

## **LGBTIQ+ in the context of higher education institutions and transnational solidarity**

### **Film screening “My Child” by Can Candan and Panel Discussion**

**4 May 2022, 18.30-21.00**

Campus Toni-Areal

Pfingstweidstrasse 96, 8005 Zürich, Hörsaal 2 (3.K02)

This event is jointly organized by the ZHAW Diversity Unit, the ZHAW International Affairs Unit and the Research Association Switzerland-Turkey (SFST). Parts of “My Child” by Can Candan will be screened followed by a panel discussion. Panelists will discuss the situation of LGBTIQ+ individuals in Switzerland and Turkey, LGBTIQ-issues in the context of higher education institutions, the need for transnational solidarity when it comes to repression and oppression and strategies how to collaborate and communicate in culturally diverse contexts.

When children have their coming out how do parents react? What do they feel and how do they cope with a situation that is still not the norm in most societies?

In his internationally acclaimed documentary “My Child”, filmmaker and academic Can Candan features a group of parents of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender individuals in Turkey on their journey to redefine parenthood in a conservative and homophobic society and mobilize for equal rights and acknowledgement for the LGBTIQ+ community.

LGBTIQ+ initiatives and needs such as documented in “My child” have gained renewed importance with the rise of populist discourses and authoritarian politics. Filmmaker Candan is currently documenting the struggle of students and faculty members at the Bogazici University in Istanbul – one of Turkey’s top universities – for academic freedom after the Turkish government appointed a rector for the university. The following student protests met with heavy police force and mass arrests. The closing down of the LGBTIQ+ student club and Can Candan’s dismissal from his academic position are further indicators for the tense atmosphere prevailing at the Bogazici University in the last months. While March 2022 an administrative court has revised the dismissal of Candan – the Bogazici incidents show the importance of transnational solidarity and resistance to protect scholars in Turkey and beyond during times of authoritarianism, conflicts and war.

Even in supposedly open, pluralistic societies like Switzerland, the struggle for recognition and equality as well as the overcoming of prejudices remain important. In view of significantly higher suicide rates among young people from the LGBTIQ+ spectrum, still widespread negative attitudes also among young people, and heteronormative and binary-oriented institutions, we ask ourselves what an institution for higher education like ZHAW can and should do on the topic.

Opening/Welcoming:

Svenja Witzig, head of the ZHAW Diversity Unit and Waseem Hussain, head of the ZHAW International Affairs Unit

Moderator:

Irina Brandenberger, ZHAW Student (BA in Communication)

Panelists:

**Can Candan** is an independent documentary filmmaker and academic at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. He directed and produced three award-winning and internationally distributed feature documentaries: “Duvarlar – Mauern – Walls” (2000), “3 Hours” (2008) and “My Child” (2013). “My Child” received various awards including Best Documentary Audience Award at 2015 Pink Apple Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in Switzerland; Theme Award at 2014 Flying Broom Women’s Film Festival in Turkey; Best Film Award at 2013 Thessaloniki LGBTQ Film Festival in Greece; Best Documentary Audience Award at 2013 Boston Turkish Festival Documentary Film Competition; Public Awareness Project of the Year, 2013 at Man of the Year awards by GQ Magazine, Turkey. He is currently working on his fourth feature documentary film entitled “Nuclear alla Turca”.

**Tabea Hässler** is a senior researcher at the University of Zurich and conducts research to assess how minorities respond to inequalities and when people engage in actions to foster social change toward greater equality. Therefore, Tabea curated the Zurich Intergroup Project (a multinational project including 43 researchers from more than 20 countries) and, together with Léila Eisner, the Swiss LGBTIQ+ Panel. A central aim of Tabea’s work is to promote more inclusive societies and social justice with a particular focus on LGBTIQ+ individuals in Switzerland and beyond. Tabea holds a Ph.D. in Social Psychology and a B.A. in Sport Management and Sport Communication

**Regula Kolar** is a Diversity Officer and responsible for the Compatibility of work/study and private life, LGBTIQ+ issues and Counselling at the ZHAW. Her work is dedicated to the implementation of LGBTIQ+ throughout the university and the implementation of corresponding measures. She also advises staff and students, as well as various organizational units, on the topic.

Regula Kolar has a Master's degree in Gender Studies and was previously active in women's and human rights work in civil society.

**Steffi Neumann** is a lecturer and consultant for leadership and coaching at the Institute of Applied Psychology at the ZHAW. Among others, she is accompanying teams and individuals in cooperating and communicating with impact in diverse settings, mainly with a focus on interculturality. In her program CAS International Leader & Entrepreneur, participants support entrepreneurs in establishing social businesses in Mongolia, Cambodia and Sri Lanka. Steffi Neumann has studied and worked in various Asian countries which deepened her understanding for the difficulties and cultural blind spots we all encounter.

She holds a Master’s degree in Political Science, Japanese Studies and International Law.