

# Sabrina Mittermeier

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Dr. Sabrina Mittermeier is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer in British and North American History at the University of Kassel, Germany. Her research focus is on popular culture in the 20th and 21st centuries, history of sexuality and specifically queer history and queer studies.

*As editor of the new TV Matters series, what is its central aim and vision?*

Books that focus on truly ‘popular’ TV, not just series with critical acclaim, so also reality TV, soaps, game shows, etc. We want to give people a first look into the production history, central themes and fandom of each of the covered series.

*What inspired you to create this series?*

While short monographs on TV exist, they often seemed very focused on prestige TV. And I just love reading and writing about all TV.

*Why do you think television still ‘matters’ so much today – both culturally and academically?*

Television is accessible in one form or other to almost everyone and has a huge impact globally on how we perceive the world and ourselves – even, or especially, through fiction.

*How do you see television studies evolving over the next decade, especially with the rise of streaming platforms?*

I think we need to think way more globally and more economically minded than a lot of TV studies do so far.

What is it about certain shows that allows them to connect so deeply with audiences and build lasting fandoms?

That's too complex to write about here, but the short version always is that we process our own lives through fiction.

Much of your research explores queer history and popular culture – how will queer representation on television be addressed within the series?

That will vary greatly between individual shows, but if one contributed to the representation of queer people, it should be discussed in the books. I do also want to feature volumes on series that have explicitly played a role in that, for better or for worse (*Queer as Folk*, *The L Word*, *Glee*, *Pose*, *Queer Eye*...).

The term 'fangirl' is often used dismissively, yet women power many of the world's largest fandoms. Are there series with predominantly female fanbases you'd particularly like to spotlight?

*Star Trek*! Without female fans of *Star Trek*, it would never even have turned into a franchise in the first place.

How has television historically shaped public perceptions of women's roles and identities?

Representation has greatly mattered to women to see alternative lifestyles, but it has also contributed to negative/harmful beauty standards and heteronormativity.

Are there shows centred on women's experiences that you're especially excited to explore in the series?

I am really looking forward to the books on *Gilmore Girls*, *Buffy* and *Derry Girls*.

If you could instantly commission a volume on any television show, which would it be – and why?

*The Muppet Show*. It was incredibly influential to a lot of comedians and screen writers and there's a lot of fascinating production history.

What do you ultimately hope readers, scholars and fans will take away from *TV Matters*?

That TV, well... matters – that it's complex and one of the most influential and versatile media.