East Berlin in the 1970s. Men meet for sex, pose for erotic snapshots commemorating the occasion, and share these and other images with each other. These black-and-white photos show a variety of naked men: thin, muscular, blond, dark-haired. Their reactions to the camera vary as well: some sheepishly or reluctantly gaze at the camera, while others confidently pose and show off their erections. Scattered among these photos are homemade reproductions of commercial pornography: photos of magazine pages, of other photos, some betraying the context in which they were produced (with part of a newspaper in the frame), others revealing the methods used (overexposure or an awkward flash).[1] These images, produced by unknown amateur photographers, which circulated among friends, acquaintances, and erotic enthusiasts, are evidence of a clandestine yet joyful sexual culture in East Berlin of the 1970s. They are also illustrations of a complex moment in the history and culture of East Germany (GDR, German Democratic Republic)—a time when male homosexuality had been recently decriminalized and amateur photography and visual culture were changing, as supplies and equipment for photography became more available and the images they produced more ubiquitous.

Beyond their extraordinariness, the images raise questions about their context and production. They lead one to ask, for example, what they have meant and for whom. Turning to the “what,” these images have been creative expression, memento, social tool, and pornography while also standing as a critique and, importantly, a record of existence. In terms of the “who” of the photos, they create a web of individuals, including the photographers, the subjects, the viewers (or “consumers”), and now the scholars. There are other important questions about what the images do, at both the time of their creation and of their interpretation. Writing about the “truth-telling” powers of photographs, John Roberts argues that within them there does exist “empirical evidence […] of appearances” as well as “evidence of the social determination of these appearances.”[2] In these photos, one sees the display of a past time and place, which help to establish an interpretation of what effect they might have on the viewer.

This article examines some of these photographs to answer questions about the work they are doing and how one can interpret them considering their historical and cultural context. There are two main components to my argument. First, these images are indirect products of the East German state, but they also are evidence of actions or expression by individuals and groups within this society. Official support for amateur photography enabled its use for sexual pleasure and connection, while censorship and import embargos made illicit art production and reproduction more likely. In other words, although the state encouraged certain leisure activities, it was the initiative of anonymous individuals that sparked the creation of these materials. Second, I argue that the images form an archive of queer pleasure, presentation, and critique. The archive I discuss comes from a private collection of shared pornographic and erotic images, including photos that documented sexual encounters among men (including at least one of the photographers) and photographic reproductions of commercially available pornography.[3] I have selected four from among the scores of photos for their ability to speak to widely relevant themes of cultural production, creative expression, and desire in the GDR. The images, which circulated among like-minded connoisseurs, not only testify to the existence of the desire they document. They also pose a challenge to acceptable public discourses in the GDR in their very composition, like the existence of same-sex desire and its role in the creation of visual records. As Thomas Yingling has argued, “For gay male culture, pornography has historically served as a means to self-ratification through self-gratification (or at least through the
acknowledgment if not the enactment of homoerotic desire) […].”[4] It is worth stating that it is impossible and undesirable to classify any “identity” on the part of the men creating or posing in the images I discuss. Instead, my argument centers on the kinds of pleasures they may activate.

To the extent that the state played a role, individuals’ ability to express themselves, especially in ways that exhibited vulnerable, controversial, and potentially dangerous desires, is necessarily important.[5] Cultural production in the GDR was not completely controlled by the state and therefore free of criticism and dissidence in the way that triumphalist narratives described the society.[6] Andrew Port has observed that “power relations were far more complex than the simple ‘state vs. society’ – ‘regime vs. masses’ – ‘rulers vs. ruled’ dichotomies have suggested.”[7] In his innovative study of plastics and East German consumer culture, Eli Rubin argues that the GDR was “a unique culture, something purely East German, a combination of state and society but representing the power of neither over the other.”[8] Even if one understands the GDR context to be one in which there was no total domination of citizens by the state, there were still manifest dangers for members of marginalized groups to engage in forms of self-expression and dissidence. Imagery, as well as creative expression in photography, “provide,” according to Jennifer Evans, “visualizations of power, agency, and resistance well below the level of official media representations.”[9] Photographic images can have great effect on our understanding of what was privately queer in a society with a disputed level of privacy.

The period of these images’ creation in the GDR was also one of changing notions of privacy. Reforms and legal changes that took place in the 1970s altered the orientation of public life and with it the shape of what was private. Paul Betts has demonstrated that “the state’s overbearing presence” in public life “made a relatively private home life all the more necessary and valued among its citizens.”[10] Some of the reckoning with conceptions of public and private in the GDR arose from depictions of a “niche society,” as Günter Gaus described it, in which private life held enormous importance for the small joys of life like gardening and celebrations of holidays with family.[11] Dagmar Herzog has argued that “sex eventually became a crucial free space in this otherwise profoundly unfree society.”[12] Although Herzog is writing here primarily about heterosexuality and conditions affecting abortion, marriage, and divorce, the observation rings true for queer sexualities and their position in the GDR.

Eastern Bloc regimes sought to manage citizens’ leisure time, so that it could be productive for the state’s goals. The 1960s and 1970s were a time of increased demands by GDR citizens that the state offer them the cultural opportunities they desired, which many expressed by showing up at events that were most meaningful to them and adapting them.[13] One means of expanding cultural opportunities for the population was the encouragement of hobbies, including amateur photography. Following post-Stalinist reforms, hobbies channeled citizens’ creative energies and could be at least partly monitored, while also praised and recognized, in amateur competitions.[14] Amateur photography could serve both public and private objectives: “as an instrument of power, cultural commodity, [and] the repository of individual communications.”[15] By the 1970s, with increased availability of television, the censorship of photographic images persisted, but artists were given greater flexibility.[16] Amateur photography delivered “exalted symbols of the private,” illustrating how private life could be structured related—but as a contrast—to public life.[17] As a means of encouraging appropriate “socialist leisure activity” and to capture attention, the GDR regime went to great lengths to give its populace what it wanted. This included introducing nude images into the mainstream and using these as an exported commodity to be sold for the country’s financial gain.[18] Such actions contradicted the ideological position that sexuality was for reproduction, rather than for pleasure.[19] Although it was probably not the state’s intention, there was a lively
exchange of professional and amateur photos, including nudes and erotic images, regardless of any official prohibition or avenues for sanctioned erotic content (like in the periodical Das Magazin).[20] The plentiful work in the published collection Die nackte Republik (The Naked Republic) shows how fond many amateur photographers were of creating their own nude material—ranging from imitations of naturalist nudism to shots that emulated Western pornography.[21] Officially permissible hobbies could also be used for forbidden goals. Prior scholarship on erotic and pornographic materials within the GDR has concentrated mostly on heterosexually oriented texts and images. One reason for this is the disproportionate number of available objects to analyze on the hetero-oriented side.[22] At least partly because of their illicit or unmentionable nature, queer or homo-oriented erotica and pornography have received less attention.[23]

In the mid- to late 1960s and the early 1970s, several events occurred that illustrate contradictory cultural impulses in GDR society and politics. Reforms under leader Walter Ulbricht, which critics said were succumbing to East Germans’ irrational consumerist desires, led to a backlash. The cultural developments the ruling party hardliners attacked included what they saw as increasing criticism of the socialist state and cultural works (film, television, literature) that supposedly encouraged immoral behavior found in the imperialist, capitalist West—although the “immoral” artists were usually targeted for their critiques of life in the GDR.[24] As if to contribute to moralistic concerns, male homosexuality was decriminalized in 1968, owing to the assessment by a behind-the-scenes legal reform commission that homosexuality was a “biological problem” concerning a “vanishing percentage of the population” who “have no control over their drives.”[25] The queer images to which I now will turn arose in this context, one of competing impulses of liberalization and prohibition as well as the otherwise contradictory surface and actual messages in a quasi-totalitarian society.

Unlike many of the kinds of images already mentioned, the photos I analyze are illicit. Publicly available nudes displayed almost exclusively women and usually in a manner associated with nature (e.g., lying on a beach), evoking past nude photography, especially of the 1920s. Privately produced photographs could take more chances, portraying more explicit imagery and a wider range of subjects, like breaking the near taboo of displaying naked men as well as showing sex acts. Private photos also allowed the creators to transgress the social boundaries determined by heterosexism.

The circumstances of such photos’ production could vary widely, but there tended to be some commonalities. It is not surprising that the photos were usually produced by people who had the equipment, materials, and skills necessary for the process, or had access to these in some form. This could mean that friends could provide these services, or undeveloped film could be removed from the country for processing in the West. The individuals producing these photos had a range of motivations, including the creation of sexual community (often with reciprocal sharing), personal enjoyment and mementos, artistic expression, or commercial gain through the sale of the images.[26]

Individuals involved in the production of these images put themselves in a compromising position. Usually, such photos were taken by amateur photographers who also had the skills and materials to develop the film. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the full range of creative energy that these photos illustrate, but one can see from the selected examples that these images could be controversial in at least two ways. First, they were legally dangerous, because they violated the law against the distribution of pornographic material.[27] Although this prohibition was selectively enforced, there is evidence that the police and the Ministry for State Security, or Stasi, actively looked for and confiscated offending material.[28] Second, and perhaps more important, the photos ran
afoul of the official views of sexuality, both for their non-procreative focus and for their homoeroticism, as men were the objects of other men’s sexual desires.

The first two photos come from a series of images created in a space with a couch and an identifiable curtain, which allow them to be categorized by this one location. These first two images show a naked man posing in front of a curtain. In one photo (Figure 1), the man sits on a couch, leaning backward, his arms behind him propping himself up, his body stretched diagonally and thinly across the frame, while he gazes down at his semi-erect penis. Excerpts of magazines, including at least one cover and a few other pages, are affixed to the curtain. <<Figure 1>>

In another image (Figure 2), the same man stands directly facing the camera, holding his penis with his right hand, his left hand perched just below his hip. His head is cocked slightly to his left; instead of looking at the camera, his eyes look diagonally toward the ceiling, almost like an eyeroll, as what seems to be the beginning of a smirk graces his lips. The expression has a playful effect, which adds to the critique these photos deliver. In both images, the curtain before which the man poses is adorned with covers and pages taken from GDR magazines. One of the covers, seen in both fig. 1 and 2, comes from the July 7, 1971, issue of Filmspiegel (Film Mirror), featuring a cover portrait of actress Monika Woytowicz as the character Peggy in Konrad Petzold’s 1971 film Osceola. A cover of Neue Berliner Illustrierte (NBI) from September 1971, showing an action shot of Olympic gold medalist swimmer Roland Matthes, is also visible. Other pages show a range of photographs: one shows a sports team; another two-page spread seems to show evolution of vehicles from horse-drawn carriages to trains and automobiles. The two identifiable magazines come from the GDR’s mass media environment and must be viewed considering the overall publishing structure within the GDR itself and in the Eastern Bloc. These magazines, like other state-controlled media, had limited ability to comment on actual “news” and often played a role of “public relations,” if not overtly relaying the state’s messages then attempting to satisfy East Germans’ demand for media, leisure, and consumer culture often inspired by their West German counterparts. [29]

<<Figure 2>>

It is possible that there are pages from other periodicals displayed in the collage, but the choices of at least Filmspiegel and NBI are not coincidental. These magazines were two of the most popular periodicals published in the GDR, both meant to appeal to the desire for entertaining and slightly consumerist media. NBI especially, with copious photographs (as of the early 1970s only recently printed in color due to limited resources), had thematic and tonal similarities to the ruling party’s newspaper Neues Deutschland (New Germany), but was not as dense and with far more illustration. Filmspiegel, which began publishing in 1954, was one of the appearances of mass media following the uprisings of 1953, an effort to appease (or distract) the East German people. The magazine “understood itself as representing the views and reflecting the tastes of the GDR’s cinema-going public.” [30]

These two photos with related compositions evince different attitudes in their presentation of the posing man and his environment. Fig. 1 leans distinctly more toward the erotic, although the pose and only semi-erect penis give a nod toward more artistic nudes. [30] In this display of the background collage, two of the magazine pages are avatars of (heterosexual) voyeuristic desire, as Woytowicz’s photo seems to delight in the erotic event, while the adjacent close-up photo portrait of a woman gazes at the man’s penis. The composition draws the eye toward the near center of the photo—the man’s penis—toward which the posing subject, the women of the magazine photos, and the photographer are looking. Although the two magazine covers add another aspect—a playful
voyeurism—to the image, the magazines are more incidental to the overall impact of the photo, which is more erotic, again emphasizing the man’s sexual arousal while also putting the rest of his body on display. Both fig. 1 and 2 deploy the magazine covers’ (and women’s) gaze, making the desire that the images evoke and provoke more multi-perspectival and pansexual. Part of a series of photos that document queer sexual encounters, these images display the photographer’s object of desire, which the women on the covers admire. These photos make desire itself the subject, also reminding one that complementary sexual interests can benefit from the same object of admiration. Fig. 2, however, makes full use of the collage of magazine pages. Here, the composition places the subject amid the covers, positing him as worthy of a pinup. This man does not resemble models in the physique and bodybuilding magazines of the 1950s and 1960s, but the juxtaposition of nudity, eroticism, and media both criticizes the types of mainstream media available in the GDR and reminds one of the importance of such publications for community and self-identification.[32] Beyond this metalevel deployment of queer media history, these photos’ (queer) use of the magazines has a more literal interpretation in its artificial function: testifying to the existence of queer desire in contrast to the mainstream visual vocabulary of the era. These photos illustrate a queer use of desire, as the man’s body—especially in fig. 1’s evocation of more “artful” nudes—channels the photographer’s desire as well as that of the pinups.

The original amateur photos are especially intriguing, but another category of image is also available among the homemade, privately shared objects: reproductions of commercially produced pornography. These images have evidentiary value, but particularly for their attestation to the underground stream of sexual visual culture. Figures 3 and 4 reveal other considerations facing the would-be pornographer: the technical requirements and difficulties of photo processing and development. The next image divulges more about the processing of these photos. Fig. 3 is a photo of a standing blond man with a moustache, smiling, his hands held behind his head. He wears a small yellow t-shirt and nothing else, revealing an erection. His hairstyle and the shirt place the photo in the 1970s. The lower corners of the image contain more marks that are remnants of the handling and development process. The most striking characteristic of the photo, however, is that it has a faded, foggy quality and presents a pink hue, which is often the result of expired film. This photo is one of a series of attempts to produce a copy of commercially available material; other versions (not reproduced here due to space limitations) reveal greater development problems (deeper pink color, occlusion of the underlying image, and distortion caused by the processing liquid). An interpretation of these images as somehow technically flawed is by no means certain, since one cannot be sure of the photographer’s intent. As these photos are found with a series of other reproductions of commercially available pornography, combined with the oral history surrounding such images, one could reasonably surmise that the goal was to create suitable bootleg reproductions to be shared or distributed and possibly sold.

Many photos betray the illicit, duplicative nature of their production: blurry focus, overexposures, the glare of flashes obscuring some of the photos, the wooden tables on which the photos were resting. Fig. 4 is an example of the operation to reproduce images for wider distribution. In portrait orientation, the photo shows a woman’s legs spread as she sits on a man’s lap and seems to guide the man’s penis. More interesting than the image itself (which is another example of a queer use of imagery, appealing to multiple desires) are the other details that such images reveal. There is printed German text above the image, from either a magazine or newspaper. Between text and the central image, there is either another image or one sees the table. At the bottom of the image, one sees evidence of another photo, perhaps one of a series waiting to be re-photographed. Such details conjure a vignette of a pornographer’s workshop, an assembly line of smuggled pornographic images waiting
to be reproduced and then either cherished or perhaps sold. The images are instructive, as I have argued, for their illustration of the conditions of visual production, in terms of both the availability of necessities like cameras, photographic print paper, and developing tools, and the amateur hobbyist photographic culture that fostered such production.[33] In addition to what they reveal about their creation, the images also remind one of other aspects: scopophilic desire, erotic arousal, and yearning for sexual community.

The photos are evidence of the encounters and activities they document, but they also attest to the reality of circulation, distribution, and the community to which the images contributed. One component is the social and sexual gatherings (I counted at least thirteen men displayed) that inspired the original amateur images’ creation. These photos provide documentation of sexual encounters, and they also offered a space for discussion, usually of the reproduced images. Some photos have comments in pencil on the reverse, offering remarks on the bodies of the men displayed.[34] Were these comments meant as guidance for the aspiring bodybuilder among the recipients of the shared images? Were they a means of categorizing or ranking the men’s bodies? The answers to these questions are not apparent; nor is a determination of whether the comments were notes purely for the images’ creator.

Thinking about the images’ circulation, it is powerful to consider the unique mobility of these and other queer images. Jennifer Evans has written that “All images are mobile, but queer erotic photographs are particularly frenetic, trafficked from place to place, circulating in tourist and fine art networks, on the boundary between high and low, and […] along twilight subcultural pathways.”[35] The photos illustrate a network of desire and contacts, independent of how many people were involved in their creation or circulation. Extending beyond any discernible meanings, the work that these images do is manifold: the contemporaneous erotic inspiration, community, and circulation; the archival significance that inspired their maintenance in a personal collection; and now the scholarly and historical significance for an assessment of queer experiences in the GDR. Each of these complex series of events creates different kinds of meanings and reactions to those meanings. Evans has argued that one can approach photographic images as “agents of meaning in their own right,” activating and reactivating emotional responses associated with their creation.[36] The affective and desirous orientations of these photos provoke questions about the subjects, objects, and audiences implicated in these displays. Annette Kuhn writes that “Meanings do not reside in images, then: they are circulated between representation, spectator, and social formation.”[37] The feverish creation, transit, and existence of these images collectively tell more about queer and queer visual experience in the GDR of this period than one could glean from an individual image.

These images are extraordinary sexual artifacts, which are important in at least two ways. First, the photos have archival significance (i.e., the documentation they provide) and emotional content (i.e., what seems to inhere in the image itself and what the image can evoke in the viewer). As already mentioned, depictions of queer life—in this case, images that capture and evoke queer desire—are rare. Beyond the research already cited, other engagements with homosexual or queer experience in the GDR have focused on, for example, autobiographical nonfiction (and “transcript literature”), political activism in the late 1970s and early 1980s, or film.[38] It is likely that more images like this exist in private collections, but precisely for that reason—the privacy surrounding the images and the practices themselves—scholars have not had much opportunity to talk about the desires that such images evoke and provoke.

A second way these images are significant is their potential for delivering emotional content. Writing about photographs and their role in public life and documentation of work, Kevin Coleman,
Daniel James, and Jayeeta Sharma posit that “photographs are a unique kind of artifact, at once a historical document, a site of affective investment, and an aesthetic object.”[39 ] One has a great opportunity when “viewing erotic photography as history,” as Jennifer Evans writes, “especially when we consider the emotional work of images in creating historical subjectivity in the changing places and spaces of viewing and display.”[40 ] Related to these interpretations, Ann Cvetkovich’s work in An Archive of Feelings is instructive for thinking about how “grappling with the psychic consequences of historical events”—part of Cvetkovich’s definition of trauma—is a process behind the objects analyzed here.[41 ] Cvetkovich observes that, for underrepresented and traumatized populations, “memory becomes a valuable historical resource, and ephemeral and personal collections of objects stand alongside the documents of the dominant culture in order to offer alternative modes of knowledge.”[42 ] Forms of expression thus become “repositories of feelings and emotions, which are encoded not only in the content of the texts themselves but in the practices that surround their production and reception.”[43 ]

While many engagements with such archives of feeling tend to focus on traumatic, melancholic, or otherwise negatively coded emotions, as Tim Dean has observed, positive-leaning interpretations are also possible.[44 ] Dean’s work is illuminating, because it shows that pornography, too, “preserves evidence of something that is otherwise transient and ephemeral,” in line with what Cvetkovich theorized as archives of feeling.[45 ] Recalling Yingling’s quote above, Dean argues that the archives—emotional, physical, transient, and otherwise—serve the crucial function of “cultural memory” for members of non-majority sexualities.[46 ] These images serve multiple purposes of memory, testimony or evidence, and form a communal rallying point for the underrepresented and persecuted who appear in them.

Regardless of the audience, the photos and associated commentary represent an articulation of desire and pleasure, one that created—or found its place in—a mode of visuality that had remained unrepresented in public GDR culture. Even if these images remained highly localized among a small audience, their existence was also transgressive in a national context of compulsory heterosexuality, as the GDR was a nation of petty bourgeois moralistic beliefs about sexuality. Turning again to Evans’s argument that images’ “intervention” can be just as if not more important than “inherent meaning,” one can discern that such images could go far beyond titillation, “bringing to the surface a range of emotions and reactions that reflect the sentiments, fears, hopes, and aspirations of the time.”[47 ] Operating beneath the surface of East German public life, both the series of sexual encounters documented in the original photos and the counterfeit production of pornography provide evidence of versions of private life in the GDR. One sees the variety of erotic inspiration that could be found in materials ranging from artistic depictions of the male body to beefcake and physique photos to hardcore hetero- and homo-oriented pornography.

The photos I have analyzed here, both originals and reproductions, reshape our historical understanding of queer experiences in the GDR. Although this collection of images emphasizes men’s self-presentation and affective engagement, the images nonetheless still tell us about the persistence of queer life, desire, and pleasure in the GDR more broadly. Amid a proliferation of visual representations in GDR life, public and private, encouraged by official state policies and challenging the primacy of the regime’s goals, the photos I have analyzed capture the existence of a hidden queer life. Thanks at least in part to the support of the GDR state, these erotically oriented photographers were able to take advantage of the circumstances to engage in activities that the state would likely not want to support, even despite the easing of legal restrictions. The subversive quality of the images is not only for how one could interpret their possible meaning around the time of their creation; it is also vital for historical and cultural assessments of the realities of queer life in the GDR. As an archive of
queer existence, the photos are evidence of both the existence of queer desire and its potential for affective resistance against majoritarian and oppressive actions.

Bibliography


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0 This article draws on research supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). I am grateful for research assistance from Steve Commichau. For their input, I thank Peter Rausch and Michael Eggert.

[1] Finding a workable definition of “pornography” is difficult. Versions of the definition have ranged from, for example, McConahay’s “any sexually explicit verbal (written/oral) or visual material (including films, plays, and other performances) created with the intention of producing sexual arousal” (italics removed) to Batten’s rather poetic “some form of explicit, unsimulated sexual prowess soliciting awe and envy but concluding in satiety,” and many varieties in between. See McConahay, “Pornography,” 37; Batten, “Strange Bedfellows,” 86.


[3] Although these images were taken with the consent of the individuals portrayed and the images were shared and distributed among contacts in the GDR, I have blurred the subjects’ faces and any identifying marks to protect their privacy. The images came to my attention, as with many historical discoveries, through happenstance. The owner of the private collection, who also told me about them as we talked about other aspects of queer life in the GDR, was at least the third person to possess the images, as they had been shared along a series of acquaintances, mostly gay men. Multiple gay men I spoke with were familiar with the practice of sharing photos. According to the oral history attached to the photos that the collector communicated, many of the photos documented an amateur photographer’s sexual encounters with men from both the East and the West. For more on images as private archive as well as record of sexual encounters, see Spring, Secret Historian; and Moddelmog and Ponce, Samuel Steward and the Pursuit of the Erotic.


[5] See, for example, Grieder, “In Defence of Totalitarianism Theory.” Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the German are my own.

[6] Ross, The East German Dictatorship, and Epstein, “East Germany and Its History,” detail the research that arrived prior to and shortly after the collapse of the GDR. More recent examples include Silverberg, “Between Dissonance and Dissidence,” and Kelly and Wlodarski, eds., Art Outside the Lines.


[12] Herzog, Sex After Fascism, 188.


[22] More research has focused on literary representations of erotic, sexual, or romantic content. Examples include Linklater, “Unbeschreiblich köstlich”; Poiger, Jazz, Rock, and Rebels; and Urang, Legal Tender.
[25] Grau, “Liberalisierung,” 332. Although the GDR regime had moved to differentiate itself from the Nazi dictatorship, it nonetheless sought to prevent public displays of homosexuality. The criminal reform took place amid legal arguments about whether individual criminal acts had great meaning for the overall class struggle and socialist cause. Alleged crimes against a person were no longer considered attacks against the social structure itself. Grau, “Liberalisierung,” 325–31.
[26] The friendly, communal distribution of erotic or pornographic images is a precursor to the now common phenomenon of sharing explicit selfies and sexts, including through hookup and dating apps. On contemporary practices, see, for example, Paasonen, Light, and Jarrett, “The Dick Pic”; Oswald et al., “I’ll Show You Mine.”
[27] The law in question was §125 against “distribution of pornographic texts,” which explicitly mentions “sketches, reproductions, films or representations.” The punishments could include public rebuke, fines, or imprisonment.
[28] Examples of confiscated material in the Stasi Archive (Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, or BStU) include BStU MfS HA II 48523 and MfS HA XX/Fo/1367.
[31] The man’s poses have a long tradition in nude portraiture and studies, including in nude photography. See, for example, Ellenzweig, The Homoerotic Photograph; and Borhan, Man to Man.
[32] For more on the history of the pinup and physique image, see Dyer, “Don’t Look Now.” On the history of homophile and gay media, especially magazines, see, for example, Rehberg and Boovy, “Schwule Medien nach 1945”; and Johnson, Buying Gay.
[33] For more on the conditions for GDR photographers, see Schiermeyer, Greif zur Kamera.
[34] One such comment: “Good biceps. Shoulder is well defined, but otherwise still much to do.”

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Transcript literature (Protokollliteratur) refers to a genre of narratives popular starting in the 1970s, often based on interviews and usually compiled by an editor, who sculpts them into something resembling a combination of oral history, autobiography, and history. On political activism, see Grumbach, Die Linke und das Laster; McLellan, Love; McLellan, “Glad to Be Gay Behind the Wall”; Marbach and Weiβ, Konformitäten und Konfrontationen. For examples of “transcript literature” (Protokollliteratur), see Lemke, Ganz normal anders; translated as Lemke, Gay Voices from East Germany; and Karstädt and Zitzewitz, viel zuviel verschwiegen. For more on the latter text and archives of feelings, see Bühner, “How to Remember Invisibility.” On film and queer experiences in the GDR, see, for example, Dennis, “Coming Out into Socialism”; Frackman, “The East German Film Coming Out”; Frackman, “Shame and Love”; Frackman and Stewart, Gender and Sexuality.


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