

trans* – Perspectives, Experiences, Spaces

**International Conference
Universität Koblenz, July 09-10, 2026**

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Conference Announcement

The term “trans*” encompasses a broad spectrum of identities, experiences, and life realities that do not align with the sex assigned at birth. Although trans* issues have gained increasing visibility in public discourse, they remain highly contentious—legally, medically, socially, and politically. In many contexts, trans* people continue to face discrimination, pathologization, and violence, even as new legal frameworks, activist movements, and cultural spaces emerge that challenge these structures and open up new possibilities for self-determination and community.

Trans* lives illustrate how bodies are governed, how identities are constructed and contested, how communities resist oppression, and how art and culture can serve as spaces of memory, self-empowerment, and imagination.

The conference “trans* – Perspectives, Experiences, Spaces” brings together scholars from various fields. The conference focuses on questions of embodiment, voice, structural exclusion, violence, political mobilization, and cultural representation. The presentations explore how trans* transitions have historically been made (im)possible by medical and psychological discourses; how trans* singers collectively reclaim their voices and reshape their self-understanding; how binary gender structures in organized sports create barriers and moments of discomfort for trans* athletes; how trans* people in Germany are exposed to diverse forms of violence and develop strategies of resistance; how transgender activists in Pakistan have built a social movement at the intersection of feminist, queer, and anti-patriarchal politics; and how a trans* museum is meeting the challenge of collecting and exhibiting the art and history of a diverse, evolving collective identity.

Together, these contributions raise a series of overarching questions: What does it mean to live as a trans* person in societies structured by binary gender norms? How do institutions—medical, legal, athletic, cultural—enable or restrict the self-determination of trans* people? And what forms of individual and collective resistance, solidarity, and imagination do trans* people and communities develop in response?

Day 1: July 9, 2026

Campus, Universität Koblenz (M001)

5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Arrival, informal gathering at the tables in front of Menseria, Mikadoplatz

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Public Opening Lecture

Ligia Fabris (Brasilien) (online)

Joint Dinner

Day 2: July 10, 2026

Campus, Universität Koblenz (E114)

9:30 – 10:00

Introductions

10:00-11:00

Louka Maju Goetzke (Koblenz): On the impossibility of wanting to become trans

11:15 – 12:15

Holly Patch (Dortmund): Sounding Trans* and Claiming Voice, collectively and individually

12:30 – 1:30

Kaja Müller (Koblenz): Gendered bodies on the move? Trans* people in cisgender dominated sport

Lunchbreak

3:00 – 4:00

Nele Weiher (Koblenz): Vulnerable, Invisible, Resilient: Trans* People and Violence in Germany

4:15 – 5:15

Saad Ali Khan (Islamabad/Rotterdam): *Jagi Jagi Moorat Jagi* Sindh Moorat March: Transgender activism, decolonial struggles and gender-justice in contemporary Pakistan

5:30 – 6:30

Shirin Graf (Koblenz): The Museum of Trans Hirstory and Art: Exhibiting collective identity(ies)?

6:45 – 7:30 Final Discussion

Joint Dinner

Abstracts

On the impossibility of wanting to become trans Louka Maju Goetzke

This presentation explores the role of plasticity in making trans(itions) im/possible in mid- to late-20th-century German sexology and its transatlantic exchanges with the US. Plasticity, here, names the grasp on the malleability of body and psyche – a grasp that is unevenly distributed across the gendered/sexed and gendering/sexing components at stake, such as ‚gender identity‘ and ‚the sexed body‘. I examine the interplay between efforts to therapy away the desire to transition and the emergence of the notion of a fixed gender identity. I venture that the traction gender identity gains as a concept is bound up with this constellation – wanting to transition is not allowed to stand as want.

Sounding Trans* and Claiming Voice, collectively and individually Holly Patch

In this talk, I present findings from my ethnographic research of trans* vocality with the Trans Chorus of Los Angeles (TCLA). The chorus is materially sounding trans* subjectivity and critically engaging with how trans* bodies and sounds are heard. In singing together, the TCLA singers multisensorially re-encounter their vocal bodies and aesthetically re-empower their voices. Experiences and understandings of gender in voice are transformed. I argue that claiming voice is an intricate process of embodying and incorporating vocal experience into a lived sense of self. This study reveals the individual and collective political, sonic, and embodied claiming of voice by trans* singers.

Gendered bodies on the move? Trans* people in cisgender dominated sport Kaja Müller

Sport is a highly body-centred sphere of society. Organised sport is structured by a binary gender logic and is therefore dominated by cisgender people. Drawing on current perspectives from sports science gender research in German-speaking countries, as well as approaches from gender and queer studies, my presentation addresses the following question: How do trans* people experience participating in sport in Germany?

To examine more closely how gender diversity is currently addressed in sport, I have conducted interviews with trans* athletes from various sports. For those athletes, there is a range of potential structural barriers, a lack of regulations, fears as well as places and moments of discomfort that shape their sporting practices. This presentation is dedicated to a critical examination of the characteristics of organised sport, the experiences of the trans* athletes interviewed, and the ambivalent significance of sport. It concludes with suggestions on how sport could be made more attractive to trans* people.

Vulnerable, Invisible, Resistant: Trans People and Violence in Germany
Nele Weiher

Trans* people in Germany are particularly affected by violence—physical, psychological, and structural. The lecture provides an overview of the forms and extent of this violence: from everyday experiences of discrimination and verbal abuse to physical assaults and institutional violence perpetrated by government agencies, medical systems, and legal structures. It explores which groups within the trans* community are particularly vulnerable—such as trans* people of color, homeless trans* individuals, or trans* youth. At the same time, the lecture focuses on strategies of resistance and self-empowerment: How do trans* people organize against violence, and what political demands arise from this? The presentation views violence not merely as an individual fate, but as an expression of societal power relations—and explores the conditions necessary for a society in which trans* people can live safely.

Jagi Jagi Moorat Jagi Sindh Moorat March: Transgender activism, decolonial struggles and gender-justice in contemporary Pakistan
Saad Ali Khan

This research seeks to engage with Sindh Moorat March as an emergent social movement led by transgender (khwajasira/hijra/gender-nonconforming) persons in Pakistan. Sindh Moorat March, as a social movement, transpired in 2022 as the first Transgender social movement, aiming to question structural patriarchy, gendered power structures, and identity politics. Since 2018, transgender activists (Khwaja Siras and Moorats) have not only struggled for the rights of their communities but also actively contributed to the new wave of feminist struggle (Aurat March). With transphobia/homophobia/misogyny intensified in the years following the Aurat March in 2018, the violence against transpersons aggravated, compelling transgender persons to start the movement for their rights more actively. Since 2022, they have successfully started Moorat March in one of the largest cities of Pakistan, i.e., Karachi. This research documents Sindh Moorat March and its historical roots, focusing on its contribution to feminist/gender politics in contemporary times. This paper situates the Moorat March within Pakistan's boarder landscape of social movements, tracing its intersections with feminist activism, queer politics, and cultural discourses on gender/sexual diversity. Employing a feminist case study approach, this research highlights the relevance and significance of such political mobilization (from the grassroots).

The Museum of Trans Hirstory and Art: Exhibiting Collective Identity(ies)?
Shirin Graf

How can transgender history be exhibited? What constitutes a transgender artwork? The Museum of Trans Hirstory and Art (MOTHA) started as a conceptual art project by the US-American media artist Chris E. Vargas. With its status as "forever under

construction“, the project raises questions about collecting, exhibiting, and mediating the art and cultural heritage of transgender life.

How should museums engage with the communities they serve? What are the benefits and pitfalls of museums raising the visibility of a diverse collective identity and catering to the community behind it?

This talk will provide an overview of the project's activities followed by a discussion about methods and positions regarding collective identity, visibility, and representation.