New exhibition highlights erotic performance cultures that have shaped San Francisco

San Francisco — On Friday, June 7, the GLBT Historical Society Museum will open a new exhibition that preserves the memory of the city’s bohemian past and its essential role in the development of American adult entertainment. The exhibition, *Erotic Resistance: Performance, Art, and Activism in San Francisco Strip Clubs (1960s-1990s)*, was curated by Gigi Otálvaro-Hormillosa and includes original research conducted in the Society’s archives. It will be on display through fall 2024.

This exhibit is titled after Otálvaro-Hormillosa’s dissertation, now published as *Erotic Resistance: The Struggle for the Soul of San Francisco* (University of California Press, 2024). During her research, she encountered objects in the archives that are featured in this exhibition and that tell the story of the cross-pollination of LGBTQ venues, strip clubs, and burlesque theaters by sex worker and LGBTQ communities alike, during the latter part of the twentieth century.

“It has been a privilege to work with the GLBT Historical Society on this project since I began the research over eight years ago,” said curator Gigi Otálvaro-Hormillosa. “I initially encountered some of the objects on display here in the Society’s archives that inspired my thinking and writing of the book, which I now have the pleasure of seeing on the walls of the museum. It has been an honor to tell the stories of the people and places I encountered during my research in various formats—in the book, through public lectures, and in this special exhibit. I am especially grateful for the opportunity to share these images and archival objects with a broader audience, including local community members and those who are visiting the museum from afar.”

The exhibition highlights the contributions of queer women, trans women, and women of color who were instrumental in the city’s labor history, as well as its LGBTQ and sex workers’ rights movements. The exhibit sheds light on
intersectional communities in the making, and the women who played a critical role in this history, which has often been hidden from view.

On view are artworks, performance documents, and other ephemera pertaining to women that were interviewed for this research project or whose archives are still in the process of being co-constructed by individuals and collecting institutions alike.

An opening reception will be held on Friday, June 7 from 6:00 - 8:00 PM at the GLBT Historical Society Museum. Tickets are $5-10 or free for GLBT Historical Society Members. Members can also access a special curator tour at 5 PM, immediately preceding the opening reception.

In addition to the opening reception, the Society will host companion programming on Thursday, June 20 from 6:00 - 8:00 PM. The event will include a screening of the documentary *Straight for the Money: Interviews with Queer Sex Workers*. Curator and author Gigi Otálvaro-Hormillosa will introduce the film and facilitate a discussion with the audience afterward.

Additional information about the exhibition, and tickets to the opening reception and film screening are available at [www.glbthistory.org/erotic-resistance](http://www.glbthistory.org/erotic-resistance).

Copies of *Erotic Resistance: The Struggle for the Soul of San Francisco* will be available for purchase in the Society’s gift shop.

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**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 is recognized internationally as a leader in the field of queer public history and maintains one of the world’s largest archival collections of LGBTQ historical materials. Our operations are centered at two sites: the GLBT Historical Society Museum, located 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 GIGI OTÁLVARO-HORMILLOSA**

Gigi Otálvaro-Hormillosa, PhD, is an artist-scholar who teaches and writes about art and activism, queer of color critique, erotic performance, and the intersections of mindfulness and creative practice. She holds a doctorate in Theater and Performance Studies with a minor in Art History from Stanford.
University, where she currently leads the LifeWorks Program for Integrative Learning.

**GRAPHICS**

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MEDIA RELEASE | New exhibition highlights erotic performance cultures that have shaped San Francisco

Photo: Screen grab from Straight for the Money: Interviews with Queer Sex Workers courtesy of Gigi Otálvaro-Hormillosa.

STRAIGHT FOR THE MONEY: INTERVIEWS WITH QUEER SEX WORKERS
30th Anniversary Film Screening
Tickets are $10, or free for members. Register at glbthistory.org/events.