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## The First Homosexuals

### The Birth of a New Identity 1869-1939

Jonathan D. Katz

**A groundbreaking, global survey of queer art, featuring more than 300 artworks made following the introduction of the term 'homosexual' in 1869**

Monacelli is proud to announce *The First Homosexuals: The Birth of a New Identity, 1869–1939*, the definitive catalogue accompanying the major international exhibition of the same name, presented at Wrightwood 659 in Chicago. A bold and sweeping cultural document, this 400-page volume brings together more than 300 works by over 125 artists across 40 countries, alongside 22 original essays from leading scholars in queer and art history.

Taking as its point of departure the year 1869—when the word “homosexual” was first coined—the book maps the complex transformation of same-sex desire from behavior into identity, a radical shift that altered the course of modern history. In visual art, this change is not only traceable but profoundly expressive. Featuring paintings, sculptures, photographs, prints, and film stills, *The First Homosexuals* reveals how artists registered, resisted, and redefined emerging notions of sexuality around the world.

Edited by art historian and curator Jonathan D. Katz, Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania and a founding figure in Queer Studies in Art History, and Johnny Willis, Curatorial Fellow at Wrightwood 659, this volume offers an unprecedented global perspective. With contributions from scholars such as Gloria Steinem Endowed Chair Tirza True Latimer, Eduardo Carrera, Catherine Gonnard, Ara H. Merjian, and Patrik Steorn, among many others, each essay focuses on a specific geographic or cultural context, including Japan, Australia, South America, and Indigenous North America.

Artists featured include Claude Cahun, Rosa Bonheur, Tamara de Lempicka, John Singer Sargent, Egon Schiele, Saturnino Herrán, Beauford Delaney, Van Leo, and Marsden Hartley—alongside lesser-known but equally significant figures whose work is presented here with fresh critical attention. Together, their images offer a richly layered portrait of an identity in the making.

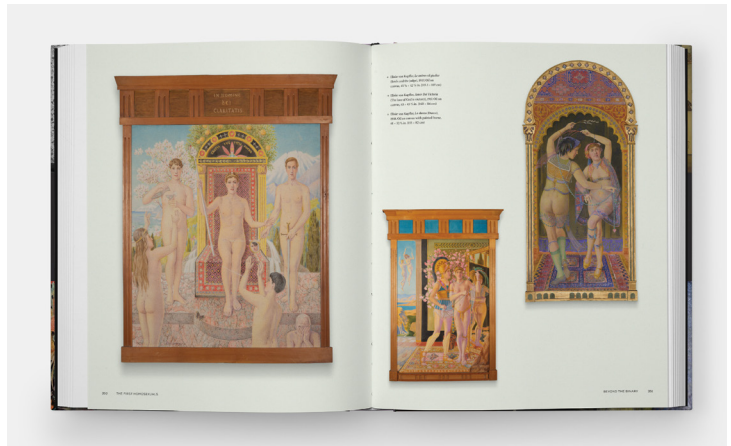
*The First Homosexuals* is more than a catalogue—it is a vital addition to the canon of queer visual culture, reframing how we understand the intersections of art, sexuality, colonialism, and resistance at the dawn of the modern era. This is an essential reference for scholars, students, curators, and anyone interested in LGBTQ+ history and the power of art to shape identity.

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# The First Homosexuals: The Birth of a New Identity 1869-1939



## About the Author

**Jonathan D. Katz, PhD**, is professor of History of Art and Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, curator of 'The First Homosexuals' at Wrightwood 659 Gallery in Chicago, and author of *About Face: Stonewall, Revolt, and New Queer Art* (Monacelli, 2024).

## About Monacelli

As a leading publisher of illustrated books for more than twenty-five years, **Monacelli** has challenged the conventions of publishing to produce provocative, inspiring, and essential titles. Founded in 1994 by Gianfranco Monacelli, the organization has released nearly 600 books on architecture, art, interior design, landscape and gardens, photography, and the applied arts. Monacelli's books have been made in collaboration with prominent practitioners and scholars ever since its inaugural title, the groundbreaking *S,M,L,XL* by Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau. In 2015, the applied arts imprint Monacelli Studio was launched, adding elevated books on art instruction, photography technique, and crafts to the publisher's roster. In 2020, Monacelli joined the Phaidon family of companies.

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