



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
Press

The print and ebook versions of this book feature full-color, high-resolution images.

This Open Access version of the book includes low-resolution images in black and white only.

press.ucalgary.ca



OTHERS OF MY KIND: Transatlantic Transgender Histories
by Alex Bakker, Rainer Herrn,
Michael Thomas Taylor, and Annette F. Timm

ISBN 978-1-77385-122-8

THIS BOOK IS AN OPEN ACCESS E-BOOK. It is an electronic version of a book that can be purchased in physical form through any bookseller or on-line retailer, or from our distributors. Please support this open access publication by requesting that your university purchase a print copy of this book, or by purchasing a copy yourself. If you have any questions, please contact us at ucpress@ucalgary.ca

Cover Art: The artwork on the cover of this book is not open access and falls under traditional copyright provisions; it cannot be reproduced in any way without written permission of the artists and their agents. The cover can be displayed as a complete cover image for the purposes of publicizing this work, but the artwork cannot be extracted from the context of the cover of this specific work without breaching the artist's copyright.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE: This open-access work is published under a Creative Commons licence. This means that you are free to copy, distribute, display or perform the work as long as you clearly attribute the work to its authors and publisher, that you do not use this work for any commercial gain in any form, and that you in no way alter, transform, or build on the work outside of its use in normal academic scholarship without our express permission. If you want to reuse or distribute the work, you must inform its new audience of the licence terms of this work. For more information, see details of the Creative Commons licence at: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

UNDER THE CREATIVE COMMONS LICENCE YOU MAY:

- read and store this document free of charge;
- distribute it for personal use free of charge;
- print sections of the work for personal use;
- read or perform parts of the work in a context where no financial transactions take place.

UNDER THE CREATIVE COMMONS LICENCE YOU MAY NOT:

- gain financially from the work in any way;
- sell the work or seek monies in relation to the distribution of the work;
- use the work in any commercial activity of any kind;
- profit a third party indirectly via use or distribution of the work;
- distribute in or through a commercial body (with the exception of academic usage within educational institutions such as schools and universities);
- reproduce, distribute, or store the cover image outside of its function as a cover of this work;
- alter or build on the work outside of normal academic scholarship.

Acknowledgement: We acknowledge the wording around open access used by Australian publisher, **re.press**, and thank them for giving us permission to adapt their wording to our policy <http://www.re-press.org>



by Alex Bakker,
Rainer Herrn,
Michael Thomas Taylor,
and Annette F. Timm

OTHERS OF MY KIND

Transatlantic
Transgender
Histories

**OTHERS OF
MY KIND**



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
Press

OTHERS OF MY KIND

Transatlantic Transgender Histories

**by Alex Bakker,
Rainer Herrn,
Michael Thomas Taylor,
and Annette F. Timm**

© 2020 Alex Bakker, Rainer Herrn, Michael Thomas Taylor, and Annette F. Timm

University of Calgary Press
2500 University Drive NW
Calgary, Alberta
Canada T2N 1N4
press.ucalgary.ca

This book is available as an ebook which is licensed under a Creative Commons license. The publisher should be contacted for any commercial use which falls outside the terms of that license.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION

Title: Others of my kind : transatlantic transgender histories / by Alex Bakker, Rainer Herrn, Michael Thomas Taylor, and Annette F. Timm.

Names: Bakker, Alex, 1968- author. | Herrn, Rainer, 1957- author. | Taylor, Michael Thomas, 1977- author. | Timm, Annette F., author.

Description: Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: Canadiana (print) 20200306022 | Canadiana (ebook) 20200306073 | ISBN 9781773851211 (softcover) | ISBN 9781773851228 (open access PDF) | ISBN 9781773851235 (PDF) | ISBN 9781773851242 (EPUB) | ISBN 9781773851259 (Kindle)

Subjects: LCSH: Transgender people—North America—History—20th century. | LCSH: Transgender people—Europe—History—20th century. | LCSH: Sexual minority community—North America—History—20th century. | LCSH: Sexual minority community—Europe—History—20th century. | LCSH: Transgender people—Medical care—North America—History—20th century. | LCSH: Transgender people—Medical care—Europe—History—20th century.

Classification: LCC HQ77.9 .B35 2020 | DDC 306.76/80904—dc23

The University of Calgary Press acknowledges the support of the Government of Alberta through the Alberta Media Fund for our publications. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada. We acknowledge the financial support of the Canada Council for the Arts for our publishing program.

This book has been published with the support of the University of Calgary's Faculty of Arts.



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts
du Canada

Copyediting by Kathryn Simpson

Cover image: Harry Benjamin, *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, 1966, photograph section. University of Victoria Libraries, Transgender Archives collection. Harry Benjamin, *The Transsexual Phenomenon*. New York: Ace Publishing Corp, 1966. Special Collections call number RC560 C4B46 1966.

Cover design, page design, and typesetting by Melina Cusano

Contents

List of Galleries | *vi*

Foreword *Aaron Devor* | *vii*

Acknowledgements | *xi*

1 Introduction | *1*

*Annette F. Timm, Michael Thomas Taylor, Alex Bakker,
and Rainer Herrn*

2 *Das 3. Geschlecht* (The 3rd sex): Illustration Practices in the
First Magazine for Transvestites | *35*

Rainer Herrn

3 “I am so grateful to all you men of medicine”: Trans Circles
of Knowledge and Intimacy | *71*

Annette F. Timm

4 In the Shadows of Society: Trans People in the Netherlands
in the 1950s | *133*

Alex Bakker

5 Visual Medical Rhetorics of Transgender Histories | *177*

Michael Thomas Taylor

6 *TransTrans*: Exhibiting Trans Histories | *219*

Michael Thomas Taylor

7 Trans Transatlantic | *247*

Nora Eckert

8 Historicizing Transgender Terminology | *251*

Annette F. Timm with Michael Thomas Taylor

Bibliography | *267*

Index | *281*

Galleries

Michael Thomas Taylor and Rainer Herrn

Carla Erskine's Slides | 8

Images of Otto Spengler | 13

Lotte Hahm | 42

Voo-Doo | 52

Gender Play | 59

Harry Benjamin's Use of Photographs of Carla Erskine | 73

Trans Men | 99

Hirschfeld's "Female Transvestites" | 136

Sensationalism | 144

Photomontage of Lili Elbe | 188

Hirschfeld's "Male Transvestites" | 196

Foreword

Aaron Devor

As this book goes to press, the two most widely used medical diagnostic manuals in the world take differing approaches to the pathologization of gender diversity. The American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) (2013) includes "gender dysphoria" as a mental illness, whereas the United Nations' World Health Organization's *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* (ICD-11) (2019) lists "gender incongruence of adolescence or adulthood" as a "sexual health condition," rather than as a pathology, thereby opening a door to providing health care rather than treating disease.

Clearly, while the medical community generally agrees that medical interventions should be provided to those who need them, they are divided on the question of what constitutes "need." Those who might request such services are not always in agreement about what level of access is appropriate. Should treatment be provided on demand, by informed consent alone? Should physicians screen patients? Are psychiatric assessments needed? What we learn in this book is that these questions have been with us for more than a century.

The authors of this book have become colleagues and friends as a result of our shared commitment to understanding how trans and other gender diverse people have actively contributed to medical discourse about gender diversity. I have been an eager supporter as they developed their ideas and created effective vehicles for getting them out to the public. As the world's first Chair in Transgender Studies, I am pleased and honoured that they approached me to write this foreword.

I first met Rainer Herrn, Michael Thomas Taylor, and Annette Timm in March 2016 when they came to talk about this work at one of the "Moving Trans History Forward"

conferences that I host in Victoria, British Columbia. By June 2016 the *TransTrans* exhibit discussed in this book was opened for public display at the Nickle Galleries at the University of Calgary, in conjunction with the annual Congress for the Humanities and Social Sciences. At Annette Timm's invitation, I provided some context for the show by giving an archivist's talk about the Transgender Archives that I founded at the University of Victoria, and by participating in a curator's roundtable.

Later that month I met Alex Bakker in Amsterdam at the twenty-fourth Scientific Symposium of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) for which I serve as the official historian, an author of their *Standards of Care* since 1999, and the coordinator since 2014 of multiple translations of the WPATH *Standards of Care* (eighteen at last count). At those meetings, Alex appeared on the program directly after the official opening by Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands and spoke movingly about "Transgender Holland: Sixty Years of Culture and Care."

This book, which grew out of those talks, considers and illuminates the complex relationships that trans and gender-diverse people have always had with medical service providers. Over the past several years, and extending into the foreseeable future, trans and other people who contribute to gender diversity have been leading a movement to depathologize gender transitioning. Those who promote this approach argue that so long as being gender diverse remains defined as a mental illness, as it is in many parts of the world, trans and other

people who contribute to gender diversity will continue to be treated as incapable of making their own informed medical decisions and will suffer from high levels of discrimination and violence. Ironically, despite supposed mental incapacities gender-diverse people find that they most often have to educate medical professionals about how to provide them with proper medical care.

However, many contemporary people argue that a medical diagnosis of some sort is in the best interests of those who wish to engage medical professionals in their gender transitions. After all, medical providers generally swear an oath to do no harm, most of them like to get paid for their work, and no one wants to get sued. Furthermore, people often fail to understand that many gender-diverse people have legitimate needs for medical interventions. Having an officially recognized medical diagnosis on the books helps more people to understand that being gender diverse is a real part of natural human variation, and this better understanding helps to decrease stigmatization and violence. A diagnosis also guides medical service providers in how to care for trans and other people who contribute to gender diversity, to do so with little fear of malpractice litigation, and to get paid for bona fide medical services.

Others of My Kind: Transatlantic Transgender Histories gives us a richly illustrated window into how these kinds of questions were handled by gender-diverse people and by medical professionals from the end of the nineteenth century until the 1960s; from the time of Magnus Hirschfeld, who oversaw some of the first attempts

at transsexual transitions in the Western world, to that of Harry Benjamin, who wrote the first book on transsexualism and oversaw some of the first medical transitions in the United States. In this book, we learn new information about how the medical knowledge gained about gender diversity in early twentieth-century Germany traveled from gender-diverse people to medical professionals, and across the Atlantic to the United States.

Virtually unknown until this book, are the names and contributions of those gender-diverse people who taught the pioneering giants of trans medicine. What we learn in *Others of My Kind* is that there is nothing new about gender-diverse people educating their doctors. Magnus Hirschfeld, Alfred Kinsey, Harry Benjamin, and many of the other great pioneers of trans medicine were taught by gender-diverse people – people who knew that they were not delusional and who were eager to have their gender identities recognized by doctors, and by a diagnosis. Christine Jorgensen and Roberta Cowell are names known to many people. Less well known are Otto Spengler, Carla Erskine, Louise Lawrence, Lotte Hahm, Willy Pape, John O., Baron Hermann von Teschenberg – all of whom taught the fathers of trans medicine about gender diversity.

Each of the authors in this book gives us a different take on how trans and other people who contribute to gender diversity interacted with the most sympathetic medical men of their day. Each chapter is generously illustrated with rare historical photographs. Rainer Herrn introduces for the first time in English the earliest

known magazine for transvestites, *Das 3. Geschlecht* (The 3rd sex). (Herrn previously published a facsimile of the entire German publication run.)

Annette Timm recounts how Otto Spengler befriended Bernard Talmey, who wrote about transvestite social networks in a 1914 article in the *New York Medical Journal*. Timm also elucidates how Alfred Kinsey and Harry Benjamin built a friendship and a knowledge base about gender variance, and about how Carla Erskine and Louise Lawrence, who thought of themselves as “doing missionary work for our cause” (p. 103), befriended and assisted Kinsey and Benjamin as they learned about genders beyond women and men.

Alex Bakker recounts stories about Dutch trans pioneers of the 1950s and 1960s that he learned from archival research and oral histories he conducted. Bakker explains the harsh realities of life during this period for gender-diverse people. He recounts that there was one doctor in the Netherlands who would do the desired surgeries at a time when none would do so in the United States. When, not long after the Christine Jorgensen story spread around the globe, Denmark closed its borders to foreigners seeking “the operation,” Harry Benjamin arranged for some of his patients to travel to the Netherlands where castration was still possible for well-screened candidates. Later, many Dutch trans women and a few Dutch trans men journeyed to Casablanca, where Dr. Georges Burou famously operated on up to a thousand trans patients.

Michael Thomas Taylor then immerses us in the visual rhetoric of representation of gender diversity starting at the end

of the nineteenth century and moving through the first half of the twentieth century. He analyses the use of photography by Hirschfeld, Benjamin, and others to produce “before” and “after,” clothed and nude, pictures that together, and only together, illustrated that an individual was transvestite. In a final chapter, reflecting the shared curation of the four contributors, he also relates how the *TransTrans* team grappled with how to tell the story they wished to tell in the *TransTrans* exhibit with maximum respect for the long-dead people depicted in photographs of fifty and a hundred years ago. This chapter tells the story of the thinking that went into how the 2016 *TransTrans* art installation show at the University of Calgary and in Berlin was fashioned

This is an important book. Most people who think at all about the relationships between medical communities and gender-diverse people assume that, until very recently, trans and other people who contribute to gender diversity have been passive and grateful consumers of medical expertise. This work shines a light on the many ways that gender-diverse people have been very proactive about bringing their

needs to the attention of medical experts for more than 100 years. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to have a gender identity other than what your sex dictated that it should be was to be entirely delusional. To have a medical condition was something else entirely. With proper medical documentation, one could go out in public dressed in accordance with one’s gender identity, and sometimes even receive treatment to effect physical transition. A few brave gender-diverse people on both sides of the Atlantic made it their project to enlist medical professionals to create diagnoses so that they could be seen as real and be provided with treatment. This could only happen when they were willing to take the risk to trust the few doctors who were curious and willing to learn.

Aaron Devor, PhD, FSSS, FSTLHE
Founder and Inaugural Chair in
Transgender Studies
Founder and Academic Director,
Transgender Archives
Founder and Host, Moving Trans History
Forward conferences
Professor, Sociology Department
University of Victoria, Canada

Acknowledgements

This was a complex project that required the help and guidance of many people. We would first like to thank the people who made our first exhibition – *TransTrans* in Calgary in June 2016 – possible. The early archival research was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Faculty of Arts at the University of Calgary provided funds to mount the exhibit through a program for interdisciplinary symposia that took place at the 2016 Canadian Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences. Reed College in Portland, Oregon, also supported some of the research for the exhibition. We would particularly like to thank Nancy Janovicek, who was Annette Timm’s partner in applying for the symposium funding and in organizing the “Spaces of Gender and Sexual Security” workshop, of which *TransTrans* was a component. The director and associate directors of the Kinsey Institute’s Library and Special Collections, Liana Zhou and Shawn Wilson, were incredibly helpful and supportive, and we were particularly grateful that they trusted us to display rare objects from their collection in our exhibition in Calgary. We are also very lucky to have had the unfailing support of the curators of the Nickle Galleries at the University of Calgary, Christine Sowiak and Michele Hardy. They were there from the very early brainstorming stages of our exhibition, and Michele Hardy expertly shepherded us through various technical challenges to get things mounted. John Hails and Doug McColl did a fabulous job of mounting the exhibit, and Marla Halsted offered critical moral support to Annette in the midst of a jungle of wires and failing computer equipment. We were also thrilled that Melanie Kloetzel was willing to draw on her own research and her collaboration with the Scottish playwright Rose Ruane, to choreograph a fabulous dance performance, “Big Head/Small Neck,” for the vernissage. An image of her kloetzel&co dancers appears in this book. Thanks too to Shawn Bracket and Amy Herr for helping with the filming of the video *Carla’s Couch* and to all those individuals, particularly Annette’s colleagues and students in the Department of History, who were willing to be part of this project by taking a seat on that couch. We thank Veronica Reeves for being willing to turn Annette’s amateur filming into a much more polished final video. Special thanks to Amelia Marie Newbert and her colleagues,

who made it possible for us to go shopping for furniture in Theatre Calgary's props storage facility and who also provided set-design expertise. We are particularly grateful to the wonderfully supportive members of our advisory committee from the local community: James Demers, Tonya Callaghan, Mason Jenkins, Amelia Marie Newbert, Anne Drew Potter, and Mina Harker. Aaron Devor, Chair in Transgender Studies at the University of Victoria, kindly agreed to write our forward and provided critical advice at key moments. We were able to present our research to precisely the right audience at his "Moving Trans History" conference in Victoria, B.C., and he also led a post-opening round table in the exhibition space, which was enormously helpful in allowing us to think through some of the issues we have explored in this book.

We were delighted to be able to slightly rethink and remount the exhibition at the Schwules Museum (Gay Museum) in Berlin between 7 November 2019 and 2 March 2020. We are very grateful to the museum's director, Birgit Bosold, and to the director of their archive, Peter Rehberg, for their initial enthusiasm, their conceptual and institutional support, and their efforts to secure generous financial support from the Berlin Senate. The exhibition production in Berlin was expertly managed by Justus Heitzelmann, Mayan Printz, and Tomka Weiß. Maya Guttman was responsible for the beautiful technical installation, and we would also like to thank Kristine Schmidt for help with archival sources housed at the Schwules Museum and Daniel Sander for

the press and publicity work that helped bring in a large audience. We thank the Kinsey Institute and the Transgender Archives of Victoria, B.C. for allowing us to reproduce archival images.

A new aspect of the collaboration in Berlin was our work with the filmmakers Sabrina Rücker and Brian Andrew Hose. Their film *Carlas Wohnzimmer* was produced in close collaboration with the curators and, as Nora Eckert wonderfully details in her contribution to this book, it captures the spirit of our intention to evoke the atmosphere of supportive intimacy that we first intuited from the images we had found of trans women sitting in a 1950s living room. There is nothing like film to bridge the gaps of time, and Sabrina and Brian's excellent ideas about how to confront present-day trans people with an uncomfortable yet still familiar past helped make the exhibition relevant to a Berlin audience. Thanks too, to Athanasios Karanikolas for recommending these extremely promising artists to us, to the Met Film School Berlin for donating studio space, and to all of the interviewees in the film, who donated their time and shared their emotions with us and our audience.

Neither of the two incarnations of *TransTrans* would have been possible without the amazing design work of Andreas Puskeiler, who has followed us through all the stages of this project and who was single-handedly responsible for the professional aesthetic of the various incarnations of our exhibitions. We know that this was a labour of love, and we thank him for his patience and resilience. We are

also thankful for having wonderful images of the exhibitions themselves to work with, provided by Andreas Puskeiler and by the professional photography services of Dave Brown in Calgary and Paul Sleev in Berlin.

Each of us also incurred some personal debts in the process of conducting our research. Rainer would like to express his thanks to Carolin Pommert for editing images from *Das 3. Geschlecht*, Katharina Sykora for help in understanding the visual practices of the magazine, Wolfram Setz for the courage to publish a facsimile edition in print, Egmont Fassbinder for making rare issues of the magazine available, and the employees of the Magnus-Hirschfeld-Gesellschaft for their support. Alex is very grateful to his interview subjects: Aaicha Bergamin, Colette Berends, and Jeanne Lessenich (who have since passed away), Henk Asscheman, Margreet Groot, Joris Hage, Jos Megens, Jill Pattiradjawane, and Ms. B. He is also grateful to Walter van Emde Boas, for providing access to his father's personal files, and to Hilde Bakker for translating the original manuscript of his chapter. Annette would like to thank Katie Sutton for reading a draft of her chapter and Jill Suzanne Smith for the invitation to deliver a keynote talk about Alfred Kinsey at Bowdoin College, an occasion that provided the first draft for chapter 3 of this book. The other participants at that symposium, which celebrated the hundredth anniversary of Kinsey's graduation from Bowdoin, also provided very helpful feedback. Thanks to Donna Drucker, David Hecht, Dagmar Herzog, Michael Pettit, Marilyn Reizbaum,

Lisa Sigel, Whitney Strub, Robert Deam Tobin, and Liana Zhou. Michael would like to thank Florian Sedlmeier, who not only made extraordinary personal efforts to help him obtain some much-needed research materials on a very short timeline but has been an unfailing friend and intellectual interlocutor throughout the entire span of this project. We are all particularly grateful to anonymous reviewer A, who provided excellent feedback and was particularly expert in helping us to rethink the sections on photography and visual imagery in this book.

And finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the University of Calgary Press, particularly Brian Scrivener and Helen Hajnoczky. Brian was enthusiastic from the start and continues to support the book's afterlife, and both of them have helped us think through the various design challenges that such an image-rich book presents. Melina Cusano created the gorgeous design and was patient with the various challenges of image numbering and placement. The press also found us an excellent copy editor in Kat Simpson, who truly went beyond the call in contributing to the discussion of various ethical and word-choice conundrums and who did her work under the most trying of circumstances. Books like this are very expensive to produce, and we are therefore happy that university presses in Canada are still willing to support such work.

