Introduction and welcome

The inclusive and sometimes controversial word ‘queer’ is both noun and adjective, used—by theorist of the classical world and sexuality, David Halperin—to describe a “horizon to think through both past and present”.

‘Queer’ often describes a ‘state of becoming’ rather than something fully resolved—a concept that derives from proto-queer theorists, including Michel Foucault and the later work of Judith Butler. It is not the same as ‘gay and lesbian’ and this creative tension becomes very concrete when addressing historical art and archives by and about non-normative men and women as well as those identifying as ‘gender fluid’.

Our forum is felt to be the first Australian international invited symposium on the topic of Queer Curating. It will explore the concept of curating—from the professional working in an art museum to the archivist and the collector of the everyday—and ask:

- How is image generation (art making) and the collection of art and images connected to the history of (homo)/queer sexuality?
- To what degree do art and artefacts make the queer subject visible?
- How are such subjects in turn rendered in/visible through alternative and dominant processes of curating, collecting and assembling?
- How is art connected to forms, gestures, materials and decorations that create a queer subjectivity?
- Who can ‘see’ this subjectivity and must it be explained?
- How do ‘on’ and ‘off’ stage historical subjectivities operate to both make the queer subject visible and invisible?
- What are the social, political and cultural effects of ‘queering’ an existing museum collection?
- What are the strategies used by queer men and women before decriminalisation of (homo)sexuality in many parts of the world from the 1960s–80s?
- How does a queer vision assist in those countries where (homo)sexuality is still actively policed?
About the symposium

Following the success of Tate Britain's recent *Queer British Art, 1861–1967* exhibition, the first such major exhibition held in the United Kingdom, our symposium coincides with the opening of *The Unflinching Gaze: Photo-media and the male figure* at Bathurst Regional Art Gallery (BRAG), New South Wales, Australia, on 16 October 2017. That event will be accompanied by an all-day community forum and opening night party, in the presence of the NSW Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Don Harwin MLC.

Also to accompany the exhibition, BRAG will publish a 100 page illustrated catalogue *The Unflinching Gaze* with essays by Richard Perram AOM (BRAG), Prof. Peter McNeil FAHA (UTS) and Dr Christine Dean (UTS).

Our symposium welcomes to UTS prominent international and Australian visitors and celebrates the 10th anniversary of the first queer, design-focused conference conducted in Australia ie *Queer Space* (UTS) in 2007.

Invited speakers come from Poland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America as well as elsewhere in Australia and include curators, collectors, artists, historians, sociologists and theorists of sexuality.

We note that our symposium also coincides with the divisive and frequently unpleasant ‘marriage equality’ debate in Australia. The Art Association of Australia and New Zealand (AAANZ) has recently issued its statement of support for marriage equality, for which the organisers are very grateful.

Location

The symposium will be hosted by the Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building (DAB) at the University of Technology Sydney, in partnership with BRAG and with the support of the UTS FASS (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) Australian Centre for Public History (ACPH).

Our location will be the UTS DAB building (the Peter Johnson building, adjacent to the ABC in Harris St, Ultimo)—Building 6 Level 6 Room 38, ie CB06:06:038.
Key people

Conveners:

- Prof. Peter McNeil FAHA, Distinguished Professor in Design History, School of Design, Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building, UTS
- Mr Richard Perram OAM, Director, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery (BRAG).

Invited guests and program:

- Ms Clare Barlow, Curator, Tate Britain UK: Queer British Art 1861–1967
- Dr Pawel Leszkowicz, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland: Queering the National Museums: the Polish Case—Ars homo erotica (queer archives in homophobic societies; queering the national museum of Poland; gay and lesbian and queer artistic histories)
- Mr Branden Wallace, Registrar, Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York (*the only queer art museum and archives in the USA)
- Mr Bill Zewadski, Private collector and benefactor, USA
- Mr Michael Carnes and Mr Robert Lavis, Private collectors of ‘COME’ (Collection of Male Erotica), Tasmania
- Prof. Andrew Gorman-Murray, School of Social Sciences and Psychology, Western Sydney University: Queer archives and loss in natural disasters
- Mr Richard Perram OAM, Director of BRAG and curator of The Unflinching Gaze: Photo-media and the male figure
- Dist. Prof. Peter McNeil, UTS Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building: Reading the queer trace in visual arts
- Assoc. Prof. Maryanne Dever, Associate Dean Teaching and Learning, UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Women and queer archives
- Dr Christine Dean, Contemporary artist and academic at UTS: Trans perspectives
- Mr Gary Carsley, Senior Lecturer Art and Design at the University of NSW, internationally active artist, curator and cultural commentator: Queer contemporary art practices
Associated events

Masterclass #1: for photo-media students: Dr Pawel Leszkowicz
Photography of Same Sex Couples in Gay and Lesbian Rights Campaigns and Actions in Europe

• 16 October 2017, 10–11.30am
• UTS Building 8: Dr Chau Chak Wing (Gehry designed) Building
• Contact: peter.mcneil@uts.edu.au
• All photo-media students welcome.

Masterclass #2: for higher degree research (HDR) students: Dr Pawel Leszkowicz
Contemporary Art and Queer Archival Strategies in Central and Eastern Europe

• 17 October 2017, 2.00pm
• Contact: peter.mcneil@uts.edu.au for the pre-reading requirements
• All HDR students welcome.

Prominent art historian and activist Dr Pawel Leszkowicz (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland), ‘queered’ the national museum of Poland and has written extensively in the area. He currently conducts research on the crisis of homophobia in Russia and Poland including the management of LGBTIQ archives and resources by private collectors and within private museums. This is his first visit to Sydney.

Further information

• For Bathurst BRAG enquiries, please contact the Gallery or Director Richard Perram OAM: via web contact on www.bathurstart.com.au
• For UTS and symposium enquiries, please contact:
  peter.mcneil@uts.edu.au