



ANNUAL REPORT

April 2024 - March 2025



✉ qamraarchive@nls.ac.in

🌐 www.qamra.in

📷 [qamra.archive](https://www.instagram.com/qamra.archive)

We thank the many individuals who have kept this archive running for the past 7 years, as we welcome our new team. We would especially like to thank members of the advisory team, T. Jayashree, Arvind Narrain, Vivek Divan, Curt Gambetta and Deeptha Rao for their work and strong support in this transitional phase. QAMRA has received two small grants, which have facilitated the hiring of our new team. We have Gauri Mahajan as our Project Associate, Anusha George as our Project Assistant, and Mira Brunner as our Chief Archivist. Being situated at NLSIU, we now have a Faculty Director, Dr. Siddharth Narrain. Our advisory team has also expanded to include the educator, writer and a digital and public humanities scholar, Dr. Kush Patel from the Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology, Manipal Institute of Higher Education (MAHE), Bengaluru. We also thank Prof. Kunal Ambasta for supporting QAMRA in the past year at NLSIU.

With the new team and space in place since November 2024, QAMRA began its operations in full swing and reopened for researchers and visitors. We also have two long-term researchers – Alice Baudequin and Ikshaku Bezbaroa, who are both PhD scholars, with QAMRA as their site.

We thank our volunteers, interns, long-term donors, patrons, and everyone who has contributed time, effort, and resources to engage with the work we do at QAMRA.

Dr. Siddharth Narrain

On behalf of the QAMRA Archival Project

QAMRA IN THE PUBLIC EYE

Public Online Lecture (International Archives Week 2024)

As a part of the International Archives Week (June 3 – June 9, 2024) our former team member, Ammel Sharon, presented in a webinar titled 'In the Dream House: Examining the New Archival Turn in India' on June 7, 2024. The talk explored archives as records, institutions, and spaces, comparing them with libraries and museums, reflecting on post-independence Indian archives, and highlighting QAMRA at NLSIU as a vital living archive of gender and sexuality.

Public Lecture @ Bangalore International Centre

Ammel Sharon was in conversation with Arvind Narrain at the Bangalore International Centre at an event called 'Redefining Unions: The Future of LGBTQ+ Rights & Marriage Equality in India', June 16, 2024. The discussion analysed the Supreme Court's reasoning on marriage equality, its impact on LGBTQ+ rights, and outlined future advocacy, legal reforms, and strategies to build wider support.



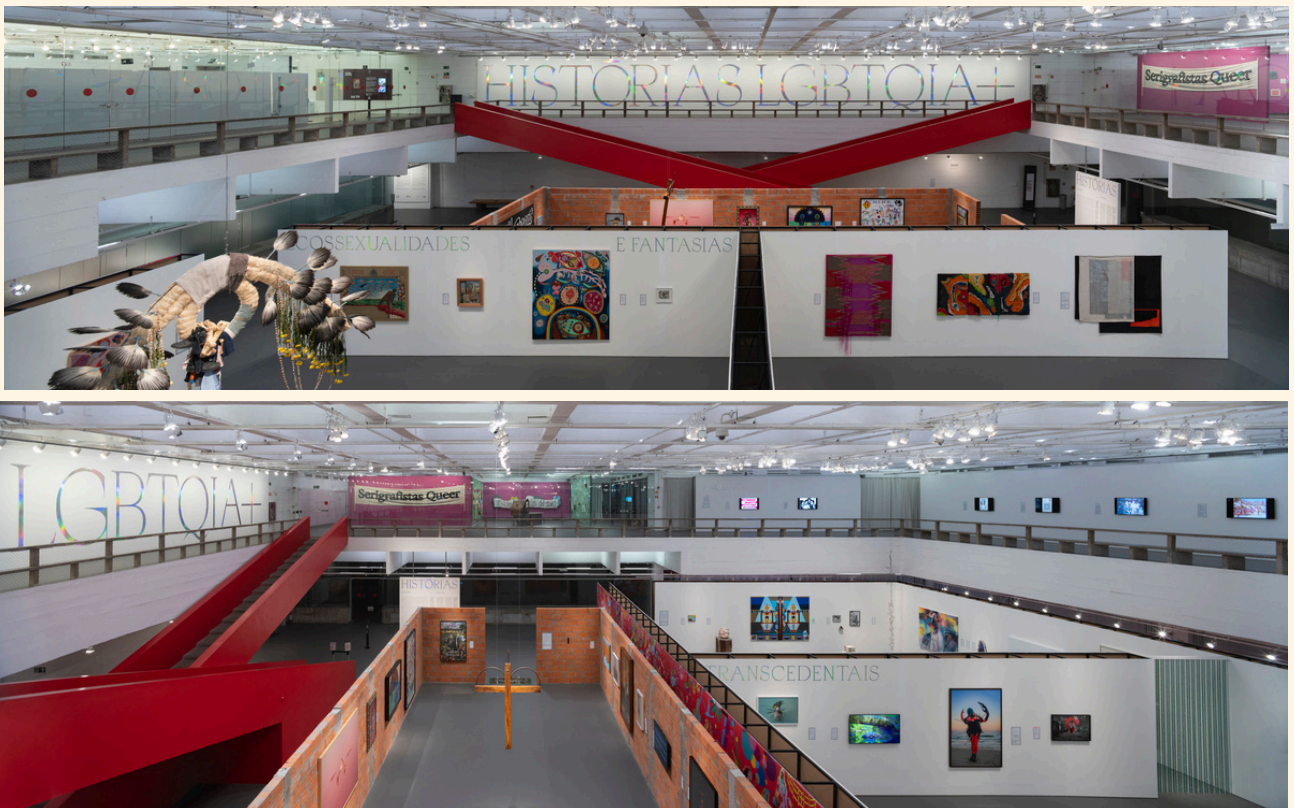
Ammel Sharon and Arvind Narrain @BIC

Workshop with students from Srishti Institute of Art and Design

Ammel Sharon and Daya Ambirajan co-conducted a workshop titled 'Queer Lives/Queer Archives' for students under Dr. Kush Patel at the Srishti Institute of Art and Design, May 2024.

Queer Histories Exhibition, MASP, São Paulo, Brazil

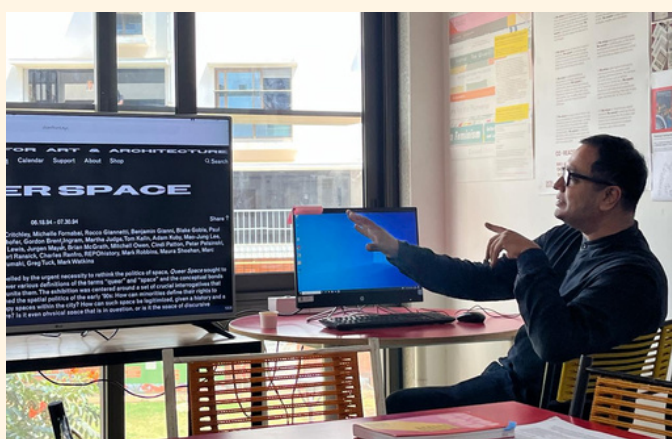
T. Jayashree and Dr. Siddharth Narrain, along with our team member Vepa, worked on curating and digitising material for the display on Archives, as a part of the Queer Histories Exhibition, hosted at the São Paulo Museum of Art. The collections were on display from January 2025 to April 2025, alongside other self-organised community archives from across the world.



The Queer Histories Exhibit at the Museum of Art São Paulo, that occupied 3 exhibition spaces of the museum, bringing together more than 150 pieces of art and documentation from around the world.

Engagement with MA Contemporary Arts Programme, Srishti Institute of Art and Design

Dr. Siddharth Narrain and T. Jayashree conducted a seminar on 'Archives and Digital Storytelling' for students under Dr. Kush Patel in the MA Contemporary Art Practice programme at the Srishti Institute of Art and Design, September 2024.



Queered Memories

Archival Activism, MA Contemporary Art Practice Core Seminar in conversation with:

T. Jayashree and Siddharth Narrain

September 30, 2024, 9:30–12:30

Rooh 201, Srishti Manipal Institute

Kush Patel, Anjali Naik, Anu [redacted]
Bavisha (Diya Varigonda), Shambhavi Palit
Eyeshaan [redacted], Krishna Priya
Ramona Dias, Vaishali Choodamani
Urja Shah, Vani Parmar, Yajnaseni

ARCHIVAL ACTIVISM

Dr Kush Patel (they/them): kush.patel@manipal.edu
Core Seminar on Archives and Digital Storytelling, MA Contemporary Art Practice (4-Credits)
Rooh 104 (The Just Futures Co-lab) and Rooh 101 (MA CAP Studio I)
Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design, and Technology, MAHE, Bengaluru
September 16–October 4, 2024

Dr. Kush presenting to their students; Posters from the seminar.

Workshop on Queer & Trans Archival Relations

Dr. Siddharth Narrain and T. Jayashree gave a virtual talk in a workshop titled 'Our Queer and Trans Archival Relations: Care, Ethics, Histories: A Critical, Creative & Experimental Hybrid workshop', hosted by the University of Sydney, on March 12, 2025. The workshop was hosted by Dr. Kush Patel (Srishti Institute of Art, Design & Technology) and Dr. Susan Potter (University of Sydney).

QAMRA Open Day

In January 2025, QAMRA hosted an Open Day at NLS, warmly received by visitors from within and beyond the campus. The display featured a rich selection of archival material—from legal documents and personal interviews to Pride photos, books, postcards, and student work—showcasing queer history and activism. Guests engaged thoughtfully with the archive and expressed interest in future engagement with QAMRA's work.



Staff, faculty, researchers, and students at the Open Day.

QAMRA x India Foundation for the Arts

The India Foundation for the Arts (IFA), in collaboration with QAMRA, hosted 3 scholars: Beena Aneesh, Komal Jain, and Puja Sen Majumder under the IFA-QAMRA Creative and Scholarly Projects. Beena and Komal completed their projects, and the reports will be made available shortly. Owing to Puja's untimely passing, their project was closed. They all spent time with the collections and QAMRA, which served as an anchor point and key site for their projects.



Poster of the exhibition that was a culmination of Komal Jain's work;
Fellows at work at QAMRA

QAMRA @ Feminist Archiving Conference, Pune

In February 2025, Mira Brunner attended a Feminist Archiving Conference hosted by the Department of Women and Gender Studies, Savitribai Phule Pune University. Mira spoke about QAMRA, focussing on the positionalities that inform, and the challenges faced by, queer archives, particularly around digitisation and privacy. The panel was chaired by V. Geetha (Independent scholar, Writer, Feminist Activist) and the other speakers were Sanal Mohan (Director, Kerala Council for Historic Research), Vrunda Pathare (Head, Godrej Archives), and Bidisha Mahanta (Executive Director, Zubaan Books).

QAMRA IN THE MEDIA

Kavya Murthy, writer and editor, in a personal essay titled 'Looking for a room of one's own', speaks of QAMRA while reflecting on the challenges and joys of inhabiting a place that records and documents queer histories.



It felt like the archive would hold some kind of historical evidence that could explain why and how I could be a free and out queer person, a kind of moral and political ancestry.

Looking For a Room of One's Own

By Kavya Murthy

A photo and excerpt from Kavya Murthy's personal essay.

Siddarth S. Ganesh and Shalom Gauri, our former team members, wrote a chapter, titled 'Digital Fever: Reflections of a Queer Archive' in the book Practices of Digital Humanities in India: Learning by Doing, published by Routledge India, 2024.



14 Digital Fever

Reflections of a Queer Archive

Siddarth S. Ganesh and Shalom Gauri

The book, and a screenshot of the title of Siddarth S. Ganesh and Shalom Gauri's book chapter.

PHYSICAL SPACE @ QAMRA

QAMRA has also expanded this year – we shifted into a new space in the New Academic Block (NAB), with an additional space on the 1st floor of NAB. We now have a dedicated storage and workspace for researchers, establishing 2 workspaces for QAMRA!



The various spaces that QAMRA occupies in the New Academic Block. Pictured here: (top left and right) our Ground Floor office; (bottom left) our permanent exhibit outside the office; (bottom right) our 1st floor storage and workspace.

RESEARCHERS & VISITORS @ QAMRA

We have had many other visitors from various backgrounds, expressing their interest and engaging with QAMRA's material and archival processes. These include faculty and students from the Institute of Psychology and Research, the National Centre of Biological Studies, Azim Premji University, and Manipal Academy of Higher Education, as well as archivists and librarians from the Azim Premji University library. We have also hosted visitors from other organisations such as the iHEAR team at Sangath, Azim Premji Foundation, and professionals from other allied fields.

We have also hosted visits to QAMRA's offsite location at T. Jayashree's studio in Cooke Town – Dr. Kush Patel brought their MA students there for a week long workshop on archival practice.



Dr. Kush Patel's students in the Cooke Town office.

Dr. Surabhi Shukla,
Assistant Professor of Law,
University of Sheffield,
and a visiting researcher
@QAMRA

It has been wonderful to find QAMRA at NLS. That this archive should exist at such an elite institution is a testament to the importance of sexuality and gender identity research in the country. Their space is calm, welcoming, freely accessible, and infrastructurally suited to quiet research work. I have now been at the archive thrice and looked at the MSIP collection. It has been humbling to learn about all the work that has gone past, and also deeply inspiring. I hope to return soon!

QAMRA is far larger and granular than I had initially been led to believe from its website and hearsay. The fact that collections are organised according to 'donor' respects the source yet allows for creative meaning-making. I value how the worlds layered within worlds only become apparent after some time spent, and thus behave an invested engagement from the researcher.

Ikshaku Bezbaroa,
PhD candidate,
Comparative Gender
Studies, Central
European University,
and a long-term researcher,
volunteer @QAMRA

We have also regularly engaged with several NLSIU students, including engagement with the Family Law II class, where the students used QAMRA's resources for their project assignments.

We hope to continue our engagement with the larger NLSIU community and the larger queer-trans community in Bengaluru.

UPCOMING @ QAMRA

We aim to host the Identifier Workshop in the upcoming months, which will help us come up with better archival practices suited to queer-trans realities in India. We also aim to digitise and make accessible two collections by the end of the year – Maya Sharma Indra Pathak, and the Queer Legal Collection, improving the online accessibility of our collections.

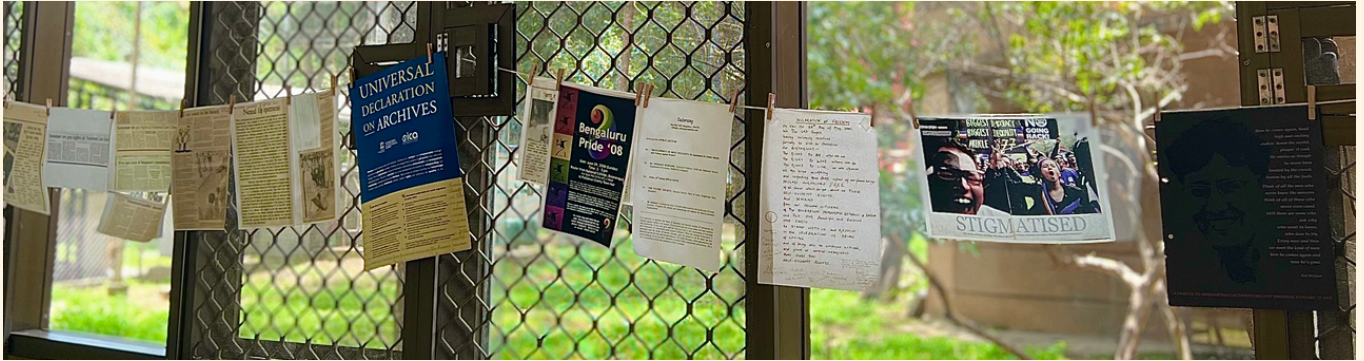
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank our volunteers, Alice and Kush, as well as our interns Sowparnica V.S., Advait, and Vepa. QAMRA would not be possible without the steady interest of people willing to dedicate their time to the archive.

We also thank our donor, Dr. Nivedita Ram, for her generous contribution towards digital infrastructure, which will enable us to make parts of our repository available online.

SUPPORT QAMRA

We preserve memories of struggles, achievement, conflict and most importantly, of love. This archive belongs to this society – it tells the stories of people, social movements and organisations.



Through collective funding comes collective ownership and collective care. Please help us by donating to this treasure trove of memories and stories! With your help, we can preserve this precious collective history.



All donations are tax-exempt in accordance with Sec. 80G of the Income Tax Act and FCRA 2010. You can choose between one-time and recurring donations. Any amount you can donate will be greatly appreciated!

Our funds go towards supporting full-time employees, undertaking archival processing, acquiring new collections, and building up a corpus for long-term stability and the assurance of independence and free access to the archive for everyone. We hope to raise enough to see us through the next two years.

Please scan this QR code to donate:



For international donations,
please write to us at
qamraarchive@nls.ac.in.

CONTACT US

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