

Anita Thaler & Anna Szlavi

Editorial for Queer STS Forum #10 2025: The past, the present and the future of Queer STS



Anita Thaler is a senior researcher at IFZ (Interdisciplinary Research Centre for Technology, Work and Culture) and consultant in Graz, Austria. She founded the working group Queer STS and proudly publishes the Queer-Feminist STS Forum with her colleagues for fantastic ten years now. Anna Szlavi is researcher recently affiliated with Johannes Kepler University, Linz, Austria, before which she was working at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, Norway for years. Additionally, Anna is a founder of qLit, a queer-feminist organization in Hungary. Anita and Anna met in a European gender network discussing issues of integrating intersectionality and queer-feminism into research. The photo shows them in Portugal posing very naturally with fruits.

As STS has helped to demystify the emergence of knowledge and innovation, academic norms, socio-political frameworks, and science policy control mechanisms, we owe it to feminist STS scholars to be aware that science and technology are not objective and knowledges are not neutral, but situationally anchored (Harding 1986, Haraway 1988). Consequently, feminist STS scholars have supported the democratisation of science, which has been linked to hopes for a correspondingly adapted academia (far removed from the ‘ivory tower’) and the kind of science that contributes, among other things, to the generation of more robust knowledge through transdisciplinary approaches (Gibbons et al. 1994).

Anita Thaler and Birgit Hofstätter, both founding members of Queer STS, wrote a book chapter about their motivation to work in a queer-feminist collective together (2022, p.217), asking: Where is the academic culture in which bright minds are interested in exchanging ideas with each other to generate new knowledge together? Where are the spaces and the time to reflect on one’s own research and teaching activities? How socially effective and feminist is STS today? Out of the need to create such a place, to examine and transform STS from a queer-feminist perspective, but also to conduct STS itself in a queer-feminist manner, a working group was formed. In 2008, feminist STS researchers in Graz, Austria, began to discuss queer-feminist literature in a ‘reading circle’. This initial reading group gradually developed into a working group – growing in participants and spreading geographically. The critique of heteronormative and binary gender concepts (i.e. a queer perspective in the original sense) was just as important for the group as questioning the power mechanisms of scientific organizations. Against the backdrop of the economization of science, questions of social justice and

intersectionality became relevant both as research content, and from the perspective of those affected by discrimination. In 2011, the working group officially named itself ‘AG Queer STS’ (AG as in “Arbeitsgruppe”, German for working group) and has been working together loosely but continuously ever since. Anita says about the working group: “We are a rather unruly collective on the fringes of academia and beyond. We all met within the context of university/research, and although several of the group moved on, to other vocational contexts, we managed to keep our love for queer-feminist issues very much alive.”

Since 2016, the working group publishes the “Queer-Feminist Science and Technology Studies Forum” on their website <https://queersts.com>, a freely accessible, transdisciplinary, multimedia online journal, without funding, in their spare time. Like all our activities. We love to connect with like-minded people, share and co-create queer-feminist knowledge. The journal is dedicated to one topic each year and used by the queer feminist community in and outside academia. Queer-feminist STS can offer theories and methods to not only criticize heteronormative and binary gender concepts but also to question the power mechanisms of scientific knowledge production and technological and innovation research. Queer-feminist knowledge theory can broaden the heteronormative epistemology of science (Armstrong & Danielsson 2023).

- [#1 in 2016](#) did not have one explicit topic, but the three contributions all touched upon teaching and interventions.
- [#2 in 2017](#) comprised six contributions about queer-feminist, non-natalist perspectives and pro-kin utopias, which were rooted in a workshop about “Make Kin Not Babies” during the STS Conference 2016 in Graz, inspired by a Donna Haraway panel at the 4S conference 2015 in Denver.
- [#3 in 2018](#) contained five contributions that discussed [“Queering Diversity” – In Search of the Queer and the Class in Academia](#).
- [#4 in 2019](#) also emerged from a queer-feminist STS conference session in Graz, “Interfaces of Queer Technologies and Sexualities”, and had four contributions.
- [#5 in 2020](#) was not only called “Queer-feminist issues in pandemic times” but was happening during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, which did not only influenced the way academics collaborated, but it also changed the way the AG Queer STS worked together and with its contributors for good. By offering an open format, the forum made it possible that contributors who had little time, resources or energy for more traditional academic papers could create and submit all sorts of multimedia contributions. This resulted in fourteen contributions.
- [#6 in 2021](#) focused on “Queer Interventions” and comprised nine contributions.
- [#7 in 2022](#) combined experiences from the issue in 2020 with an emerging topic in academia: “Towards Academic Kindness – A queer-feminist string figure on kinder working cultures in academia”. Queer STS members presented the topic of this 7th issue and its seven contributions at several conferences

and lectures, intervening again from a queer-feminist perspective in the academic world. In the current 10th issue, two of our authors from 2022 came back, Claudia Schwarz and Andrea Ploder.

- [#8 in 2023](#) was dedicated to “[Queer-Feminist Inclusion and Visibility – Overcoming Stories of Exclusion and Invisibility in Science, Education and Technology](#)” with seven contributions.
- [#9 in 2024](#) we were inspired by dystopian political realities and we asked for “[Queer-Feminist Solidarities in Times of Social and Political Turbulences](#)”, receiving seven contributions.

This is our 10th issue, and we are celebrating this milestone by looking back and forward, to discuss past and current issues of queer-feminist STS.

We sought to explore queer-feminist interventions into STS like we had stated in our manifesto from 10 years ago (<https://queersts.com/work-group/manifest/>), whether they 1) criticize empirical science from a queer-feminist point of view (cf. Schmitz & Höppner, 2014), 2) conduct research from a queer standpoint of the person(s) doing the research (cf. Heckert, 2010), 3) observe the queerness of the subject of their research (Leibetseder, 2012), 4) use a methodology which can be defined as ‘queer’ or 5) do queer-feminist interventions e.g. in transdisciplinary research or art projects (cf. Hofstätter et al. 2021), applying queer-feminism across those lines (cf. Boellstorff, 2010).

We received several wonderful contributions to this Forum:

Jennifer Dahmen-Adkins’ article “Rainbow Between Meadows – Queer Life and Studying in Rural Areas” is a theatrical script based on a focus group discussion with members of a queer student group at a rural university in Germany. Jennifer decided to present the discussion as a theatrical script, rather than as a research paper, to emotionally connect us readers to what has been said. Besides the non-traditional format, the diversity of the students is also a strong merit of the contribution.

“Affective Frictions: Emotional Labour as Knowledge Practice in Interdisciplinary Collaboration” by Zelda Wenner focusses on affects and emotional labour in interdisciplinary academic practices, identifying aspects of friction and thus increasing awareness of affects in collaborative working.

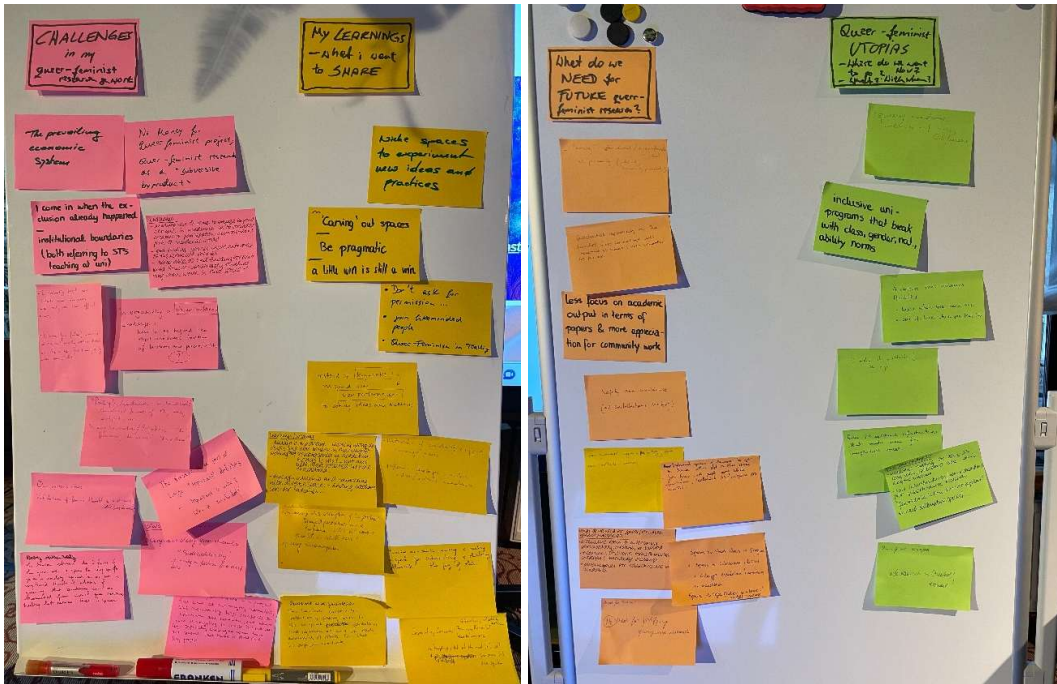
Nadine Osbild’s “Incantations from the creative margins: Disrupting binaries in innovation and ethnographic form” is composed of the insightful overview of her research about the co-cultivation of creative cultures and innovation cultures in Munich (Germany) and Bristol (UK), as well as a poem, based on interviews and fieldwork observation connected to her doctoral thesis. Her project is both thought-provoking and highly artistic.

To celebrate the 10th edition of our online journal “[Queer-Feminist Science and Technology Studies Forum](#)”, we also invited former contributors and friends of AG Queer STS. Some of them wrote for our Queer STS Forum in the last 9 years, some of them we met at conferences, while some of them we discussed research in person. Many queer-feminist researchers, teachers and artists have supported us for years, with reviews, with network activities, and with knowledge. Many have luckily become friends too, thank you so much!

With their short reflexive texts, we wanted to share how this queer STS community met and look into the future of queer feminism in all its forms. We received six wonderful gifts from friends, who share history and experiences with us, and celebrate this 10th anniversary with very personal insights, retrospective and prospective thoughts. Thank you so much, Jenny Schlager, Brigitte Ratzer, Daniela Jauk-Ajamie, Susanne Sackl-Sharif, Zoltan Bajmocy, and Andrea Ploder, for supporting our Queer-Feminist STS Forum (again)!

Like in these celebratory, reflexive texts, Anita Thaler and Magdalena Wicher discussed “The past, the present and the future of queer STS” with participants at the [annual STS conference](#) in May 2025 in Graz. The workshop participants discussed:

- challenges in their queer-feminist research and work, for instance the prevailing economic system, the unwillingness to consider participatory approaches in academia, the challenge to go beyond traditional conference formats to fit queer-feminist topics also on a process level,
- their learnings they wanted to share, like a strategy of ‘carving out’ spaces and honouring little wins as wins nonetheless, using niche spaces to experiment new ideas and practices, not asking for permission and joining like-minded queer-feminist people (allyship), inviting key performances instead of key notes to conferences,
- needs for future queer-feminist research, mainly addressing money, specifically asking funders for less formalised calls, but also mentioning less focus on academic output and more appreciation of community work, more (informal) spaces to share ideas and discuss, rejecting the productivity paradigm,
- queer-feminist utopias, like inclusive university programmes that break with class, gender, ability norms, long-term funding, questioning the current system, embracing a culture of fluidities, treating all research equal, making it worldwide (like really).



Sticky notes of the participants of the queer STS panel at this year's STS conference in Graz, discussing challenges, learnings, needs and utopias of queer-feminist research and work

With this 10th issue of our Queer-Feminist STS Forum we wanted to say “Thank You!” to our wonderful community, cherish our path so far, look a little into what we achieved together, and also glance into the future. How will queer-feminism shape academia, teaching, and especially science and technology? To highlight our gratitude for the kindness and intellectual connections we encountered in the last 10 years, we invited a guest editor, Anna Szlavi, to publish this milestone Forum with us. Anna has not only been researching gender inclusion and diversity within STEM, mainly computing, and is responsible for the university-level compulsory course, Introduction to Gender Studies in Science and Technology at the Johannes Kepler University, Linz, Austria, but she is also dedicated to highlighting the importance of interventions and best practices of her international projects and consortia she was involved in during her previous affiliation with the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, Norway.

We are especially in awe of Anna's work with [qLit](#), a queer-feminist organization in Hungary, which she co-founded. qLit serves to create safe spaces, both in the physical and in the digital senses, for queer women in Orbán's Hungary. In qLit's digital magazine, Anna writes articles about acts of solidarity and resistance, such as the latest Budapest Pride with its 200.000 participants despite the governmental threat of fines and fees for whoever shows up.

Several of our authors and friends in this Forum #10 and all the editions before serve as beacons of queer-feminism, sharing knowledge, organising activities, disrupting

heteronormative and discriminatory systems of power, speaking up, supporting LGBTQIA+ people and topics. This is why – despite all the tragedies happening in today's world – we allow ourselves to still look hopeful in the future. We know we are not alone, we feel hugged by and safe within our community of friends and queer-feminist allies. Thank you for the past 10 years, see you soon!

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