

LGBTQ+ ALMS 2016 With Out Borders
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**QueerCode:
Accessing LGBT archives of World War II
through the skin**

Good morning, my name is Isabelle Sentis, I am librarian and historian, specialized in the field of industrial heritage and European workers. I worked for ten years on the memorial issues related to World War Two.

I am also a feminist activist for more than twenty years. I fight for LGBTQI rights and women's rights. I militate for the recognition of persecutions and deportations suffered by LGBT people regardless of their nationalities and religions.

I connect my commitments against the LGBTphobias and my researches in women's history and LGBTQI people.

Thank you for your kindness and your goodwill about my beautiful french accent...

In french, we say : « *parler anglais comme une vache espagnole* » what means : « *speak english like a spanish cow....* » Please don't ask why...

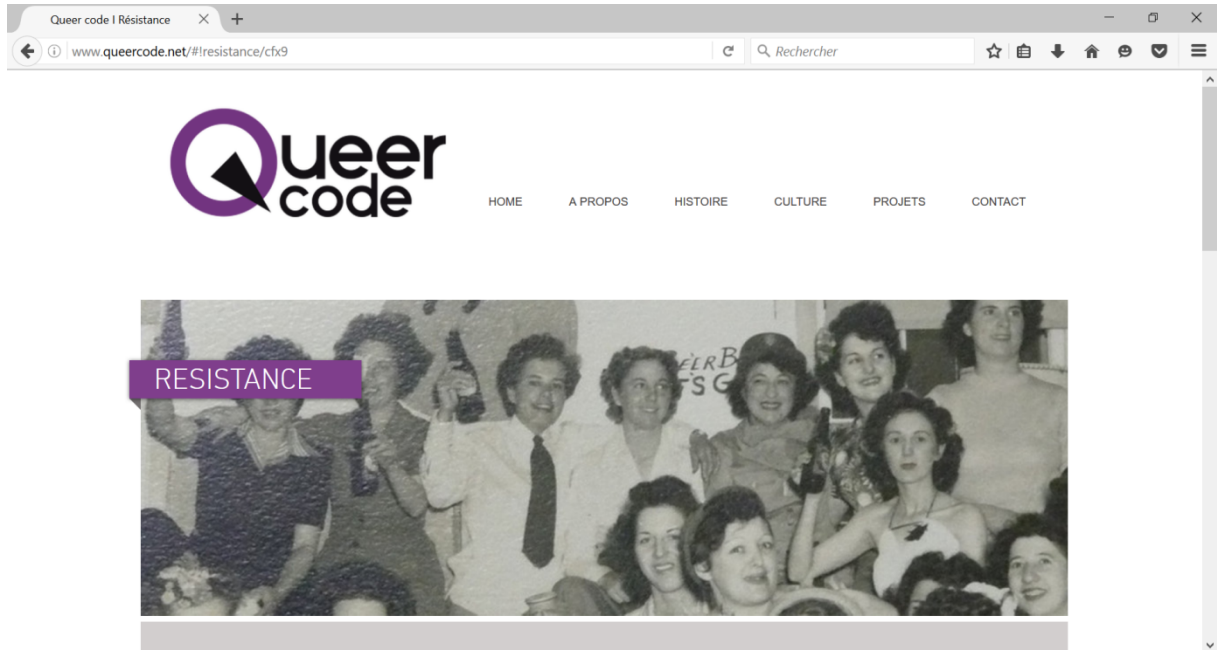
Thank you to Lydie Doleans who translated those words.

My references are very French, very focused on our marvellous country of human rights 😊.

Queer code, it's a wordplay. A play on words to discuss codes and people :

- ❖ People that the Nazis tattooed on entry in the deportation camps, to dehumanize them.
- ❖ People who have decripted military codes, such as Alan Turing.

The French public discovered the story of Alan Turing recently because of the movie "Imitation Game". Especially here, in London, you are aware of the importance of his work which has helped save thousands, even millions of lives.



I created the Queer Code platform in a participative and cooperative way. This approach aims to make visible lesbians, bisexuals, cisgenders and transgenders women who took part in the Resistance and made the story of World War Two. I asked feminist and pro-feminist activists to join me in this adventure, especially for graphic and digital design with Charlotte Passera but also for translation and mediation with Lydie Doléans, Samatha Saidi, Serge P. ... I worked with feminists, lesbians, LGBTQI collectives (Lestime, Collectif Lesbien Lyonnais, Les Flamands roses, Tels Quels...) to identify sources, in France and in other countries... Gradually I found the desire to create a space, a tool that would allow the greatest number to access these resources. From this desire was born the website queercode.net.



Claude Cahun

We created the website to commemorate the anniversary of seventy years of the liberation of the concentration camps
To make visible and transmit our history.



The QR code transfer and the Queercode sticker associated with the website also contribute to the visual identity of the Queer Code Project.

Through this Queer Code Project, I wish to gather knowledge without prioritizing. This is why the site offers various "gates" in the history of lesbians and bisexual women who participated in one way or another in the history of World War Two.

It is a fluid space that is supposed to evolve based on encounters, reflections and participations.

If the involvement of women and lesbians, particularly in the history of the Resistance, became a university research subject for ten years in France. Queer code allows everyone to seize these questions. Everyone can make a contribution to our project, even if he or she or whatever you identify in is neither historian, nor archivist or academic.

So our approach is multifaceted: scientific, artistic, popular education ...



It is also to be part of a struggle for recognition and visibility of persecution of women who loved women, cisgenders or transgenders. Understanding the mechanisms of oppression and invisibility of women and lesbians in history is essential for the emancipation of everyone whatever our identities and sexual orientations. Queer code is a LGBTQI fighting tool but also a tool of feminist struggle.

At a time when millions of persons, including LGBTQI people, are escaping from tyrannical regimes and wars, and climate change While hundreds of thousands of people are in camps at the borders of Europe, others in front of the British coast ... question and share the story of people who were interned in camps set up around the world especially in Europe during World War Two seems essential.



Lille, Journée du Souvenir de la Déportation, 2010

Make visible plural forms of resistance, without prioritization help to deconstruct the hierarchies established by heterosexism that governs our Western societies. That enrich our individual and collective imaginary world to resist today and tomorrow, here and elsewhere.



Camp d'internement de Gurs, France

We built our website in order to make visible the mobilizations of your archives to preserve the testimonies of these actors and actresses of the period.



Phyllis Arby & Mildred, Women's Army Corps, Allan Bérubé, GLBT Historical Society of San Francisco

For example : The GLBT Historical Society of San Francisco that conserve precious testimonies of soldiers (men and women) engaged in the World War Two interviewed by Allan Berubé.

We are deploying our QR code by stickers to re-materialize these resources. For example in public spaces to make visible the course of these resitants : French, German, Swiss and British ... of course!



Montpellier, 2015

They are invisibilized, particularly there in France.

So this year, during the National Day of Remembrance of the victims and heroes of the deportation, we invited by social networks and LGBTQI associations to display these stickers in public places, to participate in creating our collective memory, to be involved in the transmission of our history.



We also propose to feel connected to these resources, to these women, through our skin by affixing a temporary QR code tattoo.

I had this idea two years ago. At that time, I thought about me getting a tattoo in memory of a French woman deported to Ravensbruck for act of resistance. I met her when I was a child. I went with my father who was working on his thesis on the commitments of the French communists in World War Two.

She gave me access to her very large and beautiful humanity, a little bit like the mother of Harry Potter



Plaques en métal, aiguilles, Auschwitz, Birkenau, 2014

At the same time, there was also the discovery of five rare original metal plates of needle. Those needles were used by Nazis to tattoo prisoners. These plates were returned to the death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum in two thousand fourteen.



Now you see one of these plates. Each plate has a number formed by the needles to identify prisoners. In the beginning, they were tattooed on their breasts, and then on their left forearm. These plates have been authenticated and are preserved in the archives of the museum.



Before this discovery, young Israelis have been tattooed on the forearm the deportation number of grandparents. They created by this act intense debates.



From the exhibition **MARKED: Tattoos & Queer Identity**
@ The Canadian Lesbian + Gay Archives April 2 - May 29, 2015

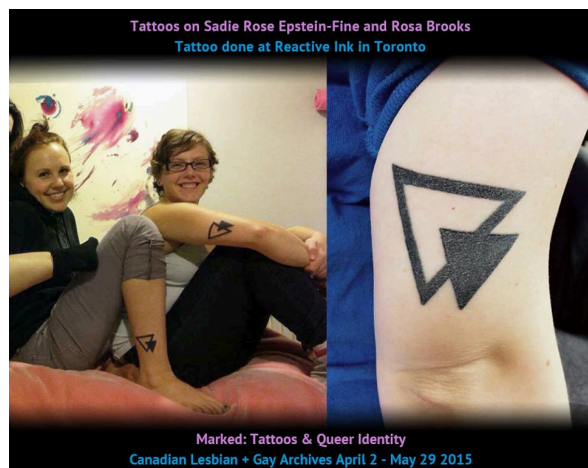
Exhibition of Christian Hernandez

Other approaches have also challenged me, like the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives with their exhibition: *Marked: Tattoos & Queer Identity* of Christian Hernandez.



Tattoos on Stephanie Young
Tattoo by Lydia K of Gem Tattoo Co.

Marked: Tattoos & Queer Identity
Canadian Lesbian + Gay Archives April 2 - May 29 2015



Tattoos on Sadie Rose Epstein-Fine and Rosa Brooks
Tattoo done at Reactive Ink in Toronto

Marked: Tattoos & Queer Identity
Canadian Lesbian + Gay Archives April 2 - May 29 2015



Solidays, Paris, 2012

After wearing T-shirts and badges of Act Up Lille and Act Up Paris, with their inverted pink triangles referring to the pink triangle of deported gays, after painting a pink triangle and a black triangle on my face of sister of perpetual indulgence, I decided to turn around the barbaric act of identification that are the tattoos made by the Nazis on the deportees.

In remembering of the thought of Monique Wittig "Every gesture is inversion" by wearing this QRcode on the skin.

This QRcode transfer is also a return to childhood games. In France, small and colorful transfers wrapped candies. I do not know if British children have the same practices ... For a few years in France, there is a revival ephemeral colorful tattoos worn by adults at parties, music festival ... our QR code transfer is also well refer to a practice now that almost vintage traces of ink stamp proving that we enter in this or that party place.

We associate and discover our history by celebration and joy, which is very important to us!



We invite you to experiment by wearing this QR code transfer during these meetings and share your feelings by e-mailing us.

In a few weeks we will introduce happenings with feminist artists who will wear this QR code transfer.

We will offer collective tours of World War Two memorials with this QR code transfer which link us to applications, serious games ... and provide new and rare informations for those too often heterosexist places.

And so we hope we modestly participate that no one around the world will be marked and dehumanized.



And as on our magnificent transgender friend Louis, our tattoos are our choice and only our choice.