

Acknowledgments

This book is a product of the emotional maelstrom that is life in the age of uncertainty. I had been carrying around these ideas for some time. They surfaced periodically, a conference paper here, an article there. Lockdown changed something in me, in all of us too. Along with the sleeplessness and anxiety of those first months, I found solace and not a little escape in writing this book. We all have an account of how we tried to find our way through the pandemic. Mine was by reconnecting with people an ocean away, brought into my orbit through their stories, photographs, and commitments, in some cases generations ago. It was through kinship, in other words, with a past that was not my own that I found the compulsion to write. The ties that bind us emotionally, intellectually, politically—across seemingly insurmountable differences—lent me resilience in the face of adversity, of which there is much, still, today.

There are a great many people whom I call kin, who emboldened me in their different ways to write this book. Some will never know the power of their intervention, although I have tried to show my appreciation through citation in the text itself. Others have given the gift of time, whether in sharing their thoughts on the manuscript as it developed or by checking in to see if I was okay. I treasure these interactions, large and small. They lifted my spirits and helped me in immeasurable ways.

My research into the world of LGBTQIA history in Germany has now encompassed the bulk of my adult life. It came about, in large part, because a host of people opened their hearts and minds to me over the course of many visits. From those early days at the old Landesarchiv Berlin on Kalckreutstraße, where I first met Andreas Pretzel and he introduced me to the team of citizen researchers doing work on Nazi crimes, I benefited from his enormous generosity of spirit. Through him I met Jens Dobler and Ralf Dose, whose work, friendship, and collegiality has shaped my thinking ever since. This intellectual and friendship network has since broadened to include Martin Lücke and Andrea Rottmann at the Freie Universität Berlin, Benno Gammerl at the European University Institute in Florence, and Katrin Köppert at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst in Leipzig. I'm especially grateful to be part of an international network of scholars supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft to bring critical queer, lesbian, trans*, and nonbinary history to wider publics. Many thanks to Rüdiger Lautmann and Florian Mildenerberger for their deep knowledge of the field and to Micha Eggert for his sweet emails and offer of conversation. Paula Villa Braslavsky has been a kindred spirit since we first met in DC. I cherish her insight into all things and her incredibly sharp wit.

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I could not have hoped for a better group of readers. Ona Bantjes-Ràfols, Dani Carron, Pat Gentile, Laura Horak, Alexis Shotwell, and Christiane Wilke gave the manuscript a trenchant critique with good humor, a few expletives, and tons of support. Katie Sutton gifted me her laser-sharp focus in a rigorous, multipage analysis of the core argument that helped identify inconsistencies and emboldened me to trust myself more. My wonderful student Nicholas Surges created a most usable index. Howard Chiang, Kate Davison, Tiffany Florvil, Craig Griffiths, Anna Hájková, Randal Halle, Lisa Heineman, Sam Clowes Huneke, Erik Huneke, Elissa Mailänder, Laurie Marhoefer, Jake Newsome, Simone Pflieger, Carrie Smith, Helmut Smith, Eliza Steinbock, Bob Tobin, Sébastien Tremblay, and Angela Zimmerman were important interlocutors at crucial points along the way, while Jin Haritaworn was an intellectual lodestar. Monica Black, Laura Madokoro, and Sandra Robinson have brought laughter and joy during difficult times. I'm grateful for the company of these smart women. Finally, Jennifer Adese, Benny Nemer, and Zoe Todd have taught me in very different ways how critical it is that we learn from both the teachings and the mistakes of our ancestors.

This book was written on the unceded, traditional territory of the Algonquin nation. It is a reminder of the responsibility I bear to think about my own implication in the history and legacy of racism and genocide, not as relics of the past but at work today where I live, teach, raise family, and write. This book honors those who labor and struggle to make these stories known.

There are, of course, so many other layers of support that help make books happen. Priya Nelson at Princeton University Press deserves special mention for her help in sparking the idea in the first place, while my former Duke editor, Josh Gutterman Tranen, gave me the gift of freedom to explore. Ken Wissoker and the production team at Duke have been an absolute pleasure to work with, a model for an academic press. The research for this book would not have been possible were it not for research fellowships from Carleton University, the Social Sciences Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Centre Interdisciplinaire d'Études et de Recherches sur l'Allemagne at Sciences Po. I'm especially grateful for Carleton's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and University Research Office and to my dean, Pauline Rankin, who has always been in my corner, even when I was presumptuous as all get out.

I struggle a bit to speak of my immediate kinship circle for—as the kids say—“reasons.” The pandemic hit in the middle of already tumultuous teenage years, with a force that was undeniable. There have been transitions big and small. We have survived, sometimes thrived, other times barely held on. We are still here, loving each other, and longing for better days. I know they will come.

ART SAVES ME AND MAKES ME SEE
THE MAGIC. . . . THE MAGIC ALSO
LIES IN THE DESIRE, IN THE EROTIC
ENCOUNTER. UNREPEATABLE,
AND THEREFORE ALWAYS REPEATED,
JUST LIKE PHOTOGRAPHY.

—Krista Beinstein, *Sex Is My Medium*

CRUISING IS HOW YOU TOUCH THE
WORLD, AND THE WORLD TOUCHES
YOU BACK.

—Liz Rosenfeld, "This Should Happen
Here More Often"