

Press Release



Gay Propaganda – How gay is Batman?

An exhibition by the Munich-based artist Naomi Lawrence is hoped to reduce prejudice against homosexuals, bisexuals and transsexuals in Ukraine and Germany

The ten pictures of comic figures are displayed in Munich and Kiev at the same time

As part of the twinning of Kiev and Munich, Naomi Lawrence presents the exhibition „Gay Propaganda“ in Kyiv Karas Gallery and the Munich gay center Sub from 14th until 21st February (Kiev) and from 3rd until 26th February (Munich). The exhibition is being opened simultaneously in both cities with live transmission between them. The organizers expect the artist herself, the all-girl Munich-based rock band QueenBaba and the councillor Lydia Dietrich at the opening event on the 14th February.

Munich/Kiev, 30h January 2014 - We all know and love them: Batman and Vicky the Viking, Chip 'n' Dale, Bolek and Lolek. They were and are heroes of our childhood. In her exhibition „Gay Propaganda – How gay is Batman?“ the Munich artist Naomi Lawrence puts well-known comic and cartoons figures in a new context. With a lot of humour, critical words and surprising scenes, she questions their sexual orientation. 'Cos of course Batman loves women, doesn't he? And isn't Vicky the Viking, the clever son of the chief, actually a girl?

What is normal? What appears familiar and what appears foreign to us? Naomi Lawrence questions gender roles. The **Karas Gallery** in Kiev and Munich's gay community center **Sub** display the pictures from 14th and 3rd to 21st and 26th of February in their rooms on



Andriyivskyy Descent 22-a and Müllerstraße 14. Gay Propaganda is officially opening on Valentine's Day, Friday **14th Februar** at **7.30 pm (Munich)** and **8.30 pm (Kiev)**.

CSD München is the organizer - in cooperation with the Sub, the Munich-Kiev-contact group Munich Kiev Queer and KyivPride. The Department of Arts and Culture of the Bavarian capital supports the exhibition, presented as part of the existing twinning of Kiev and Munich.

Naturally, figures such as Cat Leopold and the Cossacks also find their way into the exhibition. They have many fans in the former Soviet states of Eastern Europe. „Every motive has an astounding history”, says the artist Lawrence. „Chip 'n' Dale for example were a woman and a man in Germany until Disney declared the childless couple to be brothers. This just shows how arbitrarily such narrow roles are assigned and come to influence us and also how thrilling it can be to alter our perspective and free us of them.“

Attacks on exhibitions with a homosexual theme

In Kiev, Lawrence's pictures are displayed in a gallery protected by security guards. It is dangerous to deal with questions of gender and sexual identity in Ukraine. Exhibitions like this have repeatedly been raided and destroyed in the past. „It wasn't easy to find a gallery that was open to the topic“, says Stanislav Mishchenko, International Secretary of KyivPride. He is in charge of the project on the Kiev side. „Many people in Ukraine are clearly afraid to question their sexuality. People who do so in our country are quickly seen as enemies of traditional national values. Even people who have nothing against lesbians and gays react with hostility when sexual minorities stand up for their cause.“

With the exhibition „Gay Propaganda“ the organizers aim to reach a wide public in order to change society's general attitude. Homophobia is widespread particularly in Ukraine. Just as in Russia, legislation forbidding homosexual “propaganda” has already passed the first stage in the country's national Parliament. Naomi Lawrence's work also refers to this.



Landeshauptstadt
München
Kulturreferat

Co-Vernissage in Munich and Kiev

Hoping to attract as many people as possible, the organizers have put together a program for the shared opening evening in Kiev and in Munich on 14th February at 7.30 pm in Munich and at 8.30 pm in Kiev. Both vernissages are to be broadcast live and simultaneously: the artist Naomi Lawrence and the Munich-based all-girl rock band QueenBaba take care of the program in Kiev. In Munich councillor Lydia Dietrich (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen) among others is guest of honor. In Kiev Olena Semenova and in Munich Thomas Lechner are the evening's presenters. Both parties are to be permanently in dialogue with one another on that evening; it is also planned to bring the Kiev and Munich lesbian, gay and transgender communities together.

Munich Pride, CSD, has been celebrated in Munich since 1980. Every year tens of thousands of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people go out on the streets of Bavaria's capital to demonstrate for acceptance and equality. Shareholders of CSD Munich are LeTRA, the community centre for Lesbians, Münchner Aids-Hilfe, the party Rosa Liste and the gay community centre Sub. After Munich Pride 2012 ("Fight for Global Rights - Solidarity knows no Borders"), Munich's LGBT-community started a cooperation with its twin city of Kiev which today is coordinated by the contact group Munich Kiev Queer.

Munich Kiev Queer, a group consisting of LGBT-activists from Kiev and Munich, is committed to protecting the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Ukraine, but also in Germany. With regular political activities and cultural projects it draws the public's attention to the Human Rights situation particularly in Ukraine. Munich Kiev Queer also tries to transfer detailed knowledge by inviting Ukrainian and German LGBT-volunteers to participate in workshops. KyivPride and CSD Munich entered into a separate partnership. Munich's City Council supports this cooperation on an official level.

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