

TENDERLOIN MUSEUM



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Katie Conry, Executive Director, Tenderloin Museum

Email: kconry@tenderloinmuseum.org

Phone: 415-351-1912



***The Compton's Cafeteria Riot* Returns: An Immersive Theatrical Experience Revives a Landmark Moment in Transgender History**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—*The Compton's Cafeteria Riot*, an immersive, interactive play that brings to life the 1966 uprising in San Francisco's Tenderloin, will reopen in a dedicated venue on **April 11, 2025**. Recently named one of the must-see productions of 2025 by the *San Francisco Chronicle's Datebook*, this powerful theatrical experience offers audiences a front-row seat to a pivotal act of transgender resistance.

Set within a 1960s-inspired cafeteria, this unique theatrical experience places attendees at the heart of history. They sit shoulder-to-shoulder with the play's actors as the riot unfolds around them—over breakfast for dinner. Audiences will witness the resilience and defiance of the “screaming queens” who fought back against police harassment, asserting their right to exist. Predating the Stonewall Riots by three years, the Compton's uprising was the first known militant act of queer resistance against systemic oppression in the U.S. The **Tenderloin**

TENDERLOIN MUSEUM



Museum is proud to present this ongoing production in the neighborhood where the riot occurred, ensuring its legacy remains alive.

“The Tenderloin Museum has been a guiding force behind this project from the very beginning, and it has become a vital part of what we do,” says Katie Conry, Executive Director of the Tenderloin Museum. “*The Compton’s Cafeteria Riot* is especially relevant in today’s political climate, as fear is being weaponized against the trans community to undermine everyone’s rights. Art has the power to explore history, foster empathy, and promote understanding. By sharing these stories, the play reminds us that the trans community, like everyone else, seeks to live authentically. These narratives can transform hearts and minds—essential for securing trans rights and protecting our collective freedoms.”

Co-written by trans activists **Collette LeGrande** and **Donna Personna**, who were part of the Tenderloin’s queer community during the era, along with playwright and actor **Mark Nassar**, *The Compton’s Cafeteria Riot* transforms a nearly forgotten chapter of LGBTQ+ history into a powerful, humanized, and celebratory narrative. Originally developed and produced by the Tenderloin Museum and Mark Nassar in 2018, the play received critical acclaim and sold out for an extended run. Its revival has been made possible by ongoing community support and transforming a vacant Larkin Street storefront into a fully realized period-accurate cafeteria, serving as both stage and set for weekly performances.

“The Transgender community will not be erased,” says LeGrande. “We will rise up, unite, and fight for our right to live our authentic lives. That’s what writing this play was all about.”

This new production is directed by **Ezra Reaves** (they/them), a multi-talented actor, comedian, experimental theater artist, and immersive experience creator. Reaves co-produces alongside co-writer Mark Nassar and the Tenderloin Museum. A pioneer of immersive theater, Nassar co-created *Tony n’ Tina’s Wedding*, while Reaves has collaborated with companies such as *Punchdrunk* (*Sleep No More*) and the Neo-Futurists. The duo met while working on *The Speakeasy*, a long-running immersive theater experience in San Francisco, and together, they have been instrumental in crafting this site-specific production.

More than just a play, *The Compton’s Cafeteria Riot* is a living tribute to one of the most significant acts of resistance in Tenderloin history. As San Francisco’s most vulnerable communities continue to bear the weight of economic and social challenges, this production stands as both a historical homage and a beacon of resilience.

TENDERLOIN

MUSEUM



For tickets and more information, visit www.comptonscafeteriariot.com. Access our [digital press kit](#), which includes historical details about the Compton's riot, its significance and legacy, the play, and cast biographies.

###