

Universal Human Rights Know No Borders

Article 1

Article One is a touring LGBT exhibition from some of Sweden's more prominent museums, with accounts of the history and contemporary life of LGBT-persons, initiated in Stockholm at Europride in the summer of 2008. After its tour on the Baltic Pride in Riga, Latvia, in Belgrade, and Sarajevo, we have the honor to present the exhibition in Skopje, at the Chifte Amam (National Gallery of Macedonia), 22.02 -15.03. 2012.

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". So reads the very first sentence of the first article in the Declaration of Human Rights passed by the United Nations. But what cannot be seen does not exist.

And a person that does not exist is denied all rights. If you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or have a trans identity, all tangible rights – the right to hold your loved one's hand in a public place; the right not to be discriminated against at work; the right to live on the same terms as other couples – come from this first article: the right to be seen.

Museums and exhibitions form an important part of our understanding of the world. Here, our cultural heritage and collective memory is visualized and what is important – and what is not – is presented. For a long time, our museums have failed to discuss the history and specific experiences of LGBT-persons. They have not recognized the equal rights of all people.

Therefore, it is with great pleasure and pride that we present some rare accounts of the history and contemporary life of LGBT-persons.

The exhibition is made up of several smaller exhibition parts, each produced by the different museums. Every part all tell a different story but with one common subject: LGBT history.

The participating museums are the **Swedish Police Museum, the Swedish Army Museum, the Nobel Museum, the National Museum of Science and Technology, The National Museum of Sports and the National Historical Museum.**



THE SWEDISH POLICE MUSEUM

SEIZED PICTURES

In the autumn of 1903, the police raided an apartment in Stockholm. They confiscated three photo albums found in the apartment. They later returned to arrest the man who took the pictures, Carl von Platen. The photo albums were to be used as evidence of homosexuality. In 1903, sexual relations between people of the same sex were prohibited. Despite this, photographs with homosexual allusions had secretly been circulating in Stockholm. It was dangerous to possess such pictures. The photographers invented different methods to hide the sexual content. The pictures appeared to be harmless, but were in fact loaded with sexual allusions.

Were the pictures found in the photo albums homoerotic? That was for the police to decide. Several men who had posed in the photographs were heard during the investigation. As Von Platen kept records of the models' names and professions, the police were able to track down most of them. However, they were unable to find any of the models who had posed in military uniforms. They were anonymous. Perhaps Carl von Platen wanted to protect both himself and the servicemen. In the early 1900's it was common for young, poor servicemen in Stockholm to sell sex. The young men in uniform depicted in the photographs may have been prostitutes.

The photographs were bordering on illegal. None of the models were photographed in the nude. However, a closer look at the photographs would reveal nude images in the background and on the walls. The pictures depict playful interpretations of social roles. Men wearing women's clothes; a man showing his legs, another man holding a flower. Some of the models wear bathing costumes or gymnastics clothes, others wear shirt dresses. The type of garments that suggest that the model is naked under his loose-fitting clothing...

Carl von Platen was to appear before the Stockholm District Court on 19 December 1903, on charges of immoral activities.

However, his father had him diagnosed as mentally ill, on the basis of homosexual behaviour. At the age of 40, Carl von Platen was declared legally incompetent. This meant that he could not be held accountable for his actions. Carl von Platen was later discharged from a private nursing home. He travelled around Europe and wrote about his experiences. He would be arrested again 15 years later, this time for trying to kiss a lift-boy at the Hotel Kramer in Malmö.

Homosexual acts were illegal until 1944, when the law was repealed. Carl von Platen did not live to witness this. He died in 1929 at the age of 66, still declared legally incompetent. Homosexuality was considered a mental illness as late as in 1979.



THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

SWEDISH GAY RADIO

Although technology and innovations affect us all, are used by us all daily and come out of the creativity of both men and women, the representation of men at a museum such as - Sweden's National Museum of Science and Technology - is wholly dominant. One could come right out with it and say that the National Museum of Science and Technology is a monument to male engineering. If women as users of technology and innovators have not previously been given sufficient space in the collections of the Museum, we can conclude that the HBT perspective has been wholly \ lacking.

Until now that is, when the initiative has been taken to document objects that have belonged to Stockholm's Gay radio station. As objects of technology they are not especially unique, but the context in which they have been used and their symbolic value is because Stockholm's Gay radio was the first radio station in Sweden to begin broadcasting on local radio. The year was 1979 and the station operated under a trial permit before the station was officially launched. At that time, the gay movement was more political and still had many victories to win. The Gay radio has been described as highly central in this context. It offered homosexuals a nontraceable communication channel. Gay radio in Stockholm is still broadcasting and with the help of new technology, today it reaches both national and international audiences.

We have a vision to make the National Museum of Science and Technology a museum of central interest to more people. This means that more perspectives, more stories must be told, and that the white, male, middle-class heterosexual cannot any longer be the norm.

This exhibition part consists of artifacts from the Swedish Gay Radio that recently was incorporated in the collections of the National Museum of Science and Technology along with pictures from the early days of the radio station.



THE SWEDISH ARMY MUSEUM

A SOLDIER IS A SOLDIER IS A SOLDIER IS A SOLDIER

A natural born soldier, could he be gay? And do women make decent soldiers? The usual concept of a typical military force contradicts the commonly held stereotypes of homosexual men. And many people have a hard time accepting female soldiers. But a soldier is a soldier is a soldier is a soldier!

Attitudes towards gender and sexuality are not set in stone. They change over time and as society develops. This ability to change is exactly what we want to highlight. Today, the Swedish Defence Force's attitude corresponds with the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Article 1 calls attention to the equal value and rights of all human beings regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Our exhibition wants to show how this idea slowly changes reality.

*Eva-Sofi Ernstell
Museum Director,
The Army Museum*



THE NOBEL MUSEUM

INSIDER OUTSIDER, THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING DIFFERENT

Social exclusion is the private tragedy of the individual, whether perceived or real. This thing of not being a part of the group, of not feeling that one belongs, of being an outsider. Of being different, in fact. To everybody else, those who are „different“ fulfill an important function. By defining them as „unusual“, as „different“, they define their own „ordinariness“, their own belonging to the group, to the fellowship and the kinship from which those who are „different“ are excluded.

The well-known philosopher or science Thomas S. Kuhn („whereas Kuhn is dying the paradigm is growing“) has said that science changes in jumps. Traditional science develops within an established explanatory model – a paradigm – but with time it encounters a number of inexplicable facts (anomalies) that cannot be accounted for within the generally accepted paradigm. Finally someone comes along who has the courage to propose a new theory, a new paradigm. This is where those who are different – those who don't belong to the group – come in!

The history of science shows time and again that it is most often those who are „different“ who bring new, revolutionary ideas. Let us hope that those who are „different“ are not driven only by the desire for revenge – to show that they know, as well – but that they are also driven by the joy of creation. Indeed, by the pleasure that lies in creative work. The history of the Nobel Prize is full of examples of exclusion of this kind. That is why the Nobel Museum wishes to take part in the exhibition Article one. This exhibition part consists of interviews with some of the very people that decides who is worthy of the Nobel Prize. The interviews are about the importance of being different and are presented as three projections.





THE SWEDISH MUSEUM OF SPORTS

AIRING OUR DIRTY LAUNDRY

Since the Swedish Sports Museum currently lacks objects and documentation that describe the experiences of transsexual, bisexual and homosexual persons from Swedish sports history, we are instead providing modern examples of the conditions transsexuals, bisexuals and homosexuals experience within the Swedish sports movement.

Generally speaking, homosexuals are silent and invisible within sports. Homophobia comes in many forms: silence, ridicule and belittling comments. One reason for homophobia within sports could be that sports have been constructed as a homosocial world where men dominate and all forms of homosexuality are denied.

A clothesline with drying team jerseys can provide a concrete link to participation in sports. Washing clothes also relates to the expression "airing your dirty laundry", which in its Swedish form means to repent for your past transgressions and to wash away old prejudices.

Both towels and jerseys give associations to locker rooms. Locker rooms are a good representation of the existing heterosexual norm in the sports world where individuals of the same sex are not expected to have sexual feels for each other. Gender-specific locker rooms are thus the standard in the vast majority of schools and sports halls.

The uniform team jerseys allude to the sport movement's demand for uniformity and intolerance of deviations. But it can also positively allude to the fellowship of sports, where everyone can fit in with the same type of team jersey.

The text on the jerseys highlight the important parts of Article 1 of the UN's Universal Declaration on Human Rights and its connection to the Swedish Sports Confederation's policy against sexual harassment. The front of the jerseys have such words as: equality, equal rights, freedom, brotherhood and conscience are taken directly from Article 1.

Under each heading are examples of how the Swedish Sports Confederation wants to live up to Article 1. Examples are taken from the Confederation's policy programme "What sports want" and their policy against sexual harassment.

On the back of the jersey are Swedish examples of how the sports movement does not live up to the UN's Universal Declaration on Human Rights. These are challenges that remain to be solved.



THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES

CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE!

Going to a museum and allowing yourself to be enveloped by the passage of time could at best be about changing your way of looking at things. Not only opening your eyes to the many and varied ways of living, but also calling into question present-day norms. Perhaps discovering that certain forms of behaviour in modern human intercourse have not always been self-evident. What, for example, do we regard as being typical male and female behaviour? What was the situation in the past and what values were applied? Take the great Viking war god Odin, for example.

The image of a mighty, wise (and therefore oneeyed) god with a spear in his hand and a look of steel is firmly etched into the minds of many of us. But did you know that there is documented evidence that he perpetrated certain cross-gender deeds in the exercising of sejd, a form of magic or sorcery? Is it possible, quite simply, that he was transsexual? Was the mightiest of the Viking Gods a gender bender? What implications does this have for our current understanding of Viking society and its view of normality?

A great deal of our history could very well have been radically different to what we sometimes imagine. This exhibition part consist of images of artifacts and graves from the collections of the National Museum of Antiquities together with text reflecting on what is perceived as „normal“ –or not.



THE UNSTRAIGHT MUSEUM

Unstraight = Anyone or anything that is or was not part of the straight norm in society. The idea of creating The Unstraight Museum sprung from the exhibition project Article 1 and have the same core idea: -A person who is not allowed to be seen does not exist. And, by default, neither does a person who does not exist have any rights.

The Unstraight Museum is tasked with:

- Collecting and documenting LGBT history in all its forms
- Cataloguing and creating open artefact data bases
- Making all collected information available to the general public
- Working to encourage more museums to include a LGBT perspective in their collections.

The site www.unstraight.org was launched 21/7 2011 and is a project in development. The site is in its first stage and will envelop with improved search functions and links to Europeana and other museums shortly.

Artefacts, Collections and the Power of the Story Most people have a secret place where they keep items of great personal value: old letters, children's comic books, souvenirs from a memorable trip. Some of these objects we have procured ourselves, others we have inherited from those who lived before us or have received from people who have meant something to us. These objects are imbued with memories, feelings and stories.

The objects connect us to these stories; they build bridges across time and space, create structure and meaning.

Like individuals, museums also choose to keep objects. The purpose of museums in collecting artefacts is somewhat similar to the reasons why individuals save certain objects, although museums do so on a much larger scale.

Museum collections intend to preserve objects that can link us with, and supply structure and meaning to, our shared history.

They serve as knowledge banks for both researchers and the general public alike, and they have long been of great importance for education. They are our cultural heritage; our collective memory. But just as individual collections tell individual stories, museum collections both carry and convey collective stories.

These many objects tell us not only the way things were, but also what is important – and by its exclusion, what is not. The fact is that not all artefacts have been saved and not all stories have been considered of equal importance.

Often, those who have managed museum collections have especially prized artefacts and stories linked to nations, although other explicit and implicit values have also shaped the formation of collections. This continues to be the case even today. Many artefacts and stories have been, and continue to be, excluded from these collections because they are considered unimportant or shameful and undesirable.

Not least of all, museums have long neglected to depict the stories and unique experiences of Unstraight people. They have rendered invisible an important part of the history – everyone's history – that they are tasked with both preserving and conveying.

This failure is no mere footnote. The question of what is allowed to be seen in our public collections is of great importance to our lives and the opportunities we possess here and now. Because those who are invisible do not exist. And a person who does not exist, by default, cannot have any rights.

That is why The Unstraight Museum is needed. By pooling our energies and resources to create a collection that calls attention our history and contemporary reality we will create a place for ourselves in mankind's collective story. This, in turn, will make it easier for us to claim our rights, both locally and globally.

Modern technology has provided us with new opportunities to both collect artefacts and to make them accessible. Collecting physical items is time-consuming and requires a great deal of space and money.

The Unstraight Museum is a website that aims to collect images of artefacts and to tell the stories behind them. The Unstraight Museum is a museum with a global reach. Everyone with objects and stories are welcome to contribute to the museum's collection, regardless of what part of the world you live in. The objects themselves will remain with their owners and, as such, while the museum's collection will be very widely-dispersed in a physical sense, the website will allow the collection and all its stories to become available to the entire world.

As a museum, this global reach gives us the opportunity to promote a broader perspective than a traditional, national focus would. Even though both historical circumstance and daily life conditions vary greatly from place to place, our stories and contemporary reality is not primarily bound to nations. All over the world, our history and our experiences have been hidden from sight. Everywhere, they need to be brought out into the light and told. All our stories are interesting and all of them are important. And these artefacts are needed to help tell them.

We believe in objects that build bridges across time and space. We believe in the power of these collected stories.

Partners

The Unstraight Museum is a non government, non profit organization based in Sweden run and by the same group of museum professionals that started Article 1.

Feel free to contact us anytime for more information on the project.

Contact

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The project is supported by Kulturbryggan.

REJECTED

The Sexuality of the Macedonian Archive

EMOTIONAL ARCHIVE OF UNSTRAIGHT EXPERIENCES IN MACEDONIA

Queer history is history of losses. It is the loss of the history of a diffuse, heterogeneous and non-normative community, but also the historical loss/es of nonheterosexual people in their daily affective experiences and emotionally endured traces, whose laws and contents are impossible to be remembered and narrated with the dominant institutional museum, history and archive terminology. However, such loss is also the loss of the symbolic capital, of the right to a position in the symbolic economy, the right to access the positions for representation, production of knowledge, forms of living and intimacy.

In times of imposed normativity and enforced stigmatizing silence, or rather in times of 'free' choice of invisibility as a sort of necessary survival strategy, we wish to challenge the archive regimes loudly. By making visible, via archive selection mechanisms, organization, maintenance and presentation, exclusively what already exists as available cultural material, these regimes reproduce the conditions of visibility, or rather the heteronormative national culture, which already provide that certain forms of life, love, sexuality, intimacy and togetherness are recognized as legitimate, while all other emotional relationships and communities are banished to the shadows of their visibility. It is our opinion that the dominant regimes of the archive and the cultural heritage are locked in the narcissistic circle of self-reproduction, where they create the unequal regimes of visibility, repeating and consolidating them as the only visible in cultural products of representation and memory.

In this constellation, our challenge is to create an archive based on memory, on everyday lived experiences, on the affects and emotions that mark the life of a lesbian, gay, bisexual or a trans-gender person, of all those whose identity or emotions are excluded from the normative sphere of the nation. The challenge of such an archive is that it embodies a ephemeral, diffuse, unstable, affectively coloured material that testifies of the shiver in the living body. This is a material released from the institutional official interpretation, selection and organization of the national historian.

It is our intention, with this archive, to challenge the hypocrisy of the national public sphere, which is seemingly sanitized from affects and emotions, while constantly providing conditions and seeking to repeat the presentation of heteronormative intimacies as the only possible and recognized. The hypocrisy of the public national sphere is the hypocrisy of the heteronormative public intimacy that is embedded everywhere, starting from billboards, advertisements, media, to laws and public policies, cultural productions, even national dreams and utopias represented in the straight couple.

Our unorthodox archive strives to create conditions for a shift in the regimes of visibility, acknowledging and recognising what is legitimate for human beings, and creating alternative models of knowledge, memory and feeling. Therefore, our goal is by means of affective experiences to create conditions for development of new cultures and counterpublics, new affective collective formations that will stop psychologizing,

enclosing and privatizing emotions and feelings. Our emotions coloured with suffering are testimonies of the violent oppression of a system. Our joys, pleasures and friendships are the mischievous rebellions and survival weapons in and against the system of sexuality, the only one valued, the only one possible.

Archiving daily objects connected to numerous experiences of sexually non-normative communities introduces to the audience a 'structure of feelings' as an indicator of the affective life of the social system that is inhabited and lived in by those whose position is drawn up on the margins of the social field. Organizing the objects of different nature in such heretic archive maps out the numerous ways in which unstraight people are affected and subjected by/in the political organization of life. However, this archive could present a testimony of the impossibility for the omnipotence of the ideological regimes on the affective and emotional structures of the individual bodies. In other words, this archive carries within itself and suggests the survival strategies and affective adaptation, these being a tendency and optimism to continue living in the coercing conditions. Thus, the inflicted violation, the open wound in the social survival of marginalized people, and the turbulences caused by the constant crisis in safety, become a source of daily subversion and creation of alternative methods of living. The wound becomes a place open to collective creation and sharing of alternative world-making projects, penetrating and challenging the existing one.

The affective tone and emotional atmosphere offered by these objects is a reflection, but also a lapse of/ from the primary social function and values of their arrival in and organization of the world we inhabit and in which our bodies open, unfold and maintain themselves. Their defamiliarization introduces a certain stir and agitation of the adopted and recognizable common sense of space. If these objects collect and produce a certain collectivity around themselves, and as such support and reproduce certain lines of relationships instead of others, our vision is to open these lines to alternative touches and forms of use and life, in other words to open them towards the future of possible gatherings and erection of worlds, towards opening of the community to differences and the other and towards self re-examination – re-examination of one's historicity and normativity.

This archive strives to present a culture, but also a boost for transformation and creation of a new culture and public. This archive is an archive of all of us who are excluded from dominant models and as such strives to open the imagination for considering the possibilities, for drawing new lines of flight and struggle starting from this, marked with shame, still, an absent place of unstraight representation and national history. The archive presents the storage of our memories and feelings, of our scattered sad and joyful past, but also the starting point of our future, of initiating the erection of world-making projects liberated from the past and opened towards the futurity and towards transformation.

*Slavcho Dimitrov and Velimir Zernovski,
local co-curators*

IN/VISIBLE: THE POLITICAL AND SEXUAL REGIMES OF THE ARCHIVE

Conference / 23.02 and 25.02.2012 / Skopje/

"There has never been a document of culture, which is not simultaneously one of barbarism.
And since it itself is not free from barbarism,
neither is the process of transmission from one to another"
Walter Benjamin, Theses on the Philosophy of History, 1940

The main goal of the conference is to question, problematize and analyze the cultural and political regimes and strategies deployed in processes of storage of cultural, art and historical works and events, in particular, the regimes of visibility by the means of which (non-normative) sexual experiences and cultural practices are being in/excluded from the official national archives and institutionalized museum curating and their consequent influence on the politics of collective memory and cultural heritage. Hence, setting sexuality and gender as points of investigation, as they are being lived and experienced on social margins, we would like to open for discussion the very foundations of how the archive is being conceived, and what counts as an archive.

Official national archives and museum collections represent dispositive determined, more or less, by the purposes of actualizing and reflecting present cultural and political interests, reflecting the specific laws determining the structurations of the habitus of the art and cultural field, and thus appropriating and organizing past experiences in accordance to the demands for consolidation, glorification and legitimization of the present. The remembrance of an archive thus becomes the source of the amnesiac powers of the national culture. In this regard, we would like to open towards revision and mobilization the limits of our present by the means of undertaking the impossible task of mapping the absent places of institutionalized memory, the places of loss as the constitutive outside necessitating and making possible the institution of hegemonic cultural identity. In a Derridian vein, we consider the archive of the past to be always already the open and non-finalized archive of the future to come. The archive, according to Derrida cannot be foreclosed for coming interpretations and supplements. Each supplementary interpretation of an existing archive, each supplementary fact, testimony and reading of the linear national time, introduces certain fissure within, and deconstructs and opens it towards an inclusive and radical democratic futurity. The archive is inherently violent since its own possibility and memory is based on series of exclusions of unanticipated register of stories, facts, feelings, insidious cultures and every-day experiences, which is to say repertoire of sensible experiences excluded from the distribution of visibility for the purposes of establishing a coherent narrative necessary for the present, its ideologies and power relations.

In a cultural context, like the Macedonian is, where the resources of cultural power and cultural capital have been distributed historically on unequal grounds, and the reality and its objective relations of communal life have been founded on heteronormative and homosocial systems of perception, cognition and appreciation,

tion, non-heterosexual experiences, identities and feelings become the symptomatic place disclosing the contingent grounds of the hegemonic order. Yet, the absence of institutional and official documentation, of recognized cultural and art works and communal histories, set into motion and shatter also the very regimes of archiving and memory, thus, contesting the criteria and premises used in defining what counts as an archive and whose archives matter. Queer histories are histories of loss. Queerness marks the loss of a history and, simultaneously, the historical losses of non-heterosexual people in every-day experiences marked by affective and emotional traumas whose laws overshadow the possibility of remembering and narrating. As Ann Cvetkovich has argued, 'trauma becomes the hinge between systematic structures of exploitation and oppression and felt experiences of them.'

In these regards, under conditions of coercive normativity and violent compulsion on silence, or 'voluntary' choice of invisibility as a strategy of survival, the exigent question we have to open is: to what extent the normative criteria governing archival procedures, which is to say the optics determining which material is to be considered valuable for an archive and which narratives are legitimate to be defining the methods of selection, interpretation and organization of selected artifacts, reproduce the very social conditions that have made possible certain modes of production and included distribution of certain positions and realities for representation, while excluding others? If we consider, as we've argued, queer history to be an absented history, or a history not recognized as such, a history that cannot be intelligible as such in the dominant discursive rules of historiography (art, national and cultural), how are we to rethink the very terms of history and eligible archive storage in order to create a future that would democratize archives, memory and cultural identity/ies. How can the every-day traumatic and affective experiences of queers give rise to alternative public cultures, introduce a disjunction in historical time, narrative and identity, and how can memory and personal objects, testimonies and words create alternative modes of knowledge of what we are? How can we re-archive privacy and invisibility when the traces left are evoking unusual touches of the ephemeral, fragmented, everyday intimate lives?

Finally, we would like to open the imagination in thinking on what possibilities, what virtual lines of flight can we draw departing from this marked, yet, absent place of queer representations for initiating queer world-building projects relieved from the burden of past? How can we imagine futures of joyous resistance based on the violence of imposed silence?

In order to tackle in a comprehensive and dynamic manner these subjects, the Conference will gather at one place curators, cultural and gender studies scholars, art historians, ethnographers, human rights activists, nationalism studies experts etc. from Macedonia and the Region. Two panels will be held on the 23rd and 25th of February. The first panel will open discussion on the subject of 'Museums and Human Rights. The Role and Responsibility of Public Institutions of Today'. The panel discussion held on the 25th will tackle the subject of 'The Queer Location of Culture: Nationalism, History and Sexuality'.

Conference participants: **Katerina Zivanovich (Serbia), Ulf Peterson (Sweden), Helene Larsson (Sweden), Johanna Vapnargard (Sweden), Ilina Jakimovska (Macedonia), Nebojsa Vilich (Macedonia), Tatjana Greif (Slovenia), Gordan Bosanac (Croatia), Dusan Maljkovich (Serbia), Misha Popovich (Macedonia), Zarko Trajanoski (Macedonia), Stanimir Panayotov (Bulgaria), Ivanka Apostolovska (Macedonia), Slavco Dimitrov (Macedonia).**