



notizen zur alltagskultur

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

1/27 FRIENDS

„No one can part good friends

Good friends are never alone

Because there's one thing they know how to do:

Be there for one another“

– Franz Beckenbauer, „Gute Freunde“, Single, 1966 (translated by authors)

Romantic love and family ties have long been research areas in anthropology and cultural studies. Friendship, by contrast, has received surprisingly little attention until recently – despite shaping everyday life and figuring centrally in biographical self-formation. The upcoming issue of KUCKUCK 1/27 turns the spotlight on: friends.

While the heteronormative nuclear family is symbolically and institutionally promoted, and legally framed, friendship receives little legal or political recognition, despite its social significance. Friendship is credited not only with providing emotional support to individuals, but with a protective function for democracy and social stability more broadly. The romantic image of the „good“ friend is a culturally powerful trope (see Beckenbauer, above): loyal, unconditionally present, someone to lean on in hard times, a stabilizing force in one's life story and a bulwark against loneliness. In activist contexts, friendship holds genuinely emancipatory and resistant potential: it challenges the privileging of the romantic couple and opens up space for alternative forms of closeness, responsibility, care, and social reproduction.

Amid all this positive framing, the more ambivalent sides of friendship tend to fade into the background. Yet friendships are, by their nature, always potentially fragile, conflict-ridden, asymmetrical, and subject to cost-benefit calculation. Images of cronyism („Freunderlwirtschaft“) and therapeutic discourse around „toxic friendships“ point to the more fraught sociopolitical and psychological aspects of friendship. And not everyone gets to be a friend: an intersectional lens raises further critical questions – regarding gender, class, race, and age, among other factors – about who gets to be a friend, on what terms, and who is excluded from that possibility altogether.

Given these attributions and debates, actual friendship practices – and the relationships they involve – turn out to be remarkably diverse in terms of biographical significance, space, duration, intimacy, and the degree of responsibility and mutual care involved. Meanwhile, digitalization is reshaping what friendship looks like, and the rise of AI raises a further question: can a machine be a friend? That diversity complicates any clear definition of friendship, not least because its boundaries with romantic love, sexual relationships, and family are themselves blurry. This messiness is precisely what renders friendship such a rich and challenging object for cultural analysis.

The upcoming issue of KUCKUCK sets out to illuminate relationships among friends through a wide range of approaches and perspectives.

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We welcome contributions on topics including, but not limited to:

- Relational and emotional practices among friends – both online and digital
- Guiding ethical ideals of friendship, their historical and cultural specificity, and how they shape lived relationships
- The political potential of friendship, for instance in feminist or queer-political contexts
- Power-critical perspectives on friendship and its relationship to (social) capital and unequal access
- Popular-culture figures of friendship, from young adult fiction to social media
- Historical accounts of friendship and the emergence of friendship as a relational form
- Methodological reflections on becoming or being friends in the context of fieldwork and ethnography

We welcome **abstracts, ideas, and proposals (max. 150 words)** for empirical, conceptual, essayistic, activist, and artistic contributions, along with a **short biographical note (max. 450 characters)**, by **September 21, 2026**, sent by email to l.gozzer@lmu.de and j.moser@lmu.de.

Full contributions are due by **January 31, 2027**. Submissions should not exceed **20,000 characters** including references, and will go through a collaborative review process within the KUCKUCK editorial team.

Further guidance for authors is available on our website:

<https://kulturanthropologie.uni-graz.at/de/bibliothek-1/kuckuck.-notizen-zur-alltagskultur/>

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