

Samois records and t-shirts

Finding aid created by GLBT Historical Society staff using RecordEXPRESS

GLBT Historical Society

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Samois records and t-shirts

Dates: 1975-1983

Collection Number: 2003-37

Creator/Collector: SAMOIS (Organization)

Extent: 2 boxes (0.6 linear feet)

Repository: GLBT Historical Society

San Francisco, California 94103

Abstract: This collection contains records from the influential lesbian sadomasochism (SM) group, Samois. This collection does not represent the organization's "official" records. Rather, it was assembled by several former members of Samois, many of whom were involved in the production of the group's publications, *What Color Is Your Handkerchief?* (1979) and *Coming to Power* (1981). There are materials related to the two publications; organizational records; leaflets; Samois newsletters and a copy of "Cathexis," an early lesbian SM newsletter; essays and stories; invitations to early women's SM parties; and t-shirts.

Language of Material: English

Access

The collection is open for research with the following restriction. Researchers may not publish or publically disclose names or identifying information about individuals for 20 years from the date of donation, unless those individuals have already themselves disclosed, in print or a public forum, their association with these organizations, or unless they are deceased. These restrictions will expire on July 19, 2023. Funding for processing this collection was provided by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

Publication Rights

Copyright has not been transferred to the GLBT Historical Society.

Preferred Citation

Samois records and t-shirts. GLBT Historical Society

Acquisition Information

Gift of Gayle Rubin in July 2003.

Biography/Administrative History

For an organizational history of Samois, see anthropologist and activist Gayle Rubin's history, "Samois," in Marc Stein, ed., *Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History in America*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2003). Rubin's article is reprinted in the "Leather Times: News from the Leather Archives & Museum," Spring 2004: <http://www.leatherarchives.org/resources/issue21.pdf>

Scope and Content of Collection

This collection contains records from the influential lesbian sadomasochism (SM) group, Samois. According to Gayle Rubin, Samois, "founded in San Francisco in June 1978 and disbanded in May 1983, was the first known public organization devoted to lesbian sadomasochism (SM), and a key player in the early phases of the feminist sex wars. Samois grew out of the confluence of the feminist, gay and lesbian, sexual freedom, and SM movements of the 1970s." (*Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History in America*). This collection does not represent the organization's "official" records. Rather, it was assembled by several former members of Samois, many of whom were involved in the production of the group's publications, *What Color Is Your Handkerchief?* (1979) and *Coming to Power* (1981). The collection contains a copy of *What Color Is Your Handkerchief?* and a first edition of *Coming to Power*. Both are very rare. There are also materials related to the two publications; organizational records; leaflets, including a rare pamphlet from a very early (1975) attempt to start a lesbian SM group in the Bay Area; Samois newsletters and a copy of "Cathexis," an early lesbian SM newsletter; essays and stories; invitations to early women's SM parties; and t-shirts.

Indexing Terms

Lesbians

Leather

Kink

[Container List for the Samois Records and T-Shirts](#)
