2024. Photo: Julius Schlosburg,
copyright © jpop photon, 2024.

P **G**
HILIPP UFLER

I
Philipp Gufler, *Quilt #40 (Karl Heinrich Ulrichs)*,
2021, silkscreen print on fabric, 90 x 180 cm.
Photo: Franz Müller Schmidt. Courtesy of the artist
and QUIVID, art in architecture program of the City
of Munich.





II

Philipp Gufler, *The Beginning of Identification, and Its End*, 2024, two-channel video installation, 19 min., 4K. Courtesy of the artist and BQ, Berlin.

III

Philipp Gufler, *Urning*, 2023, flags. Photo: Haydar Koyupinar, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Museum Brandhorst, Munich.



E LI H ILL



I

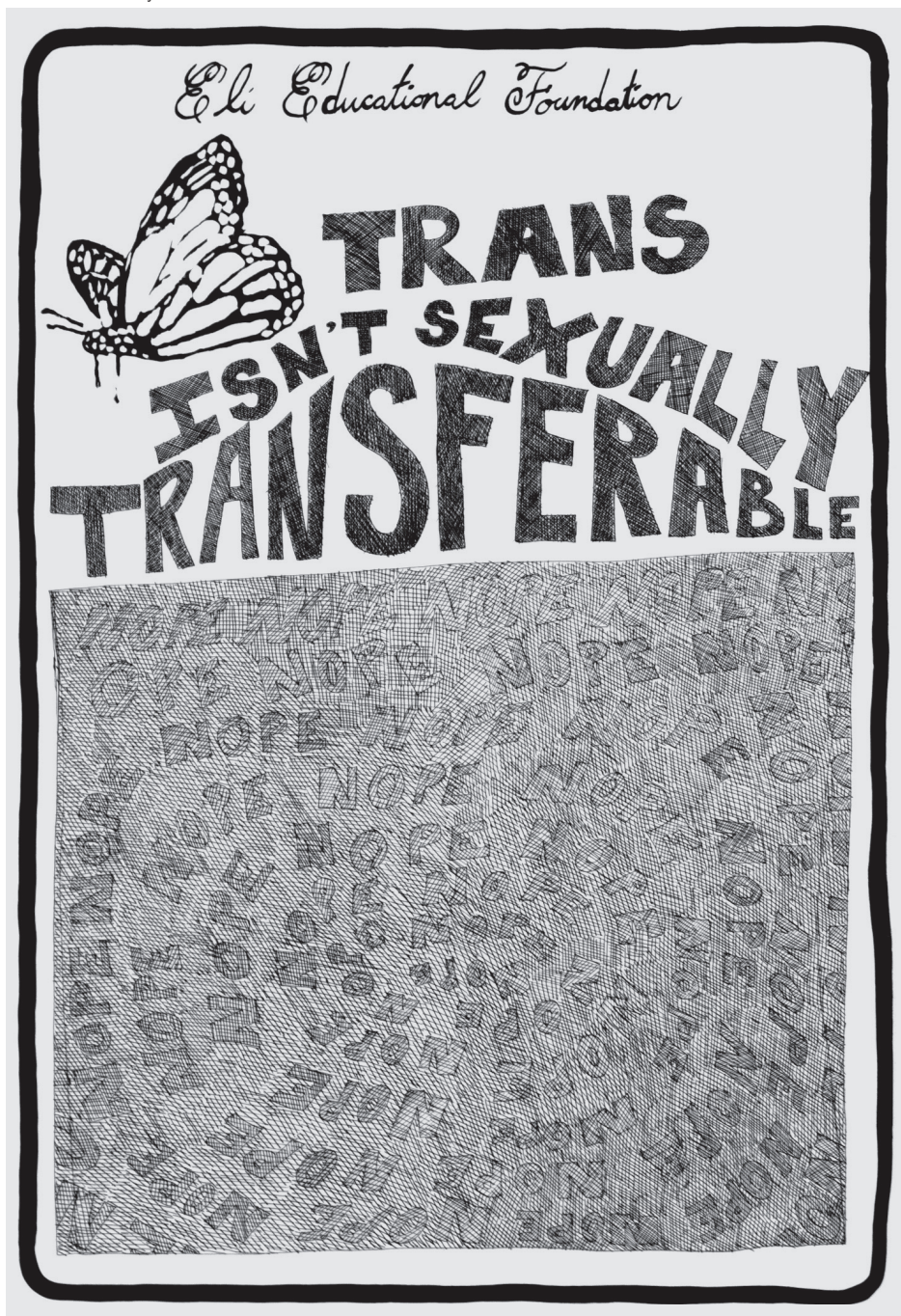
II



I
Eli Hill in the artist-made T-shirt
featuring Reed Erickson's
bodybuilding portrait. Photo:
Eli Hill. Courtesy of the artist.

II
Eli Hill, *The Artist as a Naturalist*,
oil on canvas, 24 x 20 inches, 2022.
Courtesy of the artist.

III
Eli Hill, *EEF Drawing #4*, 2021,
pen and ink on french construction
paper, 19 x 13 inches. Courtesy of
the artist.





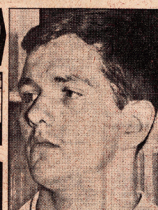
KRIWET

II
KRIWET, Text-Sign, 1968, embossed light aluminium, colour lacquered, 60 x 60 cm, (FKR 034). Photo: Roman März, Berlin. Photo: B.Q. Berlin. Courtesy of private collection.

I
KRIWET, Mixed-Media newspaper, n.d. Courtesy of the artist and BQ, Berlin.

So wütete der Kirmes-Mörder

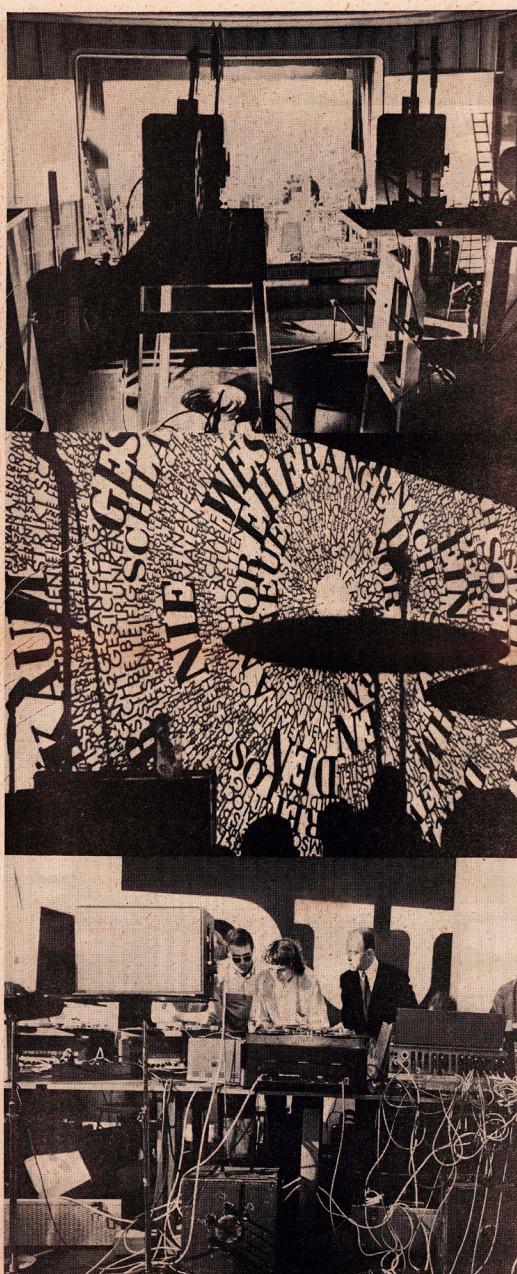
Er gestand vier Morde



19-jähriger Metzger tötete bei Kerzenlicht
Großartig
DOMINIKER
UNION

HOMO

DAS WORT ZUM SCHONTAG
WENN JEMAND BEIM KNABEN SCHLÄFT
WIE BEIM WEIBE, DIE HABEN EINEN
GREUEL GETAN UND SOLLN BEIDE DES
TODES STERBEN; IHR BLUT SEI AUF IHNEN.
(3. MOSE 20, 13)



II

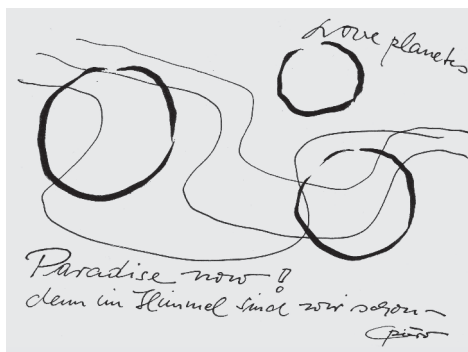


COSY **P**ÏÈRO



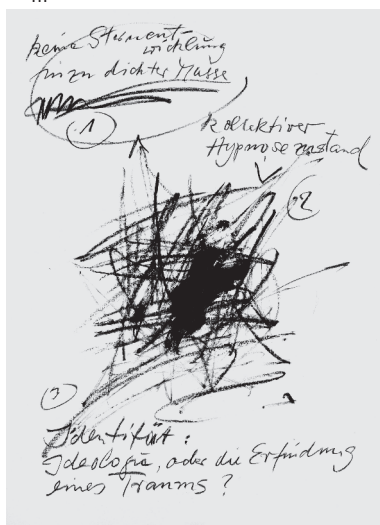
II

IV



I

III



I

Cosy Pièro, Love Planets,
n.d., drawing on paper,
10 x 15 cm. Collection
Philipp Gufler.

II

Cosy Pièro, Ich Liebe nur
die Illusion, 2012, silkscreen
print and drawing on paper,
edition 2 of 12, 86 x 61 cm.
Photo: Jan Erbeling.
Courtesy of Estate Cosy
Pièro.

V
Cosy Piëro, PRÄTE, 2001, imprinting on leather,
each 20 x 20 cm. Courtesy of Galerie Françoise
Heitsch, Munich.



VI



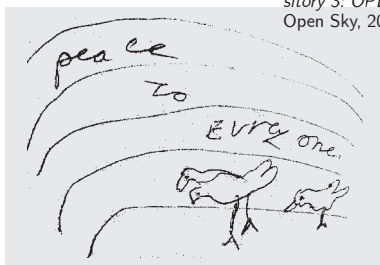
III (previous page)
Cosy Piëro, *Identität*, 1999, drawing
on paper, 100 x 70 cm. Photo:
Jan Erbeling. Courtesy of Forum
Queeres Archiv München e.V.

IV (previous page)
Cosy Piëro, *Gehen Lassen*, 2014,
Leather shoes with lettering,
30 x 16 cm. Photo: Jan Erbeling.
Courtesy of Estate Cosy Piëro.

VI
Monika Neuser, *Cosy Piëro*, n.d.
Courtesy of Estate Cosy Piëro.

RORY PILGRIM

I
Rory Pilgrim, *No title*, n.d.,
drawing. Courtesy of the artist.



II
Rory Pilgrim, *Sacred Reposi-
tory 3: OPEN SKY*, The
Open Sky, 2015-2016, poster.

The
Open
Sky

III
Rory Pilgrim, *The Open Sky*,
2016, Flat Time House, London.
Courtesy andriess ~ eyck gallery
and the artist.





IV



V

SOPHIE **S**ERBER

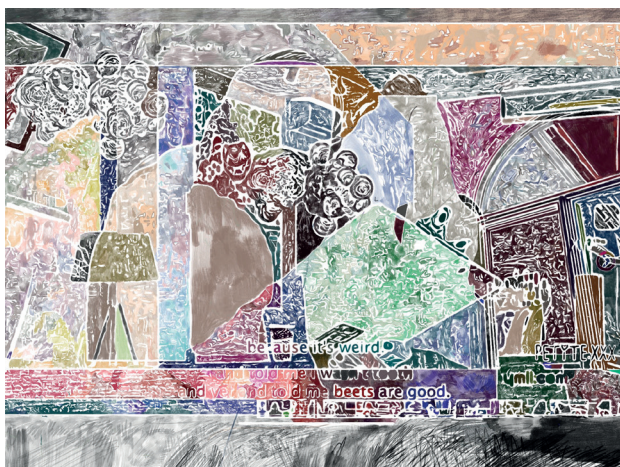


Me: ! When did u write it



There's always the possibility of an insidious man-in-the middle attack

I



II

I
Sophie Serber, *Success Breeds Success* (video still), 2024, video installation, 18'18". Courtesy of the artist.

II
Sophie Serber, *petite.x/ and told me wasn't tooth and told me beets are good*, 2023, digital sketch. Courtesy of the artist.

[07/04/2018, 02:51:31] P: About to get to the shore and shake myself off
 [07/04/2018, 02:51:41] P: But still a bit gloopy
 [07/04/2018, 02:51:59] P: And maybe I'll have the smell of it on me for a while
 [07/04/2018, 02:52:20] P: What does your day hold?
 [07/04/2018, 02:53:25] Me: how u Gonna shake it
 [07/04/2018, 02:53:31] Me: My shoot today was cancelled
 [07/04/2018, 02:53:34] Me: Thank goodness
 [07/04/2018, 02:53:45] P: Why thank goodness?
 [07/04/2018, 02:53:58] Me: Because I'm super sore today
 [07/04/2018, 02:54:19] Me: yesterday was really intense
 [07/04/2018, 02:54:32] Me: So it's probably for the best that I have today to chillll
 [07/04/2018, 02:55:02] P: What happened that was intense?
 [07/04/2018, 02:56:25] Me: I mean not that intense just long
 [07/04/2018, 02:56:32] P: Ah
 [07/04/2018, 02:56:37] Me: It was the vr shoot
 [07/04/2018, 02:56:43] P: Oh
 [07/04/2018, 02:56:56] Me: So no break and 45 min straight of cowgirl
 [07/04/2018, 02:57:02] P: Was it weird?
 [07/04/2018, 02:57:32] Me: No I think I like it
 [07/04/2018, 02:57:49] P: I thought you would like be
 [07/04/2018, 02:57:53] P: VR
 [07/04/2018, 02:58:09] P: But I thought you would like it because it's weird
 [07/04/2018, 02:58:23] Me: Maybe but I don't think it's weird
 [07/04/2018, 02:58:44] P: I think it depends on the producer too
 [07/04/2018, 02:58:45] Me: the producer told me I remind him of a dragon?
 [07/04/2018, 02:58:54] P: What?!?
 [07/04/2018, 02:58:59] P: In what way?
 [07/04/2018, 02:59:04] Me: I didn't ask
 [07/04/2018, 02:59:08] P: Hahaha
 [07/04/2018, 02:59:47] P: I have to look for this
 [07/04/2018, 02:59:58] Me: For what
 [07/04/2018, 03:00:21] P: I just want to see the dragonyness
 [07/04/2018, 03:01:04] P: It's got summery here
 [07/04/2018, 03:01:26] Me: Do u have the bike
 [07/04/2018, 03:01:32] P: Yes
 [07/04/2018, 03:01:38] Me: !
 [07/04/2018, 03:01:46] P: I might have a little jaunt later
 [07/04/2018, 03:02:06] Me: If u have energy tho r u still a bit sick
 [07/04/2018, 03:02:11] Me: I'm walking to a castle
 [07/04/2018, 03:02:19] P: Yes. So I'm wary
 [07/04/2018, 03:02:33] P: The one on the hill by the river?
 [07/04/2018, 03:02:40] Me: Yes
 [07/04/2018, 03:02:49] Me: It's a 3 hour walk I'm halfway now
 [07/04/2018, 03:02:53] P: Enjoy!
 [07/04/2018, 03:03:11] P: Holy crap. Make sure you actually rest
 [07/04/2018, 07:23:46] Me: thanks
 [07/04/2018, 07:24:31] Me: I'm about to take a bath!
 [07/04/2018, 08:05:04] P: Oh my!
 [07/04/2018, 08:08:53] Me: ya the girl that's good with knives brought a bunch of **magnes**
 here
 [07/04/2018, 11:10:19] Me: I want to call u I feel really chatty maybe in an annoying wa
 that sound unpleasant r u busy
 [07/04/2018, 11:10:51] P: I can chat / listen
 [07/04/2018, 11:11:10] P: But I'm not very chatty
 [07/04/2018, 11:11:20] P: But I can listen
 [09/04/2018, 08:02:43] Me: hey hi hey, hope ur good?
 [09/04/2018, 08:02:47] Me: Quick question
 [09/04/2018, 08:03:12] P: Shoot

Satzungen
für den Vereinigungsbund.

37

- § 1. Er besteht aus Mitgliedern u. dem Verwaltungsrath.
- § 2. Seine Zwecke sind:
- a. die Ue aus ihrer bisher. Vereinzelg zu reissen u. sie zu einer solidarisch verbundenen compacten Masse zu verbinden.
 - b. gegenüber der öff. Meinung d. den Organen des Staates die angeborenen Menschenrechte der Ue zu verpflegen, ihren namentlich Gleichberechtigung mit der Ue vor dem Gesetz u. in der menschl. Gesellsch. überlegt zu vertheilichen.
 - c. eine literarische Literatur zu gründen.
 - d. geeignete u. w. Schriften auf Sammelbüchern zum Druck zu befördern.
 - e. für die Zwecke der Ue in der Tagespresse zu wirken.
 - f. den einzelnen Uen, welche ihres Ueins wegen zu Tölpeln haben, in jeder Noth u. Gefahr beizustehen, ihnen, wenn Hülfe, auf zu angemessener Lebensstellung zu verhelfen.
- § 3. Auf jedes einzelne Mitgl. hat diese Zwecke u. Pflichten zu wirken.
- § 4. Jeder Ue kann Mitgl. sein. Nur solche Gesinnung pflichtige.
- § 5. Wer in d. Bund eintritt, kann fortw. d. sein Nam. u. seine Adresse an den Verwaltungsrath bekannt geben u. bleiben, auf, sonst dieser beides nur in Gesinnungspflicht voraussetzt falls jedes Mitgl. des V. = Raths verpflichtet sich hierauf durch Ehrenwort.
- § 6. Zur Aufnahme in d. Bund ist jedes Mitgl. des V. = R. legitimirt. Wer den besannten Grundsätzen angehängt, so kann die Aufn. auch so geschehen, d. der aufzunehmende Mensch ein Bundes-Mitgl. dem V. = R. bezeichnet wird ohne Nennung von Namen u. Adresse. Hier befragt über die Aufn. der V. = R. Persönlich u. Mith. des aufzunehmenden sind hier andernfalls zu bezeichnen. In der Mitgliedrolle des V. = R. erfolgt er einen fingierten Namen. Der unmittelbare Mitgl. bringt für ihn. Nöthigenfalls vermittelt es die Verbindung mit ihm.
- § 7. Zeit u. Austritt der Mitgl. des V. = R. hängen von ihm selbst ab. Mindestens d. Derselben umgibt sich der Landes-Mitgl. mit Namen (die Zählung)

- in Abrede nehmen. Die übrigen können unter fingierten Namen fungieren, unter Vermittlung in Eingekauft eines der sich nennenden. Dann ist jedoch deren Persönlichkeit in Bezug auf die übrigen Mitglieder des V. Ks, wie auch der Lots = Mitglieder, ausweislich zu bezeugen.
- § 8. Jedes Mgl zahlt an den V. K einen Jahresbeitrag nach Selbstschätzung, mindestens jedoch 1. Pf.
- § 9. Über die nachstehenden Ausgaben befreit der gesamte V. K. Der Mglator gegenüber ist er dafür verantwortlich.
- § 10. Von allen wichtigen Ereignissen haben die V. K. u. Mglator einander gegenseitig in Kenntnis zu setzen.
- § 11. Von allen auf Landeskosten getruckten Schriften (§ 2, D.) erhält jedes Mgl 1 Exemplar.
- § 12. Der V. K. veranstaltet gewöhnliche Enquete der Mglator, u. zwar nach seinem freigesetzten Plenarversammlungen oder Delegiertenversammlungen.
- § 13. Der V. K. wird beauftragt sein, gewöhnliche Litteratur zu Zwecken des Landes, ferner zu kaufen. (in angesehener Manier)
- § 14. Er wird beauftragt sein, ein gemeinsames Erkennungszeichen für die Ue einzuführen.
- § 15. Wünsche u. Anträge der Landesglieder hat der V. K. zu bewerkstelligen.

Lehrer des Reichs. 1865

Maria Theresia.

Oct. Germ. 301.





Statutes of the Urning League

§1. It consists of members and the Administrative Council.

§2. Its purposes are:

a.

To tear the Urnings out of their previous isolation and unite them into a solidary, cohesive body.

b.

To defend, in the face of public opinion and the organs of the State, the inborn human rights of the Urnings, and in particular to vindicate for them equality with the Dionings before the law and in human society at large.

c.

To establish an Urning literature.

d.

To promote the printing, at the League's expense, of suitable Urning writings.

e.

To work for the concerns of the Urnings in the daily press.

f.

To assist individual Urnings, who must suffer on account of their Uranism, in every need and danger, and, where possible, to help them also to obtain a suitable position in life.

§3. Each individual member is likewise bound to promote these purposes to the best of his ability.

§4. Every Urning may be a member. Only dishonorable disposition excludes.

§5. Anyone joining the League may demand that his name and address be known only to the Administrative Council and remain so, and that the Council keep both in cipher. Every member of the Administrative Council pledges his word of honor to this.

§6. Every member of the Administrative Council is authorized to admit new members to the League. Should special reasons be given, admission may also take place in such a way that the person to be admitted is designated to the Administrative Council by a member of the League, without disclosure of name and address. In this case, admission is decided upon by the Administrative Council. The personality and station of the new member must be indicated by other means. In the membership list of the Council, he receives a fictitious name. The mediating member vouches for him and, if necessary, acts as intermediary with him.

§7. The number and selection of the Administrative Council depend upon itself. At least half of them must make themselves known to the League members by name and address. The others may function under fictitious names, through the mediation and guarantee of one of those who

are named. In such cases, however, their personality and station must be indicated to the other members of the Council, as well as to the League members, by other means.

- §8. Each member pays an annual contribution to the Administrative Council, according to his own estimation, but at least 1 Reichsthaler.
- §9. Expenditures to be made are decided upon by the entire Administrative Council. It is responsible to the members in this respect.
- §10. The Administrative Council and the members must keep each other mutually informed of all important events.
- §11. Of all writings printed at the League's expense (§2, d.), each member shall receive one copy.
- §12. The Administrative Council organizes periodic congresses of the members, either plenary assemblies or assemblies of delegates, at its discretion.
- §13. The Administrative Council shall endeavor to make periodicals serviceable to the purposes of the League in appropriate measure.
- §14. It shall endeavor to introduce a secret sign of recognition for the Urnings.
- §15. The Administrative Council shall take into consideration, as far as possible, the wishes and proposals of the League members.

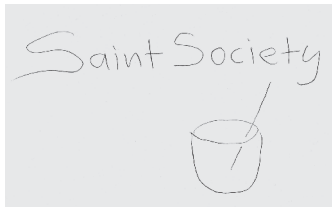
Drafted September 1865,

NUMA NUMANTIUS

L O U W R I E N W I J E R S



I
II



I
Louvrien Wijers at work on *Tomorrow's Language* in 2023. Video still: Egon Hanfstingl.

II
Louvrien Wijers, *Saint Society*, 2014, multiple print.

III.
Louvrien Wijers in front of a selection out of her work *Veertig Woorden* (1970/71, Collection of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam), 2022. Photo: Egon Hanfstingl.

IV
Louvrien Wijers, 5 days *Art meets Science and Spirituality in a changing Economy*, DVD box. Design: Egon Hanfstingl.



Art meets Science and Spirituality in a changing Economy

Art

Science

Spirituality

Economy

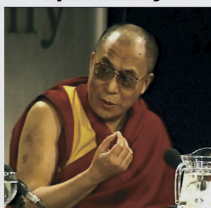
1



Robert Rauschenberg



David Bohm



Dalai Lama



Stanislav Menshikov

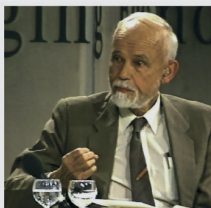
2



John Cage



Ilya Prigogine

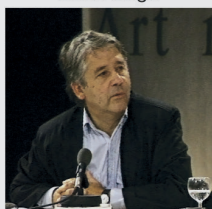


Huston Smith



F. Wilhelm Christiansen

3



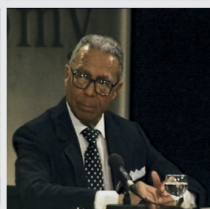
JCJ Vanderheyden



Francisco Varela

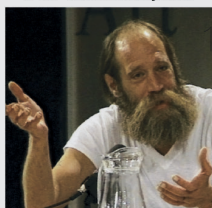


Tessa Bielecki



J.M. Pinheiro Neto

4



Lawrence Weiner



Rupert Sheldrake



Sogyal Rinpoche



Jean-Maxime Lévêque

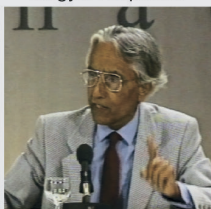
5



Marina Abramovic



Fritjof Capra



Raimon Panikkar



H.J. Witteveen

A mental sculpture by Louwrien Wijers



V
Louwrien Wijers, *With Detachment*, 1977. Photo: Rene den Engelsman. Collection Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed.

Urning for Everyone

by SIMON(E) VAN SAARLOOS

Karl Heinrich Ulrichs is hailed as a granddaddy for European gays like Sappho is the founding mother for many European lesbians. Where Ulrichs was (of course wrongfully) labeled the first gay man in world history by activists in the 1980s, Sappho is often claimed as the first recorded lesbian. In his 19th century writings, Ulrichs conveyed that queerness was natural and inborn, way before the neuroscientists of the 1990s popularised the belief that sexual orientation is mapped and predetermined in the brain. Those who reside on the Greek island of Lesbos—where Sappho was born and lived between circa 610 and 570 BCE—are called Lesbians. Lesbians have been proud Lesbians (with capital L!) by birth for centuries.

On Lesbos, I take a walking tour with the director of the documentary *Lesvia*, which follows the 70s increase of lesbian tourists arriving in the village of Eressos, and the co-habitation and conflict with locals. As she points to the “boob shaped” mountain (reminding me of the “clitoris hill” in San Francisco’s lesbian neighborhood Bernal Heights—a woman and a beautiful landscape are always also just some sites to tramp on), she says: everyone wants a piece of Sappho. Tourists, locals, historians, poets, different generations of lesbians and dykes: they all need Sappho to be what they want her to be. ‘Yes,’ she continues, ‘the record shows certain facts: Sappho was from an aristocratic family, and she had slaves, yes, we know this, but her life has to be understood in its own time.’ The tour group nods righteously, and I decide to leave. Not because I think Sappho should be deplatformed for being who she was in her *own time*, but I do question the defensive pretense to understand a time that is apparently morally particular but still can be comfortably defined from the future. I can’t quite join a chorus that’s protecting a historical figure against supposedly contemporary views—especially as these views are also contested as *killjoy* in the current moment, which makes it easy to imagine that oppositional ideas from the past might not have survived the eradicating forces of selective archives.

It is also possible that my quiet departure from this group has something to do with being the only person there who is perceived to be a man. Of course, masculine off-center vibes are abundantly present among this lesbian crowd, but my hormonal transition has superficially landed on some blonde surfer boy situation, and despite my Urning gestures and Babygirl purrs, it’s the boy and the boy appearance alone that is seen. The possibility of appreciating the impossibility of feeling close to the real Sappho while also only being able to know her through one’s own framework and desires, relates, for me, to the appreciation of the impossibility of having both a pussy and a cock at the same time. The love for impossible combinations is acquired taste and, on this island, dickgina is only appreciated by some. This is not a commentary on lesbian separatism. Most separatism has loose ends, and most loose ends crave to be pulled, no matter how carefully this must be done. It might be frustrating to focus on low hanging fruit, but if you pluck with enough passion, it won’t grow back until next season. My appreciation of impossibility – the impossibility of “more and more” as trans life might show us, or “the particular play in the space of impossibility that blackness is”—is about reading historical figures ^{1,2}. Figures such as Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, figures such as Sappho. We do not leave or disengage from the archives (like I did on the tour) just because it is impossible.

It is on Sappho's Island that I read through the more than eight hundred pages of Ulrichs' *Research on the Riddle of Man-Manly Love*. It is on this island that I pay twelve euros an hour to gym with a personal trainer—a luxury I have not been able to afford anywhere else. He is my height but huge in width, his muscles bulk from every angle. And he is incredibly friendly, gentle even. On one of our first sessions, he asks me about the scars across my chest and when I tell him I'm trans, he responds like everyone else in the gym by saying that I'm so strong, you would never know. Little do they know that, to cite Ulrichs, 'Even if I have a man's beard, limbs, and body ... I am and remain a girl' and proudly so.³

The trainer wants to know if he should consider moving to the US to compete athletically. When I wonder aloud how it would be to migrate there now, considering Trump and the hold of fascism on daily life, he nods understandingly. He shows me pictures of different haircuts and asks what would look good on him, especially as he worries about his receding hairline. He exposes his forehead and, invited in, I study it up close. I tell him that in the US, people take drugs for most things, including balding. He asks me to send him information about these pills, and this is how we start following each other on Instagram. When Charlie Kirk gets shot, the trainer posts a video celebrating Kirk's heroism. He also shares posts about Trump warning for the ruination caused by immigrants.

It is on the island that I write this, not far from where Sappho allegedly jumped off a cliff overlooking the Aegean Sea. The rock I'm looking at must have been her last view. It's a few hundred meters offshore, a fifteen-minute swim from here. Except, my swimming is terrible, and it takes me much longer. As a kid, I hated the swimming classes that are a mandatory part of growing up in the Netherlands. To fit my transition story, I have re-narrated my distaste for swimming as a result from having to wear a bathing suit, but in reality I only remember the one time that my mom had forgotten my bathing suit (a mother is always also just a site to blame), and I had to wear shorts from the pool's lost and found. While waiting for the coach's whistle to jump in, peers were nagging me, asking if I was a boy or a girl. With my buzz cut and baggy clothes, I was always such a boy—to the extent that on holidays I'd make new friends as if I were one—, but this naked display felt really embarrassing. Maybe the problem was that I had to wear these shorts

1. "More and more" here refers to a transcribed conversation between psychoanalysts Avgi Saketopoulou and Griffin Hansbury titled "Sissy Dance \$1: The More and More of Gender" for *The Psychoanalytic Review*, Vol. 109, No. 3, September 2022. The more and more counters an economy of conservation and scarcity and instead embraces abundance. This abundance also shows up in the trans ability to hold the material and the symbolical body both at the same time, even if they are considered to hold different or opposing meanings and functions. Abundance has been an important framework for my work, whether in my book on memory culture and the (im) possibility of commemorating everything all at the same time (*Take 'Em Down. Scattered Monuments and Queer Forgetting*), or in my exhibition *ABUNDANCE. We must end the world as we know it*, co-curated with Vincent van Velsen at Het HEM, Zaandam 2021.

2. This is a citation from Fumi Okiji's 2025 book *Billie's Bent Elbow: Exorbitance, Intimacy, and a Nonsensuous Standard* for Stanford University Press, in which she celebrates the "particular play in the space of impossibility" as a Black practice and ability to let opposites exist without trying to conflate, flatten or relate them. The dissonance between opposing ideas, feelings and materialities does not have to be solved. Instead, practicing a comfort with discomfort means that impossibility can exist without evoking a stressed or disturbed response.



3. This translation comes from Philipp Guffler's book *Dis/Identification*, Kunsthalle Mainz, 2024. I prefer Guffler's translation from German over the published English translation: 'My beard is a man's, my limbs and body virile; However, inside: I am and remain a female.' Ulrichs, Karl Heinrich. *The Riddle of "Man-Manly" Love: The Pioneering Work on Male Homosexuality*. Trans. by Michael A. Lombardi-Nash. Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1994, 99. It was published in Latin in 'Inclusia': 'Sunt mihi barba maris, artus, corquesque virile, his inclusa quidem: sed sum maneoque puella.', which was translated into German 'Hab ich auch den Bart auch vom Mann, die Glieder, den Körper, das alles schließt mich von außen nur ein: Ich bin und bleibe ein Mädchen' by Wilfried Stroh (in: Wolfram Setz (ed.): *Karl Heinrich Ulrichs zu Ehren. Materialien zu Leben und Werk*. Wilfried Stroh, 'Karl Heinrich Ulrichs als Vorkämpfer eines lebendigen Latein', Verlag rosa Winkel, 2000, 85.

out of necessity, and gender out of necessity never seems to work on me. Despite being a terrible swimmer, I have struggled to make it to the rock, because a local legend claims that if you touch it, you become gay. The

rock's magic has been proven by proxy, because most people who come to Lesbos are gay already anyway. However, I believe in the rock, like I believe in fire. In attempts to understand my experiences with sexual assault at a young age, I perceive both the assault, myself, the perpetrator, the wound, the entangled dance with the pain and pleasure of the happening, as fire. Nothing stays the same, once touched by fire. But the touch also diminishes the distance, the reach between one separate element and another: what gets burned by fire, also partly becomes fire. Like anything that enters us—whether classified as toxic or not—, we also become it, inseparably linked and co-created. What I love about perceiving the rock as a gay making entity, has thus little to do with ecosexuality or a celebration of nature's force. What I love about the rock as a magic gay intoxicator, is the (im)possibility of no longer perceiving sexuality as inherent or individual. It is a rub, a touch, a belief, a myth. It is not, like Ulrichs argues in defense of Urnings and Urningins rights, our own personal nature. Nor do I mean to say it's just nature itself. I don't mean to argue for the existence of queerness at all! Not even in penguins, or seahorses, or in anthropological excavations or historical recuperations. Inspired by Ulrichs etymological reference to the planet of Uranus, I wish to displace the idea of queer so far outside of us, that it requires no defense at all. I'm imagining an existence without defense. An existence of gay because a rock has been there for centuries. Because fire burns. Because toxins enter us and we are toxic. Because the world is a viral and contagious place. I wish for a gay that does not need to be happy or specific, a trans that does not need a book or record. A queer that lives free, because a river and a sea can hold each other near, without the violation of illegal occupation.

I have come to this island from another one, Turtle Island, also known as North America. Upon arriving there, the friends I was staying with lost their grandchild, as he tried to shoot his High School classmates before taking his own life when the cops arrived. This particular school shooting was barely covered in the news, because Charlie Kirk was killed on the same day, while being asked about the number of mass shootings in the US. To distract

ourselves, we played a game of charades. We were giddy, the air thick with desperation and the comfort of creating a system of meaning together. It was my turn to perform and gesture while the others guessed and I pulled a book from the hat full of references: *Just Kids* by Patti Smith. I started with the second word—kids—, got on my knees and made playful sounds. It took a while for my friends not to call me “drag” or “gay” or “a horny animal” and instead correctly guess “kids”. Then, I pretended to be blindfolded, holding two scales. To get to the word “just”, I was mimicking the lady of justice. But no matter how much I swung the imaginary scales and re-emphasized the blindfold, they did not guess “justice”. Perhaps the lady of justice is a historical figure now, too far off from the current US American situation to serve as a reference in a game. To gesture both kids and just(ice), it would have been most efficient if I had pretended to hold a gun. What is of interest to me here, is not to sketch the US as a pitiful place, a ground zero in contrast to Europe’s moral soil. Instead, I’m interested in the complete eradication of justice as we know it. What report would Ulrichs—a trained lawyer who addressed the Association of German Jurists, advocating queer life—write about Urnings and Urningins, if it had not served as a defense of legal rights? Without depending on a legal system that can either ruin or recognise our existence, what kind of Urning life would we have learned about?

In the meantime, Trump claims that the Left wants transgender for everyone. I wish. I wish we had a Left like that. I read a similar expectation and desire for contagion in Ulrichs when he writes about the statistics of gay life: ‘the ratio of adult Urnings to adult males is 25,000 in 12,500,000, or 1 in 500. That is, for every 500 adult males in Germany there is an average of one Urning.’ He also detects a rapid onset of gay desire: ‘the number of Urnings is constantly increasing.’⁴ This increase came true, though we have been stuck at 10% for a while now. Such statistics are meant to discursively contain us, but we who roam the alleys and meet the downlows and feed the hunger of the flexibles, we know this calculation means nothing.

I choose to see a contagion strategy in Ulrichs’ description of the Urning and their relationship to women, which sounded a little different than his approval and praise of femininity. When he writes that the Urning is ‘born to love men and horrified by women,’ I (choose to) see a contagion strategy aimed at hetero (*Dionings*) men.⁵ By claiming the supposed disgust of women as a particular gay quality, Ulrichs moves toward what binds straight men always already: the hatred of women, no matter how much they desire them as well. If loving men and feeling horrified of women is a quality of homosexuality, straight men are basically already there. Focusing on the gay man’s love for men and disdain of women, is a propagandist way of making straight men gay. This is what I call a queer reading of the archive: not by seeking historical figures who were queer or queer adjacent, but by pressing queerness onto everything I come across. It’s a self-obsession that becomes so omnipresence, that the focus on *self* nearly disappears and instead makes of trans and queer a contagious everywhere.

If I can get what I need from Trump (“transgender for everyone”) I can get what I need from Ulrichs. And I hope you do too.

4. Ulrichs, Karl Heinrich. *The Riddle of “Man-Manly” Love: The Pioneering Work on Male Homosexuality*. Trans. by Michael A. Lombardi-Nash. Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1994, 23.

5. Ulrichs, *The Riddle of “Man-Manly” Love*, 25.

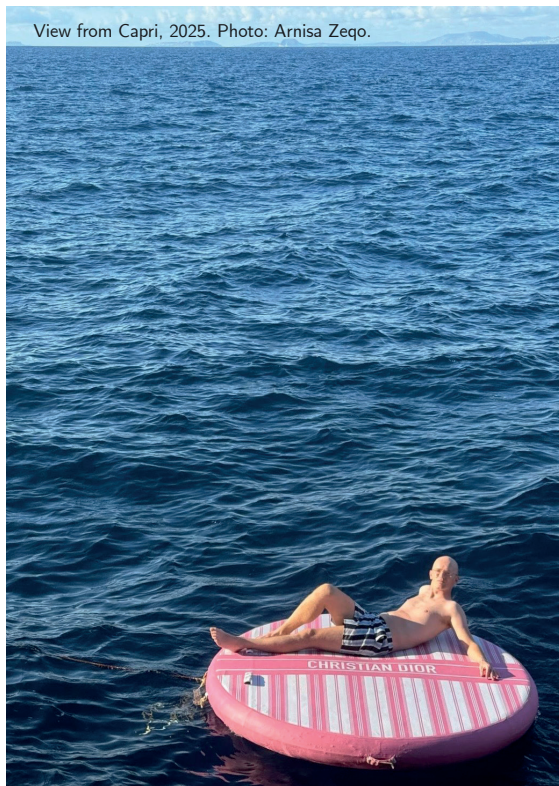
P RELUDE

It's September 16, 2025, and I'm floating on a Christian Dior-sponsored raft on the Mediterranean Sea. On my right passes an endless parade of small boats entering the Grotto Azzurro. Tourists armed with iPhones and cameras duck as they enter the cave—once Emperor Tiberius' private swimming pool—hoping to catch a glimpse of the magical blue light that bewitched pederast-turned-Uranian poet Edwin Emmanuel Bradford a century prior, when he dedicated his homoerotic poem to a young Italian boy in *The Bather in the Blue Grotto at Capri* (1914). From above I hear the pulsating sound of a DJ trying her best to get the party started at the beach café that serves \$50-dollar club sandwiches to the European and American nouveau riche.

Capri. A Uranian temple, sanctified by the likes of Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas, Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen, Nina Cesarini and Paul Hoecker, and Luisa Casati Stampa & Marchesa Casati—priests and priestesses of Aphrodite Urania, the celestial goddess of love in Plato's *Symposium*, performing rituals of spiritual and intellectual male-male love.

To my right floats A, my lesbian wife; to my left floats M, an artist in every sense of the word. We fancy ourselves twenty-first-century Uranians, who, like the famed *La Nemesiache*, want to bring myth back to the world. The trip to Capri is a pilgrimage, in search of lost time, knowing we are chasing ghosts.

View from Capri, 2025. Photo: Arnisa Zeqo.



D ADDY

It's January 12, 2000, and I lie to my parents. They think I'm boarding the train to Groningen, but in fact the train takes me to Amsterdam, where I am meeting Elvis. We chatted on focus-in.com/gaychat. He is in his mid-forties, Black, probably not really called Elvis, and not as handsome as I had hoped he would be. I am fourteen, green as grass, straight from the farm, and impressed by everything. The only word for Uranian that I know of is faggot. Elvis says he will buy me any CD

at the Virgin Megastore in the basement of Amsterdam's Magna Plaza—I pick K's Choice album *Paradise in Me*. We walk around on Dam Square, as the winter dusk settles in. The greyiness of the city is pierced by the buoyant rays of novelty. Elvis has booked us a room in a shabby motel on the Damrak, where we are supposed to have sex, which I do not really know what that means. I am incredibly turned on and awfully afraid. He fucks me. I want to, I don't want to. It hurts. The music station TMF is playing on the small television in the room and I see Maya dancing vigorously in the desert, giving the late '90s girl power that we all try to emulate: *How you gonna act / how you gonna handle that / Whatchu gonna do when she wants you back / What you gonna do when you can't so no*. Great song. I arrive home near midnight and my parents are furious. I am bleeding. I don't tell them about my day.

Many daddies will follow, some nice, some nasty.



USBAND

It's February 24, 2017, and I'm saying "yes" to N. Whenever I told someone I was married, I would add that we did it for the visa, to go to Chicago. *I never thought I would get married*, followed by a well-manicured smile. Apparently, it needed a disclaimer. Was I betraying my politics—the fear of succumbing to some festering heteronormativity that mandates dogs (I hate dogs), white-picket fences (neutral), and candle-lit suppers (I love candle-lit suppers)? Was I afraid of the intimacy within a formalised structure, *l'institution du mariage*? Was I not good enough, not worthy? We are all returning to Reims, constantly. And here is the irony: it is through marriage that I became Uranian. To realise that I could never fully love in an institution.

I love him, still.



Graphic of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs. First published in: *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (Yearbook for Intermediate Sexual Types), vol. 1, 1899, p. 35. An undated portrait photograph served as the model.

LOVER

It's March 19, 2006, and A and I are headed to our usual Sunday evening haunt in Amsterdam, De Trut. We are students, of art history, of the metaphysics of youth. We are dressed impeccably—she in a woollen skirt, silk blouse, and high heels, long raven black hair caressing her high cheek bones as she turns her face towards me; me in a grey three-piece suit with a flashy tie, gesturing aesthetically towards the green carnation. For clarity, De Trut is a basement-level, queer squatters-bar. We stand out. Gin-and-tonics are priced at a very accommodating one Euro and fifty cents, and so we drink many. *Ad fundum*. Like the late great Edmund White, I have had many lovers. Hundreds, maybe thousands. (Why so few?) I remember them all, although some of

them were quite forgettable. Many of them would be picked up at De Trut. For fun, A and I introduce ourselves under pseudonyms, inventing characters as we go along, letting the avataristic theatre of Uranianism flow through us, knowingly and unknowingly. A recurrent character is Anthony. He is from London, speaks with a very thick British accent, and is an expert on the art of the Rococo, while occasionally entertaining his literary aspirations.

Anthony remains, I embrace him tenderly.

U RANIAN

It's May 6, 1868, and Karl-Maria Kertbeny first mentions the term "homosexuality" in a letter to Karl Heinrich Ulrichs. A few years prior, Ulrichs had coined "Urning," later to become Uranian, to denote a third sex: *an anima muliebris virili corpore inclusa*, that is to say, a woman's soul enclosed in a male body. For Ulrichs, being an Urning was a condition of nature, innate, and thus not deserving of criminal sanction. Kertbeny's aim is moral and legal reform: he was campaigning against the criminalisation of consensual same-sex acts and wants a vocabulary that would shed the loaded, pathologizing, pejorative terms of his day, i.e. "sodomite," "pederast," etc. He disagrees with Ulrichs on the innate characters of such orientations: '[E]vidence of innate predisposition is not conducive to our goal, nor is it the least expedient way. Moreover, we are talking about a dangerous double-edged sword, no matter how fascinating the natural mystery may be anthropologically. Because legislation does not inquire about the inclination of innate predisposition, but rather about its personal or socially harmful effects along with its social implications. ... Since the state has no business meddling in the sexual practices of two consenting individuals over the age of 14, in private and without violating the rights of a third party, even if this leads to the most severe consequences for both parties[.]' Terms evolve—Kertbeny's notion of "homosexuality" becomes pathologized from the 1870s onward, by the likes of Karl Westphal, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, and later

Sigmund Freud; Ulrichs' Urning or Uranian becomes an identitarian and minoritarian category.

Today, Uranianism has very little to do with its initial gender-essentialist definition. Uranianism is a license to fabulate, to align with queer precursors beyond institutional and biological lineages, to create a story that is at once deeply lived and profoundly fantastical.

E PILOGUE

It's November 2, 2025, and I'm writing this text. An ode to daddies, husbands, lovers, and Uranians. A life so far marked by desire, not just the carnal kind, but most of all, a desire for a life that is written in the stars—a life at once here and out there, then and now. On the last evening in Capri, M offers a tarot reading. In this practice, I am a dilet-tante at best, but I manage to pick the right card: The Fool, symbolising endless possibilities, new beginnings, and boundless potential. The card is numbered 0, as it represents the start of a journey with unlimited options and encourages embracing the unknown with optimism and a leap of faith. Maybe Capri still has some myth after all, so here we go: the Uranian-turned-Fool crashes into the unknown, armed with a body, with words, with work, with kinship for fellow Uranians. The Fool uses everything.

Artist SHARAN BALA reflects in their work on the medical institutions that medicalized their intersex body. Utilising their experience within multi-media installations and sculptural works, they raise questions regarding power structures, the medical gaze, and the medical, political, and social diagnoses of sex. Sharan is an intersex activist, public speaker, documentary maker, and Rijksakademie resident 2026-2027.

EVA BURGERING is curator at Nest. Here, she recently developed the program 'Art and Listening' on the political potential of radical attention and listening, consisting of six solo and duo exhibitions at Nest in Laak. Her research focuses on the impact of historical lines in contemporary art, particularly in the fields of ecology, botany, and intersectional feminism.

CACONRAD has been writing poems for more than 50 years and working with (Soma)tic poetry rituals for over 20 years. Their latest book is *Listen to the Golden Boomerang Return* (Wave Books / UK Penguin 2024). They received the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, a PEN award, a Creative Capital grant, a Pew Fellowship, and a Lambda Literary Award. The Book of Frank is available in nine different languages, most recently French and Italian, and they coedited *SUPPLICATION: Selected Poems of John Wieners* (Wave Books). They also exhibit poems as sculpture with recent shows in London, Melbourne, Porto, Santander, and Tucson. They teach at the Sandberg Art Institute and De Ateliers in Amsterdam.

GÜRSOY DOĞTAŞ, raised in Germany as the child of so-called "guest workers," is a curator and researcher whose work explores how people from immigrant backgrounds experience and shape cultural institutions. His practice examines the evolving meaning of "guest" and how curatorial work can confront exclusion while proposing alternative forms of belonging. He has (co-) curated exhibitions and symposia at institutions such as the Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt and Marta Herford Museum. Gürsoy Doğtaş is one of the curators of *Manifesta*, the European Nomadic Biennial, which will take place in the Ruhr region of Germany in 2026.

HENDRIK FOLKERTS is Chief Curator of Programme at Kunsthaus Zürich. Before, Folkerts held senior curatorial roles at Moderna Museet, the Art Institute of Chicago, documenta 14, and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. His practice is rooted in performance, radical hospitality, feminist and queer perspectives, and the expanded field of painting. He has curated groundbreaking exhibitions

and performance programs that place artists' practices at the center of innovative exhibition models. In addition to his curatorial work, Folkerts is a prolific writer and editor.

PHILIPP GUFLER researches questions of queer pictorial worlds and challenges Western historiography, in which heterosexuality and a binary gender system are the social norm. In his artistic practice, he uses various media, including silk-screen printing on fabrics or mirrors, artists' books, performances, ceramics and video installations. Gufler is based in Amsterdam and is a former resident of De Ateliers and a member of the grassroots organisation Forum Queeres Archiv München since 2013.

ELI HILL is a New York-based artist from a working-class family in Port Huron, Michigan. He studied at The Cooper Union and Rutgers University and was a 2019 resident at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Their work spans painting, performance, and artists' books, often addressing contemporary art, art education, and social engagement. They have received multiple awards and grants, write on contemporary art, teach at Rutgers University and other institutions, and volunteer with NYC Parks and Trans Lifeline.

KRIWET was a German artist renowned for his pioneering work in visual poetry and sound art. He explored the intersections of text, image, and sound, creating mixed media works that challenge traditional artistic boundaries. KRIWET is known for his innovative use of typographic and visual techniques, concrete poetry, and experimental film. His works are held in major collections, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York and Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

After studying fine arts in Brussels and living in the south of France COSY PIÉRO moved back to Germany and from then on lived in Munich as a single mother. To make a living, Cosy founded the legendary queer artists' bar *Bei Cosy* in 1962. At the beginning of the 1980s, Cosy concentrated exclusively on her art and created large-format paintings, larger-than-life sculptures and expansive installations, which she exhibited internationally. In 2022 she received the art award of the City of Munich for her life achievement as an artist. Cosy died on June 29, 2023.

RORY PILGRIM is a multidisciplinary artist working across music, film, text, drawing, and live performance, with a focus on activism, community, and social change. Their work explores how people come together, communicate, and share personal

experience, drawing on feminist and socially engaged art practices. Pilgrim has exhibited and performed internationally, including at Chisenhale Gallery, MoMA, Centre Pompidou, and Serpentine Galleries. They were awarded the Prix de Rome in 2019 and nominated for the Turner Prize in 2023.

SIMON(E) VAN SAARLOOS is a writer, artist, and curator based between Oakland and Amsterdam, whose work explores queer time, trans experience, and moments of insurgency. They are the author of six books, including *Against Ageism: A Queer Manifesto*, *Take 'Em Down*, and *Playing Monogamy*, as well as several books in Dutch. Their artistic and curatorial projects—such as *Cruising Gezi Park*, *Juicy Refuge*, and IDFA's *Not Yet Yes* and *Contagious & Queer*—center on queer intimacies, performative strategies, quantum physics and abundance. Van Saarloos has held residencies internationally and taught at institutions including UC Berkeley, the University of Amsterdam, and ETH Zurich.

SOPHIE SERBER is a visual artist living and working in Amsterdam. She studied Fine Arts at Pratt Institute in New York and at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie. Her work has been exhibited internationally, including at Disneyland Paris, Melbourne, Mery Gates in New York, Shore Gallery in Vienna, and Vleeshal in Middelburg. Serber often explores relationships, identity, and sensory experiences through image and sound in her practice.

KARL HEINRICH ULRICHS was a German lawyer, writer, and early researcher of sexuality and gender identity. He published numerous essays and pamphlets analysing same-sex desire and advocating for the decriminalisation of queer acts. Ulrichs developed terminology to describe different sexual identities and documented historical and legal perspectives on same-sex relationships.

LOUWRIEN WIJERS considers herself a sculptor: she regards writing and speaking as forms of sculpture. Her work explores the intersections of art, science, spirituality, and economics. A key moment in her practice was the meeting she organised in 1982 between Beuys and the Dalai Lama, which later led to her extensive project *Art meets Science and Spirituality in a Changing Economy* (1990). In November 2025 she received the Gerrit Benner Award for her leading contribution to the visual arts in Friesland together with her solo exhibition *We Live in Language* at Fries Museum, Leeuwarden.

Agenda

1 February

17 – 19 April

Winter/Spring 2026

*Success Breeds Success
Or You Need To Be
A Friend To Get A
Friend*

One Nest Stand

A publication event with Sophie Serber

9 January – 5 April

6 – 8 March

*Urning and Urningin.
Language and Desire
since 1864*

AM.PM.AM. #3
Ariadne Randall:
*Our Mouths Are
Spring**

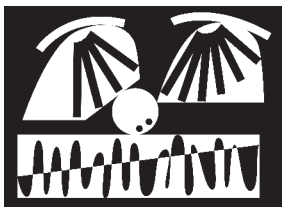
One Nest Stand is an annual exhibition hosted and organised by Nest in collaboration with the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague. KABK students respond to an existing exhibition at Nest, translating its central themes into new work. Throughout the process, students are guided by professional coaches and curators.

28 January

Verwend Nest is back!

Are you between 6 and 12 years old? Then Nest invites you to become a Verwend Nest and discover contemporary visual art with us!

For €60.00 per year (free for Ooievaarspas holders), you can participate in fun workshops with other children on Wednesday afternoons. The workshops take place once a month. During the workshops, you'll first view the exhibition with a Nest instructor, then work with what you've seen and create your own artwork. We've previously created life-size drawings, pinhole cameras, kaleidoscopes, drum kits, and much more! The workshops take place between 1:30 PM and 3:00 PM. If there's enough interest, a second group can be formed.



Children who would like to come and have a look before deciding to become a member can send an email to odine@nestruimte.nl.

Upcoming workshops take place on 28 Jan, 18 Feb, 11 March, 22 April, 13 May, 3 June & 8 July.



Ariadne Randall is an American artist, composer, and poet whose work explores questions of identity and becoming, often drawing on her own experience and gender transition. Her practice is shaped by diverse influences, including Zen Koans, Low Theory, contemporary digital culture and poetry. The third AM.PM.AM at Nest in Laak focuses on Ariadne's new one-person opera, *Our Mouths Are Spring*. This performance is presented alongside a new installation that explores the intertwining of bodies, emotions, and internet structures. Randall invites McKenzie Wark for a reading during AM.PM.AM. She previously collaborated with her in the performance *Reverse Cowgirl II: Ride It To The Top*.

* Location Nest in Laak, Verheeskade 321

22 March

*Uranian, Queer
Identity in Germany
and the Netherlands
at the end of the
19th Century*

Lecture and discussion with
Douglas Prestell and Maurice van
Lieshout

Ongoing

Infinite Library



Nest is proud to present the Infinite Library: a revolving art bookcase made possible by the generous donation of hundreds of art books from the collection of Aveline de Bruin (Collection de Bruin-Heijn), Jap Sam Books, The Ekard Residency, Brigitte Wawoe and various individuals. The collection consists of artists' books, catalogues, monographs, essays and other art publications. We invite you to browse and find something beautiful for your own bookshelf. In return, you may leave an art book of your own for the next reader, pay it forward. This way the bookcase keeps filling up with new art books. So if you have a gem of an art book that's collecting dust at home, take it here and become part of this infinite library. Don't have any beautiful art books at home yet, but do you want a very special book or are you looking for something specific? Find something without obligation, or just read for a few hours with a free cup of coffee or tea.

For all events and guided tours, see nestruimte.nl

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De C. Rebecqueplein 20b
2518 RA The Hague
The Netherlands
+31 70 3653186

www.nestruimte.nl
info(at)nestruimte.nl

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Colophon

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www.nestruimte.nl

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Philipp Gufler

ARTISTS

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Eva Burgering (curator)
Odine Burghouwt (education)
Josef Braumann (technician)
Fay Buurman (intern)
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Amy Mansveld (head of production)
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