

History Happens

News from the



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Historical
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archives & museum



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Managing Archivist Joanna Black in the stacks at the GLBT Historical Society

Behind the Scenes at Historical Society's Archives: Growing Collections, New Projects

Last June, the GLBT Historical Society moved its extensive collections to a building that offers more than twice as much space for archives and offices, together with a larger reading room. Although not as visible as the GLBT History Museum, the archives are the foundation of the society's queer public history efforts and support the work of an array of researchers. Since opening its doors over the summer, the expanded

space has welcomed more than 100 users from around the world. Now that the staff is settled in to the new location, Managing Archivist Joanna Black sat down with *History Happens* to give us a look behind the scenes.

Many members and friends of the LGBTQ community have little experience with archives. What would you like them to know?

I think people have an idea of archives being remote and inaccessible -- and I really want them to understand the archives are here for them. These materials aren't "history" per se but rather the raw materials that history is made out of. Traditionally, historical narratives have often left a lot of people out, including LGBTQ people. The archives offer sources that help researchers construct more complete and inclusive histories -- and we're constantly striving to support this work by expanding the diversity of our holdings. I'd also say that we're really here for the whole public, not just specialists. We really want you to come visit!

What are some of the most important projects for the archives in the coming year?

One of our biggest initiatives is a set of long-term digitization projects, with audiovisual documents as a priority. In addition to conserving these fragile materials, the project will make them much more readily available. We also understand the demands of researchers and the public to access more material remotely, so we're studying best practices to build up our infrastructure in that area. Another priority is to reestablish our oral history program and make it front and center. Oral history is exciting because it captures the living stories of people in their own words -- people who were involved in the community in a political and social environment very different from what we know today.

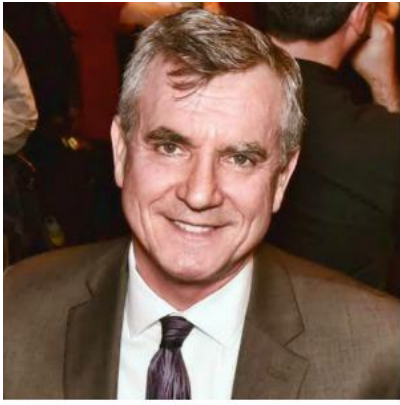
What's one of the quirkiest items you've come across in the course of moving the archives?

Oh, I just love the button collection. We've organized our buttons thematically: For example, one set is Pride buttons, another is AIDS-related, another features buttons from the leather community. But a final one is labeled "Smart-Ass Slogans," and it's got all the sarcastic and caustic ones. They always make me smile and they represent the humor and playfulness that the community has maintained despite the hardships and challenges that its members have had to endure. That cheekiness is something I really admire.

The GLBT Historical Society archives, located at 989 Market St. in San Francisco, are open to members Wednesdays and Fridays, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and to all individuals on Thursdays, 1:00 to 7:00 p.m. For details or to make an appointment, visit the [archives home page](#).

From the Executive Director

Vision2020: Envisioning a New Museum



by Terry Beswick

When I see temporary exhibitions like our current show, "[Noche de Ambiente: LGBTQ Latinx Life, 1970s-1990s](#)," being installed at the GLBT History Museum, my first response is immense pride that we're able to give voice to another important piece of LGBTQ history. And then I immediately imagine how great it would be if we could provide our curators

more space and support, or if we were able to install both long-term exhibitions and even more short-term ones.

At our wonderful Living History gala a couple of weeks ago, we were thrilled to announce Vision2020, our campaign to create a New Museum of LGBTQ History and Culture with just those sorts of expanded facilities and resources. Our goal is to establish the new museum when the final lease extension on our current museum runs out in four years. The next several months of this campaign will focus on building up the GLBT Historical Society's finances to position us for the launch of a future capital campaign.

With increased support both from the City and County of San Francisco and from you -- our members and sponsors -- we will be working hard throughout 2017 to build our long-term capacity for growth and to identify possible sites for development of the new museum while we continue to strengthen our ongoing archives and museum programs.

Doubling the Impact

To kick off Vision2020, we're launching a \$75,000 year-end fundraising drive with a \$30,000 matching challenge from three exceptional donors: Al Baum, Elisabeth Cornu and the Excelerate Foundation. Thanks to their generosity, new donations or increased gifts from previous donors that we receive by the end of 2016 will be matched dollar for dollar -- so by [giving today](#), you'll double the impact of your support. All donations are tax-deductible. To join the campaign, [donate here](#).

Your dollars will be crucial to Vision2020 -- but so will your suggestions. The new museum will belong to all of us, so we want you to help us envision the spaces, programs, exhibitions and archives the museum might bring together. Send your ideas for the dream museum you'd like to see by writing to me at terry@glbthistory.org. Or watch this column and follow us on social media to learn about ways you can get involved in shaping all our work at the GLBT Historical Society.

Thank you for being a part of Vision2020.

Terry Beswick is executive director of the [GLBT Historical Society](#).

Upcoming Events

Staged Reading

Rhino in the Castro: Bahala Na (Let It Go)



Monday, November 7

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 *Bahala Na*, a comedy by Clarence Coo. A young Chinese-Filipino man and his husband are about to adopt a baby, but the man can't tear himself away from his ailing and unconscious grandmother. The young man's family disapproves of his gay life, but through the dreams of the grandmother, we see that she, too, has been pushing against gender restrictions her whole life. Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

Panel Discussion

Queer Visual Culture: Research by Emerging Scholars



Wednesday, November 9

7:00-9:00 PM

The GLBT History Museum

4127 18th St., San Francisco

\$5.00; free for members

Emerging scholars at Bay Area schools are producing innovative research to advance understanding of queer culture. This panel

offers an introduction to master's thesis work in architecture, visual culture, race, gender studies and queer theory:

- Elena Gross (California College of the Arts) will discuss artistic exploration of surveillance and the racial politics of public sex in her presentation "The Body Remains: The Felt/Photography of Lorna Simpson."
- Julian Wong-Nelson (San Francisco Art Institute) will discuss artist Tina Takemoto's work based on Jiro Onuma, the subject of an exhibit at the GLBT History Museum, in "Fisting for Freedom: Queer Gesture as Temporal Liberatory Practice."
- Stathis Gerostathopoulos (University of California, Berkeley) will discuss his work in "Spaces of Sexual Citizenship: Notes Toward Fieldwork in Three American Cities."

Professor Sampada Aranke (San Francisco Art Institute) will serve as moderator. The program is sponsored by the [Queer Cultural Center](#) as part of its Emerging Scholars Series. Join the Facebook conversation [here](#).

[After Hours Party](#)

Ladies of the 80s: A Sexually Ambiguous Decade



Friday, November 18

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. For this month's theme, "Ladies of the '80s," join DJs Siobhan Aluvalot (Gayface, Vice) and Marke B. (Kingdom, Hard French) as they delve into the funky, sophisticated sounds of one of the most sexually ambiguous decades of pop music, when tough femmes, secret lovers, nasty girls, drag queens and a streak of Sapphic desire ruled the charts. With surprise drag numbers, a stylish crowd and great tunes foregrounding the queer pop-culture of the 1980s. For more information and advance tickets, [click here](#).

[Author Talk](#)

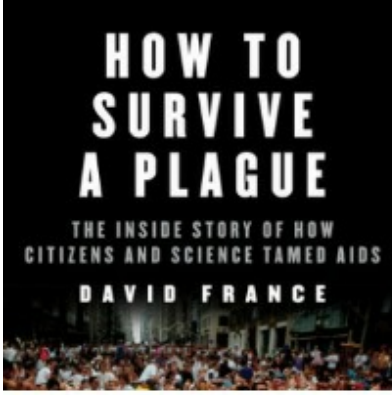
David France: How to Survive a Plague

Wednesday, November 30

7:00-9:00 PM

Books Inc. at Opera Plaza

601 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco



Free

Author David France discusses his new book *How to Survive a Plague: The Inside Story of How Citizens and Science Tamed AIDS* (2016) in conversation with Terry Beswick, executive director of the GLBT Historical Society. France is the creator of the seminal [Oscar-nominated documentary](#) of the same name -- a gripping history of the battle to halt the AIDS epidemic

in the 1980s and the heroic AIDS activists who refused to die without a fight. Fifteen percent of proceeds from sales of the book during the talk will benefit the Historical Society.

The event takes place at [Books Inc. at Opera Plaza](#).

Visit Us

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

Thanksgiving Day (November 24): Closed

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.

CREDITS: Photo of Joanna Black by Gerard Koskovich; photo of Terry Beswick by [Gareth Gooch](#).

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