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**GLBT  
Historical  
Society**  
*museum & archives*

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## **50 Years of Pride: Exhibition Documenting San Francisco Pride Opens on GLBT Historical Society's Website**

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**San Francisco** — A new online photography exhibition documenting five decades of San Francisco Pride opens today on the GLBT Historical Society's website at [glbthistory.org/50-years-of-pride](http://glbthistory.org/50-years-of-pride). Presented by the GLBT Historical Society and the San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) Galleries with the support of San Francisco Pride, *50 Years of Pride* celebrates the golden jubilee of one of the city's most beloved public festivals. The physical exhibition will open on the ground floor and North Light Court of San Francisco City Hall after the city's shelter-in-place order has been relaxed. *50 Years of Pride* inaugurates the GLBT Historical Society's Pride season, which includes both exhibitions and programming.

On June 28, 1970, a small group of LGBTQ people marched down Polk Street —then San Francisco's most prominent queer neighborhood—to mark an event called "Christopher Street Liberation Day." Commemorating the one-year anniversary of the historic Stonewall uprising on Christopher Street in New York City, the march was followed the next afternoon by an intimate "gay-in" at Speedway Meadows in Golden Gate Park. Fifty years later, this modest gathering has evolved into San Francisco Pride, a globally famous annual parade and celebration that welcomes hundreds of thousands of participants and spectators from around the world the last weekend in June.

Encompassing examples of photojournalism, portraiture, fine-art photography, posters and magazine covers, *50 Years of Pride* honors how San Francisco's LGBTQ community has come into its own since that first humble Pride gathering. The exhibition explores how Pride has reflected and refracted the community's priorities, responses and activism in times of hope and despair, triumph and setback. Images drawn from the GLBT Historical Society's archives are joined by photographs from other institutions, as well as works by over a dozen independent queer photographers.

The exhibition is curated by Lenore Chinn and Pamela Peniston, two San Francisco artists with deep roots in the city's queer arts and culture community.

“Culling through the archives at the GLBT Historical Society, we found a treasure trove of photographs, snapshots and 35 mm color slides that tell a story of the spirit and nature of Pride and what it has come to mean both locally and internationally,” Chinn says.

*50 Years of Pride* is a collaborative project of the GLBT Historical Society and the SFAC Galleries. “The history of Pride over the last half century in San Francisco is as complex and diverse as our city,” says the GLBT Historical Society’s executive director, Terry Beswick. “It is also a great lens through which we can examine the evolution of our LGBTQ rights and freedoms, as well as our awareness of how our movement intersects with other social justice movements. I’m so proud to have curators Pam Peniston and Lenore Chin tell these stories through this exhibit.”

Meg Shiffler, director of the SFAC Galleries, says, “The SFAC Galleries is thrilled to partner with the GLBT Historical Society to produce this expansive anniversary exhibition. SF Pride is a San Francisco treasure that has become a globally recognized and totally integrated part of our civic and cultural identity.” The SFAC Galleries is also celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2020.

This exhibition has been made possible by the generous support of San Francisco Pride. “We could not be more excited about the way *50 Years of Pride* helps illuminate the complexity of our story,” says Fred Lopez, executive director of SF Pride. “It’s frequently said that LGBTQ history is American history, and that’s undeniably true, particularly here in San Francisco. Exhibitions like this highlight our unique nature as a city at the forefront of all things LGBTQ.” Additional support for *50 Years of Pride* is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and San Francisco Grants for the Arts.

*50 Years of Pride* opens Friday, May 15 on the GLBT Historical Society’s website at [glbthistory.org/50-years-of-pride](http://glbthistory.org/50-years-of-pride). For more information, visit the GLBT Historical Society website at [www.glbthistory.org](http://www.glbthistory.org).

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## **About the Curators**

**Lenore Chinn** is a painter, photographer and cultural activist who works to create structures of personal and institutional support that both sustain critical artistic production and advance movements for social justice. Portraiture, both in painting and photography, is at the core of her visual art practice. Her current street photography chronicles a rapidly changing sociopolitical landscape. A San Francisco native, she was a founding member of Lesbians in the Visual Arts, a co-founder of the Queer Cultural Center and has been active in the Asian American Women Artists Association since the group was founded.

**Pamela Peniston** is a founding member and artistic director of the Queer Cultural Center, and has been one of the curators for the visual and performing arts at the National Queer Arts Festival since its inception. She has won numerous awards for her work designing and painting sets for national and Bay Area theatrical and dance companies. Peniston’s photographic interests are

split among the wonder and beauty of nature, women in windows, the beauty of simple architectural elements and the community and humanity of people around the world.

### **Complementary Exhibition**

The GLBT Historical Society is also presenting a complementary exhibition about San Francisco Pride, *Labor of Love: The Birth of San Francisco Pride, 1970–1980*, which documents the early years of the annual celebration. This exhibition will open on the GLBT Historical Society's website at [glbthistory.org/labor-of-love](http://glbthistory.org/labor-of-love) in June 2020.

### **About the GLBT Historical Society**

The GLBT Historical Society is a public history center and archives that collects, preserves, exhibits and makes accessible to the public materials and knowledge to support and promote understanding of LGBTQ history, culture and arts in all their diversity. Founded in 1985, the society maintains one of the world's largest collections of LGBTQ historical materials. The society's operations are centered around two sites: the GLBT Historical Society Museum, located since 2011 in the heart of San Francisco's Castro neighborhood; and the Dr. John P. De Cecco Archives and Research Center, open to researchers in the Mid-Market district. For more information, visit [www.glbthistory.org](http://www.glbthistory.org).

### **About the San Francisco Arts Commission Galleries**

Located in the heart of San Francisco's Civic Center, the SFAC Galleries makes contemporary art accessible to broad audiences through curated exhibitions that both reflect our regional diversity and position Bay Area visual art production within an international contemporary art landscape. By commissioning new works, collaborating with arts and community organizations and supporting artists' projects, the SFAC Galleries provides new and challenging opportunities for contemporary art to engage with a civic dialogue. The SFAC Galleries was founded in 1970 and is the exhibitions program of the San Francisco Arts Commission, the arts agency of the City and County of San Francisco. For more information, visit [sfartscommission.org](http://sfartscommission.org).

### **About San Francisco Pride**

The mission of the San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Pride Celebration is to educate the world, commemorate our heritage, celebrate our culture and liberate our people. Our annual event on the last weekend of June is the biggest gathering of the LGBTQ community and allies in America as well as San Francisco's largest outdoor event, consisting of a two-day Celebration in Civic Center plus a parade down Market Street with more than 280 contingents marching. Since 1997, SF Pride has awarded over \$2.5 million in proceeds to local nonprofit LGBTQ organizations and those organizations working on issues related to HIV/AIDS, cancer, homelessness and animal welfare. For more information, visit [sfpride.org](http://sfpride.org).

### **Graphics for Reproduction**

The following graphics may be reproduced free of charge only in conjunction

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The view of the celebrations from top of the San Francisco City Hall dome, 2008; photograph by Rick Gerharter, used with permission, all rights reserved.



John Lewis and Stuart Gaffney representing marriage equality; 2012; photograph by Daniel Nicoletta, used with permission, all rights reserved.



Gabrielle Daniels and Merle Woo carrying a sign that reads "People of Color, Feminists, Jews, Gays, Fight Back," 1980; photograph by ©2020 JEB (Joan E. Biren), used with permission, all rights reserved.

