

History Happens

News from the



GLBT
Historical
Society
archives & museum



October 2016

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"Noche de Ambiente" curators
Angel Rafael "Ralph" Vázquez-Concepción
and Juliana Delgado Lopera

Noche de Ambiente: New Exhibition Celebrates Latinx LGBTQ Performance, Activism

For decades, Spanish speakers in many parts of the Western Hemisphere have used the word *ambiente* -- literally meaning "atmosphere" or "environment" -- as a coded reference to queer Latinas and Latinos and their culture. The term is at the heart of a new exhibition debuting October 28 at the GLBT History Museum: "Noche de Ambiente." The show will open a window into the meanings of *ambiente* as reflected in Latinx

drag performance and LGBTQ and AIDS activism in the Bay Area from the 1970s into the 1990s.

Curated by Juliana Delgado Lopera and Angel Rafael "Ralph" Vázquez-Concepción, the exhibition brings together diverse documents, images and videos from the [GLBT Historical Society's archives](#) and materials contributed by community members to summon the protective embrace that welcomed many Latinx people into the queer fold. "Growing up in Puerto Rico, the word *ambiente* was familiar, I heard it a lot when I was a kid in the '80s," says Vázquez-Concepción. "But it would be later that I would come to understand the shielding effect it has. Like a spell, it turns the space it refers to into Latinx queer domain."

A World of Queer Latinidad

Delgado Lopera adds that she first learned the word from her "queer mother," Adela Vazquez, a woman who told her stories that "opened an underground world of queer Latinidad invisible to the public eye. I didn't see representations of queer Latinos (especially immigrants) in the queer history I learned. Through Adela I also met many queer Latinos active during the '80s and '90s, some even became part of my chosen family. I'm committed to the unearthing and preservation of their stories because they're part of me, they created openings for me to exist."

Based in San Francisco, the curators bring distinctive backgrounds to their work. Born in Colombia, Delgado Lopera is known as a writer, educator, oral historian and spoken-word performer. She serves as executive director of [RADAR Productions](#), which organizes queer literary programs. Vázquez-Concepción was an arts journalist and curator in Puerto Rico. He went on to receive an MA at San Francisco's California College of the Arts. He's the founder of [Cranium Corporation](#), a platform for dialogue about art, artists and exhibitions.

"Noche de Ambiente" opens on Friday, October 28, with a [public reception set for 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the GLBT History Museum](#) at 4127 18th St. in San Francisco. The curators will make brief remarks to inaugurate the show. Wine and light refreshments will be served. Admission is \$5.00; free for members. The exhibition will be on display in the museum's Front Gallery through February 2017.

From the Museum Manager Meet Our Dynamic Corps of Volunteers

by Jeremy Prince

A large part of the success of the GLBT History Museum comes from our dynamic corps of



Chanella Hunter

volunteers -- some 30 people whose love of queer history and desire to give back to their community is evident in everything they do. In exchange for contributing their time and talents, the volunteers learn more about queer history, discover how the museum operates, and interact with visitors and other volunteers from a range of generations, backgrounds and communities.

Chanella Hunter is one of these devoted volunteers. Her motivation for getting involved? She says she wanted to feel "more connected to the LGBTQ community" after hearing about the horrific [attack at the Pulse nightclub](#) in Orlando last June. She signed up the following week "to help the queer community in a consistent way." Chanella now staffs the museum desk, where she greeted guests during our busy tourist season -- and has assisted with public programs and our new After Hours series.

Like Chanella, all our volunteers play an integral role in the day-to-day operations of the museum: keeping the galleries open; leading docent tours for guests from around the world; providing support for an array of events; and helping build and install exhibitions. In addition, volunteers bring their professional expertise to working groups that guide programming and exhibitions at the museum.

Desk Volunteer, Docent, Board Member

Some of our museum volunteers even have gone on to serve as members of the GLBT Historical Society's board of directors. One example is Lee Callahan, who identifies as both gay and trans. Lee notes that the Historical Society "belongs to trans people just as it belongs to all members of the GLBT community and those who support us." He began volunteering at the welcome desk in 2011 when the museum opened its doors, then joined our docent program, and now acts as board secretary.

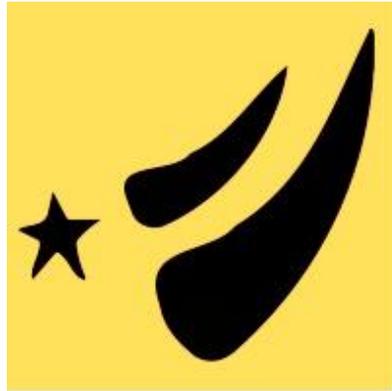
For me, one of the great joys of working with our volunteers is learning about their interests and experiences: They're students, workers, professionals and retired people who reflect the diversity of the Bay Area. Some are getting involved with LGBTQ culture for the first time; others have dedicated their long lives to fighting for our right to live and love openly and honestly. Some are even founding members of the GLBT Historical Society; their volunteer work has been so rewarding, they're still lending a hand after more than three decades.

Everyone is welcome to apply to join our wonderful team of volunteers. Simply fill out our online [volunteer form](#). We're looking forward to hearing from you!

Upcoming Events

Staged Reading

Rhino in the Castro: Oedipus at Palm Springs



Monday, October 3

7:00-9:00 PM

The GLBT History Museum

4127 18th St., San Francisco

Free | \$5.00 donation welcome

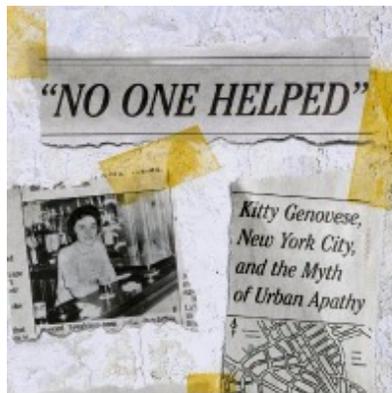
[Theatre Rhinoceros](#), San Francisco's groundbreaking queer stage company, has teamed up with the GLBT History Museum to

present "Rhino in the Castro," a series of readings of plays reflecting the LGBTQ community and our allies. The museum provides the space, and Rhino provides the scripts and actors.

This month's offering is *Oedipus at Palm Springs* by the Five Lesbian Brothers -- a queering of an ancient tale, as the title indicates. A group of middle-aged friends gather for a holiday at a lesbian B&B in Palm Springs. One brings along her much younger girlfriend. One too many secrets is revealed. Directed by Kathryn Wood. Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

Author Talk

Race, Gender & Sexuality in the Story of Kitty Genovese



Tuesday, October 4

7:00-9:00 PM

The GLBT History Museum

4127 18th St., San Francisco

\$5.00; free for members

Many know the story of Kitty Genovese, whose 1964 rape and murder in New York City with numerous bystanders who supposedly

ignored the crime became a case study of big-city indifference. Drawing on her new book, ["No One Helped": Kitty Genovese, New York City and the Myth of Urban Apathy](#) (Cornell University Press, 2015), Marcia Gallo will detail little-known aspects of Genovese's life, including her lesbian relationship, and will explore how New York's shifting racial and economic

demographics shaped the media's "urban apathy" story. Gallo is an associate professor of history at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she teaches courses on race, gender and sexuality, as well as oral history and public history. Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

History Panel

Queer Trailblazer: Magnus Hirschfeld's Life & Legacy



Thursday, October 6
7:00-9:00 PM
The GLBT History Museum
4127 18th St., San Francisco
\$5.00; free for members

Starting in the late 1890s, Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935) was a trailblazing defender of homosexual and transgender people. He was internationally renowned as a founder of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, the world's first homosexual advocacy group, and as creator of the Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin. Both organizations were banned when the Nazis came to power. In conjunction with the GLBT History Museum's [current exhibition about Hirschfeld](#), a panel of historians will discuss his life and legacy:

Mel Gordon, author of [Voluptuous Panic: The Erotic World of Weimar Berlin](#) (2008), will place Hirschfeld in relation to 1920s German culture. Gayle Rubin, professor of anthropology and women's studies at the University of Michigan and author of [Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader](#) (2011), will trace Hirschfeld's influence as a sexologist. Gerard Koskovich, curator of "[Through Knowledge to Justice: The Sexual World of Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld](#)," will introduce and moderate the panel. Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

Policy Talk

Teaching LGBTQ History: California's New Framework



Thursday, October 13
7:00-9:00 PM
The GLBT History Museum
4127 18th St., San Francisco
\$5.00; free for members

In July 2016, the California Department of Education adopted a new educational framework that incorporates LGBTQ history into eight grades in elementary and high schools, making it by far the

most LGBTQ-inclusive public school program in the nation. In this presentation, Don Romesburg, chair of women's and gender studies at Sonoma State University and program committee chair for the GLBT Historical Society, will describe the hard-fought campaign that resulted in adoption of the curriculum. He'll also offer examples of the new course content for grades ranging from 2 through 11 and discuss the impact of this groundbreaking educational reform for students in California and beyond. Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

Author Talk

Sex Science Self: A History of Hormones



Thursday, October 20
7:00-9:00 PM
The GLBT History Museum
4127 18th St., San Francisco
\$5.00; free for members

Author Bob Ostertag will discuss his new book, [*Sex Science Self: A Social History of Estrogen, Testosterone and Identity*](#) (University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), in conversation with Trystan Cotten, an associate professor of gender studies at California State University, Stanislaus. The book surveys the fascinating cultural and biological history of sex-hormone research. Ostertag situates this story in the context of an increasingly visible and political lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender population, and opens up a wealth of new questions and debates over gender, sexuality and medical treatments. Ostertag is professor of cinema and digital media at the University of California, Davis; he is the author of five books and is an internationally known composer, performer and activist. Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

After Hours Party

Black Cat Drag Makeover: Celebrating José Sarria



Friday, October 21
7:00-9:00 PM
The GLBT History Museum
4127 18 St., San Francisco
\$10.00

The monthly After Hours party at the GLBT History Museum celebrates the queer past with dancing, drinks, nibbles and mingling in the galleries after the museum's regular exhibition hours. This month's theme, Black Cat Drag Makeover, celebrates drag icon and activist José

Sarria and the Black Cat Café where he performed from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. Sarria ran for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors as the first openly gay candidate in the world exactly 55 years ago. Proceeds from the event will go towards giving a fabulous makeover to the GLBT History Museum's reception area and Main Gallery. For more information and advance tickets, [click here](#).

[Get Your Tickets](#)

Living History: The GLBT Historical Society Gala

LIVING HISTORY
A GLBT Historical Society Gala

OCTOBER 15th 2016
SATURDAY • 6-9 PM
The Green Room • San Francisco
San Francisco's War Memorial Performing Arts Center

GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY • GLBTHISTORY.ORG/GALA

GLBT Historical Society
archives & museum

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EXHIBITIONS & PROGRAMS

The GLBT History Museum

4127 18th St.

San Francisco, CA 94114

(415) 621-1107

www.glbthistory.org/museum

Monday & Wednesday - Saturday: 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Tuesday: Closed
Sunday: Noon - 5:00 PM

ARCHIVES & RESEARCH CENTER

The GLBT Historical Society

989 Market St., Lower Level

San Francisco, CA 94103-1708

(415) 777-5455

www.glbthistory.org/archives

Please call to schedule a research appointment.

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