

SPROUTS FOR QUEER LOVE
a public participatory performance

Shu Lea Cheang x Hani Portner
with performer: Po Nien Wang

A POLIGONAL project
CONSTELLATIONS Celebrating Queer Spaces that No Longer Exist

15:00 - 17:00 March 11, 2023

Meeting point: Gedenksäule für das Institut für Sexualwissenschaft <https://goo.gl/maps/BzZChSv6dZXzHT3A8>

Today, part of the HKW (Haus der Kulturen der Welt) is located on the former site of the institute for sexual sciences founded in part by Magnus Hirschfeld (1868 - 1935), a renowned sexologist and gay rights advocate. In May 1931, on his lecture tour to Shanghai, Hirschfeld met Li Shiu Tong, a 24 year old student. In the following years, Hirschfeld, accompanied by Li, as "companion" and "protector", gave lectures and researched queer sexual practices worldwide. In May 1933, Nazi-supporting German Student Union broke in and occupied the Institute, subsequently burned its library of books in public view. Hirschfeld was forced into exile and died in Nice in 1935. Li Shiu Tong, his not publicly acknowledged partner, died anonymously in Canada in 1975.

In designated fields around Tiergarten, we grow mushroom along with selected writings of queer studies quoted from the institute's restored library and contemporary queer scholars. This special edition of pamphlet recalls the time when homosexuality can be punished under Paragraph 175 of Nazi regime, the queer pamphlets and magazines were circulated at strategic places, i.e. canteens, u-bahns, outside of the Bundestag and the universities. Wearing wireless headphones with audio recording that recounts the Institute's their-stories, the public are invited to walk around the fields, picking up the scattered pamphlets and take them home. In an open field where microphones and sound system are set up, we invite public to read out loud the texts along with the performance in progress.

In this nature and nurture infused setting, SPROUTS FOR QUEER LOVE brings back Li Shiu Tong to revisit sites around Tiergarten where he allegedly wandered about and met the underground scenes of gay cruising and sexual anarchy when he first visited Berlin. Li Shiu Tong, enacted by a queer performer, well dressed in his signature Western suit and hat of 1930s, walks among the public. As he walks, Li progressively transforms himself from a Silent Asian to a flamboyant queer/trans spirit liberated from a repressed self during the turbulent times. At the end of the performance, the public are invited to make flower seed bombs and scattered them among the fields of mushroom. In late Spring/Summer times, we revisit the flower fields fertilized by mushroom compost.

SPROUTS FOR QUEER LOVE forever.

Artists

Shu Lea Cheang is an artist and filmmaker whose work aims to re-envision genders, genres, and operating structures. Her genre bending gender hacking practices challenge the existing operating mechanisms and the society's structural boundaries. Cheang has worked with Berlin's international queer communities in her films and artworks, including FLUIDØ (2017), 3x3x6 (2019) and her new feature, UKI, a SciFi Viral Alt-Reality cinema scheduled for release in Spring 2023.
<http://mauvaiscontact.info>

Hani Portner is a multidisciplinary queer trans Jewish disabled Artist working in Berlin Germany. Hani creates events and spaces for the queer communities; seeds guerilla gardens of mushrooms and edible plants in places of forgotten Jewish joy. Hani leads walks throughout the seasons and teaches accessible classes in foraging for the fairy minded, searching for ways to connect fellow humans with the land and the neighbors.

<https://www.instagram.com/the.rainbow.fairy/>
<https://haniportner.wixsite.com/myceliummemory>

Imagine yourself as a mushroom (audio, 11:00) by Hani Portner

During its 14 year existence, the institute for sexual sciences (1919-1933) provided gender-affirming care, counselling, surgeries, and community support. Led by Hirschfeld, queer, trans, jewish people who found shelter here have danced, talked, feasted, and celebrated Shabbat in each other's loving arms. Hani engages us in a conversation with the land about reclamation, revitalization and retaliation while recounts the people's stories. Imagine yourself as a mushroom - by envisioning ourselves as mycelium, connecting, entangling, and supporting, we can together build something beautiful, in solidarity with the marginalized and honor our ancestors.

Special thanks to John Greyson for consultation on Li Shiu Tong's life