

[CfP: The World of BL: Cringe, Hype, or Activism?](#)

Discussion published by Antje Ziethen on Sunday, December 4, 2022

CfP: Panel at the Annual Conference of the Film and Media Studies Association of Canada (FMSAC)

May 27-29, 2023

York University, Toronto

The World of BL: Cringe, Hype, or Activism?

This panel addresses the increasingly global phenomenon of Boys' Love (BL) shows that come out of Thailand, Korea, Taiwan, Japan, China, the Philippines, and Vietnam. They are available to international audiences through platforms such as Youtube, Viki, Bilibili, or GagaOOLala. Recently, the genre was mentioned in articles both in *The Times* and *The Guardian* who emphasize their positive impact on the national economy and tourism industry, particularly in Thailand. Since its beginnings in 1960s Japan print culture, BL has expanded to other geographical areas and forms of media, including TV shows and web series. Despite its growing success, scholars and fans alike have identified BL's many problematic aspects including dubious consent, binary heterosexual dynamics imposed on gay relationships (seme/uke), colorism, use of transgender characters for comic relief, marginalized female characters and misrepresentation of gay men. However, with more and more shows hitting the airwaves, especially in Thailand, viewers seem to notice a shift in the way BL shows deal with gay romance. Does BL start to (slowly) move away from the too familiar tropes repeated over and over again since the release of *Sotus*? Do shows such as *Not me*, *Bad Buddy*, *I Told Sunset About You*, *Gaya Sa Pelikula*, or *A Man Who Defies the World of BL* renew the genre with their focus on more complex coming-of-age stories, exploration of political issues, gay cast, and ironic self-awareness? Have more recent BL shows been able to diversify their audiences to include members of the LGBTQ+ community? Can BL shows actually be considered LGBTQ+ media, given the fact that they are often based on novels written by (straight) women for (straight) women? Is it meaningful to compare BL shows to examples of queer cinema from a scholarly perspective? Are there conclusions to be drawn from analyzing, for instance, Xavier Dolan's *Matthias & Maxime*, Marco Berger's *Plan B*, or Guadagnino's *Call Me by Your Name* (2017) with *I Told Sunset About You*, *Where Your Eyes Linger*, or *2gether*?

We invite **papers of 15 minutes** from scholars across disciplines who engage with these or other relevant questions about BL. Please send your **abstract of 200 words** to antje.ziethen@ubc.ca and mpoulena@student.ubc.ca. The deadline for proposals is **December 20, 2022**. Accepted panelists will be notified by email in early January. **All presenters have to be members of FMSAC at the time of Congress registration.**

Please note that FMSAC is working with Congress to offer **a limited number of virtual presentations on hybrid panels** through its Zoom platform. The Conference Committee asks that,

when you submit your proposal, to indicate whether you intend to attend Congress 2023 in person or wish to present virtually. While virtual presentation will be possible, please note that full Congress fees will be in effect for both in-person and virtual presenters given the costs involved in hosting participants both on campus and via virtual platforms. Please see more information here:

<https://www.filmstudies.ca/conference/fsac2023>

<https://www.federationhss.ca/en/congress/congress-2023>