



ACTIVISTS, ARTISTS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, ETC.
CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

After the success of its first instalment in Lisbon in 2015, the second Non-Monogamies and Contemporary Intimacies Conference (NMCI), to be held 31 August to 2 September 2017 at the Sigmund Freud University in Vienna (Austria), aims to continue to **bring together activists, artists, academics, community members, therapists/counsellors and other practitioners** to meet each other and address the conditions, experiences, challenges, and opportunities involved in **relationships that go beyond norms such as compulsory monogamy or compulsory (hetero)sexuality.**

Intimate relationships that don't follow one of a few commonly accepted patterns – like being monogamous, being heterosexual, aiming for marriage and children, etc. – are upheld by social and legal systems and frequently portrayed in a negative light. For example, non-monogamous relationships are often described as 'infidelity' or 'failures' to conform to the 'normal' way of doing relationships. The idealised opposite-sex couple is still held up as the option to strive for – it is seen as intrinsically better. At the same time, the 'normal' patterns are not working anymore for many people, in many places, and due to many reasons.

In everyday reality, people from all kinds of backgrounds (including, for example, artists, activists, and members of various subcultural communities) are experimenting with intimate relationships, exploring alternatives, and living through pain and joy in sexuality, love, and embodied experiences. But who are they/we? Who are these people that, through their daily practices, through their artistic work, their activism, through their writing, challenge mononormativity and traditional coupledness?

Traditional views and practices related to sexualities and intimacies are being called into question by critical discourses on norms and lived experiences (and the ways in which these two elements interact). Heteronormativity, the core of the sex-gender system, is being challenged and alternative perspectives and practices are being highlighted. This trend is reflected for example in recent films or musicals that reach broad audiences (e.g. 'Brokeback Mountain' and 'The Dallas Buyers Club', Pedro Almodóvar's and Wong Kar Wai's films, or the musical 'Hedwig and the Angry Inch'). Political, cultural, and socio-economic transformations have given birth to new challenges and opportunities for activism to reach into traditional hegemonic institutions of power.

Visibility for alternative intimacies and relationship structures in mainstream media has grown in recent years – and alongside, a bias that tends to focus overly on ‘sex’ (sexy bias) rather than on other aspects of (consensual) non-monogamies. As the tendency towards ‘palatable’ kinds of sex seems to be a central trend in media presentations (e.g. newspapers, mainstream portrayals on TV), asexual and aromantic relationships have barely gained any visibility, people with disabilities are still routinely portrayed as sexually deficient or ‘inspirational’, and sex work continue to be ostracised legally and socially.

TOPICS

With NMCI, we want to **bring together people from a variety of backgrounds in order to foster a platform for the exchange of ideas and experiences, as well as opportunities for collaboration and solidarity.** We welcome contributions from artists, activists, practitioners, community members, academics/researchers, therapists/counsellors and others who have a stake in these issues.

Contributions could focus on, but are not limited to, the following:

- Presentations of non-monogamies, asexuality, aromanticism in mainstream media;
- Sexual bias in presentations of consensual non-monogamies in mainstream media;
- Connections and intersections between non-monogamies/contemporary intimacies and race, migration, sex-gender, sexual orientation, kink, class, culture, dis/ability, education;
- Legal opportunities and challenges regarding non-monogamies and contemporary intimacies;
- Films concerning the topic of consensual non-monogamies and other forms of relationships like aromantic and asexual partnerships;
- Films/books with BDSM as a topic (mainstream and alternative), also concerning the rise and visibility due to the ‘50 Shades of Gray’ effect;
- Film festivals that pursue a positive depiction of sexuality and kink;
- Community projects and organising;
- News media depictions of non-monogamies and contemporary intimacies, as well as experiences of managing contacts with the media;
- Self-help groups concerning asexuality and aromanticism;
- Photography and photographic art with non-monogamies and alternative contemporary intimacies as their main focus;

- Art and art installations as activist and social expression for alternative lifestyles as well as political interventions;
- Experimentations with permaculture, anarchist governance, community-building and non-monogamies;
- Experimentations around building new tools for communication, as well as new ethical principles for interpersonal communication;
- Integration of feminism into contemporary intimacies, and its expression through art and activism;
- Integration of queer theories/practices and queer cultures into philosophies of contemporary intimacies, and expression through art, activities (festivals such as Burning Man, Boom, etc.) and activism;
- Intersections between non-monogamies and feminist theories, LGBT studies, gender and queer studies, post/decolonialism and other anti-oppressive strands.

ACCESSIBILITY & LANGUAGE

We are dedicated to providing an **inclusive, safe and harassment-free experience** for everyone, regardless of personal/professional and financial background, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, dis-/ability, physical appearance, body size, race, class, age or religion.

The venue – Sigmund Freud University – is wheelchair-accessible. If you have additional accessibility requirements (e.g. sign-language interpreting), please contact us via e-mail. We will do our best to provide for everyone's requirements. If you are not sure whether your particular set of requirements 'counts', please e-mail us anyways!

While the **main conference language** will be **English** for logistic reasons, we plan to include a **German-language stream** to make the conference more accessible to local participants in and around Vienna/Austria.

SUBMISSIONS

We aim to have a diverse conference, both in terms of participants and in terms of different modes of engagement with the production of knowledge and social action. We therefore encourage the submission of workshops, storytelling, project presentations, performances, film screenings, debates, installations, role-plays, activist-driven reflections, reflexive exercises, and other formats. Contributions should **normally take either 20 or 90 minutes**, but we are open to other timeframes depending on your requirements.

If you would like to propose a German-language contribution, please send your abstract in **German**. For all other contributions, the preferred submission language is **English**. Provided that, upon acceptance, the contribution itself can be in English or German at the conference and the proposal can be resubmitted in English for the conference programme, proposals can also be submitted in the following languages: **Esperanto, Finnish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Ukrainian**.

Please send **proposals or abstracts** (up to 250 words for individual submissions and up to 500 words for panel submissions), a **short bio** (up to 50 words), and your **contact details** to nmcconference@gmail.com by **3 March 2017**. If applicable, please also include information about your **technical/spatial/temporal/etc. requirements**.