

Elisar von Kupffer (1872-1942)

Citation for published version (APA):

Oosterhuis, H. (2000). Elisar von Kupffer (1872-1942). In G. E. Haggerty (Ed.), *Gay Histories and Cultures: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 524-525). Garland Publishing. Encyclopedia of lesbian and gay histories and cultures Vol. 2

Document status and date:

Published: 01/01/2000

Document Version:

Accepted author manuscript (Peer reviewed / editorial board version)

Please check the document version of this publication:

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
- The final author version and the galley proof are versions of the publication after peer review.
- The final published version features the final layout of the paper including the volume, issue and page numbers.

[Link to publication](#)

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

If the publication is distributed under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license above, please follow below link for the End User Agreement:

www.umlib.nl/taverne-license

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at:

repository@maastrichtuniversity.nl

providing details and we will investigate your claim.

Elisar von Kupffer (1872-1942)

Elisar von Kupffer, an aesthete of Baltic aristocratic ancestry, gained popularity in homosexual circles around 1900 with his anthology of homoerotic literature from antiquity to his own time, *Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe in der Weltliteratur* (1899). With his anthology the poet and painter Kupffer hoped to create a counterbalance to medical theories of homosexuality, especially those of Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Magnus Hirschfeld. In fact, he rejected the terms 'homosexuality' or 'uranism' because to him these were loaded with the stigma of sickly deviation and effeminacy of men. Instead, he introduced the words *Lieblingminne* and *Freundesliebe* to indicate that same-sex love should be viewed not as a biomedical issue, but as a cultural and historical one. As he explained in the highly polemic introduction to his anthology, that was also published in Adolf Brand's *Der Eigene*, Greek boy-love, pedagogical eros, and the cult of romantic friendship in 18th and 19th-century Germany had been discredited by medical interference with same-sex love. Advocating a cultural-aesthetic and masculine-nationalist approach of homoeroticism, Kupffer set the tone for Brand's *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*. In the light of his ardent plea for masculinity at the beginning of the century it is remarkable that, as a painter, Kupffer later elevated androgyny as the state of human perfection. Eros would span the gulf between the masculine and the feminine. Together with his friend Eduard von Mayer, he contrived an esoteric doctrine called *Klarismus*, for which he built the *Sanctuarium Artis Elisarion* in Minusio (Locarno) in Switzerland. The walls of this temple and museum in one consisted of a monumental painting by Kupffer of eighty-four strikingly similar naked ephebic youths in various positions.

Harry Oosterhuis