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

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***TransTrans*: Exhibiting Trans Histories**

Michael Thomas Taylor

For us as curators, *TransTrans*, the name we chose for our exhibition in Calgary in 2016, means many things. It refers, of course, to the transgender transatlantic histories that give this book its title. It also points to transvestite and transsexual, the two medical terms and identities structuring these histories. The doubling of trans further signifies our intention to avoid telling any single history of trans identities but to instead explore moments of transfer, transformation, translation, transposition, transgression, and transparency. Instead of presenting a heroic story of influence and progress, our intention has been to emphasize processes of rupture, renewal, and re-appropriation. We have aimed to make visible the uneven ways that knowledge about sexuality moves across time and geographical boundaries through imagery and terminology.

Like this book, restaging *TransTrans* in Berlin after our first exhibition in Calgary continued the back-and-forth movement across the Atlantic that we trace in our research, following how these transgender stories returned to Holland and Morocco after traveling from Europe to the United States. The previous chapters of this book have emphasized

Our intention was to make visible the networks that the images reflect and the future histories that they made possible.



FIGURE 6.1: Photographs from opening of *TransTrans* in Berlin, 7 November 2019. Photos: Paul Sleev.



that deep layers of interpersonal and cross-national relationships lie behind the images we are exhibiting. As we saw it, making visible these connections and the stories they tell posed several challenges. One was to represent the networks of individuals and institutions that produced the images. Another was to show how images had migrated between contexts and sources, reflecting a range of interests and intentions. We hoped that bringing out these two dimensions would clearly document the medicalized forms of looking and normative framings reflected in many of the images and how they were used, while also highlighting how the origins of the images in other practices and discourses situate them at odds to these framings.

Our network wall, which we discussed in the introduction to this book, was one first solution to these dilemmas. Another solution was to divide both exhibitions into two sections or areas. One area of the exhibition was devoted to the public circulation of images in print sources, including excerpts from the *Steinach Film* (discussed in a gallery in this book), and another was devoted to private networks of trans individuals sharing images and stories. In both exhibitions, this more privately focused area of the exhibition centered on a reimagination of the living room where Carla Erskine took pictures of her friends. In both exhibitions, we also created or commissioned a film in

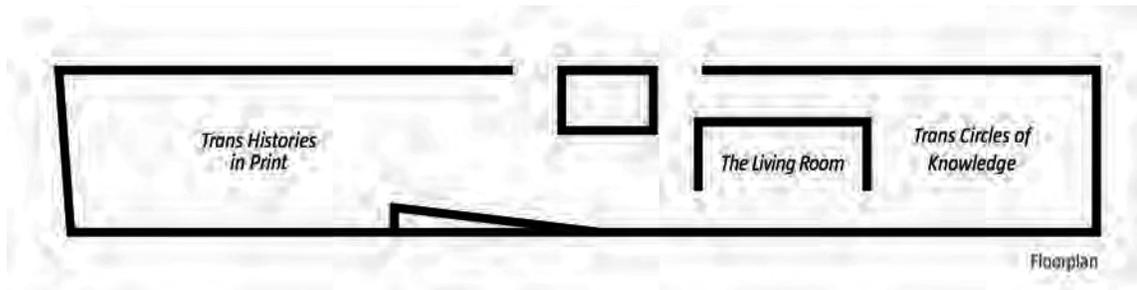


FIGURE 6.2: Exhibition Layout of *TransTrans* in Calgary



FIGURE 6.3: “Trans Histories in Print,” north wall. Photo credit: Dave Brown, LCR Photo Services, University of Calgary.

which people today respond to the historical material in the show. I will discuss all of these elements below.

In Berlin, the dual exhibition structure was realized by placing the public images from these transgender histories along the outside walls of the gallery, with the living room and the commissioned film occupying

the centre of the space. In Calgary, we made use of two separate spaces in the gallery, which we called “Trans Histories in Print” and “Trans Circles of Knowledge.”

As the layout diagram in figure 6.2 shows, the exhibition in Calgary also had two points of entry, corresponding to these two rooms. This was an accidental



FIGURE 6.4: “Trans Histories in Print,” view of south wall towards entrance. Photo credit: Dave Brown, LCR Photo Services, University of Calgary.

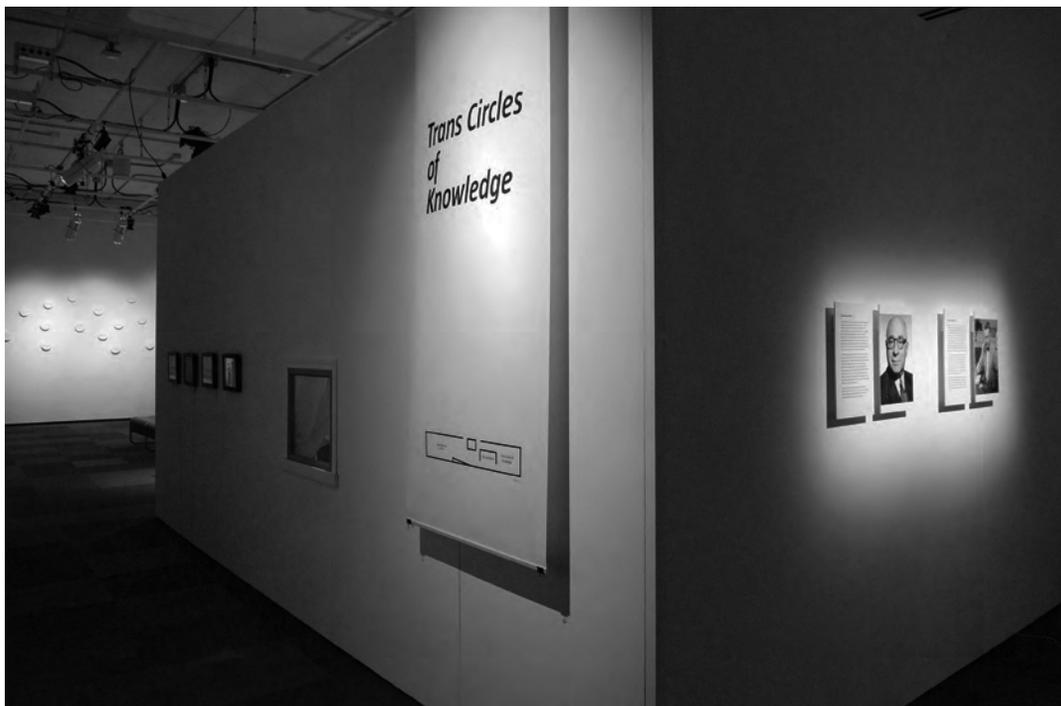


FIGURE 6.5: Entrance to “Trans Circles of Knowledge.” Photo credit: Dave Brown, LCR Photo Services, University of Calgary.



FIGURE 6.6: Network Wall in Berlin. Photo credit: Paul Sleev.



FIGURE 6.7: Entrance to “Four Trans Stories” in Calgary. Photo credit: Dave Brown, LCR Photo Services, University of Calgary.



FIGURE 6.8: Rows of “Medical Publications” and “Popular Magazines” in Calgary. Photo credit: Dave Brown, LCR Photo Services, University of Calgary.

constraint of the space, dictated by the location of an elevator shaft. However, we took this constraint as an occasion to underscore how the stories we meant to tell are not linear but exist in layers and networks. And in both exhibitions, the network wall was the most prominent element encountered by visitors upon entering the space. In Berlin, it was the first thing visitors saw, visible through the entryway into the room. And in Calgary, it was located directly across the wall from the entrance to “Trans Histories in Print.” It offered an immediate visual contrast and anchor point for our decision to depict four trans stories around the elevator shaft – Otto Spengler, J., Carla Erskine, and Katharina T. – while also highlighting

how the images we showed moved between contexts and archives.

(The images of Otto Spengler are discussed in this book in the image gallery on pages 13–17.) The wall traced these networks by means of threads between its subjects, and it emphasized the place of trans individuals in these histories with red lines emanating from their nodes.

To present the images that circulated in print, we designed thematic clusters with the images in two rows. These clusters focused on topics in this history, such as “Gender Play,” “Passing,” or “Artists,” or on key moments and stories, such as the Benjamin-Hirschfeld-Kinsey connection, how Benjamin used Carla’s images in his book, or the stories of the trans women

who had surgery in Amsterdam between 1954 and 1955. The structure of two rows also allowed us to make visible the different contexts in which images circulated. On the top row, we showed images from medical and scientific sources and the archive of the Kinsey Institute. On the bottom row, we showed images from popular sources, mainly consisting of the magazines published by Friedrich Radszuweit in the 1920s and early 1930s. These magazines included *Das 3. Geschlecht* (The 3rd sex), as well as *Die Insel* (The island), which was aimed at gay men, and *Die Freundin* (The girlfriend), which was aimed at lesbians.

Three key points from Rainer's essay should be emphasized here. First, both these medical and popular publications used images from a range of sources that included historical depictions, fashion photographs, publicity materials for performing artists, and personal photographs provided by patients or readers. Second, the same or very similar photographs were often published in both medical and popular contexts, framed accordingly in very different ways. In Radszuweit's publications, for instance, the same photographs were often published in different magazines aimed at very different audiences, which entirely changed the identity being ascribed to the person in the image. The same image may appear to depict a gay man in one context and a "female transvestite" in another. Finally, these reframings almost always reflected the normative judgements of editors and/or authors. For Hirschfeld and Benjamin, this normative framing concerned the scientific explication of a natural phenomenon,

arguments for popular understanding and acceptance intended to spur social reform, and possibilities of medical treatment. For the popular magazines, two main concerns were issues of passing – rooted primarily in norms about bourgeois respectability – and sensationalist or erotic appeals to readers.

But it is equally important to note that how these images were used generally diverged from the intentions with which they were made. Both Hirschfeld and these popular magazines published explicit calls to readers to send in photographs. The images that readers sent in reflect a range of practices and intentions; but as we have documented in this book, most of these were not medical or scientific. Here, however, images of trans men are an exception. As we discuss in our image gallery, depictions of trans men are relatively rare in published and archival sources from this time – in part because it was much more acceptable for female-bodied individuals to dress and act in masculine ways, and in part because the categories of identity ascribed to them were often more fluid and less visible than those ascribed to homosexuals, effeminate men, or trans women. Thus not only are many of the images we have of trans women explicitly medicalized and pathological, but they are also not balanced by other representations.

The way in which many of the images were collected, however, does indicate that some form of implicit or explicit consent for them to be published was given by those who sent them in. For the images in Benjamin's book, for instance, we have signed consent forms archived in his files.

Yet the intentions of the editors in asking for these images varied. When Hirschfeld asked for images for his illustrated volume, he framed his request in a universalizing way: “For this work does indeed follow the good and worthy purpose of creating understanding and just judgement for so many of our fellow humans who have been misrecognized in their own, unique way of being.”¹ This perspective is reflective of Hirschfeld’s general strategy to couch his claims for minority sexual rights in terms of human rights, though as Katie Sutton surmises, he likely also had commercial motives.² This universalizing rhetoric, in any case, is completely missing in the popular publications aimed specifically at transvestites. Rainer shows this, for instance, in looking at the appeals for photographs that were made in *Das 3. Geschlecht*, which make no pretense of speaking to any audience other than the transvestites who will be able to send in the photos the editors want. Whether the photos collected in this way were then mainly aimed at and spoke to these same transvestites when they were published is another question entirely.

What we see in many of the images is a need to make visible and explain forms of gender fluidity or transformation – whether labeled as cross-dressing, transvestitism, or transsexualism – that aspired to norms of passing. This is an intention shared both by the individuals who made the photographs and by those who published and edited them. At times this revelation could appear emancipatory and playful, and at other times it is very clearly associated with a threat of gender trouble or dissimulation.

Moreover, this threat is evident both when this fluid or incongruous gender presentation is overt and also when it fades into the background, though continuing to lurk beneath the surface of what appears to be normal gender presentation. Another striking feature of the images that circulated in public is that the images published in medical or scientific contexts often give us considerable insight into individual stories or personalities. Even though these medical images are framed by clinical, often pathologizing discourse, they are often accompanied with case studies or individual biographies. By contrast, many of the images used in popular magazines were taken from contexts dominated by clichéd motifs or personas created for publicity (such as the theatre), or they are reduced to judgements about how well the individuals pass or fit certain gendered norms of style or comportment. Yet as we have also demonstrated, even the medical publications had a popular reading audience, and published images and life stories inspired many transgender readers to appropriate this medical knowledge in refashioning their own identities and seeking out recognition and treatment.

The cluster we devoted to “Artists” in each of our exhibitions illustrates these dynamics particularly well. In the cluster depicted in figure 6.9, for instance, we see vividly how similar images – in this case, of the performer Voo-Doo – circulated in both medical and popular contexts but with very different intentions and effects. Voo-Doo can be seen here in the first three panels of the top row, and in the first panel of the bottom row. A more detailed discussion of



FIGURE 6.9: Cluster of “Artists” in “Trans Histories in Print” in Calgary, with medical images on the top row and images from popular magazines on the bottom row.

Voo-Doo’s images can be found in this book in the gallery devoted to Voo-Doo, and the other two images of artists on the top row are discussed in Michael’s essay. But it is worth noting that the images of Voo-Doo in the top row are immediately striking especially because they do not conform to categories of binary gender difference or to a difference between lived and performed identity. The juxtaposition of a photograph with a self-drawn expressive drawing also aligns this depiction of Voo-Doo with other artistic images that Hirschfeld used to shed light on the inner psychological reality of his subjects. By contrast, all the images in

the bottom row – including the photo of Voo-Doo – largely perpetuate gender norms and conventions of theatrical performance, and they give us no insight beyond the stage persona they depict. The photograph of Voo-Doo as a “dance phenomenon who has, as a woman, achieved world success in his snake-dances” circulated in *Das 3. Geschlecht* in a semiotic space in which it is functionally similar to the other images of performers we exhibited in this cluster: “Henriette,” a “New York transvestite” on tour in Germany, and a “Male artist who enjoys world fame as an oriental dancer.”



FIGURE 6.10: “Big Head/Small Neck” performed by kloetzel&co at the opening of *TransTrans* in Calgary. Photo credit: Dave Brown, LCR Photo Services, University of Calgary.

To reflect on the tensions between modes of self-fashioning and conventions of theatrical performance that we find within these histories, we also invited Melanie Kloetzel, associate professor in the School of Creative and Performing Arts at the University of Calgary, to create a dance performance for the space with her company, kloetzel&co. Choreographed by Kloetzel with a spoken-word script by Kloetzel and the Scottish playwright/performer Rose Ruane, “Big Head/Small Neck” used a projection of historical images to examine the medicalization and modification of trans and all gendered

bodies through wit, satire, and precision. The dancers’ movements and their provocative questions and provocations skewered social expectations of behaviour in relation to gender and sexuality.

Such public image histories and performances, however, were only the most visible part of the stories we told. The private, personal networks we uncovered formed the emotional centre of the exhibition, which we presented in spaces designed to prompt visitors to go beyond merely looking in order to find and experience deeper emotional connections. Our recreation of Carla’s living room



FIGURE 6.11: View through the window into the living room in *TransTrans*, Berlin, 2019. Photo credit: Paul Sleeve.

in both exhibitions (first designed and envisioned by Annette) and the exhibition elements we used to tell these personal stories were intended as invitations for visitors to imagine themselves stepping into these histories and to reflect on their own positions today – specifically, to reflect on today’s norms about gender and sexuality and how public discussion about transgender identity is rapidly shifting.

In Berlin, this living room was the spatial centre of the exhibition – the

focal point around which the rest of the exhibition was organized on the gallery walls. But in order to establish the living room as a personal space that was welcoming but also somewhat protected, the entryway was located only on one side, directly opposite a wall telling the stories of the medical and scientific authorities who publicly shaped these histories. (The wall contained the Steinach Film, a cluster on the Hirschfeld-Benjamin-Kinsey connection, and a cluster contrasting the story of how Benjamin used Carla’s images in his book with Annette’s reconstruction of Carla’s life history.) The space was nevertheless clearly marked as a construction of our own making. The wall with the curtain and window consisted only of a plywood frame – the film set used to produce the video *Carlas Wohnzimmer* to be discussed below.

In Calgary, too, we designed the space so that visitors would enter the living room only indirectly. Visitors came to the entrance through a corridor, along which we mounted digital frames displaying slideshows of many of the slides that we had found in Benjamin’s archive. Many of these were the photos that Carla made of her friends in Louise Lawrence’s living room. Visitors then came upon the window in the wall that allowed them to look into Carla’s living room.

Annette was inspired to create this window by a slide of a woman reading a book (figure 6.15), which gives some sense of the location of Lawrence’s apartment in the inadvertent capturing of a San Francisco street, likely Pine Street.³ We found the images in figures 6.15, 6.16, and 6.17 in a box of slides upon which Benjamin



FIGURE 6.12: View of the wall creating the living room in *TransTrans*, Berlin, 2019. Photo credit: Paul Sleeve.



FIGURE 6.13: Rotating images on five digital screens at the entrance to “Trans Circles of Knowledge” in Calgary. Image from KILSC-HB 17. Copyright © 2017, The Trustees of Indiana University on behalf of the Kinsey Institute. All rights reserved. Photo credit: Dave Brown, LCR Photo Services, University of Calgary.



FIGURE 6.14: View through the window into “The Living Room,” *TransTrans*, Calgary, 2016. Photo credit: Dave Brown, LCR Photo Services, University of Calgary.



FIGURE 6.15: A slide in Benjamin’s personal effects, 1954. Likely a picture of Carla’s friend Karen (pseudonym), KILSC-HB 17. Copyright © 2017, The Trustees of Indiana University on behalf of the Kinsey Institute. All rights reserved.

had scrawled only the name “Terry” and the dates 1954, 1955, and 1956. They were taken in 1954 and we believe that they are of Carla’s friend Karen (a pseudonym). (In a 1954 letter to Benjamin, Carla mentioned that Karen was an excellent seamstress: “She makes herself beautiful clothes.”)⁴ Two years later, Benjamin received more images of the same woman. Here we place the two poses side by side – though they could not originally have been viewed this way, since they were created as two separate stereoscopic slides (figures 6.16 and 6.17).

The photos are strikingly beautiful. Their beauty lies in the symmetry of the images and the figure they depict; in the ideals of feminine perfection that she

embodies; and in her success – in these images – in passing. The fact that she had been arrested for “masquerading” as a woman just two months before this photo was taken is nonetheless a sharp reminder that the beauty of these images also rests in their power to capture a fleeting moment presenting its subject as she would have liked to be seen.⁵ As witnesses to this scene, we can honour and appreciate this self-presentation, which also means understanding its complexity. Although the images depict a personal moment, staged no doubt in a private and protected space, the photographs explicitly point beyond these limits. For us, the most poignant aspect of the image on the right is the



FIGURES 6.16 and 6.17: Images of Karen likely taken by Carla in 1956, KILSC-HB 17. Copyright © 2017, The Trustees of Indiana University on behalf of the Kinsey Institute. All rights reserved.

acknowledgement of its beholders: Karen gazes into the mirror, looking past herself to smile directly at the camera.

Our exhibitions and this book also aim to look back, as it were, and to also look beyond: to see the stories and images we encounter as reflections of much more, and to create the context we need to see this depth. The mirror in the photograph also marks a layer of distance – a decision of its subject to look at us by first looking away – that we must also note and respect. One can only feel sadness when one realizes that such an image could hardly find a place in Benjamin’s book (with its clinical framing and need to illustrate his theories

of “transsexualism”), or that it was nearly lost in his archive, boxed up together with vacation slides. The beauty of the images also lies in unexpectedly discovering some of the personal story they do not show and in recognizing the historical forgetting and invisibility of which they are an emblem.

As we expanded *TransTrans* to include the histories that Alex tells about the Netherlands in the 1950s, we found many moments that similarly document these two opposing sides of transgender history. On the one hand, as Alex argues, the images in his chapter demonstrate the emerging visual openness about trans lives within the popular culture of the boulevard press

and in the context of new forms of night life in Amsterdam and other European cities. We see the self-awareness and fearless attitudes of trans pioneers who did not hide themselves, even if their images were perhaps being exploited by others for commercial gain. Pictures of Christine Jorgensen, Tamara Rees, Aaïcha Bergamin, and Bambi show women who carried the public image of what it meant to be trans. They were portrayed both as examples of the extravagant lifestyles of the jet set and as inhabitants of the seedier corners of urban culture. Both kinds of images stereotyped trans women and trans experiences for generations to come.

Yet, much like the stories revealed in the other chapters of this book and in our *TransTrans* exhibitions, there was another, far more secret side to the histories we are telling in both the United States and Europe. Alex, too, found pictures of people who wanted to remain anonymous and invisible. These pictures were taken in private, either as self-creations or with the help of a trusted trans friend. Catherine J., for example, images of whom are reproduced in Alex's chapter (figures 4.19 and 4.20), likely took self-portraits to show her doctor how she looked in female attire. Using the same visual rhetorics deployed by Hirschfeld and Benjamin, the double images show her in virtually the same posture, in both masculine and feminine presentation, in a hotel room. (It could be Hotel Hegra, but we cannot be sure.) The nervous, but excited, look on the face of Dauphine P. – who dared to be photographed outside, but still on the safe steps of Hotel Hegra – is touching, because

it similarly reveals the private hopes and fears of these individuals.

For these reasons, among others, we felt strongly that in staging *TransTrans* we needed strategies to respectfully open up these private spaces and moments. We wanted to make them accessible and to invite visitors to come into Carla's living room, as it were, but we wanted to do this in a way that would avoid or at least resist the voyeuristic, exhibitionist, and sensationalist tendencies that are embedded in these histories. For us, this meant emphasizing the context in which the images were produced, making their materiality clear, and explaining the history of how they were shared, preserved, and came to us. It also meant asking questions about what these images might mean today in our very different gender landscapes.

One strategy we chose to achieve these aims began with our publicity. In Berlin, the poster for the Berlin exhibition used the image of Karen looking into the mirror. In Calgary, we chose to use three images to create three different exhibition posters.

The decision to use the image of Carla showing her tattoos (figure 3.5), in particular, was difficult and carefully considered. In Calgary, we made many decisions about the exhibition in consultation with an advisory committee that Annette assembled from local Calgary members of the trans, LGBTQ, and queer artist communities.⁶ Like all of our choices about what images to display, however, the decision remained that of the co-curators. With the knowledge of context behind the image of Carla showing her tattoos, we tend to read it is a playful tease and a



FIGURES 6.18, 6.19 and 6.20: *TransTrans* posters, designed by Andreas Puskeiler.

delicate moment in which Carla reveals this very beautiful, feminine ornamentation. Without more context, though, the image risks being depersonalizing and titillating and threatens to invite a leering curiosity about the genitals hidden from view. Such (sensational) curiosity is explicitly part of the histories we tell, as is apparent in the second image we chose for our posters in Calgary, which was used as a cover to *Das 3. Geschlecht* and printed again inside the issue with the question, “woman or man?” The carefully placed mirror, for instance, is placed on the floor where it might reflect the figure’s genital area, teasing us to imagine looking up the skirt at what we cannot see. And as Michael discusses in his essay, the image in the third poster was published as a self-confession offering insight into the

artist’s own personality. We hoped that the series of all three posters would introduce the range of historical periods and kinds of documents shown in the exhibition, while also emphasizing dimensions of gender-play and self-fashioning that are so utterly different from the medicalized frame of so much of our material.

Another strategy for exhibiting these images was the video project we developed, called *Carla’s Couch* in Calgary and – in a substantially revised format – *Carlas Wohnzimmer* (Carla’s living room) in Berlin, where it was produced by two filmmakers, Brian Andrew Hose and Sabrina Rücker. (In the next chapter, Nora Eckert provides an account of the making of the Berlin version of the film from the perspective of the interviewees.) For the



FIGURE 6.21: Poster for *TransTrans* at the Schwules Museum, Berlin; Credit: Schwules Museum

first version in Calgary, Annette began by sending out a call we wrote together inviting individuals to come and sit on a couch similar to the one we found in these slides. (Amelia Marie Newbert helped organize the generous loan of this and other furniture from Theatre Calgary, and she helped Annette design the film set.) We initially planned to ask those who entered the Living Room where the film was shot the following questions: What is your gender? Why does it matter? Where, and to whom? How do you show it? Live it? How

do others see your gender? Do you have just one?

In practice, Annette and her assistants, Amy Herr and Shawn Brackett, found that the conversations evolved more naturally, with the interviewees making their own decisions about what, if anything, they wanted to say. These interviews were then edited together into a video presentation spread across four screens, with storyboarding by Annette and editing by Veronica Reeves. The four screens were placed directly opposite from a reproduction of Hirschfeld’s Wall of Sexual Transitions, and historical images from the slides we found in the Benjamin archival collection were interspersed between the interviews. The goal was to highlight the historical construction of sexual categories (symbolized by the frames on Hirschfeld’s wall and the separate video screens on ours) and to reveal something about real people who have accepted or struggled with those categories. Amelia Marie Newbert’s reaction to completing her interview perfectly expressed the joy of self-fulfillment that this video sought to capture (figure 6.23).

In Calgary, interviewees also wrote single words to describe their gender identity onto pieces of paper, which Annette (with the help of curator Michele Hardy) turned into bubbles (figure 6.24) to be arranged on the large end wall of the “Trans Circles of Knowledge” space – a metaphor both for the disruption of the taxonomical grid of Hirschfeld’s Wall of Sexual Transitions and for the “circles” of intimate relationships that help form these identities.

In the Berlin exhibition, the film created by Brian Hose and Sabrina Rucker similarly



FIGURE 6.22: “Carla’s Couch” video project. Photo credit: Dave Brown, LCR Photo Services, University of Calgary.



FIGURE 6.23: Amelia Marie Newbert in “Carla’s Couch.”



FIGURE 6.24: Gender circles. Photo credit: Dave Brown, LCR Photo Services, University of Calgary.

asked how our view of gender has changed since the early twentieth century. In this film, however, the focus was more explicitly on an engagement with the historical material presented in the exhibition. Hose and Rücker explored these contemporary perspectives through interviews with trans and nonbinary people living in Berlin today, and they asked protagonists to reflect on the past and connect to their lived experiences. The protagonists in the film read out and react to excerpts from Magnus Hirschfeld’s “Psycho-biological Questionnaire” from 1925 (its sixth edition), as well as to excerpts from letters that Carla Erskine sent to Harry Benjamin in the early 1950s. As in Calgary, this representation of present-day trans and gendered realities played directly opposite a

reproduction of Hirschfeld’s “Wall of Sexual Transitions.”

Both films recreated a scene reminiscent of the room we find in many of Benjamin’s slides. In Calgary, Amelia Marie Newbert used skills critical to her job as production manager at Theatre Calgary to help Annette produce this space; and in Berlin, this set design was the work of Christina Chelaru. Both designers reproduced the curtain from Louise Lawrence’s living room that had first allowed us to connect a pile of randomly sorted slides from Benjamin’s personal effects. Yet this replication of the curtain and the creation of a living room was meant only as a gesture – a historical reference to create material reality and invite visitors to physically inhabit a memory and a moment



FIGURE 6.25: Visitors on opening night *TransTrans*, Berlin, 2019. They are watching the video *Carlas Wohnzimmer*. Hirschfeld's Wall of Sexual Transitions is visible to the right.

captured in the slides and reimagined in the films.

In the living rooms in both versions of the exhibition, a camera was placed to point directly at the couch. This piece of furniture represented the place where Carla and her friends had posed for the pictures in the slides in San Francisco; and it was the same couch used in the film. In Berlin, the coffee table in front of the couch also displayed printed copies of the excerpts from Carla's letters to Benjamin. Visitors to the gallery could thus contemplate these historical documents in relative quiet and seclusion. In Calgary, the camera was interactive, turning the living room into a photobooth operated from a visitor-activated iPad on the table in front of the couch. Visitors could pose (as the three co-curators do in

figure 6.28), click on the iPad, and then print out a classic photobooth sticker that they could either keep or paste on the interactive wall outside the living room.

In both living rooms, we also displayed several of the stereoscopic slides themselves on a lightbox. In Calgary, this box was directly positioned beneath a short biography of Carla and a print of a photo where she poses so confidently in her elegant dress, with her handbag; in Berlin, it was on a side table across from the images of Karen in front of a mirror and the photo of Carla with three of her girlfriends (see figure 3.18 in chapter 3). As material artefacts of this history, the slides are also reminders of the imaginative leap that viewing them entails. Created to be seen in a personal viewfinder, they are themselves



FIGURE 6.26: View of the living room in *TransTrans*, Berlin 2019.



FIGURE 6.27: Sabrina Rücker, co-director of *Carlas Wohnzimmer*, in the living room of *TransTrans*, Berlin, 2019.

windows into a private world. As slides, however, they are also transparencies able to be projected onto a larger screen, which can serve as a metaphor for what we have done in blowing them up and printing them as elements in our exhibition or this book.

The slides we chose for this lightbox included the images of Carla used by Benjamin in his book, as well as the beautiful images of Karen looking into a mirror. One reason we displayed these sensitive slides of Carla only in their original form, in this very small format, was to emphasize their private nature. Yet this presentation was also meant to shift our gaze away from the images as projections and back to the fragility and delicacy of the slides themselves. The lightbox was meant to shine light *through* but also to help us see *what* we are looking at – to witness the life stories of these men and women, transposed and transformed on(to) images they made to be shared, though not necessarily for us. In highlighting this dual dynamic as we retraced and retold these stories in *TransTrans*, our intention was to make visible the networks that the images reflect and the future histories that they made possible.



FIGURE 6.28: Michael Thomas Taylor, Annette Timm, and Rainer Herrn in the *TransTrans* photobooth.



FIGURE 6.29: Photoboxes showing slides in Berlin and Calgary. Photo credit: Paul Sleev and Andreas Puskeiler.

TransTrans

Transgender Histories Between Germany and the United States, 1882–1966

Nickle Galleries, University of Calgary
27 May to 10 June 2016

Exhibition Production

Annette F. Timm

Curated by

Rainer Herrn, Michael Thomas Taylor & Annette F. Timm

Exhibition Design for Trans Histories in Print

Andreas Puskeiler

Exhibition Design for Trans Circles of Knowledge

Annette F. Timm

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**Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction,
Magnus Hirschfeld-Gesellschaft Berlin, Murnau-Stiftung/Bundesfilmarchiv,
Rainer Herrn, Theatre Calgary**

Set, Film Editing & Filming Assistance

Amelia Marie Newbert, Veronica Reeves, Amy Herr & Shawn Brackett

Advisory Committee

**James Demers, Tonya Callaghan, Mason Jenkins, Amelia Marie Newbert,
Anne Drew Potter, Zac Slams**

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Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction in Bloomington, Indiana**



TransTrans

Transatlantic Transgender Histories

Transatlantische Transgendergeschichten

Schwules Museum, Berlin

7 November 2019 to 2 March 2020

Kuratiert von/Curated by

Alex Bakker, Rainer Herr, Michael Thomas Taylor & Annette F. Timm

Ausstellungsgestaltung/Exhibition Design

Andreas Puskeiler

Leihgeber und Bildquellen/Loans & Images

Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction

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Rainer Herr

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Film *Carlas Wohnzimmer*

Filmemacher, Interviews und Produktion/Filming, Interviews & Production

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**Senatsverwaltung für Kultur
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Schwules Museum

be  **Berlin**

Senatsverwaltung
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SMU

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

- 1 The original German reads: “Gilt diese Arbeit doch dem guten, würdigen Zweck, zahlreichen in ihrer Eigenart verkannten Mitmenschen Verständnis und gerechte Beurteilung zu verschaffen.” Magnus Hirschfeld and Max Tilke, *Der erotische Verkleidungstrieb (Die Transvestiten)*, vol. 2: *Illustrierter Teil* (Berlin: Alfred Pulvermacher & Co., 1912), 2.
- 2 Katie Sutton, “Sexology’s Photographic Turn: Visualizing Trans Identity in Interwar Germany,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 27, no. 3 (2018): 442–79, here 455.
- 3 We have been unable to confirm the precise address of Lawrence’s apartment, but Don Lucas told Susan Stryker that he remembered it was on Pine Street. See Susan Stryker, Don Lucas Interview: Recorded at Lucas’s home in San Francisco, Transcript, 13 June 1997, GLBT Historical Society, <http://www.glbthistory.org>.
- 4 Erskine to Benjamin, 22 Jan 1954, KILSC-HB, Box 4, Ser. II C.
- 5 Carla had introduced this woman to Benjamin with the line: “Our new transvestite, [Karen], of whom Louise will probably tell you, if not already – was arrested and held 4 days for drag and given 6 months probation.” Letter dated 24 Nov 1953, KILSC-HB, Box 4, Ser. II C.
- 6 Some members of this committee also spoke with Michael via Skype. Advisory board members included James Demers, Tonya Callaghan, Mason Jenkins, Amelia Marie Newbert, Anne Drew Potter, and Zac Slams.