

GALA Queer Archive Collection inventory

AM3178 - Elise van der Merwe (Bishop) Collection

Summary:

Title: Elise van der Merwe (Bishop) Collection

Dates: 1982-1983, 2022

Size: 3 standard-size archive boxes

Restrictions: Users must sign a confidentiality agreement before accessing correspondence (B1).

Source: Donated by Liesl Theron, November 2005, Further material donated by Elise Bishop (nee van der Merwe)

Description: Elise van der Merwe (Bishop) is a MTF transgendered person, who told her story in the Afrikaans media in 1982 (series A). Elise received many letters from individuals who read her story, and these letters and her written responses comprise series B. Some of these letters were from other transgender people and in one instance was accompanied by photographs (part of the reason for the confidentiality form users must sign). Elise lodged the material in this collection with a publisher with the intention of publishing a never completed memoir. The bulk of the records are in Afrikaans.

Special formats: Photographs;
record (LP); statuette; douche set and cream (stored in archive office)

Language: The records are primarily in Afrikaans.

Processed: November 2005, by Anthony Manion. Collection checked by Linda Chernis, June 201, and updated with new additions in August 2022 and January 2024.

Container list.

A. Press clippings (1980s)

Press clippings from *Rapport*; *Sarie*; *Die Transvaaler*; *Suidwester Rand Daily Mail*; *Republikein*; and others: 1982-1983. (All but one clipping in Afrikaans). 1 folder
(Note: *Rapport* did a series of 7 articles on Elise over November/December 1982).

B. Correspondence (1980s)

B.1. Correspondence with public (1982-1983, 4 folders) **RESTRICTED**

Letters and cards written to Elise (some via *Rapport*) from various individuals, including other transgender people in November/December 1982. Includes letters/cards written to Elise with the original envelope, as well as her reply (typed on her personal letterhead with Namibia address) in Dec '82/Jan '83. The letters and envelopes contain correspondents' full names and addresses (though from 1982/3). Researchers are therefore required to sign a confidentiality agreement before accessing.

Folder 1: Replies written Nov/Dec 1982 (19 letters and replies – one of the letters contains photos sent by the sender)

Folder 2: Replies written 4-6 January 1983 (16 letters and replies)

Folder 3: Replies written 6 (contin) and 7 January 1983 (15 letters and replies)

Folder 4: Letters and cards written to Elise with no reply attached (5 letters, 5 cards, 1 postcard, 1 fax message, 2 empty envelopes)

Folder 5: List of names and addresses of all 41 people who wrote to her after the *Rapport* articles, including a breakdown of numbers per province and gender. Note that some of the correspondence above was repeat (i.e. some people wrote to Elise more than once).

B.2. Correspondence with the media (1982, 1 folder)

Four letters from Elise to the editor at *Rapport* discussing the articles about her (also one reply).

C. Personal Items

C1. Documents (1 folder)

- Legal document outlining the terms of the termination of the relationship between Elise van der Merwe and Stefanus Terblanche. 1982.

- Certified copy of abridged Civil Union Registration Certificate. Marinda Bishop and Elise van der Merwe. 7 June 2007, Paarl.
- Poem: *Vir Fanie*. 21 September 1982 (presumably written by Elise for Fanie (Stefanus))

C2. Objects (stored in archive office, fragile)

- Douche and cream. In Bishop's words (January 2024): "I'm sending you the antiquated dilator plus the original douche and creams utilised at the time - thus 49 years ago!!!"
- Record (LP) and extra covers (x2): 'Pierre van der Merwe Sing' (c.1967)

"I'm also submitting for inclusion the record of my singing issued by AKA Johannesburg at age 15 when still a boy plus a spare cover. Only record so cannot replace! I'm keeping the CD but my executor has instructions of what must be made available to GALA in the event of my death." (email correspondence between GALA and Bishop, January 2024)
- Small statuette of Brahms as seen on the LP cover.

D. Autobiography

D1. Kennis van die Noodlot

Elise' first attempt to get her autobiography published in the 1980s and early 1990s under the title *Kennis van die Noodlot*. This was sent to GALA by Elise Bishop in July 2022.

D1.1 Early attempts at publishing (1984-1991, 1 folder)

Mostly correspondence with publishers regarding publishing her story as a book. Also the full draft manuscript (digital) – printed cover, contents and introduction.

D1.2 *Kennis van die Noodlot* – bound manuscript

D2. Twee Lewens

Elise Bishop released her autobiography *Twee Lewens* in July 2022. Published by Hemel en See.

D2.1 Material sent to GALA by Elise Bishop around time of publishing the book (1 folder)

- Image files from the book (printed for reference)
- GALA/Elise correspondence (email) June 2022

D2.2 Two copies of the book.

D2.3 Press and interviews around *Twee Lewens*

- WOORDFEES TV 2022 - Yvonne Beyers – HUISGENOOT. Video of interview available as video file, saved on archive hard drive and computer.
- Press release 'LitNet columnist on Woordfees TV' (re. above).
- Photocopy of Kyknet/Rapport Book Prize 2023.

E. Academic articles and interviews

E1. Louise Vincent and B Camminga. 'Putting the 'T' into South African Human Rights: Transsexuality in the Post-Apartheid Order'. *Sexualities* (2009, 12: 678).

E2. Interview with B Camminga and Elise van Der Merwe Bishop, 2022.

E2.1 Interview transcript

E2.1 Digital photographs of B and Elise at time of interview