

October 2019

Panelists Julie Nice, Stuart Gaffney, John Lewis, Kara Korbel Chinula, Ruth Villaseñor and Ana Eng at the "Love, Marriage and Queers" panel on February 28.



## Celebrating Connections at the GLBT Historical Society Annual Gala: "Reunion: Chosen Family"

by Terry Beswick

We're so excited about the GLBT Historical Society's upcoming annual gala, "[Reunion: Chosen Family](#)." Our hostess Juanita MORE! is planning a spectacular evening of great food, wine, celebrity guests and entertainment. Our [silent auction](#) will offer exceptional lots including historic LGBTQ photographs and posters, travel packages and fine dining. Atop San Francisco's newest iconic skyscraper, the Salesforce Tower, the venue offers breathtaking, panoramic views of our city.

In addition to the glitz, our gala is really an opportunity to connect with our supporters, and show our deep gratitude to our staff, board and volunteers. It's a time to reflect on how far we've come, and most importantly, a chance to envision our plans for the future.

### Celebrating a Milestone

This year we're celebrating a milestone. I'm thrilled to report that we've completed an initial set of feasibility studies that lay out a detailed

business plan for a new, full-scale LGBTQ Museum and Research Center in San Francisco. As part of the gala program, we'll give you a preview of the plans. Our opportunity now is to present these detailed plans to the key stakeholders who will make the project possible: local and state elected officials, corporate and foundation partners, and individual supporters.

Why do we need a full-scale museum of LGBTQ history? The answer can be found in our eight-year-old Castro museum. By industry standards, it has been wildly successful, drawing a remarkable 26,000 visitors in 2018, three-quarters of whom came from outside California. But our museum has reached the limit of its visitor and display capacity, even as the demand for knowledge about queer history and the society's unparalleled collections continues to grow. What better place to establish a full-scale museum than in San Francisco?

## A Cultural Crown Jewel

Young LGBTQ people continue to struggle with acceptance and are often disconnected or alienated from their birth families. It's critical to provide them with a sense of the proud LGBTQ heritage of their diverse chosen families. Our queer elders often feel that their stories are at risk of being forgotten, and that no one will learn from their lived experiences. A new LGBTQ history museum and research center will enrich the lives of young queer people and forge intergenerational connections. It will be a crown jewel in San Francisco's robust array of cultural institutions.

Our world faces enormous challenges in the current political environment: racial and economic injustice, climate change, voter suppression and hostility to immigrants, to name but a few. LGBTQ people are profoundly connected to these struggles for social justice, which is one of the major reasons why preserving and sharing queer history is our vital and urgent mission. Through engagement with our history, including the successes and failures of our movement, we can inspire effective leadership to take on today's most pressing social and political issues.

The GLBT Historical Society's museum and archives illuminate these connections for people from all around the world every single day. This is what we are celebrating this year at "Reunion: Chosen Family." I hope you will [join us at the gala](#) and on our ongoing journey.

*Terry Beswick is executive director of the GLBT Historical Society.*

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## From the Staff

### Honoring Our Roots Through Innovative Programming

by Nalini Elias & Leigh Pfeffer

Since opening the doors of the GLBT Historical Society Museum in 2011, we have centered our public outreach efforts around our programs. In



the course of finalizing this year's events, we've taken the opportunity to reflect on how we conceive and develop our programming — and to share with you why it's something truly special.

Unlike those offered by other cultural institutions, our programs aren't created from the top down. Instead, like most of our temporary exhibitions at the museum, we develop them based on proposals submitted by community members and supporters.

## Diverse, Inclusive and Experimental

Every month we sift through these proposals to build a series of diverse, inclusive and experimental events designed to educate, inspire and entertain. We take care to balance different types of events and organize programs thematically. For example, this month's programs celebrate and honor the fact that October is both American Archives Month and LGBTQ History Month.

The result: participants in our events and reactions of our guests are as varied as the topic proposals we receive. Some programs, such as "California and the Stonewall Riots" last month, are facilitated by the best queer historians and academics in the country. Others, such as this summer's "Thrill Spot," a discussion about a raid on a North Beach lesbian bar, represent the community-based approach to queer history for which the society is widely known.

At least one type of program is unique to us: Our Living History Discussions, such as our upcoming [roundtable on the 30th anniversary of the Castro Sweep Police Riot](#) of 1989, bring together participants in and witnesses to historic events in Bay Area queer history. And many of our gatherings are just plain fun: For instance, we held two events featuring new artwork, poetry and performances by Bay Area Latinx artists and culture-makers in conjunction with our "[Chosen Families](#)" exhibition this summer.

## Highlighting Marginalized Voices

Whether you're interested in historical deep-dives, dynamic conversations on the historical background to current issues facing the LGBTQ community or new art and media works that move the cultural needle forward, there's something for everyone. Our approach also allows us to explore topics that have been hidden or neglected. By encouraging community leadership and input, we foreground the voices and perspectives of the marginalized, including queer elders, people with disabilities, immigrants, transgender and nonbinary people and people of color.

Above all, our programming allows us to remain true to our earliest roots as a community-based organization, even though we've grown tremendously. The past two years have witnessed a dramatic surge in the number of attendees at our events. With your support and

involvement, we'll continue to make our program series one of our highest priorities for community engagement, and a vital platform for dialogue, debate and exploration.

*Nalini Elias is the curator of exhibitions at the GLBT Historical Society and Leigh Pfeffer is the society's museum operations manager.*

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## At the Museum

### Finding the Extraordinary in the Beautifully Ordinary



by Katie Loebach

I was fortunate that my very first day at the GLBT Historical Society just happened to be the date that the "[Chosen Familias: LGBTQ Latinx Stories](#)" exhibition opened at the GLBT Historical Society Museum.

I came to San Francisco last summer from a small liberal-arts college in rural southern Maryland to complete a two-month internship working with the Art and Artifacts Collection and immediately fell in love with the LGBTQ community here. Having studied queer art, I was struck by the unique curatorial approach of "*Chosen Familias*."

#### A Feeling of Hominess

The focal point of this show consists of a row of black binders, each stuffed with dozens of personal photographs contributed by members of the Bay Area Latinx community. The simplicity of the binders alone aroused a feeling of "hominess": It felt as though I were looking through a family's homemade photo album.

The pictures, many of them candid, depict queer people interacting with one another, and are so beautifully ordinary that I could easily see myself and my own family in the photos. Paging through the albums, I felt almost as though the people in the snapshots had personally invited me into their lives.

Many of the albums depict drag queens and performers, with backstage or "behind-the-scenes" images before and after their performances. I relate to these photographs because my own chosen family consists of my predominantly queer burlesque troupe. We put on semiannual performances at my college, using both traditional and modern burlesque techniques. Being a member of this troupe in a rural area can be difficult, as it often feels as though many people are actively working against us.

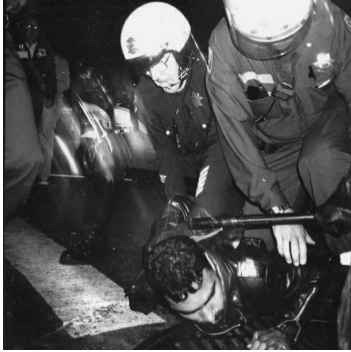
Witnessing the mutual support of chosen family members documented in "*Chosen Familias*" reminded me of the support and love that chosen queer families provide to their members, often in the face of adversity.



## Upcoming Events

### Living History Discussion

## Remembering a Police Riot: The 1989 Castro Sweep



Thursday, October 3

7:00–9:00 p.m.

The GLBT Historical Society Museum

4127 18th St., San Francisco

\$5 | Free for [members](#)

On Friday, Oct. 6, 1989, San Francisco police responded violently to a small, peaceful ACT UP march protesting government neglect of people with AIDS. Nearly 200 San Francisco

Police Department officers — half of all those on duty — invaded the Castro district for more than three hours, beating activists and passersby, systematically sweeping all pedestrians from seven city blocks and placing thousands in businesses and homes under virtual house arrest. The event came to be known as the Castro Sweep Police Riot and resulted in three years of civic turmoil, including protests, lawsuits and numerous disciplinary proceedings. The Castro Sweep remains the single most massive police attack on LGBTQ people and people with AIDS in the history of San Francisco. To mark the 30th anniversary, a panel of veteran activists will recount their memories of the sweep and its aftermath and will discuss the evolution of relations between the SFPD and the LGBTQ community. Tickets are available online [here](#).

### Conference

## Memory Lives On: Documenting the AIDS Epidemic



Friday, October 4, 1:00–7:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 5, 9:00 a.m.–4:15 p.m.

UCSF Mission Bay Campus

Byers Auditorium, Genentech Hall

600 16th Street, San Francisco

\$30

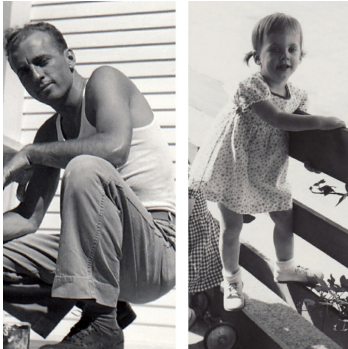
The GLBT Historical Society is cosponsoring a two-day [interdisciplinary symposium](#) organized by the University of California, San Francisco,

that focuses on documenting the history of HIV/AIDS. The epidemic has affected many millions of individuals and communities around the world, presenting significant challenges to historical understanding. By reexamining knowledge of past experiences of the HIV/AIDS, the symposium aims to improve understanding of the effects of the disease and what its history can teach us about responding to future epidemics.

The program consists of an afternoon session and evening reception on October 4, followed by a full day of presentations on October 5. The complete program of events is available [here](#). Tickets are available online [here](#).

## [Illustrated Talk](#)

### [My Dad's Closet: A Father, a Daughter, a Secret](#)



Friday, October 11

7:00–9:00 p.m.

The GLBT Historical Society Museum

4127 18th St., San Francisco

**\$5** | Free for [members](#)

In this illustrated presentation organized for National Coming Out Day on October 11, San Francisco resident Laura Hall recounts the life story of her gay father, Ralph, from 1918 to 2008.

Hall was 24 when her father came out to her in 1975. She learned that in the late 1930s, her father had been in a relationship with a musician in Los Angeles. But two arrests for homosexual activity sent him back into the closet, prompted him to enlist in the Army and ultimately led him to marry a woman. With a panoramic sweep covering the conservative California Central Valley oilfield culture of Ralph Hall's youth, to his postwar double life, to his care for dying friends during the AIDS crisis, this universal love story — a preview of Laura Hall's recently completed memoirs — is a window into the life of a man who felt that he had no choice but to live in the shadows. Tickets are available online [here](#).

## [Community Event](#)

### [Opening the Vault: A Spotlight on the Archives](#)



Sunday, October 13

12:00–3:00 p.m.

The GLBT Historical Society Museum

4127 18th St., San Francisco

**\$5** | Free for [members](#)

October is both LGBTQ History Month and American Archives Month. To mark these celebrations, visitors to the GLBT Historical Society Museum on October 13 will enjoy a

special opportunity to learn more about the society's archives. Archives staff will show and discuss a number of rare items from the collections that are not customarily on display at the museum. They also will discuss their behind-the-scenes work, describe the society's extensive holdings and explain the process for proposing donations to the archives. There is no charge for this event beyond the standard museum admission fee. Museum tickets are available online [here](#).

## [Exhibition Opening](#)

# Performance, Protest & Politics: Gilbert Baker's Art



Friday, November 1  
7:00–9:00 p.m.  
The GLBT Historical Society Museum  
4127 18th St., San Francisco  
\$5 | Free for [members](#)

A new exhibition at the GLBT Historical Society Museum uses textiles, costumes, photographs and ephemera to paint a complex portrait of San Francisco artist Gilbert Baker (1951–2017), who designed the iconic rainbow flag as a symbol of the LGBTQ community. First displayed at the 1978 San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade, the flag has transcended its humble, hand-sewn origins to become an internationally recognized symbol. Yet the success of this design has in some ways overshadowed the larger story of its creator and his exceptional creative work.

Curated by Joanna Black and Jeremy Prince, this exhibition examines how Baker blurred the lines between artist and activist, protester and performer, emphasizing his intuitive understanding of the ways art can serve as a powerful means to address political and social issues. By exploring the less well-known dimensions of Baker's wide-ranging oeuvre, it places the rainbow flag back into the unexpected and evocative context of his exceptional life as an activist and artist. Light refreshments will be served. Tickets are available online [here](#).

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## Current Exhibitions

### Front Gallery

[Chosen Familias: Bay Area LGBTQ Latinx Stories](#)

Open through October 20, 2019

[More information](#)

### Community Gallery

[The Mayor of Folsom Street: The Life & Legacy of Alan Selby](#)

Open through October 20, 2019

[More information](#)

### Main Gallery

[Queer Past Becomes Present](#)

Long-term exhibition

[More information](#)

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You are family. Please join us for

# REUNION CHOSEN FAMILY

*The 2019 GLBT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Gala*

**October 18th** | Friday | 6-9PM

Ohana Floor | **Salesforce Tower** 415 Mission St | SF



## Visit Us

### THE GLBT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

Exhibitions & Programs  
4127 18th St.  
San Francisco, CA 94114  
(415) 621-1107  
[www.glbthistory.org/museum](http://www.glbthistory.org/museum)

Monday–Saturday: 11:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.  
Sunday: Noon–5:00 p.m.

### DR. JOHN P. DE CECCO ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Research & Public History Center  
989 Market St., Lower Level  
San Francisco, CA 94103-1708  
(415) 777-5455  
[www.glbthistory.org/archives](http://www.glbthistory.org/archives)

Call to schedule a research appointment or make an appointment



online by [clicking here](#).

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**CREDITS.** FEATURE and FROM THE STAFF: Photo by Nalini Elias. AT THE MUSEUM: One of the pages in the family albums displayed in the exhibition “Chosen *Familias*,” photo by Nalini Elias. UPCOMING EVENTS. Living History Discussion: Police arrest a man during the Castro Sweep (1989); photo by [Marc Geller](#), used with permission. Conference: Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt on the balcony of San Francisco City Hall, courtesy of UCSF. Illustrated Talk: Ralph Hall (1946) and his daughter Laura (1953), courtesy of Laura Hall. Community Event: Stacks of the GLBT Historical Society archives; photo by Dave Earl. Exhibition Opening: Gilbert Baker as Pink Jesus (1990); photograph by Robert Pruzan, collection of the GLBT Historical Society.

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## Back Issues

