

Choose a city...

Search



Sign In | Register



61°

86° Hi / 70° Lo
Precip: 60%
7-Day Forecast»

Local National International Politics Family Workplace Religion Crime Pride AIDS

News :: Local

New York's Leslie-Lohman Named World's First Gay Museum

by Daniel Scheffler

EDGE Contributor

Tuesday May 29, 2012

PRINT

EMAIL

SHARE

COMMENTS (0)



The exterior of the Leslie-Lohman Museum (Source: MoGLA)

The Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art in New York received a Museum Accreditation from the State of New York last month. The museum, located in SoHo, is the only museum in the world that is completely gay- and lesbian-focused, and so of course it makes sense that it is in the heart of a new New York.

The current attention to gay marriage across the country feels like old news already and a new interest in the cultural wars, reminiscent of the mid-'80s, is resurfacing once again. In the art world, "gay art" and sexual difference has historically had a hefty policing and even some censoring, silencing a quest for civil rights.

In the past, museums have often been reluctant to tackle gay art, in fear of scorn from the masses and disinterest from the moneyed few. But this has not kept gay and lesbian art at bay, and recently, with heroes like curator Jonathan Katz and the Brooklyn Museum showing "Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture," the playing field is starting to become equalized substantially. An acceptance of "gay art" and "queer artists" is something that the Leslie-Lohman Museum feels strongly about. Part of their mission is to show their exhibitions and works to larger audiences -- gay and straight alike.

In 1969, the same year as the Stonewall riots, Charles Leslie and his late partner Fritz Lohman organized their first exhibition of gay art, an act of bravery in tumultuous times. The two explorers started the Leslie-Lohman Museum and have up to today inspired the museum and its followers. The inspiration is partly to give attention to gender and sexuality as well as to the uncharted history of cultural and social contexts left for the art world to display and revel in.

By showing work previously missed in the U.S. from transgender photographer [Del LaGrace Volcano](#), the museum is actively challenging the aged divide that had kept artists closeted or in bohemian European galleries. Jonathan Katz, now on the museum's Board of Directors, believes that showing Volcano's work, and more like this, is one of the exact principles upon which the museum was founded.

"While until recently, queer art exhibitions assumed an audience of mostly queer visitors, a new generation of queer cultural institutions instead seeks to make queer art visible to a mainstream audience," said board member Jonathan Katz.

"While until recently, queer art exhibitions assumed an audience of mostly queer visitors, a new generation of queer cultural institutions instead seeks to make queer art visible to a mainstream audience. If we learned anything from the record-setting attendance of "Hide/Seek," it was that people of all stripes were hungry for precisely the information the big museums have been censoring for decades now," said Katz.

One of the major exhibits is of the artist and socialite Paul Thek (<http://www.ptproject.net/>) who will be showing his work at the museum this fall. This is the first time that Thek will reveal the gay drive behind his work and showcase the gay influence in his prior work -- in particular, works that were shown at the Whitney Museum a year ago.

The permanent collection at the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art includes more than 6,000 objects from over three centuries of gay and lesbian art. The museum proudly announced roughly eight major exhibitions a year, as well as plays, poetry readings, artist and curator talks, panel discussions and film screenings, a membership programme and a research/archive arm will accompany. There is

also "The Archive," a quarterly newsletter focused on everything gay and lesbian in the art world.

The museum acts as a searchlight for so many artists that have not been previously acknowledged, showcasing and preserving their work, and gives an opportunity for many new gay and lesbian artists to be part of a museum wholly dedicated to their craft, and their voice.

The Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art (MoGLA) is located at 26 Wooster Street



Popular Stories in News



Israeli Ambassador to U.S. Applauds Country's LGBT Rights Record

By Michael K. Lavers | May 14



Disco Queen Donna Summer Endured After Era Faded

By Mesfin Fekadu | May 18

Like the King of Pop or the Queen of Soul, Donna Summer was bestowed a title fitting of musical royalty -- the Queen of Disco. Yet unlike Michael Jackson or Aretha Franklin, it was a designation she wasn't comfortable embracing.



Pa. Teacher Filmed Gay Student at Prom to Mock in Class

By Jason St. Amand | May 17

A Pennsylvania high school teacher allegedly video taped an openly gay student and his transgender date during a prom and then showed the footage to her class, allowing students to make fun of the couple.



Follow EDGE

Stay up to date with breaking news, arts reviews, interviews, giveaways and more: