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LES CAHIERS QGF

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LEQGF - Laboratoire d'Etudes Queer, sur le Genre et les Féminismes asbl

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Les Cahiers QGF 2

Queer_feminist (Im)Possibilities in Arts and Culture

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Introduction : Queer_Feminist (Im)Possibilities in Arts and Culture

L'équipe du Laboratoire d'Etudes Queer, sur le Genre et les Féminismes est heureuse de présenter sa deuxième édition des Cahiers QGF. Ce numéro prend comme point de départ notre projet de *queerisation* de la Villa Vauban et poursuit une réflexion plus large sur les possibilités et impossibilités queer_féministes dans les arts et la culture au Luxembourg.

C'est en 2023, que l'équipe des 2 Musées de la Ville a pris contact avec LEQGF. Leur souhait était de les accompagner et de les conseiller dans leur processus de rendre la Villa Vauban plus inclusive des réalités LGBTQ+. Cette mission nous a enchanté·e·s et nous avons voulu relever le défi d'aller *tordre* (Faure, 2021) le statu quo d'un lieu qui historiquement est très rigide et empreint d'hétéronormativité. Effectivement, les musées sont des institutions de maintien du pouvoir, comme le montrent les multiples réflexions effectuées par rapport à la décolonisation des musées¹ et de la mémoire publique (Kelly & Vassell, 2023). Il en va de même pour les sujets LGBTQ+ qui constituent une population dépourvue d'histoire et de culture dans les traditions muséales (Middleton, 2020). En même temps, les musées peuvent devenir des lieux d'explorations. C'est dans cette double perspective que nous avons abordé la Villa Vauban : mettre en évidence les expressions du pouvoir, questionner les normes et surtout, faire ressortir des possibilités queer. Par queer, nous n'entendons pas uniquement la sensibilisation à la question LGBTQ+, mais la déconstruction de la pensée [hétéro]normative dans les représentations, les espaces, les discours et les pratiques.

Dans ce numéro, Kyra Thielen et Anne Hoffmann des 2 Musées de la Ville reviennent sur les origines du projet *Queer Possibilities – Queering the Museum*, tandis que Enrica Pianaro présente les détails d'exécution, ainsi que la suite du projet. En même temps, nous avons demandé à Claire Schadeck, responsable de projets culturels au CID | Fraen an Gender, de présenter leur travail sur le sexisme dans la scène culturelle luxembourgeoise et de mener une réflexion socio-politique sur les obstacles et les possibilités que ces initiatives ont fait émerger.

De plus, Sandy Artuso revêt sa casquette de professionnelle de la culture. Elle propose un retour d'expérience sur sa mise en scène de la pièce « 4.48 Psychosis » de Sarah Kane avec Independent Little Lies. Elle montre que bien que cette pièce ne comporte pas d'étiquette « pièce de théâtre féministe », les conditions de réalisation et la prise en compte du bien-être de l'équipe contribuent à créer un environnement coopératif et une structure de prise de décision horizontale. Ensuite, elle fait ressortir son alter ego, Profx.Drx. Sand Gattus, qui est intervenu·x lors du Festival Queer Little Lies en novembre 2024. Elle revient sur la conférence gesticulée « Queer Culture in Luxembourg » et reprend, dans les Cahiers QGF, son analyse pleine d'ironie de la culture queer et de ses développements au Luxembourg. Est-ce vraiment la fin de la culture queer au Luxembourg ?

Pour enrichir les contributions, la poétesse Lara Well nous offre un intermezzo créatif en lien avec le sujet de ce numéro. Elle nous décrit, à sa manière, des « choses vues » dans les institutions culturelles qu'elle a visitées.

Ce dossier ne serait pas complet sans revenir sur l'activité que nous avons menée en juillet 2024 pour le 25^{ème} anniversaire de la Luxembourg Pride. Enrica Pianaro décrit l'activité – maintes photos à l'appui – et montre pourquoi il est important de mener un travail d'histoire queer qui questionne les évidences. Elle plaide pour un accès collectif et solidaire à l'histoire LGBTQ+ du Luxembourg.

Finalement, nous souhaitons revenir sur « pourquoi » il est nécessaire et fondamental de **penser l'inclusion des sujets LGBTQ+ et féministes dans le travail d'institutions muséales et culturelles.**

¹ Site web Museums Association : <https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/decolonising-museums/#> (consulté le 23.11.2024)

Depuis l'investiture du nouveau président états-uniens en janvier 2025, nous avons, en très peu de temps, observé ce que des politiques conservatrices et anti-queer font aux politiques culturelles. A titre d'exemple, le Stonewall National Monument Visitor Center² qui commémore l'histoire et les luttes des communautés LGBTQIA+ voit son travail censuré. Le musée est hébergé sur l'un des sites du National Park Service³, qui applique l'*executive order* de bannir et de nier l'existence des personnes trans (Warbelow, 2025). Ceci implique l'effacement du « T » dans le sigle LGBTQ+ communément utilisé aux États-Unis⁴. De même, le « Q » a été retiré du sigle pour ne laisser que le « LGB » sur leur site internet et pour effacer toute trace de l'engagement des personnes trans et queer dans les luttes de Stonewall. Cet acte a des conséquences sur l'écriture de l'histoire et sur la transmission de la mémoire LGBTQ+ : elle fausse l'accès aux savoirs et elle fait disparaître ce que les recherches⁵ en sciences sociales et en sciences historiques, menées depuis plus de cinquante ans, ont fait émerger de l'ombre.

C'est pour cela que des projets comme *Queer Possibilities – Queering the Museum* servent d'exemple. Ils viennent contredire les tentatives d'exclusion et d'effacement qu'on retrouve aussi en Europe. Nous espérons que ces lignes donnent envie de lire nos cahiers et que chacune y trouvera de l'inspiration pour faire de l'art, de la culture et de l'histoire des espaces de création des possibles queer_féministes.

Enrica Pianaro, pour l'équipe de rédaction

Post Scriptum : Le 8 mars 2025 le groupe de travail queerféministe de Richtung22 a publié le zine « *Rop op d'Bün. What needs to change in the Luxembourgish theater scene* ». A travers différentes interviews, le zine se penche sur les questions de pouvoir dans la scène théâtrale luxembourgeoise et présente une variété de revendications. Le zine peut être lu en ligne sur leur site : <https://richtung22.org/>

² Site web Stonewall National Monument Visitor Center : <https://stonewallvisitorcenter.org/> (consulté le 20.02.2025)

³ Site web National Park Service : <https://www.nps.gov/ston/index.htm> (consulté le 20.02.2025)

⁴ Aux États-Unis on retrouve plus communément l'utilisation du sigle LGBTQ+ sans le « I ». Cela dépend des organisations et des approches militantes.

⁵ Un travail fait le plus souvent dans des conditions peu optimales (archives difficiles d'accès, sources perdues, peu d'intérêt de la part des grands départements universitaires, etc.) et avec peu de financements.

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ANNE HOFFMANN & KYRA THIELEN

Queering Les 2 Musées de la Ville de Luxembourg

“It is not inclusion if you invite people into a space you are unwilling to change.” (Abdi, 2024)

What does it mean to “queer” the museum? Where do you begin, and how far do you need to go? What do you need to change in your institution? These questions, along with many others, emerged in 2023 when we first discussed making *Les 2 Musées de la Ville de Luxembourg* (L2M) — comprising our Art Museum *Villa Vauban* and *the Lëtzebuerg City Museum* — more accessible and welcoming for the queer community. The most pressing question, however, was: How can we achieve this in a respectful and meaningful manner, given the fact that our team is mostly cisgender and straight?

Origin of the project

The idea for this project was born in early 2023 when we developed the new theme for our “Zoom—In” programme in the Villa Vauban's permanent exhibition, “A stroll through art”. Every year, Villa Vauban introduces a special themed programme to engage visitors in a new way and offer new perspectives on the exhibition and the collections.

The art collections of L2M focus on Dutch paintings from the Golden Age (17th-century) and 19th-century French history and landscape paintings. It also includes European paintings, sculptures, and drawings from the 17th to the 19th-century. It is important to highlight that the collections lack representation of female artists from this period, despite their proven presence and contributions.¹ This gap sparked a discussion for the upcoming “Zoom—In” theme. Following themes like “Les 5 Senses” and “Bella Italia”, our team now wanted to address this absence in our collections and permanent exhibition for the first time. Despite the lack of female artists from the 17th to the 19th-century in the collections, we decided to explore the role of women throughout those periods. This led us to the theme “Typical (Fe)male: Gender Roles and Identities in Art.” Through guided tours, conferences, workshops, and concerts, we aimed to show how women have been portrayed according to their status in different eras, how men and women have been depicted differently, and what was generally regarded as typically male or female.

However, we realised that our focus was still on heteronormative gender roles and that we were not addressing the issue of queerness at all. This was a big challenge for our cis-straight team. Despite our brainstorming efforts, we did not feel qualified to authentically engage with queer issues. Therefore, we initially stuck to a classic heteronormative narrative in our programme.

A decision that didn't resonate with us. As a museum committed to inclusivity and openness, we refused to allow our lack of knowledge or experience to exclude anyone. Determined to do better, we began researching and came across American exhibit designer and museum consultant Margaret Middleton and her guide, “Looking for Queer Possibilities in Museums” (Middleton, 2024). While promoting her guide was one option, we also felt the need to create something uniquely tailored to the needs of Luxembourg's queer community. This led us on a journey to develop our own approach, reflecting our deep commitment to inclusivity and representation.

¹ This applies to many art collections through-out European museums.

First steps

Before starting to queer the L2M, we identified several main challenges for our team:

1. As a cis-straight team, how can we accurately identify the needs of the Luxembourgish queer community?
2. The collections of L2M have not yet been analysed for queer content.
3. How can we avoid the criticism of queer tokenism? In other words, how can we ensure we are creating something meaningful for the community and establishing a safe space within our museums?

The next logical and crucial step in developing the project was to gain a clear understanding of the limitations of our organisation. In our experience, projects mostly fail due to inadequate staffing. The museums' focus remains on exhibitions, and with up to eight exhibition openings per year at *Villa Vauban* and the *Lëtzebuerg City Museum*, it became clear that comprehensive research on queer narratives would be a rather impossible task for our team. Queer history and culture are vast and complex, and we were humbly aware that we currently lacked the resources or expertise to fully uncover and interpret these narratives.

To become more comfortable formulating a project for queering the museums, we sought out a queer consultant from outside our organisation — someone experienced in working with and for the queer.

With their guidance we discussed our fears, knowledge gaps, and hesitations about developing a concrete project. The consultant provided the following recommendations:

1. Partner with an organisation, institution, or individual specialising in queer studies.
2. Ask — and they could not stress this enough— the community what they need.
3. Recognise that the expert in this field is not the museum but the community itself and therefore embrace co-creation and change.

Finding the right partner

We reached out to LEQGF to collaborate on our future project, recognising that their specific expertise and values made them the ideal partner. With this collaborative approach we hoped to demonstrate our genuine commitment to inclusion and hopefully build stronger relationships with LGBTQ+ audiences in the future. Recognising that queering the museums is a long-term initiative that also requires a lot of changes, we decided it was best to collaborate with an established association rather than an individual. It was important for us to have a well-respected organisation within the queer community as our partner, to enhance the project's credibility. Given our very limited interaction with the queer community to date, our partner needed to help us expand our network. Expertise and knowledge in queer studies were essential, as our team lacked this background. Additionally, since we were still defining the community's needs, we needed a partner open to a flexible, evolving project.

In summary, partnering with a strong organisation like LEQGF can greatly enhance the effectiveness, reach, and sustainability of the project, leading to a more significant positive impact on the community. Additionally, involving the queer community in the process builds trust and fosters a sense of ownership and validation.

Conceptional Development

By working with LEQGF, we settled on a flexible concept for the project “Queering Les 2 Musées de la Ville de Luxembourg.” In the first phase, taking place throughout 2024, we aim to connect with the queer community. With LEQGF’s assistance, we want to identify the community’s needs. We hope to gather information on what aspects we need to change, adapt, and integrate in the future. For instance, we want to determine whether we should use gender-inclusive language in our communications, how to integrate queer stories into the museum’s narratives and develop specific activities for the community. This research based first phase, led by LEQGF, will mainly focus on Villa Vauban and we are enthusiastic that it will provide us with valuable insights.

You can read more about their research design in their article.² The results of this research will hopefully help us create even more meaningful content and activities to establish our museums as a safe space for the queer community.

Even if the outcome of the project has not yet been fully finalised, our objectives and goals are absolutely clear. For 2025, we aim to develop a queer-themed programme based on the research results, with essential input from the community. This programming will take place at both *Villa Vauban* and the *Lëtzebuerg City Museum*. By intentionally creating a queer-themed programme, we aim to integrate the queer community into our diverse range of audiences. Just as we design programmes for children, young adults, adults, disabled individuals, and seniors, we will consider the queer community as an integral part of our public.

Further we plan to broaden our narratives in exhibitions to include, whenever possible, the stories and perspectives of queer individuals. This approach ensures that our museums reflect and celebrate the diversity of our society and allow visitors to get a wider understanding of queer Luxembourgish culture.

Why do we do this?

If the history of a city is to be presented fully and truthfully in a museum (and collection), queer communities and their narratives cannot be left out.³ LGBTQ+ communities have always been part of the social, cultural, and political fabric of cities, and their stories help to give a complete picture of a city’s past and present. L2M is not the first cultural organisation working to create a safe(r) space for the queer community. With the new ICOM Museum definition, many museums worldwide have expanded their roles beyond collecting, exhibiting, and preserving tangible and intangible heritage, actively embracing change. They now have a clear mission to “...foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally, and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection, and knowledge sharing” (ICOM, 2024). Therefore, it is essential for museums to highlight queer stories to foster societal acceptance and understanding.

In times of petition n°3198⁴, museums in Luxembourg are called to action to use their educational function to raise awareness and to help visitors learn about the history and culture of the queer

² See Enrica Pianaro’s article in this edition of Les Cahiers QGF.

³ For us, this also applies to all other communities and narratives that have been neglected to date.

⁴ The petition n°3198 argues for excluding LGBTQ+-related topics from the education of minors in Luxembourg. Families should have the right to address these issues according to their own beliefs and principles. The petition’s concern is that introducing such topics at an early age may disrupt children’s psychological and educational development. It advocates for age-appropriate education and suggests that the government should either exclude these subjects from school programs for minors or allow families to opt-out.

community. In this capacity, museums can contribute to breaking down prejudices and raising awareness of the struggles and challenges faced by the queer community.

The “Queering Les 2 Musées” project is driven by our commitment to inclusion and our desire for an authentic representation of the different narratives in our society. Although the project is still in development stages our goals and directions are very clear: we want to keep on working on creating a museum space that not only welcomes the queer community, but actively includes and engages them, and gives them power in this space. We want to broaden our understanding, enrich our narratives and storytelling approaches, and ensure that the history and experiences of all people, including the LGBTQ+ community, are represented and celebrated in our museums and collections.

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ENRICA PIANARO

Une promenade queer dans le musée et quelques détails techniques

Le projet *Queer Possibilities – Queering the Museum* est né de la volonté de rendre les 2 Musées de la Ville plus queer. Depuis quelques années, l'équipe pédagogique de la Villa Vauban et du Lëtzebuerg City Museum entame une réflexion sur comment rendre ses musées plus inclusifs et accessibles à des publics diversifiés. Ainsi, l'équipe a déjà mis en place des outils destinés à accueillir les personnes malvoyantes. De même, elle a aussi proposé des activités pour favoriser l'accès aux jeunes qui ont une déficience auditive et/ou un trouble du langage. Finalement, elle intègre, depuis quelques années, des activités autour de la représentation des femmes dans l'exposition permanente de la Villa Vauban. A la suite de ces réflexions et parce qu'une partie de l'équipe a développé une sensibilité pour des sujets « marginalisés », elle a souhaité approfondir la question d'un *musée ouvert à tous·x·tes* en se focalisant sur les questions LGBTQI+.

LEQGF a, dès lors, été choisi comme partenaire pour accompagner le processus de *queerisation* des 2 Musées de la Ville. Le **but du projet** est d'identifier les limites hétéronormatives du musée et comment le rendre plus queer. Notre démarche consiste à faire réfléchir et à faire sortir notre pensée des cadres (cis-hétéro)normatifs.

La Villa Vauban constitue le point de départ de notre état des lieux, de nos recherches et de notre analyse. La phase de prise de contact et de conception a déjà débuté fin 2023. L'état des lieux et les activités ont été menées durant l'année 2024.



Analyse globale de la Villa Vauban

- Espaces, Communication, Collection (expo permanente)
- Programmation cadre, expo temporaire, activités public



Ateliers (2x2h) pour 10 personnes du staff des 2 Musées

- AT1: Mesurer l'état de connaissances par rapport aux thématiques LGBTQI+ et pour identifier les obstacles
- AT2: Présenter les résultats de l'analyse et identifier des pistes d'action



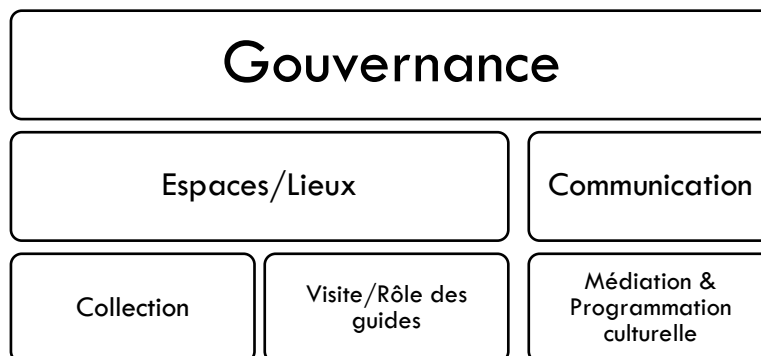
3 visites conscientes à la Villa Vauban (1h), 3 ateliers d'échange (1h), 1 atelier de suivi (1h30) rassemblant 40 participant·e·s

- Visites conscientes « Queer Gaze » + ateliers d'échange: collecter les impressions, identifier les (hétéro)normativités et les possibilités queer
- Atelier de suivi: structuration des axes d'analyse

A partir de ce travail, nous avons identifié **six axes d'analyse** qui permettent de questionner l'hétéronormativité du musée, mais aussi de proposer des pistes d'action pour favoriser plus de *queerfriendliness* :

1. **Gouvernance** : niveau décisionnel, gestion des ressources humaines, engagements institutionnels
2. **Espaces/Lieux** : les lieux physiques, les espaces virtuels, l'aménagement des espaces
3. **Communication** : supports imprimés, médias sociaux, site web, accueil des publics

4. **Collection** : exposition permanente, recherche et conservation, exposition temporaire
5. **Visite/Rôle des guides** : format des visites, accompagnement des guides
6. **Médiation & Programmation culturelle** : programme d'accompagnement, offre pédagogique



Pour documenter le travail accompli et pour donner la possibilité à d'autres institutions muséales de découvrir le projet, nous avons conçu le **guide** « *Queer Possibilities – Queering the Museum* » en janvier 2025. Ce guide comporte les **findings** de notre évaluation de la Villa Vauban, des **recommandations** et de **propositions concrètes** axées sur le contexte luxembourgeois. Le guide, à paraître cette année, peut servir d'inspiration à toute institution culturelle soucieuse de rendre sa structure plus inclusive des réalités LGBTQ+.

Conclusion : une promenade, pas une course

Ce projet s'inscrit dans un processus de déconstruction et d'apprentissage. Il a ainsi été conçu dans la longue durée, afin de permettre des changements durables au sein du musée. *Queeriser* une institution signifie la changer dans son ensemble, comme le montrent les six axes d'intervention.

Mais, bien que ce projet se termine, un autre travail commence : diffuser les connaissances acquises auprès d'autres acteurs culturels. En juin 2025 se tiendra une après-midi de réflexion à destination des institutions muséales et culturelles. Lors de cette rencontre, les 2 Musées de la Ville, ainsi que LEQGF, présenteront le projet et espèrent **inciter à la discussion sur le potentiel d'une approche queer des musées et des institutions culturelles au Luxembourg.**

CLAIRE SCHADECK

Eine gendersensible Kulturpolitik: Sexismus? Doch nicht in unserer Kulturszene!

Sexismus zu identifizieren und als solches zu benennen stört das gängige Narrativ einer vermeintlichen Errungenschaft der Gendergleichberechtigung in Luxemburg. In meiner kulturpolitischen Arbeit wird auf die Frage, wie sich genderbedingte Diskriminierung im Kulturbereich äußert, oft mit Unverständnis und Kopfschütteln reagiert. Sexismus? Doch nicht bei uns! Oder vielleicht doch?

In diesem Beitrag möchte ich in einem ersten Schritt die aktuellen kulturpolitischen Projekte des CID | Fraen an Gender vorstellen, um in einem zweiten Schritt näher auf die Herausforderungen in der Bekämpfung von strukturellem Sexismus im Kulturbereich einzugehen. Schlussfolgernd werde ich eine Auswahl an politischen Empfehlungen auflisten, die dem Handlungsbedarf in Luxemburg gerecht werden sollen.

Die kulturpolitische Arbeit des CID | Fraen an Gender

Das CID | Fraen an Gender ist sowohl ein Kompetenzzentrum als auch ein Treffpunkt für alle Fragen rund um Gender und Feminismus in Luxemburg. Wir setzen uns für die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter, für eine feministische Gesellschaft und für die Vermittlung und Entwicklung von Genderwissen ein. Das CID betreibt eine öffentliche Bibliothek und koordiniert verschiedene kulturelle, soziopolitische und pädagogische Projekte. Wir verfolgen das Ziel eine inklusive und diverse Kulturlandschaft zu schaffen, in der alle Menschen frei von Diskriminierung und strukturellen Hindernissen die Möglichkeit haben, ihrer künstlerischen Tätigkeit nachzugehen. Durch aktive Sensibilisierungsarbeit, sowie politische Lobbyarbeit engagieren wir uns dieses Anliegen voranzubringen.

Die Identifizierung struktureller Barrieren und geschlechtsbedingter Diskriminierung in der luxemburgischen Kulturszene findet in unserer Arbeit auf mehreren Ebenen statt:

Wir stehen in direktem Austausch mit Künstler*innen und Kulturschaffenden, die uns einen ungefilterten Einblick in die Kulturlandschaft bieten. Das CID versteht sich als Vermittlerin zwischen kulturellen und politischen Akteur*innen. In seiner politischen Lobbyarbeit lässt das CID Forderungen aus dem Kulturbereich einfließen, um politische Handlungsträger*innen auf die aktuellen Herausforderungen in der Szene aufmerksam zu machen. Angesichts der prekären Arbeitsbedingungen riskieren Kulturschaffende besonders von struktureller Diskriminierung betroffen zu sein. Befristete Arbeitsverhältnisse, Nepotismus und Niedriglöhne fördern Abhängigkeitsbeziehungen zwischen Auftraggeber*in und Künstler*in.

Um auf dieses Thema aufmerksam zu machen, startete das CID im Februar 2023 mit einer digitalen Sensibilisierungskampagne (FOQUS & BEAST), die sich auf anonyme Aussagen von Kulturschaffenden aus Luxemburg bezieht. In diesem Zusammenhang haben wir Personen aus verschiedenen kulturellen Bereichen kontaktiert und sie nach ihren Erfahrungen mit Sexismus in ihrer professionellen Tätigkeit befragt. Die Rückmeldungen wurden in der Form eines kurzen Videos veröffentlicht. Diese Sensibilisierungskampagne wurde sowohl auf unseren sozialen Medien ausgestrahlt als auch während einer Woche im April und einer Woche im Oktober als Vorspann im Utopia gezeigt. Ebenfalls ausgehend von diesen Aussagen schrieb die Rapperin Nicoool einen Text (2023), der die strukturelle Dimension von genderbedingter Marginalisierung und Diskriminierung in der Kulturbranche beleuchtet. Dieses Lied wurde im Rahmen der Fête de la Musique Luxemburg 2023 uraufgeführt.

Zudem haben wir aufgrund der mangelhaften Datenbasis eine Bestandsaufnahme (Lorentz & al., 2023) bei dem Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER) in Auftrag gegeben. Ziel dieses Projekts ist die Erfassung der Repräsentation der Geschlechter in der Programmgestaltung ausgewählter Kulturinstitutionen, sowie der Verteilung von Frauen und Männern in unterschiedlichen Berufsfeldern im luxemburgischen Kultursektor. Die Untersuchung bezieht sich auf die Saison 2022-2023 und umfasst folgende Bereiche: Theater, Tanz, klassische und zeitgenössische Musik. Die Resultate wurden im Februar 2024 veröffentlicht und den untersuchten Institutionen vorab im Rahmen einer Konferenz vorgestellt. Dieses Projekt reiht sich in unsere Auseinandersetzung mit strukturellem Sexismus in der Kulturszene ein. Die Studie liefert jene Zahlen, die strukturellen Sexismus in Luxemburgs Kulturlandschaft identifizieren und soll fortan als Grundlage für die Ausarbeitung zielgerichteter Maßnahmen dienen. Hier handelt es sich um einen Anfang, der Raum für weiterführende Untersuchungen lässt. Wir möchten zudem darauf hinweisen, dass dieses Projekt das Konzept der binären Geschlechter-Logik nicht überwindet, da der Mangel an Daten es uns nicht erlaubt hat, Non-Binarität zu identifizieren.

Die Erhebung gendersegregierter Daten bildet die Grundlage, um genderbedingte Diskriminierung zu identifizieren und anschließend gegensteuernde Maßnahmen zu entwickeln. Die Ergebnisse zeigen: Insbesondere im Bereich der Musik sind Frauen in allen Berufssparten deutlich unterrepräsentiert. Mit Blick auf Festivals wird diese Diskrepanz noch deutlicher: 82,5 % der Line-Ups sind männlich besetzt.

Im Rahmen der bestehenden Konvention mit der Stadt Luxemburg, hat das CID aus diesem Grund bereits zwei Jahre in Folge einen Teil der Koordination der Programmgestaltung der Fête de la Musique Luxembourg übernommen. Wir wollen der genderbedingten Diskriminierung entgegensteuern, indem wir gezielt weiblichen und queeren Künstler*innen eine Plattform bieten. Ziel ist es, denen Menschen Raum zu geben, denen in der Musikbranche wenig Platz eingeräumt wird. Auf diesem Weg widerlegen wir das hartnäckige Argument, es würde zu wenig weibliche Künstler*innen geben. Unsere Bühne soll andere Programmverantwortliche ermutigen eine repräsentative und intersektionale Perspektive in ihrer Programmgestaltung zu berücksichtigen.

Aktuelle Herausforderungen in der Bekämpfung von strukturellem Sexismus

Sowohl Erfahrungsberichte von Kulturschaffenden als auch die Ergebnisse unserer Studie über die kulturelle Programmgestaltung zeigen: Weibliche Künstlerinnen werden im Vergleich zu männlichen Künstlern weniger gebucht, sie programmieren kleinere Bühnen, und besetzen weniger häufig Entscheidungspositionen. Neben dieser strukturellen Diskriminierung erleben weibliche Kulturschaffende zusätzlich Sexismus in Form von Berührungen, die nicht auf Einvernehmlichkeit basieren, Kommentaren, die sich auf ihr Muttersein beziehen oder indem ihre professionelle Legitimität in Frage gestellt wird. Hier beziehe ich mich auf die Ergebnisse der bereits erwähnten Umfrage, die wir 2023 mit der Hilfe von luxemburgischen Kulturschaffenden durchgeführt haben.

Im Rahmen meiner kulturpolitischen Arbeit habe ich die Möglichkeit öffentlich im Namen des CID Stellung zu beziehen und auf gesellschaftspolitische Tendenzen zu reagieren. In diesem Kontext habe ich bereits mehrfach das Medium der Pressearbeit genutzt, um gezielt die strukturelle Dimension von Sexismus in Luxemburgs Kulturszene anzusprechen. Die Verbindung zwischen Sexismus und Kultur auf der einen Ebene, sowie die Tatsache, dass das CID dies vor dem Hintergrund der luxemburgischen Kulturbranche tut, stößt in der öffentlichen Diskussion auf besonderen Widerstand. Zum einen wird die Relevanz der Thematik in Frage gestellt, zum anderen wird die luxemburgische Kulturbranche vehement in Schutz genommen.

Dabei ist die Kulturbranche ein Bereich wie jeder andere, in welchem Machtpositionen eine bedeutende Rolle spielen bei der Finanzierung von Projekten oder der Besetzung von Posten. Die Resultate unserer Studie zeigen, dass die Posten von Entscheidungsträger*innen vergleichsweise deutlich häufiger männlich besetzt sind. Hier handelt es sich um einen Ausdruck von strukturellem

Sexismus als effektives Mittel, um die männliche Vormachtstellung und die damit einhergehenden Privilegien in einem patriarchalen Gesellschaftssystem aufrecht zu erhalten. Sexistisches Verhalten ist immer auch ein Ausdruck von Machtmissbrauch, welcher Hierarchien quer durch verschiedene Gesellschaftsschichten hinweg festigt.

Folgende anonyme Aussage, die wir im Rahmen unserer Umfrage mit Kulturschaffenden erhoben haben, veranschaulicht individuelle Konsequenzen von strukturellem Machtmissbrauch:

I was witness of harrasment of a colleague and tried, with another colleague, to convince her to adress the HR department of my newspaper but she refused. She was afraid she could lose her job. The man was her direct boss and had got promotions the years before, although his problematic behavior with women was not really a secret. She was depressed and after a while she quit her job.

Sexismus manifestiert sich hier auf drei Ebenen: Einschüchterung, Abhängigkeit, emotionale Ausbeutung. Aus Sorge die finanzielle Einkommensquelle zu verlieren und zu riskieren in die Prekarität abzurutschen, entscheidet sich die betroffene Person gegen eine Anzeige. Die Tatsache, dass das übergriffige Verhalten gegenüber Frauen zudem bekannt war und die Person dennoch befördert wurde zeigt, dass Sexismus nicht nur geduldet, sondern einem professionellen Aufstieg nicht im Weg steht. Dieser Ausdruck struktureller Akzeptanz von genderbedingter Diskriminierung lässt sich auf patriarchal strukturierte Arbeitsverhältnisse zurückführen, in denen Macht dazu dient Hierarchien zu festigen.

Sexismus ist kein Einzelfall, sondern ein strukturelles Problem. Luxemburg steht aufgrund seiner Größe vor einer zusätzlichen Herausforderung: In einem Land, in dem jede*r jede*n kennt, ist es besonders wichtig, die Anonymität der Betroffenen zu gewährleisten. Das luxemburgische Arbeitsrecht sieht vor, dass die Personalvertretung und Gleichstellungsbeauftragte, falls vorhanden, befugt sind, Beschäftigte, die sexuell belästigt wurden, zu unterstützen und zu beraten. Sie sind verpflichtet, die Vertraulichkeit der ihnen in diesem Zusammenhang bekannt gewordenen Informationen zu wahren, es sei denn, die betroffene Person entbindet sie von dieser Pflicht (Art. L. 245-6(2)).

Besonders in kleinen Künstler*innenkollektiven oder Ensembles besteht allerdings das Risiko, dass Machtmissbrauch von der Personalleitung ausgeübt wird. Eine externe und unabhängige Anlaufstelle könnte helfen, diesem Interessenkonflikt entgegenzuwirken. Aufbauend darauf müssen Strukturen geschaffen werden, die es Betroffenen ermöglichen, Missbrauch zu melden, ohne Ausgrenzung innerhalb der Branche befürchten zu müssen.

In diesem Zusammenhang möchte ich die Bedeutung von Gender Mainstreaming in der Umsetzung von kulturpolitischen Maßnahmen hervorheben. Gender Mainstreaming ist ein struktureller Ansatz, anhand dessen jede politische Maßnahme auf seinen gendersensiblen Einfluss analysiert wird. Konkret bedeutet das, dass bei jeder neuen Entscheidung beachtet wird, ob und wenn ja, inwiefern Geschlechter unterschiedlich betroffen wären. Gender Mainstreaming ist demnach eine Maßnahme, um genderbedingter Diskriminierung vorzubeugen.

Fehlt allerdings das Bewusstsein für genderbedingte Benachteiligung im Kulturbereich, riskiert die Notwendigkeit von Gender Mainstreaming in den Hintergrund zu rücken. Auch wenn die Ethik-Charta des Kulturministeriums (2022) die unterzeichnenden Einrichtungen dazu verpflichtet die Geschlechtergleichheit sowohl auf Entscheidungsebene als auch in der Programmgestaltung zu berücksichtigen, zeigt unsere Studie deutlich, dass nicht alle Einrichtungen dieser Verpflichtung gerecht werden.

Zukunftsausblick – Eine Kulturlandschaft frei von Sexismus?

Schlussfolgernd möchte ich in diesem Beitrag einige Forderungen, beziehungsweise Empfehlungen auflisten, die der Bekämpfung von strukturellem Sexismus in der luxemburgischen Kulturszene entgegenwirken können. Wie bereits mehrfach in diesem Beitrag erwähnt, veranschaulichen die Ergebnisse unserer Bestandsaufnahme eine deutliche Unterrepräsentation weiblicher Künstlerinnen. Aus diesem Grund empfiehlt das CID eine gezielte Förderung von weiblichen, queeren und marginalisierten Kulturschaffenden. Diese beinhaltet unter anderem:

- Ausarbeiten von Sensibilisierungskonzepten wie „Kinder entdecken Künstlerinnen“
- Finanzielle Unterstützung für Kulturinstitutionen, die explizit feministische Kunst in ihrer Programmgestaltung berücksichtigen
- Paritätische Besetzung von Gremien, sowie eine paritätische Programmgestaltung
- Berücksichtigung einer gendersensiblen Perspektive in der Programmgestaltung
- Jährliche Kontrolle der Programme aus einer geschlechtssensiblen Perspektive durch ein unabhängiges Gremium

Neben diesen gezielten Forderungen möchte ich abschließend das Anliegen der Arbeitsgruppe Unmute Power Abuse hervorheben, nach einer unabhängigen Anlauf- und Vertrauensstelle für Kulturschaffende, die von Diskriminierung oder Missbrauch betroffen sind. Diese zentralisierte Anlaufstelle soll unter anderem die psychologische und juristische Betreuung und Begleitung von Betroffenen garantieren, sowie durch Sensibilisierung von Professionellen des Kultursektors einen aktiven Beitrag im Feld der Prävention leisten.

Nach der Darstellung der kulturpolitischen Arbeit des CID und der Herausforderungen bei der Bekämpfung von strukturellem Sexismus in der Kulturbranche soll diese Auswahl an Forderungen zeigen, dass Veränderung möglich ist. Eine feministische Weltanschauung toleriert weder Diskriminierung noch Unterdrückung, sei es durch Geschlecht oder andere identitätsstiftende Merkmale. Es gilt, Benachteiligung im Hier und Jetzt zu identifizieren, um Lösungen zu finden, die uns einer Welt ohne Sexismus und strukturelle Diskriminierung näherbringen. Die Überzeugung, dass dies keine Utopie, sondern eine mögliche Realität ist, bildet die Grundlage für unsere Arbeit im CID. In diesem Sinne: Sexismus in unserer Kulturbranche? Ja, gibt es. Muss aber nicht so bleiben.

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SANDY ARTUSO

Spotlight on 4.48. Psychosis

Sarah Kane (1971-1999) is considered one of the most powerful voices of British contemporary drama, even though she only wrote five plays and one screenplay in her short lifetime. Since the much-discussed success of her first play *Blasted* in 1995, her work has been linked to the “In-Yer-Face” theatrical style - much to the dismay of the author herself. Throughout her work, the unapologetic research of absolutes like Love, Guilt, Truth are centrepiece. *4.48 Psychosis* is Sarah Kane’s last play, written while Kane was struggling with severe and recurring depression. It premiered posthumously in 2000 at the Royal Court’s Jerwood Theatre Upstairs in London, one year after the suicide of the author.

„Remember the light and believe the light“

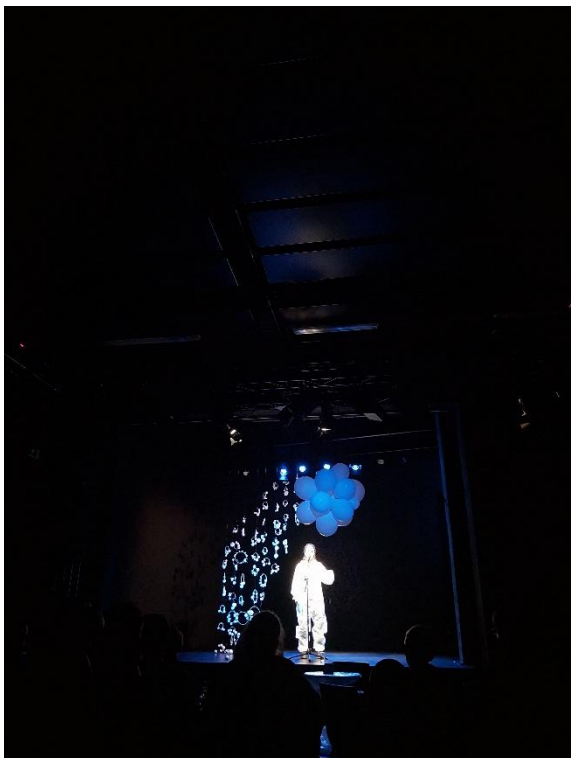
I had wanted to work on this play for many years. I first discovered it via a good friend, who raved about it, but recommended to better not read it when in a sad mood. It was the early 2000s, and since then, I have become sort of an expert of Sarah Kane’s work. In 2012, I wrote my master thesis on her second play *Phaedra’s Love*, and though my later academic path took me to narrative studies and trans/gender studies, I still circled back to that play every once in a while, and pondered how one could stage it to be truest to the text. As mentioned above, Kane’s work deals with absolutes, and *4.48 Psychosis* represents the culmination of this quest for “Truth by Language.” It is an unsettling play, both in form and content. For some, like the theatre critic Michael Billington in his first review, it is a “75-minute suicide note” (Billington, 2000), but for others, like the actress Jo Innes who starred in the very first production, “the heart of it is a love story – what does it mean to love, can we love, all those questions,” she would state years later in an interview with *The Guardian* (Dickson, 2016). The play, which has no discernible stage instructions or dialogue delimitations, is characterized by a hyper precise use of every word. What on the first reading seems confused rambling is in fact a lyrical exploration of the decline of the mental health of the dramatic “I,” the narrator of the play. But as always in Sarah Kane’s plays, there is hope, which is why the production I directed focussed on the brightness hidden in this text.

„An instant of clarity before eternal night“

This production was a success thanks to teamwork, and the care we all took to shield us from immersing ourselves too much into the depth of the darkness of this play. Because let’s face it: the play talks about severe mental health issues and suicidal ideation, and working with it led us inevitably to hazardous realms. Catherine Elsen, the performing actress, had the hard task to shoulder one of the most complex plays on her own on stage. Hence the importance to give her the backup in our creative team. It was paramount to look after ourselves, and foremost about the one who would be facing the audience on her own. For me, directing is not about dictating my interpretation of a play on my team. It’s about sharing a vision, and guiding the performer - and later the audience - through it.

It was also important to contextualize the production, and offer a programme around it where the main subject from the play would be further elaborated with the public. Before the premiere at Kulturfabrik in October 2023, we organized a discussion about mental health in the arts community with the artists Catherine Elsen, Renelde Pierlot, Jennifer Lopes Santos and Alisha Leyder. We followed up a year later with the participation in a round-table in Dudelange on the subject of mental health and youth, and organized another workshop on creatives’ struggles with mental health at Bâtiment4 in Esch/Alzette, both in October 2024. In Dudelange, our production was furthermore presented in the context of their “Women and Culture” programme, in collaboration with the city’s Gender Equality Office.

We might not have put the term “feminist” on our production sheet, but the essence of our work was that: we contested the patriarchal power relations which also are at play in cultural production; everyone involved was properly remunerated according to seniority; we centred the well-being of each team member; and not least, we staged a play written by a young woman.



4.48. *Psychosis* at Kasemattentheater
23.10.2024
© private photo Sandy Artuso

THE TEAM:

Director: Sandy Artuso

Performing Actress: Catherine Elsen

Scenography / Artistic Design: Anne Linder

Light Design: Steve Demuth / Nina Schaeffer

Theatre Pedagogue: Laetitia Lang

Assistant Director: Claire Wagener

Production Manager: Jill Christophe

A production by Independent Little Lies – ILL in coproduction with Centre Culturel Kulturfabrik Esch-sur-Alzette and Centre Culturel Régional opderschmelz Dudelange. With the support of the Ministry of Culture, the City of Esch-sur-Alzette and Œuvre Nationale de Secours Grande-Duchesse Charlotte. The play was performed at:

Kulturfabrik Esch-sur-Alzette (27.10.2024 Première & 28.10.2024)

Centre Culturel Régional opderschmelz Dudelange (21.02.2024)

Kasemattentheater (22.10.2024 & 23.10.2024)

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LARA WELL

Choses vues

Dans un studio d'artiste à Kottbusser Tor on me fait manger un infâme bonbon au gingembre.
N. me demande pourquoi je l'ai pas recraché. Je lui dis que ça m'a pas traversé l'esprit.

L'artiste se caresse la joue, se regarde dans la glace
trempée jusqu'aux genoux elle sort
des noyaux de cerise de sa bouche
comme si c'était des dents
arrachées douloureusement

Elle dit que la mâchoire est une berge
pour les mots liquides qui coulent sur sa langue
pauvre courant sous-jacent elle chante
en caressant son reflet

Dans le public quelqu'un lit des mots
sur le dos de quelqu'un d'autre
underkissed undertouched underloved
le contresort: *understanding*
mouais

Dans un ancien crématorium une femme est assise dans la neige, une flaque de sang entre les jambes. Une deuxième femme danse en silence sur une berge caillouteuse. Au bout d'un long tunnel souterrain plongé dans le noir, une troisième femme immobile flotte dans une piscine.

Elles sont nues toutes les trois. J'ai un goût de mort dans la bouche. Trois gros plans sur des visages en train d'avoir un orgasme, trop de lumières stroboscopiques. J'ai toujours peur de découvrir que je suis épileptique.

Sur un mur ouvert au public je lis trois témoignages de femmes qui ont rencontré la mort.

La première a été poussée dans une piscine lorsqu'elle était petite alors qu'elle ne savait pas nager. Elle a attrapé une méningite et passé trois mois à l'hôpital. Entre la vie et la mort, c'est la

vie qui l'a choisie, avant de la faire tomber dans l'addiction (drogue et alcool). Elle a développé une maladie auto-immune et j'ai oublié la fin de l'histoire.

La deuxième raconte un épisode psychotique dans sa cuisine. Elle pensait qu'elle allait mourir, ne comprenant pas ce qui lui arrivait, jusqu'à ce que son mari l'emmène à l'hôpital.

La troisième femme a survécu à trois cancers. À côté de son texte elle a fait des petits dessins rigolos de sa double mammectomie.

Au deuxième étage du KW, une artiste du Groenland pose nue devant la baie glacée pour rompre le silence. Elle est debout les bras croisés, son visage en double exposition regarde à la fois le sol et l'objectif. C'est elle la photographe — c'est elle qui parle.

corps victime

corps paysage

corps qui crie

arctic hysteria disaient les colons danois

Elle se roule sur une carte de la côte qui l'a vue grandir. Elle la caresse comme si elle nageait dedans, ou qu'elle faisait l'amour avec, puis elle la déchire méthodiquement, formant des grandes bandes de papier. Elle dit que c'est pour récupérer la vérité.

Au Kunstraum Kreuzberg en lettres rouges: *Aus der Krankheit eine Waffe machen*. L'intérieur du bâtiment est éclairé comme un hôpital et les murs des couloirs sont couverts de graffitis. Dans les années 70 le *Sozialistische Patientenkollektiv* considère que les maladies psychiatriques ne sont pas simplement des histoires médicales individuelles, mais la conséquence de la société (capitaliste) dans laquelle nous vivons.

Dans un boudoir poudré, une fille nuage est fatiguée

elle a ramené sa couette à l'*Arbeitsamt*

— enfoncée dans la mousse

elle se couche sur les exigences

Dans sa lettre à un poulpe, une fille crip-tonite lui parle de son espérance de vie raccourcie et des gens qui disent *I'd kill myself if i were you*. Elle lui demande si lui aussi a envie de mettre son poing-tentacule dans la figure de la baleine du Groenland quand elle lui dit qu'elle peut vivre jusqu'à 200 ans.

Dans les wc

un graffiti rose fluo
d'une fleur fâchée

À une soirée de spoken word dans un bar de Neukölln, læ présentateur.ice répète *and remember that the gender binary is a construct!* jusqu'à ce que ça se transforme en gimmick un peu creux. Ou comme si c'était un mantra et qu'on était dans une secte composée de jeunes gens au crâne rasé/mullet décoloré. Chaque performance est précédée d'une série de trigger warnings divers et variés. Je me demande si parfois quelqu'un sort de la salle ou alors se bouche les oreilles. *Désolée mais la vraie vie elle donne pas de trigger warnings!* Berlin a fait de moi une vieille réac. *Be kind to each other!* c'est son autre mantra.

En sortant sur le trottoir je dis à mon amie N. que Berlin me transforme
en vieille pie aigrie.

Sur scène une poétesse avec un nom de papillon
dit que l'eau prend les coups sans rien dire — elle avale et elle se tait
je me dis c'est vrai ça
mais dans une expo sur les chemins de l'eau
j'apprends que les rivières savent se défendre

Une artiste *pfützologue* dit que les flaques aiment les dépressions
les failles, les trous — les flaques se blottissent
se pelotonnent sur le sol et se glissent dans les fentes
elles se collent aux bosses et aux creux
elles lissent la surface, masquent le marasme qu'elles remplissent
localisent les craquelures et les dissimulent

Quand il y a une tempête, les scientifiques font des recherches dans les flaques pour savoir d'où
elle vient.

Dans une maison du XIVe siècle du centre de la France
une femme sort d'un puits en criant
elle a de long cheveux noirs et elle est nue
d'après son peintre elle représente la vérité

Le soir dans ma chambre je regarde en boucle le concert de Big Thief au Way Out West. Sur le devant de la scène Adrienne Lenker chante avec les jambes écartées — cas classique de je veux être elle et je veux être avec elle. Elle a mon âge mais elle a moins de cheveux blancs. Elle porte un grand t-shirt gris foncé ses cheveux bruns décoiffés lui tombent sur les yeux. On dirait moi mais épanouie.

"I'm afraid of getting older" that's what i learned to say (elle chante)

'cause society has given me the words to think that way

the message spins and spirals "don't get saggy don't get grey" (elle fait une grimace)

how can beauty that is living be anything but true?

so let gravity be my sculptor let the wind do my hair

let me dance in front of people (elle secoue la tête) without a care

let me be naked alone with nobody there

or with mismatched socks and shoes and stuff stuffed in my underwear

(elle empoigne sa ceinture pour remonter son pantalon)

Je veux exsuder ce qu'elle exsude. Au lieu de ça je marche et je boude.

SANDY ARTUSO

Queer Little Lies: an alternative reading of the State-of-the-Art Queer in Luxembourg

This text is an adapted rendition of the gestured conference proposed by Profx. Drx. Sand Gattus at the opening of the fourth edition of the Queer Little Lies Festival on November 27th at the Ratelach. What a surprise to discover that night that Profx. Gattus is in fact an alter ego of our colleague and co-founder Sandy Artuso. No one would have possible thought of that, it was a stunning revelation!

“Queer as in: Opposing normative and stereotypical thinking; defying supposed evidences on gender, sexuality, desire and bodies; queer/feminist because you can’t smash the cis-tem without smashing the patriarchy; subverting boundaries – also one’s own.”

This is the latest version of the positioning of the Queer Little Lies festival that took place for the fourth time in November 2024. Produced by the theatre collective Independent Little Lies (ILL), it was initiated and curated by me, with the ambition to offer a platform in Luxembourg to inter/national queer artists. It was important from the very beginning to emphasise the genuine meaning of the adjective “queer”, and to show how it relates to the objectives of the festival. The statement is clear: *not gay as in happy, but queer as in fuck you.*¹ Subversion is inherent to queer culture. It begins with the reappropriation of a slur and continues with the continued challenging of the status quo – in society, politics and art. And let’s be clear about that point: art is always political, there is no such thing as *l’art pour l’art*, unless your entitlement blinds you to your own situatedness.

Contrary to the Luxembourgish custom to always claim that one’s initiative is the very first of its kind, and incepted by a higher being in a dream and never ~~appropriated from~~ inspired by others, I for once clearly state that this festival could not have been conceived, born and raised without the lived experiences of its curator. The idea for the festival came because I had seen and experienced queer art forms abroad that were not to practiced here in Luxembourg, because I got to know some of the European queer cultural scene in my own nomadic years; it came because I knew expat queer artists that had a career abroad, but lacked exposure in Luxembourg, and didn’t find a fertile soil *doheem*² to show their art. Prior to the realisation of the first edition in 2018, I had a lifetime to observe the local offer of queer art, and Reader, you know that it was scarce. Outside the Pride month and its activities, which will be discussed later, there were not many cultural institutions venturing into queer spaces or rather: creating queer spaces. There was - and still is - the 3CL, which always found a place and space to showcase some artists that break the Luxembourgish frame. In fact, it was at one of their *3 du Trois* that I would first see Valerie Reding’s work, an artist which would become a festival regular. There was - and still is - the Kinneksbond, which regularly integrated gay artists into their seasonal program. But the facts in 2018 were: apart from the aforementioned houses, the apparitions of queer artist on a Luxembourgish stage were punctual, mere sparkles in a year-round program, and centralized on June or rather July, when the Pride month takes place in Luxembourg.

¹ The origins of this slogan are no longer traceable, but this “rallying cry of queer culture” (Ruberg & Philipps) captures the impetus inherent to the political queer.

² Luxembourgish for “at home”.

There were three factors that made it possible to realise the first Queer Little Lies festival in 2018: ILL's trust in me and my plans, their resources as a producer, and the openness to new horizons of the then newly appointed director of the Escher Theater, Carole Lorang. The main objective of the festival was clear: offer a platform to local, international and expat queer artists. The focus would be on performing arts, as that is the core discipline of Independent Little Lies, but as seen in other festival, it would offer an interdisciplinary program, with also workshops, readings, conferences.

For the first edition in 2018, we invited artists from queer capitals of Europe (Brussels, Berlin, Zurich, Paris) to gather at the Escher Theater for three days of queer artistry, where they met with local artists, activists, and an inspired audience. The program was full and multi-disciplinary: film, performances, workshops, table-discussions and an exhibition, everything taking place under one roof. This queer connectivity was sparkled with the help of local initiatives like xxyz Luxembourg and queer loox, but also by simply asking old and new friends from abroad, like Laura Pfeiffer, Camille Pier, Valerie Reding or Ludovic-Mohamed Zahed to come to Esch. Apart from the experiences of the three days, it generated a network of queer alliances that gave the opportunity to discover artists who otherwise would not have been in the field of vision. But it worked also the other way, and helped put Luxembourg on the queer cultural map of Europe.



Camille Pier | La nature contre-nature (- tout contre)
QLL1 © Silvia Delmedico



Valerie Reding | wild child
QLL 1 © boshua

The second edition of the festival was again planned in cooperation with the Escher Theater, and planned for November 2020. Yes, *that* year 2020. Heavily impacted by the global sanitary crisis due to the pandemic of COVID-19, the planning and organisation of the second edition was challenging up to the last moments before the opening on November 12th, 2020. Confronted with travel limitations, distancing rules and all the other sanitary restrictions, we still managed to show resilience and offer a various programme with inter/national artists. Even though we had to sit far apart during EDSUN's concert, even though some invited artists (notably Fernando López Rodríguez and Lolo Arziki) were not able to join *en présentiel*, the festival gave us all a moment to breath and

to get together after a year of being separated. Alas, just two days after the festival closing, the second lockdown started.



EDSUN
QLL2 © boshua

2022 represented another challenge, the task to offer a queer alternative during a heavily saturated cultural year. Apparently, something called Esch2022 was taking place that year, which inflated the cultural offer of the south of Luxembourg, though the rest of the country was mostly spared of it. For the anecdote: after successfully applying to the program for the European Capital of Culture, we decided to retract QLL out of the selection. It was imperative to preserve the subversive nature of the festival, and not to risk an impending pink-washing appropriation by a neoliberal culture machine.



Sophie Labelle
QLL3 © boshua

And finally, the QLL festival came back for a fourth time in November 2024, parading the hopeful-yet-ironic motto that there was nothing to fear. But before elaborating on that point, I want to focus on the question of **where queer culture can take place**. So far, we talked about institutional cultural spaces, theatres, performance venues. Usually, you would look for queer culture in other places too, in bars, in museums, in the public space even. But as usual, the findings for Luxembourg are sobering. As of March 2025, we have one gay bar (Letz Boys) and one Rainbow Center - *LGBTIQ+ Zentrum fir queer Kultur*. To be clear: this is on a national scale, for the whole Grand-Duchy, which prides itself to be in the Top 10 of ILGA-Europe's Rainbow Map for years. Considering this desolate state, I rather would like to talk about **spaces that can be reappropriated**

to become temporary safe spaces³ for queer people, by queering spaces.⁴ This is why I wanted to highlight how also local institutions, like the Escher Theater or the Kulturfabrik for example, can help to create spaces or to be spaces that are not only welcoming but nurturing for queer arts. Kufa has always been a place for more subversive art, and it had started to be that in a more consequent way in 2023 when they started a dedicated Pride Week program, including e.g. the much-discussed performance by Richtung22, “Mis(s) Representation !”⁵ Since then, they continued to mainstream queer culture in their yearly program. But you can also see other institutions that you might not have expected, like the Villa Vauban in Luxembourg City and their endeavour to queer the museum with a little help from queer experts.⁶ Or with one of the main locations of QLL4, the Escher Kafé, that hosted the exhibition, the reading night, and the closing party. The Escher Kafé is not a queer bar, but owners that are not only “queer-friendly” but also willing to open their doors and their space for queer art.

If I talk about queer culture, I cannot NOT talk about Pride, so much is clear. But I want to get back to its original essence: a demonstration, a riot, an appropriation of the streets to show that *we’re here, we’re queer, get used to it.*⁷ For Luxembourg, the official “first one” took place in 1999 in Luxembourg-City.



Pride event 1999 at Luxembourg-City (©Tageblatt)

The image you see here is from the first Pride event in Luxembourg, with the Theatre des Capucins in the background. These were the first steps for a coordinated Pride, and one aspect was always important also in those historical times: arts, music, performance etc. Pride is a political moment but it is also always a moment of celebration, a moment for celebration, for letting your hair down together with your friends and allies. 25 years later, LEQGF offered a workshop for participants of the Luxembourg Pride 2024 where they could share their memories or anecdotes connected to

³ The necessity of such spaces will not be discussed here. In fact, my colleague Enrica Pianaro already gave a much better argument in her article on “Safe(r) spaces” in Forum N°410 (Pianaro 2020).

⁴ Parties are a distinct topic, in my opinion. They are nomadic per se, even though some venues and parties are linked for a certain time. There are queer (...or rather: gay...) parties taking place in Luxembourg, but their rhythm is subject to many challenges, and won’t be further elaborate here. Maybe in another Gestured Conference, who knows...#nospoiler

⁵ <https://richtung22.org/miss-representation/>, last visited 01.03.2025.

⁶ See both the articles by Enrica Pianaro and Anne Hoffmann & Kyra Thielen in this edition of the Cahiers QGF.

⁷ Another popular slogan dating back to the early 1990s, originating from Queer Nation, a LGBTQ activist collective formed by ACT-Up members in New York.

25 years of Pride in Luxembourg.⁸ Interestingly, one of the shared memories went back even before this pride in 1999, and remembered interventions of a group of *travestie* artists, or drag queens as you would call them nowadays, and how they reclaimed the street in Luxembourg-City, the Place d'Armes no less, with a drag flash mob in 1985 (Seiler 2024). Which brings me to the certainly most famous queer artists of Luxembourg, a group which has been active now for over 46 years, namely the performing legends of Fadas Family. Some of them were there for the first interventions in the late 1980s, and all of them have certainly reached a level of mainstreaming queer culture that most of us can only dream of. Incidentally, the first performance I saw of them was in the late 1980s, at some festivity organized by the sports club my parents were involved with. I was in awe of what must have been one of the first gender-transgressions I witnessed. This just to say that sometimes we - the oh so proud queer cultural elite trained in the major European capitals of queerness - should sometimes get down from our high horses regarding what we deem to be *true*TM queer art, and give credits to people who after 46 years, are still there doing their thing.

And now, Reader? Where are we now, in 2024? As I mentioned before, and in the announcement for QLL 4: there is nothing to fear. The year is 2024, and Luxembourg has become a haven for queer people; queer arts and artists are celebrated everywhere, and non-heteronormative artists do not have to struggle to get platforms. All the major cultural institutions of Luxembourg are mainstreaming LGBTIQ+ artists and their works through their program. There are self-declared safe spaces sprouting throughout the country, and “queer” has become the new normal.

There is no threat. There is nothing to be afraid of...

Unless of course you have created a figure that defies gender rules like Tatta Tom.

Unless you dare to read children stories with a non-heteronormative twist in a public library. Then you should be prepared for the wrath of many among us who think that anything that is not *their* normal should be kept far away for their poor, impressionable children which would turn queer the second they see the beautiful antlers on Tatta Tom's head.

Also, you should probably also not talk about queer culture in school, you should probably not speak *at all* about queer topics in schools because it is NOT APPROPRIATE for the poor children that are so impressionable, they turn queer the second they read the acronym LGBTIQ+ on a poster.

But no, my friends, there is nothing to fear when 9979 people⁹ in Luxembourg signed a petition that LGBTIQ+ topics should not be treated in schools. People you may you know, people that work with you, maybe even you? Congratulations anyways, these topics are already made invisible, or only treated meagrely in schools, so really, there is nothing to be afraid of.

So no, my friends, with the anti-queer and anti-gender movements (*and surprise, they are all linked*) on the rise, there is nothing to fear, and we can all be very safe in our queer cocoons.

We have been warning against this for a long time. Hence, amidst this current retro-waves of proto-fascism, we on the front, activist, *artivist* get weary and we, the elder queers, need to channel our energies. Though my *Herzensprojekt*, I felt the QLL take a toll on me. It's time to close that door, as the saying goes, even though I am not sure what others will open. QLL 4 was the last one – so far. Reader, it's now your turn to take the relay to queer the Luxembourgish cultural landscape.

⁸ For more details, see Enrica Pianaro's article in this edition of the Cahiers LEQGF.

⁹ Pétition publique n°3198: <https://www.petitions.lu/signer/3198>, last visited 01.03.2025.

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ENRICA PIANARO

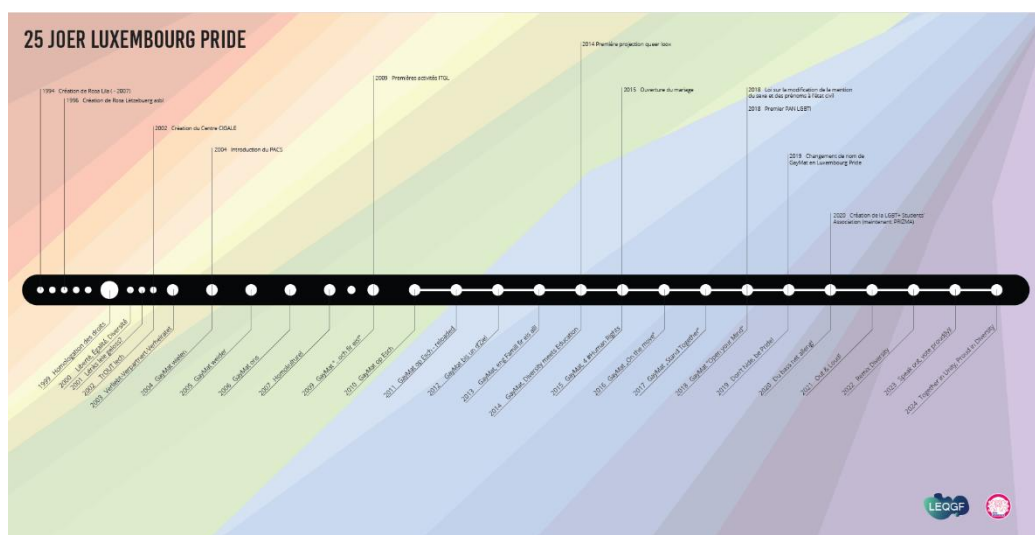
Looking back at the activity 25 Joer Pride zu Lëtzebuerg

The year 2024 marked the 25th anniversary of the Luxembourg Pride, one of the biggest and most popular LGBTIQ+ events in Luxembourg. For this occasion, the Laboratoire d'Études Queer, sur le Genre et les Féminismes – LEQGF collected anecdotes from the community which were related to Pride, in collaboration with the Pride organiser Rosa Lëtzebuerg.

We wanted to hear from people who are not to be found in the newspapers or history books. While archive work is important and necessary, for example to reconstruct political advances in LGBTIQ+ rights, it is just as important to know the everyday history, the one that is rarely written down, the history that leaves no traces.

The activity

During the street fest in Esch-sur-Alzette on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th of July 2024, our team collected memories and anecdotes from the community, performers, and allies. We created a large timeline from 1999 until today on which people were invited to write their memories related to the yearly pride events which took place in Luxembourg.



© LEQGF Asbl, 2024



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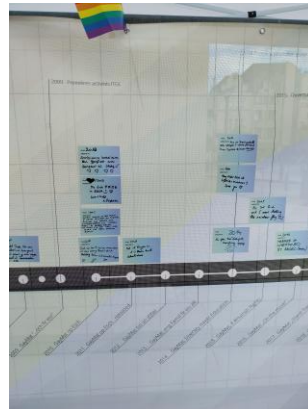
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Along with historical information and some key dates, we recreated common memories related to pride over the years. The information on the timeline was completed with the following questions:

- Do you remember where the first pride took place in 1999?
- Why are the years 2004, 2006, 2015 and 2018 considered milestones for LGBTIQ+ rights in Luxembourg?
- What major change occurred in the pride organisation in 2010?
- Which nowadays famous artist performed at the GayMat 2012 and was then only 19 years young?



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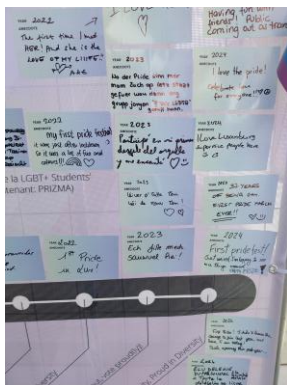
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We also included more personal questions to guide people and help them rememorate particular events bound to a feeling or emotion:

- Maybe you experienced your first kiss during the pride, or you seized the occasion to come out to your friends, colleagues, or family?
- Maybe you were disappointed with current changes or, on the contrary, had a lot of fun?
- Maybe you made new friends, discovered your activist potential, or simply came to pride to enjoy a drink?



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During the two days, we collected 95 anecdotes and memories. People enjoyed this activity, because it was something they could do quickly without missing any of the programme. Participants even received a small present: a magnet with the inscription “We <3 queer history”.



Creating and sharing collective memories

Even though the task was easy, we still faced minor challenges. Some people had difficulties remembering the year their anecdote took place. This was the opportunity to converse with people and research information together on our smartphones, for example. Some people remembered the colours of the t-shirts that were used by the pride organisers from 2013-2018, where every year had one colour of the rainbow flag.¹ Other people remembered whom they went to the pride with and directly recollected with their friends *when, what, where* it happened to catch the right year.

Some people came to the pride for the first or second time, most of whom were “baby queers,” but some were much older (*scoop: there is no age for coming out!*) They did not have a memory to share *per se*, but they shared messages of belonging: “Finally I meet like-minded people” and “My first pride with my lover” or “70 years old and participating in my first pride.”

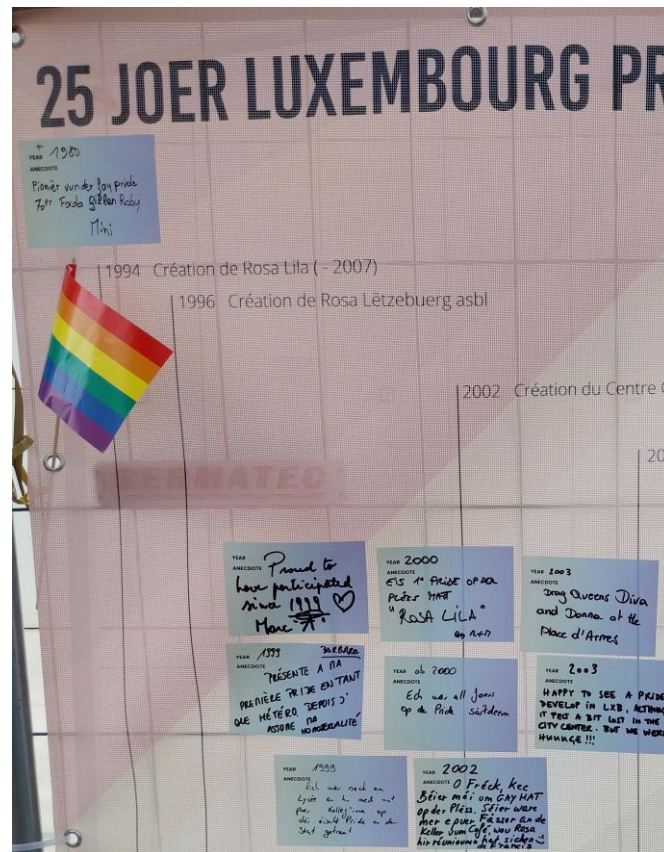
Then we also had an unexpected encounter. A drag queen from the Fada's Family² named Mini³ approached us and claimed that in the 1980s in the streets of Luxembourg City a group of drag queens marched from the bar Petit Fada, owned by Robbi Gillen,⁴ to the Place d'Armes. It was not as organised as the current pride, but it was still a group of queer folx being visible in the public space – as she described it “pioneers of the gay pride.”

¹ Red: GayMat 2013 « Eng Famill fir eis all »; Orange: GayMat 2014 « Diversity meets Education »; Yellow: GayMat 2015 « 4 #Human Rights »; Green: GayMat 2016 « On the Move »; Blue: GayMat 2017 « Stand Together »; Purple: GayMat 2018 « Open Your Mind ».

² Website Wikipedia/Fada's Family: https://lb.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fadas_Family (accessed: 01.03.2025)

³ Website L'Essentiel: <https://www.lesentiel.lu/de/story/luxembourg-pride-ich-habe-es-mir-nicht-ausgesucht-ich-wurde-so-geboren-103146625> (accessed: 01.03.2025)

⁴ Website Woxx: <https://www.woxx.lu/656/> (accessed: 01.03.2025)



This encounter emphasizes the significance of diversified community voices. It also enables collective discussions on a specific event and opens the door to co-creating memories. Following our activity, Joël Seiller – who we did not meet during pride – thought about the 1980s and asked himself if pride was older than the 25th anniversary. To find an answer to his question, he met with an old friend who also went to the Petit Fada in the 1980s and who remembered this time when drag queens walked around the Place d’Armes.⁵

Perspectives

One story always leads to another. Luxembourg’s queer history is a patchwork of various memories, anecdotes and moments created by individuals, communities, and movements. They can build on each other, complete or contradict each other: this is what makes queer history exciting and alive. This is also what reinforces existing social bonds or what creates new bonds between communities and generations.

The “drag queen” episode opened new perspectives and once again showed the importance of looking beyond the most obvious information. Which keywords did you use to research pride events in newspaper archives? Who are your oral sources and do they represent various perspectives? How, as a researcher or community leader, can you make diverse voices heard?

We will pursue this adventure and continue to dig into the past. We want to hear from women, drag queens, HIV activists, POCs and many more – to collect the stories, anecdotes and experiences of individuals, communities, and movements that shaped and shape the history and present of LGBTIQ+ existence in Luxembourg.

⁵ Website Queer.lu: <https://queer.lu/fr/le-tralala-cest-quoi/> (accessed: 01.03.2025)

Timeline: 25 Joer Pride – some key dates

For the third issue (Summer 2024) of the magazine *queer.lu*, LEQGF put together a timeline of key dates from the first pride in Luxembourg to the present day. The information in this timeline has been researched and compiled by Enrica Pianaro. It comes from various online media sources. The original text is in French.

1996: Creation of Rosa Lëtzebuerg Asbl, an association that organises the first festive Pride event in the streets of Luxembourg City three years later.

1999: The first “gay pride” was held on May 29th in Luxembourg City near the Théâtre des Capucins. The organisers were dressed in white and the small information stand was decorated with pink balloons. The slogan of the first pride event, which also appeared on the backs of the T-shirts, was « l’homologation de nos droits ».

2003: The gay and lesbian associations Rosa Lëtzebuerg and Rosa Lila, which are jointly organising the pride, have opted for the slogan ‘Verliebt-Verpartnert-Verheiratet’. They are fighting for the recognition of their couples. In 2004, they celebrated their first success in gaining legal recognition with the introduction of the Partnership Act (PACS) on July 9th.

2004: Luxembourg Pride introduces a distinctive name, playing on the word GayMat (Luxembourgish: géi mat, which means “to go with”). GayMat was used as a pun until 2018 and changed its name to Luxembourg Pride in 2019.

2010: After ten years in Luxembourg City, GayMat is moving to Esch-sur-Alzette. This decision is the result of a lack of support from the VDL. GayMat is growing and needs more and more resources and space. The “Minett-Metropole” offers new opportunities for organising the pride.

2013: Unlike the parades and pride marches that are well known abroad, GayMat was a gathering at Place de l’Hôtel de Ville featuring artistic and musical performances, as well as information stands until 2012. It was not until 2013 that the “Equality March” was organised, starting from the Place de la Résistance, also known as Brillplaz.

2015: A new element has been added to the pride programme, namely the ceremony to commemorate the homosexual victims of Nazism in front of the Musée national de la Résistance. In 2017, the commemoration is accompanied by the ‘Lesbisch, jüdisch, schwul’ exhibition. Since 2015, the commemoration has been held every year and has become a gathering that pays tribute to LGBTIQ+ people who are victims of hatred and violence, in Luxembourg and elsewhere.

2019: The international LGBTIQ+ community is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots, which took place in New York on June 28th. The bar’s regulars called for an end to institutional violence against homosexual and trans people. This demonstration subsequently gave rise to annual public gatherings in June, which are considered to be the first pride celebrations. The idea is to make visible and publicly celebrate LGBTIQ+ lives.

2020: Pride events exist because people come together in public spaces to claim their rights and celebrate their diversity. So how do you organise pride during a pandemic and strict containment measures? Quite simply by organising a digital pride under the slogan ‘You are not alone.’ The following year, the pride left the digital space and announced itself as ‘Out & Loud’ at Wiki Beach.

2025 and beyond: With the rise of anti-gender and anti-queer mobilisations, LGBTIQ+ activists are calling for vigilance. Pride is certainly a celebration and LGBTIQ+ people have the right not to be concerned about what is happening in the world and at decision-making level. However, Pride also has political potential and we must seize this moment of high visibility to enforce the demands that have not been met yet at the political, legal and social level.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Sandy ARTUSO, PhD in Literature from the University of Luxembourg, Magistra Artium in English and German Philology from the University of Heidelberg, is a queer/feminist philologist. She is a member of the theatre collective Independent Little Lies. An *artivist* for the promotion of queer art forms and queer artists, she has created and curated the biennial queer-feminist festival Queer Little Lies since its first edition in 2018.

Anne HOFFMANN studied Art History, specialising in Photography, and Literature and Linguistics. Since 2011, she has been working for Les 2 Musées de la Ville de Luxembourg as Curator. In 2020 she was Project Manager for Interpretative Design on the Urban Nature Project at the Natural History Museum London (NHM), before returning to L2M, Luxembourg in 2021. Anne's focus lies on shaping the Museum's "phygital" vision and transmedia storytelling strategy by redefining how museums can engage with the contemporary citizen and different communities through technology and participation towards a "museum for all".

Enrica PIANARO is a feminist sociologist who has been working on gender and sexuality issues in Luxembourg for fifteen years. Since 2017, she has been researching, analysing and sharing reflections on queer/feminist activisms, as well as on the importance of minority knowledge and its impact on social change.

Claire SCHADECK arbeitet seit 2021 beim CID | Fraen an Gender, wo sie für die Koordination politischer und kultureller Projekte verantwortlich ist. Zwischen 2022 und 2023 war sie als Forscherin an der Universität Luxemburg an dem Projekt „Les représentations du genre dans les manuels scolaires - Cycle inférieur de l'enseignement secondaire“ (Kerger, Pianaro & Schadeck, 2023) beteiligt. Sie hat ihren Bachelor-Abschluss in Vergleichender Literaturwissenschaft an der Universität Wien abgeschlossen und anschließend erfolgreich einen Master-Abschluss in Gender Studies erworben.

Kyra THIELEN studied Educational Science, specialising in museum education and art history. In 2017, she became Head of the Publics Department of Les 2 Musées de la Ville de Luxembourg (Lëtzebuerg City Museum & Villa Vauban), overseeing the institutions activities programming. Kyra is passionate about making museums more accessible and participatory for all visitors, and her work is focused on engaging and cocreating with different audiences and communities.

Lara WELL est une artiste et autrice franco-luxembourgeoise. Elle écrit des poèmes, des chansons et elle travaille actuellement à l'écriture de son premier roman. Ses textes parlent du monde du dessous, des choses qui se touchent et de noyaux qui scintillent. Ils sont publiés dans des revues littéraires et performés sur scène. En 2023 son poème *À la frontière* remporte le premier prix du concours Jeune Printemps - Printemps des Poètes Luxembourg.