

schwules  
museum

lützwowstraße 73  
10785 berlin

EN



# 12 Moons Film Lounge

**2<sup>nd</sup> Moon: LÄSBISCH TV**  
**15.2. – 16.3.2018**

The First Lesbian TV Magazine on the Planet!

In its 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle, the *12 Moons Film Lounge* is transformed into an archive. For the first time since it aired, LÄSBISCH TV is made publicly available in its entire run. As the self-proclaimed “first lesbian television magazine on the planet”, LTV was produced between April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1991 and May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1993. The cable TV station FAB – Fernsehen aus Berlin, the first private regional cable TV station in Berlin – broadcasted the news and culture magazine. The broadcasts reached an audience of up to 350,000 viewers.

The magazine was conceived and produced in Berlin and bears unique testimony to the ‘ladies only’ scene of the 1990s (a scene that has almost vanished today) as well as to the rich cultural life created by and for lesbians. 44 venues – bookstores, galleries, restaurants, lesbian centers and coffee houses – provided ample opportunities to women\* for spending time amongst themselves. By night, the lesbian subculture offered a large variety of events and venues for going-out.



The makers of LTV emerged from this active and incredibly productive scene. Rosa von Praunheim who had initiated the magazine *schrill, schräg und schwul* (flaming, flamboyant and gay) – later called *andersrum* (that other way) – that was catered to gay men and broadcasted on FAB, approached cultural event manager and activist Mahide Lein about considering the possibility for a lesbian format that could be broadcasted on an alternating basis with the gay magazine. Soon after, the first team around Mahide Lein, Ira Kormannshaus, Sharron Sawyer and Susu Grunenberg aired their first 55-minute long TV episode. Mahide Lein stayed on as the key person behind LTV. She spent the next two years working exclusively for the format – without pay. Production meetings took place in her apartment and Lein operated both behind and in front of the camera.

Over 130 women\* were involved in the non-budget production of the magazine, which was broadcasted on a monthly basis (and on a bi-weekly basis its the first six months). Pre-production of LTV took place at the media centre of Freie Universität Berlin. The Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin (Film and Television Academy in Berlin) provided editing stations for post-production. In short segments, alternating teams reported on international affairs, arts, sports, everyday life and film, and provided the community with recommendations for upcoming events, all that from a lesbian and feminist perspective. Political state-

ments, a range of individual takes on pressing issues, sassy introductions and a consistently self-reflective view on the women’s and lesbian scene all testify to how progressive and dynamic LTV was for its time.



LTV interviewed the legendary feminist artist group Guerrilla Girls from New York who appealed to the audience in Berlin to form their own coalitions and to become active. The *Referat für gleichgeschlechtliche Lebensweisen* (senate unit for homosexual concerns) regularly presented its work and invited the community to talk about experiences of discrimination. A protest march following an arson attack by the radical right in Mölln in November of 1992 that had cost three women their lives was documented. In fact, sexualized, racist and patriarchal violence against women\* became one of the main concerns of the magazine. As a response to this “new eruption of violence”, many of the segments reported about international conferences and nation-wide protests and offered portraits of individual activists and groups such as practitioners of alternative medicine, martial artists and songwriters. Amongst those targeted by this wave were lesbian women\* who, then and now, do not receive the same kind of attention as gay men – overall and in terms of experiencing discrimination in particular.



A range of segments addressed the experiences of people of color and of people with disabilities. Reports included the *5. Interkulturelle Sommerseminar für Schwarze Frauen-Studi-*

*en (5th Intercultural Seminar for Black Women Studies)* or the *1. Gay and Lesbian Run*. Fairly new for the Berlin scene at the time were transgender issues that were being introduced by scenes from Monika Treut’s film “Female Misbehavior”.

Sexuality, lesbian desire and lesbian erotica were seamlessly integrated into the magazine: performative videos encouraged safer sex, night owls of the Berlin nightlife gave interviews about their dating practices, and – wearing chicken masks on their heads and dildos strapped to their backs – members of the 1. European lesbian escort service revealed details about their clients.

Artistic expression in LTV ranged from improvised performative clips to professional video art and full-length lesbian feature films. The animated film “Ich und Frau Berger” (“Me and Ms. Berger”) tells the endearing story of a secret romance with an older neighbor. Two bugs become the protagonists of a narrative about a lesbian couple in the experimental short film “Mein Frühstück mit Doris” (“My breakfast with Doris”). A format reporting exclusively lesbian and feminist news from Berlin and around the world was included as well, staged in settings like a phone booth on the street or reported from behind an ironing board. The LTV-team approached women\* on the street, asking: “Did you ever kiss a woman?”. As an ironic challenge to the cliché of the humorless lesbian, other segments invited viewers to submit lesbian jokes. The creators’ knack for playfulness, performance and masquerade vividly exude from the screen.



The magazine came to an abrupt end when it was cancelled along with *andersrum*. The network justified its decision to remove the two shows with its desire to transition to terrestrial broadcasting via antenna. The makers of FAB deemed the two homo-formats unsuitable for future programming. After its demise, Mahide Lein stored the magazine’s film stock for 26 years. Thanks to financial support from the Federal Foundation Magnus Hirschfeld, Lein is now in the process of cataloguing and digitizing the material.

Before LÄSBISCH TV will be remastered and sent to various LGBTIQ\*- and feminist archives, the episodes can be viewed in their entire run at the *12 Moons Film Lounge*. Even after 26 years, the material has not lost any of its unique character and charm. Two television formats followed on the heels of LTV:

The US-American *Dyke TV* (1993 to 2005) and *Lesben in Sicht* (Lesbians in Sight), which contained 51 episodes and was broadcasted between 1994 and 1998 on Offener Kanal Hamburg (Public-access television channel, Hamburg). Like LTV, the two magazines were created by the community for the community and broadcasted over a longer period of time.



Today, the internet has become the major site for a wide distribution of lesbian content. Newly developed formats such as podcasts and web series have become publicly available through the World Wide Web. *Mixed Messages* from Berlin, *The Foxy Five* from South Africa, *Brown Girls* or *Unsolicted Project* from the USA are only a small cross-section of this new phenomenon.

At the *12 Moons Film Lounge*, all 27 episodes of LÄSBISCH TV are available for selection on two monitors. Screenings on the big screen include a “best-of” of episodes 1-10 as well as – in time for this year’s Berlin International Film Festival, the 68th Berlinale – two special editions from 1992 and 1993 addressing the festival. These two editions critique the underrepresentation of lesbians in the Berlinale program, offering an alternative in response that includes selected scenes and interviews featuring lesbian icons like Barbara Hammer and Monika Treut. The fact that in 1992 only 44 out of the 440 films shown were created by women\*, while only one single film dealt with a lesbian theme, lead the presenters to charge that “The whole Berlinale is a scandal!”.

All three broadcasts shown on the big screen are accessible to an international audience: part of the footage is in English and English and German subtitles will be provided.

## 12 Moons

### A year-long program featuring films by feminist filmmakers and video artists

For *12 Moons*, one of the exhibition rooms at Schwules Museum is transformed into a film lounge inviting visitors to encounter various cinematic formats and international (queer) feminist positions. The film lounge is open during regular Museum opening hours, with each new moon initiating a new program cycle.

The series is a yearlong intervention against the under-representation of women's\* perspectives, specifically in media and museum contexts, but also in the arts and society overall. Month by month, the screenings raise questions about the construction and communication of forms of *femininity\_ies*, and also gauge the potential of an alternative gaze.

In search of classics in lesbian and feminist film history, of contemporary queer positions and of the voices of women\* of color, we will turn to the OWLs (Older Wiser Lesbians) and talk to experts of porn film. We will dig through archives and visit festivals and ask the communities about the stories that need to be seen and heard.

The selected films provide insights into everyday lives and desires, they question relationship structures and power constellations. A critical eye is cast on societal pressures, while times of uprising and resistance against coercive gender norms offer inspiration. The utopian concepts and moments of healing emerging from the selected films are testimonies to the global struggles of women\* for respect, self-determination and spaces to unfold.

*12 Moons* is funded by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe as part of the project *Year of the Women\**.

#### Team

Curator: Vera Hofmann

Assistance: Felix Roadkill and Anina Falasca

Engl. translation: Noemi Y Molitor

Scenography with Carolin Gießner and Théo Demans

**Sun, Mon, Wed & Fri: 2-6pm,  
Thu: 2-8pm, Sat: 2-7pm,  
Tue: closed**

**7,50 € (4 € reduced)**

**+49 (0)30 69 59 90 50  
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