

Call for Proposals
Queer Pop
An Academic Symposium

Venue: Center for Popular Culture and Music
(Zentrum für Populäre Kultur und Musik, ZPKM),
Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg,
Rosatraße 17-19, 79098 Freiburg, Germany

Dates: January 17 and 18, 2020

Confirmed Keynote Speakers: Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky, Professor of Media and Gender Studies, Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany

Milla Tiainen, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Gender Studies, University of Turku, Finland

Participating Musicians: Sookee, Berlin
Sue Lèwig, Cologne

Popular culture encompasses and draws from a rich history and invokes a large repertoire of works by sexually ambiguous musicians, filmmakers, writers, photographers and performers, including but not limited to members of various LGBTQI* communities. When encountered on stage or on screen, forms of sexual ambiguity often spark fascination. In everyday life in various socio-cultural contexts, sexual and bodily difference in all its forms still creates hostility while rendering vulnerable those human beings that deviate from the white, male, straight, able-bodied norm. Societies that stigmatize non-normative and non-binary embodiment and marginalize other than heterosexual forms of desire frequently instigate in queer, trans* and intersex subjects feelings such as shame, outrage, anxiety, depression, and failure.

In the last fifteen to twenty years, feminist and queer scholars have investigated the political weight of such bad feelings with renewed intensity, focusing on specific negative affects and asking the question: how can negative affects be made productive? Feminist and queer scholarship on affect critically considers the societal causes of bad feelings and explores the creative employment of these affective intensities. Speaking and writing from a marginal position, feminist and queer scholars offer a wealth of sharp-sighted analyses and astute interpretations of cultural phenomena.

Within the field of popular music studies, the topic of sexual difference has been part of the discussion for a long time. Especially in recent times, however, musicians place a distinct emphasis on matters of gender and sexual identity. Thus the pressing question arises: how and to what extent do bad feelings, sparked by social exclusion, inform aesthetic strategies in popular music and culture?

This symposium seeks to consider how feminist, queer and trans* musicians, filmmakers, writers, photographers and performers contribute to popular culture.

Which affects do their works engender, how do they rouse their audience and to what ends? How do queer pop-stars use fame, fashion and performance to fabricate and circulate ambiguous messages about new forms of gender, race, class and desire and even about the limits of what is considered to be human? Which other ways of living and relating to difference in all its forms do their contributions enable?

Topics for papers may include, but are not limited to:

- feminist and queer music cultures
- queer and transgender cinema
- feminist, queer and trans* performance art
- queer and trans* photography
- sexual ambiguity and stardom
- affect and popular music
- affect in popular culture
- specific negative affects (shame, outrage, anxiety, failure)
- drag
- camp
- signifyin(g) (Henry Louis Gates, Jr., 1988)
- disidentification (José Esteban Muñoz, 1999)
- disorientation (Sara Ahmed, 2006)
- gaga feminism
- hip-hop feminism
- afrofuturism
- queer utopias

Abstracts of at least 1.000 and no more than 1.500 characters (including spaces, excluding the bibliography) together with a short biographical note of no more than 1.000 characters (including spaces) may be submitted until **July 15, 2019** to conference.queer.pop@zpkm.uni-freiburg.de. Please submit your proposal and short bio in a single PDF file. Notification of acceptance or rejection can be expected in early August 2019.

Young scholars may apply for coverage of the expenses for overnight accommodation.

Concept and Coordination: Dr. Bettina Papenburg, Institute for Media and Cultural Studies, Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg and Dr. Kathrin Dreckmann, Institute for Media and Cultural Studies, Heinrich-Heine-University Dusseldorf.

The symposium is hosted by the ZPKM. The ZPKM and the organizers wish to thank the State Ministry of Baden-Württemberg for Science, Research and Arts for financial support.