

Closed Windows

Curated by American Boyfriend

In E.M. Forster's "Maurice," the main character and his classmate Clive act indifferently to each other at first, suppressing their feelings towards one another. One night, after Clive continues to treat him with hostility, Maurice stands impatiently in the King's College courtyard for the entire night, looking at the window of Clive's room. When the sky lightens, he finally makes up his mind and enters through the window. Their relationship had to remain concealed, as homosexual acts between men were illegal in the UK at the time; the novel itself remained unpublished because homosexual acts were forbidden by the law. Despite this, the novel circulated among Forster's circle of friends in the UK and the USA, before being published in 1971 — after the author's death. Homosexual acts were decriminalized in England and Wales in 1967.

"Closed Windows" focuses on actions and relationships that, despite their existence, remain mostly unseen. Emily Wardill's "No Trace of Accelerator," which incorporates the true story of a series of mysterious fires in a small French village, tells the tale of a woman who remains in her room while others evacuate the village in fear of the sporadic fires. For her series "Letter to Her," Jinhee Kim embroiders lines of text on the backside of photographs of old postcards. As the embroidery appears to be just a fraction of the message, the text seems like some sort of code being exchanged between the sender and receiver. Scott Treleaven's "Salvation Army" zines were self-published in Toronto in the late 1990s and circulated among queers in various parts of the world, giving rise to unexpected reactions and exchanges. Tomoko Asakai's photographic series "Sight" captures people immersed in watching movies. The subjects appear relaxed and in close relationships, however as we are unable to know their identities or the nature of their relationships, we can only speculate.

In an isolated place, a relationship may be nurtured in a strong manner or it may end up being a violent one; it may be forced to remain hidden or it may be too modest to be known. Such a relationship rarely draws the attention of others, nor does it affect the world. In a certain era or location, it may come with the danger of being exposed and labeled sinful. However, it also carries the possibility of resurfacing by chance, affecting the people it reaches and altering ideas of privateness.