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Hard Pressed: Queer Print Theory in Germany and Austria in the Long 19th Century

Abstract:

This essay examines the ways in which the material realities of art print production opened onto the lived experiences of their queer makers and viewers in Germany and Austria during the long 19th century. After an initial analysis of how pressure registered in the work of German artist Sascha Schneider, I examine how the translation of works by the Tyrolean painter Franz von Defregger into print facilitated their collection by queer men across Germany and Austria. My final case study focuses on the print collection of the queer Austrian Archduke Ludwig Viktor, arguing that print collecting played a constitutive role in queer self-fashioning. Working through these three disparate case studies, I examine how the technical principles of pressure, translation, and incorporation might help us to revise and reimagine queer male subjectivity in the years around the turn of the 20th century.

Keywords: Sacha Schneider, Franz von Defregger, Archduke Ludwig Viktor, print collecting, queer prints

In most histories of modern European sexuality, the relationship between homosexuality and print began in 1869: the year that the homosexual received a *name* in print. Queer theorists and historians of sexuality have dutifully and expertly mapped the printed face of homosexuality as it coursed its way through the long 19th century, emerging here in legal or medical texts and there in novels, poems, or private epistolary. Amongst heightened sensitivity to the ideas these printed materials have engendered, however, material histories of homosexuality have largely been lost in the proverbial shuffle. One might say that, though much has been said about how homosexuality appeared *in print* in and after 1869, precious little has been said about how it appeared *on paper*.

This lacuna is particularly remarkable given that paper functioned as the formative, fundamental material of 19th-century European homosexuality. Histories of

art have shown countless examples in which heterosexual desire proudly asserted itself in oil paints slathered onto monumental canvases, but queer desire necessarily worked in more subtle ways, circulating instead as pictures printed in privately illustrated books, personal advertisements in periodicals, and artworks reproduced in magazines. For the historian of sexuality, the contingent materiality of these objects provides a confounding roadblock to sustained consideration. In contrast to more concrete historical documents of heterosexuality, historical documents of homosexuality appear ephemeral, as evidence that José Esteban Muñoz famously characterised as “traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things.”¹

Muñoz purports that such a theory does not deny materiality, but it certainly queers materiality. Ephemeral evidence, in Muñoz’s system, is rarely tangible. It works around and outside of normative definitions of materiality, evading the surveillance of those who seek to eliminate queerness on the basis of its hard evidence. This conception of ephemera has been enormously influential for subsequent studies of queer life and culture, as well as for studies of material culture writ large; Gillian Russell offers the useful term “ephemeraphilia” to describe the queer attraction to ephemeral objects, which are fundamentally imbued with “fugitive knowledge, indeterminate legibility, and potentially boundless affect”.²

These theories of ephemerality may work well when applied to performance art, ticket stubs, and handbills, but their efficacy seems less promising when we attempt to apply them to art objects – even those on paper, like art prints. As tangible registers of meeting and converging materials (ink, for instance, permanently pressed and absorbed into the paper support), art prints fall squarely outside of Muñoz’s criteria of the ephemeral. Similarly, art prints are not ephemeral in the same way that Russell’s queer evidence is ephemeral; though they are often marginalised and devalued by art historians, they are nonetheless generally understood as proper artworks with attendant histories of creation, ownership, and display.

What, then, might a queer theory of the art print look like? How might we approach these objects, often integral to queer life and practices of self-identification, in a way that neither subverts nor essentialises their insistent materiality? Recent work on prints by the art historian Jennifer Roberts perhaps provides a promising model. Roberts’s methodological approach to art prints begins at the level of making and offers a way to analyse how the print “generates meaning at the level of fundamental physical operations”.³ She highlights a series of six “manoeuvres” inherent to print-making – pressure, reversal, separation, strain, interference, and alienation – each of which might denote a “specific form of intelligence, and a specific area of sensitivity, that allows for specific kinds of intervention in social and political life”.⁴

1 J. E. Muñoz, “Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts”, *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, 1996, 8, no. 2, p. 10.

2 G. Russell, “Ephemeraphilia: A Queer History”, *Angelaki*, 2018, 23, no. 1, p. 181.

3 J. L. Roberts, “Pressure”, *Contact: Art and the Pull of the Print*. The Seventieth A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., [accessed 25/11/2021], 3:33.

4 Ibid., 4:32.

My investigation takes Roberts's analysis of pressure as a starting point but quickly expands beyond her focus on the material production of prints to consider how two other technical principles – translation and incorporation – might broaden our understanding of how queer German and Austrian men collected and interacted with art prints. Queer histories are often defined by a paucity of documentation and evidence; this is true to varying degrees in my three case studies, and the evidentiary archives shrink with each successive case. As a means of reckoning with these limitations and frustrations, I embrace Saidiya Hartman's critical fabulation, which fashions speculative arguments grounded in critical readings of extant archives.⁵ Drawing on Hartman, I aim to exert my own pressure on the presumed limits of these queer narratives. How might such a radically liberatory method allow us to rethink the historical relationship between queerness and print? By remaining attentive to the technical principles of pressure, translation, and incorporation, and considering the social cognates these principles make legible, I aim to show the myriad ways that sensitivity to material and process might buttress our understanding of queer identity in the long 19th century.

Pressure: prints between sex and violence

Pressure – one of the most fundamental technical manoeuvres of printmaking – provides a fitting point of entry into a queer theory of the art print. Every print, by the very nature of the medium, registers a meeting between two disparate objects. As Roberts notes, prints are ultimately products of *contact* (which conjures notions of touch, presence, and intimacy) and *release* (which signals loss, separation, and memory).⁶ In all printmaking processes, the transfer of the image from the inked matrix to the paper support is the direct result of imposed pressure; under the force of the printing press, the ink is passed from matrix to support, leaving evidence of an otherwise invisible meeting of paper and plate.

That the force inherent to the printing process should be wielded by artists whose identities are the source of great social or political pressure should come as no surprise; as such, pressure is a key term in articulating the formation of queer male identity in the years around the turn of the 20th century. Rather than functioning primarily as an oppressive force, however, I would like to conceptualise the ontological pressure of queer identity as existing between the pleasurable pressure of physical contact and the violent pressure of forced “outing” and extortion. Pressure for the 19th-century homosexual male could serve as a source of gratification and jouissance *or* as a source of trauma and debilitation. Often, these forms of pressure were two sides of one coin, as pressing a lover's body close to one's own (*an sich pressen*) quickly gave way to the threat of blackmail and social ruination (*erpressen*).

5 See S. Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts”, *Small Axe*, 2008, no. 26, vol. 12, no. 2.

6 Roberts, *op. cit.*, 11:32.

The Russian-born German artist Sascha Schneider acutely understood the full range and volatility of this dynamic. Born in St. Petersburg in 1870, Schneider spent the majority of his life and career as an artist in Germany, attending the Academy of Fine Arts Dresden (Hochschule für Bildende Künste Dresden) in 1889 and taking a post as a professor of painting at the Grand-Ducal Saxon Art School Weimar (Großherzoglich-Sächsische Kunstschule Weimar) in 1904. Schneider worked across media as a painter, sculptor, and printmaker. In his practice, the lines between media significantly blurred: oil paintings might be revised and printed as wood engravings, figures that populated paintings might later be sculpted in stone, prints might serve as the basis for new painterly iterations of old scenes and motifs.

Beyond his purely artistic merit, Schneider is also remarkable because of his documented homosexuality and the thinly veiled homoeroticism that is evident in his body of works on paper – a homoeroticism that we might say is driven by pressure. Indeed, in Schneider's prints, the force inherent to their production is echoed in the force of muscled body on muscled body. Contact between bodies is charged, forceful, and intentional. Strong hands grasp muscled biceps and forearms tightly (sometimes uncomfortably so, as in Schneider's 1904 *Kain und Abel*, produced for Karl May's popular novel, *Winnetou I* (fig. 1). Schneider's *beau idéal* was first and foremost overly strong; his continuous pursuit of the ideal male form led him to

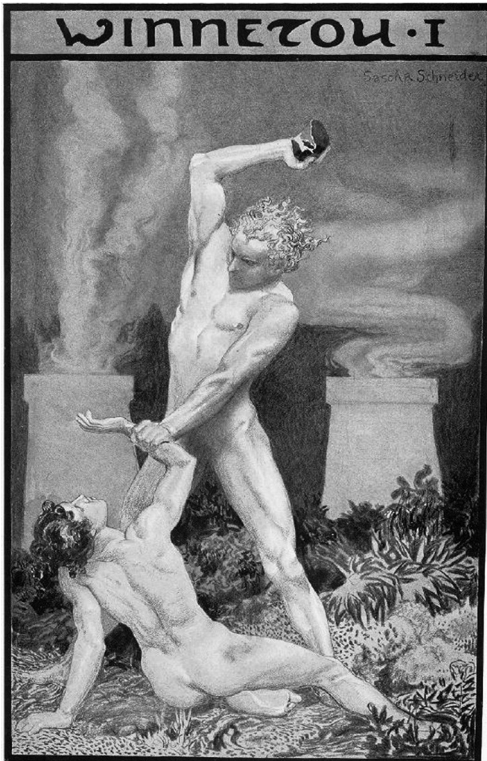


Fig. 1. Sascha Schneider, *Kain & Abel* (*Brudermord*), 1904. Lithograph.
Photo: Christiane Starck.

found the Kraft-Kunst Institut (literally, Strength-Art Institute) in Dresden in 1919, a space that primarily served as a fitness studio in which Schneider's hired models were given the equipment and training necessary to turn their bodies into hardened and muscled subjects. These models in turn exerted their own physical pressure on the same-sexed bodies of others in his paintings and prints; in his 1923 print series *Calisthenics* (*Kallisthenie*), Schneider's subjects even use the sheer weight of their partner's nude body as the pressure required to build up muscles that they exhibit for the desirous gaze of their comrades (figs. 2, 3).

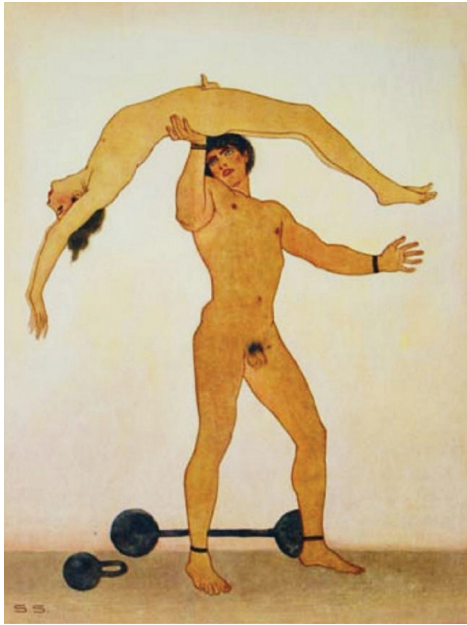


Fig. 2. Sascha Schneider, *Hochstrecke*, 1923. Printed in *Sascha Schneider*, Verlag der Schönheit, Dresden, 1923. Photo: Christiane Starck.



Fig. 3. Sascha Schneider, *Energising Exercise* (*Energisierende Übung*), 1923. Printed in *Sascha Schneider*, Verlag der Schönheit, Dresden, 1923. Photo: Christiane Starck.

The pressure that arises from such close bodily contact in many cases also activates the homoerotic valence of the work. Take, for instance, one of Schneider's best-known works, *Hypnosis* (*Hypnose*), which he originally produced as a drawing, but which was printed and circulated in a now iconic print by Breitkopf and Härtel in 1904 (fig. 4). In *Hypnosis*, Schneider pictures with unsettling clarity the fully embodied experience of homoerotic ecstasy: the two men at the centre of his composition are not only hypnotically bound (that is to say, psychically bound), but physically bound as well, as the grip of the well-muscled hypnotist presses into the flesh of the nude body now under his control. As an art print, the homoerotic corporeal pressure that plays out in *Hypnosis* recalls the technical pressure inherent to its own material production.



Fig. 4. Sascha Schneider, *Hypnosis* (*Hypnose*), 1904. Lithograph by Breitzkopf & Härtel. Photo: Christiane Starck.

Both the material pressure required for printmaking and the pressure of the sensually tight grip at the centre of the work, however, are but stand-ins for the real pressure with which Schneider seems fundamentally concerned in this work and others: the corporeal pressure of sexual intercourse. As Christiane Starck notes, when it came to Schneider's sex life, the artist was "no monk"; in a diary entry from around 1912, the artist confirmed his high estimation of the sex act, writing that "coitus is the highest and fullest harmony of body and mind: the most natural common ground".⁷ Schneider's blunt embrace of sex accords well with extant accounts that paint a picture of queer life in German metropolitan centres as anything but chaste – accounts that directly contradict the eminent sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld's apologist claims that the majority of homosexuals disavowed sexual activity.⁸ Despite Germany's Paragraph 175 and Austria's Paragraph 129(b), which criminalised sodomy, and varying degrees of oversight by municipal police forces, queer subculture in both Germany and Austria pivoted on the sexual encounter. These encounters took a variety of forms: a robust sex economy in both Berlin and Vienna provided opportunities for erotic experiences, and parks, bars, public urinals,

7 C. Starck, *Sascha Schneider: ein Künstler des deutschen Symbolismus*, Marburg, 2016, p. 153.

8 Hirschfeld refers to the large number of "celibate" (*enthaltssam*) homosexual men in Berlin and the "rarity" (*Seltenheit*) of "actual pederastic acts" (*eigentlich päderastische Akte*). See M. Hirschfeld, *Berlins Drittes Geschlecht*, Berlin–Leipzig, 1904, p. 12, 52.

and baths, like Vienna's famed Esterházy-Bad (fig. 5), functioned as meeting places for quasi-anonymous and clandestine sexual contact with other queer men.⁹



Fig. 5. August Stefan Kronstein, *Duschraum im Esterházy-Bad in der Grumpendorfer Straße 59/ Luftbadgasse 12*, c. 1880. Pencil and aquarell, 15.8 x 45 cm. Vienna, Wien Museum.

Within this nexus, Schneider's prints – like *Hypnosis* and the selected prints from his *Calisthenics* folio – read as emblems of the artist's lived sexual experience, pictures that coalesce as traces of his own participation in the subcultural economy of queer male sex. The pressure of body on the same-sexed body that Schneider bakes into his imagery here echoes the frisson inherent to the queer sexual encounter: hands grasping, pulling, caressing, the crush of bodies colliding, pressure and, ultimately, release. Pleasurable pressure imbues Schneider's prints just as it imbued the furtively pursued sexual liaisons that propelled contemporary queer life.

Even as Schneider's work evidenced a central preoccupation with the erotic pleasures that pressure could afford, however, it simultaneously registered the violence and risk that accompanied queer life and identity. As Roberts notes, the intense pressure of the printing press also serves a forensic function, as it reveals features that typically remain invisible or hidden: to expose to pressure is to impress upon paper every detail of the matrix.¹⁰ In Schneider's case, exposure was wrought by his lover and former student, Hellmuth Jahn, with whom he shared a roughly two-year romantic relationship between 1904 and 1906. After the two men relocated to Weimar in 1904, their relationship quickly deteriorated; Jahn relocated to Berlin in January 1906 and began the first of a series of blackmail attempts against the artist. Jahn "outed" Schneider in the spring of 1908, an act that forced him to address his homosexuality in a letter to the director of the Weimar Kunstschule and resign from his professorial post before fleeing to Italy to avoid prosecution.

Jahn's blackmail constituted a form of violence against queer men that was relatively common in Germany and Austria in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As

⁹ My own knowledge of queer spaces in Berlin and Vienna has been informed by R. Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity*, New York, 2014, and A. Brunner, et. al., *Sex in Wien: Lust. Kontrolle. Ungehorsam*, Vienna, 2016.

¹⁰ Roberts, op. cit., 32:10.

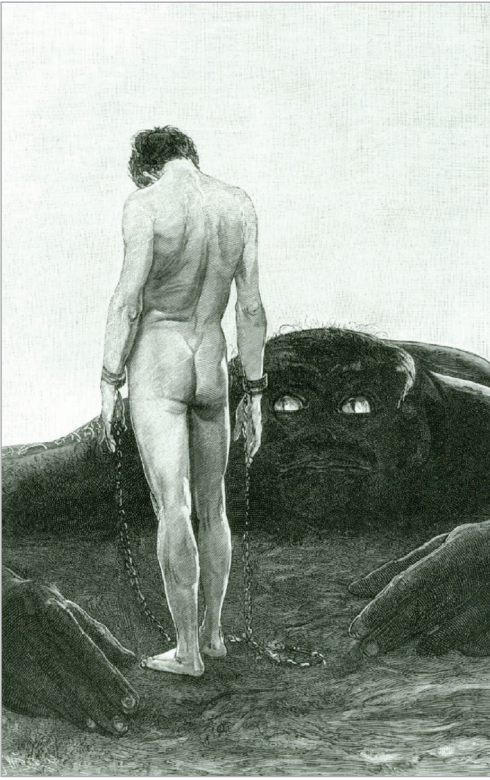


Fig. 6. Sascha Schneider, *The Feeling of Dependency* (*Das Gefühl der Abhängigkeit*), 1897. Printed in *Meisterwerke der Holzschnidekunst*, J. J. Weber, Leipzig, 1896. Photo: Christiane Starck.

Robert Beachy notes, “homosexual blackmail had come to be considered a lucrative specialisation among a class of convicted criminals,” with Hirschfeld estimating that 30% of Berlin’s homosexuals had been subjected to extortion attempts.¹¹ The success of these attempts varied; the blackmailed individual was often coerced into providing hush money upon receipt of an extortion letter, but many attempts were foiled as queer men turned to sympathetic legal authorities who apprehended and prosecuted the blackmailer instead. The course of blackmailing was never assured, however, and the very real threat of legal repercussions under sodomy laws loomed large. Blackmail, or *Erpressung*, invokes pressure in its very etymology, here applied to disastrous ends.

Somewhat speculatively, I would like to suggest Schneider’s work *The Feeling of Dependency* (*Das Gefühl der Abhängigkeit*) as a way to think through the artist’s life-long negotiation with the risk, precarity, and ontological pressure of queer identity (fig. 6). First conceived as a drawing in 1894, the picture proved enduringly popular and received renewed life in editions printed by both art publishers and the popular press. In this composition, Schneider’s subject has lost his erotic power: pleasurable

¹¹ Beachy, op. cit., pp. 77–82.

pressure has vacated the composition, leaving only the uncomfortable tightness of shackles imposed by a dark black beast. Given the artist's reticence to ascribe meaning to the work and the continual revisitation of the picture over the course of his long career, it is tempting to read the work within the context of Schneider's attempts to reconcile the pleasure of same-sex love with the weighty, confining, and occasionally immobilising pressure of queer existence. The force of the printing press resonated within this volatile dynamic, mirroring the force of the queer sexual encounter even as it echoed the risk and pressure that accompanied it.

Translation: queer iconography and mass reproduction

I here depart from the printmaking manoeuvres that form the basis of Roberts's analytical approach in order to offer two interpretive strategies of my own that speak to the historical specificities of queer male life and processes of identity formation in Germany and Austria around the turn of the century. The first of these processes is translation, an analytical suggestion that may at first glance appear ill-considered given the linguistic ties binding Germany and Austria. My interest lies not in linguistic translation, however, but rather in the pictorial translation of paintings and sculptures into prints that could easily circulate amongst a wider German and Austrian viewership. Over the course of the 19th century, technological developments allowed works of art to be inexpensively reproduced with relative ease; in addition to longstanding traditional modes of printmaking, photographic processes of reproduction developed later in the century, such as photogravure, allowed printers to produce true-to-life reproductions of painterly and sculptural masterworks.

I would like to hone in on the notion of reproductive printing as a form of translation, a term first applied to the act of printmaking by Giorgio Vasari and which benefited from further theorisation by Denis Diderot and Adam von Bartsch in the 18th and early 19th centuries.¹² Etymologically, translation (or *übersetzen* – literally “to set over”) implies movement, not only from one medium or language into another but from one place to another. To translate is to traverse, to cross over, to transport and transform. The 20th-century reproductive art print was translatory in the fullest sense: pictorially (as printmakers transformed popular works of art into etchings, engravings, lithographs, and photographs) *and* locatively (as these reproductive pictorial translations traversed political and social borders to arrive in the hands of an increasingly art-literate public).¹³

12 For a brief summary of this history, see A. Bloemacher, et. al., “Quanto in virtù d’una ingegnosa mano / la fermezza de’ marmi ai fogli cede”: The Art of Translating Sculpture into Print. An introduction”, in: *Sculpture in Print, 1480–1600*, eds. A. Bloemacher, et. al., Leiden, 2021, p. 19.

13 R. M. Verhoogt, “Free Access to the History of Art: Art Reproduction and the Appropriation of the History of Art in Nineteenth-Century Culture”, in: *Free Access to the Past: Romanticism, Cultural Heritage, and the Nation*, eds. L. Jensen, et. al., Leiden, 2010, pp. 144–66.

The Austrian-born painter Franz von Defregger provides an illuminating case in my examination of queer translation in its full force of meaning. Defregger was born in the Tyrol region of Austria in 1835, though he spent most of his career as an artist in Munich, working as a professor of history painting at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts from 1878 to 1910. Internationally known as “the Homer of the German peasantry”, Defregger earned immense popularity for his saccharine depictions of Alpine folk subjects, regional histories, and peasants from his native Tyrol, such as his 1882 *The Tyrolean Salon (Der Salon-Tiroler)* (fig. 7).¹⁴ Given their popularity, these works underwent a widespread process of translation into prints that could be purchased for personal ownership. The art press of the German printmaker Franz Hanfstaengl produced printed reproductions of Defregger’s works, featuring technologically advanced photogravure “translations” of Defregger’s most popular oil paintings, providing a unique opportunity to own the artist’s work.¹⁵ In their celebration of Germanic distinctiveness, such “homeland pictures” (*Heimatbilder*) undoubtedly served the critical function of shoring up a sense of collective Germanic identity, both amongst disparate German states and between Germans and their Austrian neighbours.¹⁶



Fig. 7. Franz von Defregger, *The Tyrolean Salon (Der Salon-Tiroler)*, 1882. Oil on canvas, 95 x 135 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie/Andres Kilger.

14 R. Lenman, *Artists and Society in Germany, 1850–1914*, Manchester, 1997, p. 70.

15 See H. Hess, “Franz von Defregger und die Ökonomisierung der Kunst”, in: *Defregger: Mythos-Missbrauch-Moderne*, eds. P. Assmann, et. al., Munich, 2020.

16 S. Egger, “Alpine Trachtenlandschaften”, in: Assmann, op. cit.

The accessibility of Defregger's "translated" art prints also had major ramifications for artistically oriented queer individuals. In 1914, the Magnus Hirschfeld observed one often encountered the same artworks time and again in the homes of homosexual men, noting that "great quantities of reproductions ... correspond[ing] to the sexual tastes of the homosexual concerned" often adorned the walls of the queer individual's home. Notably, Hirschfeld included Defregger's portraits of handsome peasant farmers in his list of queer favourites. These prints were likely picked up on the cheap from mass-produced portfolios or cut out of popular newspapers like the *Illustrated Newspaper* (*Illustrirte Zeitung*), which featured a full-page reproduction of Defregger's *Portrait of a Farmer with Pipe* on the cover of its 10 October 1885 issue (fig. 8). The collection of these prints by queer men constituted a distinct subcurrent of the wider vogue for collecting reproductions of Defregger's work. For queer men, the translation from painting to print was accompanied by a translation of context, as Defregger's nationalistic pictures were reborn as that which Jennifer Doyle evocatively termed "queer wallpaper": works that primarily operate in the service of queer identification processes, their significance activated on the walls of queer spaces rather than within official artistic institutions. In attaching subcultural meaning to Defregger's popular prints, queer men effectively secreted queer desire within dominant and normative discourses.¹⁷

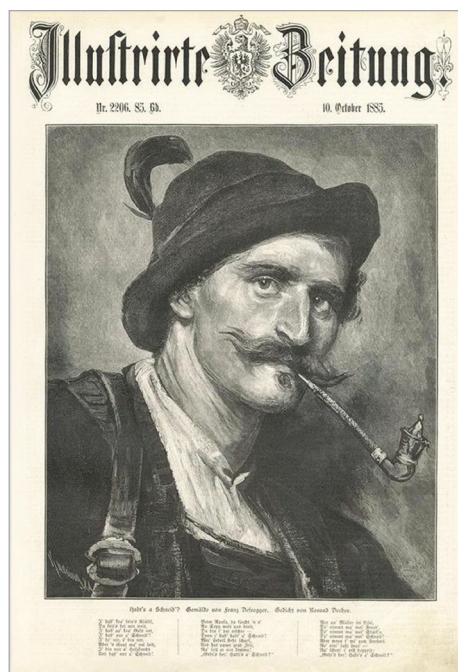


Fig. 8. Cover of *Illustrirte Zeitung* with Franz von Defregger's *Portrait of a Farmer with Pipe*, 11 October 1885.

17 J. Doyle, "Queer Wallpaper", in: *The Art of Art History*, ed. D. Preziosi, New York, 2009, pp. 391–401.

Defregger's translation into print effectively facilitated the circulation of queer identity beyond the local level, allowing the construction of queer identity across Germany and Austria to parallel the development of national and pan-German identities. Indeed, the circulation of Defregger's Tyrolean peasant prints amongst queer German men is part and parcel of the larger movement of print material amongst and between German and Austrian queer men in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Such printed material circulated independently of sexological, medical, and anthropological publications that produced "official" narratives of homosexuality: guidebooks printed in small runs by independent printing presses, like *The International Travel Guide* (*Der internationale Reiseführer*) published by Berlin's K. Schultz Verlag in 1920, provided a comprehensive list of homosexual social venues across Austria and Central Europe for the queer German traveller; select book shops, like the Buchhandlung Richard Lányi in Vienna, covertly stocked sexual scientific and homoerotic literature printed on German presses; the Viennese art publisher Salomon Bloch printed picture postcards and small prints featuring photographs by the German photographer Wilhelm von Gloeden for distribution throughout the region.¹⁸ The queer art print comprised an integral component of this queer circulatory system of print material. Already translated from one medium to another, the art print's literal and physical translation – its movement between German and Austrian locales – facilitated cross-fertilisation between burgeoning localised queer communities.

It is also important to note that these art prints – in direct contrast to the prints I will examine in the following section – were socially translatable, as well. As "low art" reproductions of "high art" paintings or sculptures, such prints essentially democratised access to pictures that were traditionally reserved for the enjoyment of the educated middle and upper classes, the aristocracy, and art connoisseurs. The access that such a social translation enabled cannot be underestimated; the printed reproduction mobilised a new world of identificatory possibilities for queer men typically excluded from the more respectable queer circles occupied by wealthy intelligentsia, offering opportunities to integrate queer icons into their lives and domestic landscapes. These cheap prints, in short, provided opportunities for lower- and middle-class queer men to participate in "wider communication and associational networks" and to translate ways of being and knowing propounded in the upper social reaches of queer culture into their own vernacular.¹⁹

Incorporation: queer collecting and communal histories

While print reproductions of oil paintings and sculptures provided opportunities for lower class men to make artistic references part of quotidian queer life, other

18 For further information on the enterprises of Lányi and Bloch, see *Geheimsache: Leben. Schwule und Lesben im Wien des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. A. Brunner, Vienna, 2005.

19 G. Russell, *The Ephemeral Eighteenth Century: Print, Sociability and the Cultures of Collecting*, Cambridge, 2020, p. 65.

operative principles made prints attractive to queer men in the educated bourgeoisie (*Bildungsbürgertum*), aristocracy, and royal households. In this final section, I offer an analysis of *incorporation* as a central term in the articulation of a queer theory of the art print. Like translation, incorporation signifies in multiple meaningful ways. In its evocation of absorption, integration, and coming together, incorporation maps well onto the printmaking process; indeed, prints might be said to be the direct result of incorporation. The inky matrix, placed in direct contact with the support and subjected to pressure, is incorporated into the paper – absorbed into the dampened paper fibres – to produce a picture. The subsumption of one body into another is fundamental to the printmaking process.

But incorporation, as a concept, is also incredibly useful in theorising the development of a communal sense of queer identity in the 19th century. This assertion perhaps becomes clearer when considered in the light of turn-of-the-century homosexualist attempts to validate the existence of the queer male by placing him within – or incorporating him into – a long historical genealogy of male homosexuality. Such attempts served the double function of showing that homosexuality was natural and long occurring, while also holding up well-known and respected historical queers as beacons of achievement to combat negative contemporary perceptions of the homosexual as degenerate and depraved. This strategy was pictured with striking clarity in the 1919 film *Different from the Others* (*Anders als die Andern*), written by Richard Oswald and Magnus Hirschfeld. As Hirschfeld himself took to the screen to condemn Paragraph 175, he conjured a queue of queer notables across time that included King Ludwig II of Bavaria, King Friedrich the Great of Prussia, Tchaikovsky, da Vinci, and a line of numerous others that stretched into the shadows (fig. 9).



Fig. 9. Richard Oswald, still from (*Different from the Others*) *Anders als die Andern*, 1919. Film. Filmmuseum München.

The conceptual inclusion of oneself into larger historical trajectories of same-sex desiring men served a critical role for queer men, who were conceptualised as pathological aberrations whose sexual preferences precluded them from perpetuating heteronormative genealogies and family trees. One way queer men affected this inclusion was through their art-collecting practices, which enabled them to synthesise their own individual histories with larger communal histories of same-sex desire to reimagine their own familial lineage in what Whitney Davis has termed “queer family romance.” In Davis’s theorisation, art objects, even those with no apparently homoerotic iconography or meaning, could come to take on a distinctly queer intelligibility when viewed within the context of the larger collection and the alternative lineages they invoked. According to Davis, “family resemblances among objects in a queer collection might sometimes serve...as a way to create an *actual alternate family*”, as collectors constructed their own self-genealogies through the assemblage of queerly coded art objects.²⁰

As a case study to think through the dynamic of incorporation as it opened from material prints onto their inclusion into queer familial collections, I turn to the art collecting practices of the Austrian Archduke Ludwig Viktor (1842–1919), younger brother to the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I. The Archduke, colloquially known as “Luzi Wuzi”, a nickname bestowed upon him by his mother, had little interest in royal duties and harboured no political ambitions; indeed, he was best known in contemporary Viennese society for his homosexuality and penchant for dressing in women’s clothing in public. The royal family was initially tolerant, though highly disparaging, of the Archduke’s queer eccentricities. In 1904, however, the family’s tolerance waned after the Archduke attempted a sexual advance on a bathhouse attendant at the Central Bath in Vienna. Likely fearing further scandal, Franz Joseph exiled his younger brother to Schloss Klessheim near Salzburg, which he had gifted to him in 1866.²¹ The Archduke lived the rest of his life estranged from Vienna and his brother despite written pleas to return to the city and royal residences. Indeed, after the death of his beloved mother, the Archduke’s relationship to his family deteriorated; rarely taken seriously, given few meaningful responsibilities, and constantly the butt of the joke, the Archduke’s alienation from the royal family and tumultuous relationships with both his Emperor brother and his wife, Empress Elisabeth, took a toll on his attachment to his Habsburg heritage.

After his exile to Klessheim, the “relationless” Archduke began to develop a “replacement family” (*Ersatzfamilie*) of his own creation.²² As in Davis’s case study of the English novelist and collector William Beckford, Ludwig Viktor’s collection of nearly 30,000 art objects suggests attempts to reimagine his royal lineage as part

20 W. Davis, “Queer Family Romance in Collecting Visual Culture”, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, June 2011, 17, no. 2–3, p. 310.

21 H. Neuhold, *Das andere Habsburg: Homoerotik im österreichischen Kaiserhaus*, Marburg, 2008, p. 182.

22 *Ibid.*, 143.

of this process.²³ Largely side-lining his role as brother to the Habsburg Emperor, Ludwig Viktor's collecting habits evidence a preoccupation with France and French nobility, to which he was tangentially connected through the marriage of his paternal aunt, the Empress Marie Louise, to Napoleon. In addition to his extensive collection of Sèvres porcelain, portraits of Marie Antoinette, and relics of Napoleon strewn throughout the palace, the Archduke gave pride of place in the entry hall staircase to two bronze statues of the French kings Henry IV of Navarre and Francis I.²⁴ The exiled Archduke's Austrian familial relations are here subverted in favour of a largely fabricated familial romance with a historically impossible genealogy of French nobility.



Fig. 10. Heinrich Gürtler, Lower hall of Schloss Klessheim, 1919. Photo: Salzburg Museum, Salzburg.

23 These inventories are accessible in a series of ten catalogs published by the Dorotheum. See *Gesamteinrichtung Schloß Klessheim Nachlaß Erzherzog Ludwig Viktor*, Bd. 1–10, Vienna, 1921.

24 The identification of these objects is the work of researchers at the Salzburg Residenzgalerie. See R. Juffinger, *Erzherzog Ludwig Viktor: Franz Josefs jüngster Bruder und sein Schloss Klessheim*, Salzburg, 2019.

Also significant, however, is the self-fashioned queer genealogy that the Archduke's collection effectively created, or, we might say, *incorporated*. Though few to none of the documented works on display at Klessheim or in the Archduke's collection were overtly homoerotic, many were imbued with queer iconic significance and their arrangement within a series of pictorial ensembles and groupings engendered distinctly queer "family resemblances" between and amongst the objects. Take, for instance, the lower hall of the palace, where the Archduke staged a series of tableaux that wedded queer iconicity (a Carrara marble bust of Alexander the Great; an oil painting of an Austrian soldier, recalling the Archduke's own sexual predilection for the soldiers garrisoned near Klessheim) and the newly-fashioned, Francophilic family romance (signified by the marble bust, draped in a mantle at centre, of Napoleon II, who spent most of his life in his mother's homeland as Franz, Duke of Reichstadt) (fig. 10). Similar queer assemblages were to be found elsewhere in the lower halls and likewise interpolated a fabulated biological lineage with works that placed the Archduke as the inheritor of a distinctly queer pictorial heritage.

Though art prints do not feature prominently in the ensembles displayed in more public spaces throughout the palace, they formed a substantial portion of the Archduke's collection. Indeed, the print collection featured the same degree of



Fig. 11. Rudolf von Alt, Schloss Klessheim, unidentified interior, 1878. Aquarell, 26.9 x 36.3 cm. Salzburg Museum, Salzburg.

thematic and iconographic intermingling seen in the palace assemblages; included in the collection are prints of the queer Friedrich the Great and his Sanssouci Palace, a number of “military albums” featuring prints of soldiers, and at least one collated portfolio of 62 lithographic portraits of handsome men produced by Viennese artists, in addition to a number of prints depicting French nobility and royalty. As is often the case in queer histories, little evidence exists as to how or where Ludwig Viktor interacted with or displayed these prints. Certainly, as Franz von Alt’s depiction of a richly ornamented sitting room in the palace suggests, some of these matted and framed prints were displayed in the Archduke’s private living spaces (fig. 11). Most of them, however, must have been kept in storage and viewed at the Archduke’s request in Klessheim’s library (as evidenced in fig. 12).



Fig. 12. Heinrich Görtler, Library of Schloss Klessheim, 1919. Photo: Salzburg Museum, Salzburg.

In lieu of hard evidence, I would like to suggest that the Archduke’s print collection might have provided opportunities to privately mirror the same queer family dynamic at work in his larger ensembles, here at an intimate scale. In its composition, his print collection represented a transition from older 19th-century practices of encyclopaedic collecting towards an individualised approach that prioritised the collector’s emotional and subjective attachments.²⁵ The resulting degree of thematic, geographic, and chronological intermingling offered the opportunity

²⁵ This transition is detailed in B. Salsbury, “Introduction”, in: *Collecting Prints, Posters, and Ephemera*, eds. R. Iskin, B. Salsbury, London, 2020.

for the construction of new narratives and relationships based on idiosyncratic pictorial groupings. In this way, such print collections recall the dynamics of early 19th-century Grangerising, in which collectors of print material customised books and manuscripts by manually incorporating art prints into their pages. Whereas the prints pasted into Grangerised books were meant to be “seen, displayed, and enjoyed,” however, print collections like the Archduke’s functioned in quieter ways, as personal archives of potentiality and possibility rather than “public monuments” to social status and good taste.²⁶ Quickly retrievable, imminently manipulable in any number of queer familial coherences, and able to be privately ogled, kept, and maintained, the extensive collection of prints that the Archduke kept at Klessheim represented a private microcosm of the more general queer family romance staged in the palace’s public spaces.

Given the surveillance of the Crown in Vienna, which stymied his ability to convene homosocial groups or conduct the erotic friendships memorialised in the “queer family” collections of William Beckford, for instance, the Archduke was forced to primarily work within his own expansive collection to curate his assemblages. The print collection thus takes on heightened relevance, offering an archive within which Ludwig Viktor might reimagine himself as the “proheritor” of a queer history of printed pictures and an “ingenitor” of a new way of conceptualising himself within a queer aristocracy of his own creation.²⁷ In a series of recursions, the act of incorporation – of absorbing, subsuming, and ultimately communing – asserts its centrality to this relationship in ever-widening circles. As paper incorporates ink, so too might the collector incorporate prints into his own queerly constructed collection – and, in so doing, establish *himself* within a transhistorical queer family.

Conclusion

What queer narratives are made viable by sensitivity to material and its social cognates? My analysis has sought to articulate three possible readings of the relationship between art prints and their queer makers and viewers, though surely these are merely three potential approaches within the web of conceptual possibilities. If technical-material approaches to the art print map well onto queer experiences in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it is because queer men were subjected to the very same technical forces that governed the creation of the prints with which they engaged. Schneider’s relationship to printmaking was undoubtedly unique, but the experiences of pressure that his prints recall were shared by burgeoning communities of queer men spread far and wide across Germany and Austria.

In my attentiveness to the ways in which these communities coalesced through processes of communication and exchange, I departed from Roberts’s close reading

26 L. Peltz, *Facing the Text: Extra-Illustration, Print Culture, and Society in Britain 1769–1840*, San Marino, 2017.

27 Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

of print production to consider how we might apply technical principles to circulation and collection. Though located in the specific case studies of Defregger and the Archduke Ludwig Viktor, my formulation of translation and incorporation aimed to provide useful terms with which to approach the queer reception of art prints more generally. Such an approach necessitates a focus that exceeds the purely pictorial, locating queerness not only at the level of style and form, but in aesthetic parallels, social cognates, and material resonances – even when those materials are scarce, absent, or frustratingly stripped of their queer valences by institutions seeking to eliminate queer subjectivity.

By way of conclusion, I reiterate the question posed by Saidiya Hartman in her postulation of critical fabulation: “is it possible to exceed or negotiate the constitutive limits of the archive?”²⁸ This study has taken the position that scholars of queer cultural heritage must emphatically answer this question in the affirmative: acknowledging the fragmentation of queer material archives must not foreclose our engagement with them. Predicated as it is on what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick conceptualised as an “open mesh of possibilities”, queerness is imminently amenable to readings that embrace rather than reject lack.²⁹ Material histories of queerness pivot on the powerful conceit that queer identity is never *just* ephemeral. Our critical engagement with material archives may never fully recover queer lives, but it can surely offer opportunities to radically envision new narratives of queer survival, self-fashioning, and communion.

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28 Hartman, op. cit., p. 11.

29 E. Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, Durham, 1993, p. 7.

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