

SARAH RYAN

New acquisition maps Melbourne's queer history

This year, the Library acquired five limited edition Queer-ways maps. The maps are based on a digital community cartography project and printed on cotton bandanas made and sewn in Melbourne.

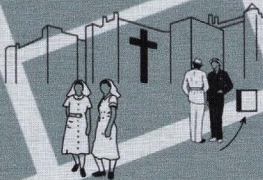
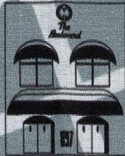
Queer-ways – Retracing Queer Footprints is a collaborative community arts project by multidisciplinary artists and educators Luciano and Georgia Keats, in partnership with the Australian Queer Archives. The artists began the project in response to the feelings of loss and isolation arising from the inability to physically meet in community spaces during the COVID19 lockdowns in Melbourne.

Luciano and Georgia found that they had limited knowledge of queer communities apart from their own. Queer-ways is a vehicle for them to learn about the histories of other communities and to share this knowledge with others. Their mission is to digitally map the past and contemporary queer cartography of Melbourne by connecting members of the LGBTIQ+ community to the locations where they feel represented, heard and able to be their true selves.

Inspired by the graphic design of the iconic Melway street directory, the digital map combines historical data from the Australian Queer Archives with individual stories to create a permanent record of queer experience. Anyone

Detail of the Melbourne Queer-ways bandana, showing a section of the CBD. Luciano, Georgia Keats and Australian Queer Archives, *Melbourne (Naarm) bandana*, cotton voile, 55 x 55 cm, 2021, H2023.66/2.

STEAMWORKS



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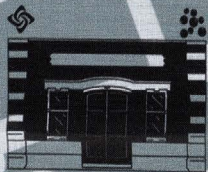
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FLINDERS ST





Luciano, Georgia Keats and Australian Queer Archives, *Collingwood (Yalla-birr-ang)* bandana, cotton voile, 55 x 55 cm, 2021, H2023.66/5.

can add to the footprint by marking locations on the map using categories such as ‘Nightlife’ and ‘Places of Queer Significance’.

The printed maps acquired by the Library draw on this digital project and give people an opportunity to wear a piece of Melbourne’s queer history. The five maps include the suburbs of St Kilda (Youruk), Melbourne (Naarm), Prahran (Pur-ra-ran), Carlton (Yern-da-ville) and Collingwood (Yalla-birr-ang). The format is a reference to ‘hankie codes’ or ‘flagging’, a popular form of non-verbal communication used within the queer community during the 1970s and 1980s to signify sexual preferences. Sales of the bandanas raise funds for the Queer-ways project, with a portion of sales going directly to the Australian Queer Archives.

Scanning the QR code on the label of the bandanas takes you to a virtual exhibition where you can view the digital maps. Once scanned, the printed maps come to life using augmented reality. This is accompanied by audio commentaries from prominent community figures that guide the audience through the history of the area, highlighting significant sites and events.

The Melbourne map documents the first queer marriage in 1856 between Edward de Lacy Evans (born Ellen Tremaye) and Mary Delahunty, unknowingly officiated at St Francis’ Church (just around the corner from State Library Victoria). The city gave queer people the anonymity to meet



Luciano, Georgia Keats and Australian Queer Archives, *St Kilda (Youruk) bandana*, cotton voile, 55 x 55 cm, 2021, H2023.66/1.

safely and socialise in bars, clubs and cafes. In the 20th century, Melbourne was host to many queer rights campaigns, such as the decriminalisation of men's same-sex intimacy in 1981 and the abolishment of historical convictions for those previously criminalised acts. Present-day events such as the Melbourne Queer Film Festival and Midsumma cement the central place of queer culture in Melbourne's history.

The project initially focused on Melbourne but has extended its reach to regional cities. As part of Pride celebrations, Queer-ways worked with the Victorian Government and Midsumma to extend the project's mapping to Daylesford, Wodonga and Mildura.

The Queer-ways website is also captured in the PANDORA archive. PANDORA was established by the National Library of Australia to selectively collect web publications that document the history and culture of Australia and its people. This ensures that the content created on the Queer-ways website will be digitally preserved for future generations.

You can learn more about researching queer history by visiting our website and searching for our research guide, 'Protests, activism & dissent in Victoria'. Your free State Library Victoria Access membership also gives you access to the databases 'Archives of Sexuality and Gender' and 'Gender Identity and Social Change'.