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**ONE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES HEADLINING EXHIBITION
FOR CIRCA: QUEER HISTORIES FESTIVAL 2025**

**Festival to Launch with *The Sky is Always Falling*
Spotlighting the History of HIV/AIDS Activism and ACT UP/LA in Los Angeles**

**Special Events to Include Screenings and
Panel Reuniting Original ACT UP/LA Members**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Los Angeles, CA (July 30, 2025) — One Institute announced today the headlining exhibition *The Sky is Always Falling: HIV/AIDS Activists Unleashing Power in Los Angeles Then and Now* will open the Circa: Queer Histories Festival 2025. The

exhibition will be presented at the Los Angeles LGBT Center's Advocate and Gochis Galleries starting September 28, 2025 and run through the entirety of October, LGBTQ+ History Month.

The Sky is Always Falling highlights five key ACT UP/LA political actions from 1987-1993 that brought visibility to the HIV/AIDS crisis through a series of demonstrations, protests, sit-ins, and rallies. Presented through artwork and archival ephemera, the exhibition draws parallels between the COVID-19 pandemic and the Trump administration's attacks on healthcare and on LGBTQ+ Americans. The exhibition features never-before-seen documents and photographs from ONE Archives at the USC Libraries, alongside original works by artists such as **Kang Seung Lee, Marcus Kuiland-Nazario, Reza Abdoh, and Ron Athey** that showcase radical moments of queer resistance, and the resilience of LGBTQ+ activists and artists in Los Angeles during the HIV/AIDS crisis who, in the face of death and discrimination, found solidarity. ***The Sky is Always Falling* is curated by LA-based writer and UCLA Arts professor, Anuradha Vikram.**

"We're proud to open the third annual Circa: Queer Histories Festival with *The Sky is Always Falling*, an exhibition that speaks to the urgency and resilience at the heart of queer history," said Tony Valenzuela, Executive Director of One Institute. "As queer and trans communities face growing attacks from government policies, Circa and LGBTQ+ History Month remind us why preserving our history matters. Honoring the legacy of ACT UP/LA at Circa here in Los Angeles, where the movement took shape, is not just reflection. It is a call to action."

The opening reception of the exhibition will take place on **Sunday, September 28, 2025 from 4:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. at the LA LGBT Center's Advocate & Gochis Galleries.** The event will encompass a brief tour and remarks from the curator as well as an intimate performance titled 'Threnody' with former ACT UP LA member and interdisciplinary artist Marcus Kuiland-Nazario. The performance will encourage audience members living through grief and loss to share their experiences, traditions, or culture. ***The Sky is Always Falling* will be on view to the public from September 28-October 31, 2025.**

"ACT UP/LA threw dozens of events to support these actions including drag shows, club nights, sex parties, and even a musical" says curator Anuradha Vikram. "The sky was falling, but disaster wasn't going to stop activists from having a good time."

In addition to the exhibition, a panel featuring original members of ACT UP/LA, **Judy Sisneros, Helene Schpak and Jordan Peimer**, will take place on **Saturday, October**

11, 2025, 7:00 p.m.- 9:00 p.m. at the LA LGBT Center's Advocate & Gochis Galleries organized by ACT UP/LA's oral history committee and moderated by Anuradha Vikram. The discussion will center the five key actions of ACT UP/LA: the Christmastime protest at the Immigration and Naturalization Service (the precursor to ICE), the Los Angeles County/ USC Hospital pickets and vigils, the Westwood Federal Building die-ins and shut downs, the Walker A Frontera Women's Prison AIDS ward protests, and the Oscars "AIDS PHOBIA" Academy Awards demonstrations. The conversation will convene HIV/AIDS crisis survivors and present day queer and trans communities and use ACT UP/LA as an example of how to bring back deliberate opposition against attacks on LGBTQ+ rights today.

The LA LGBT Center will also present two screenings as a part of the Circa exhibition. **The Center** will feature a recording of **Reza Abdoh's** final play in Los Angeles, 1993's "Quotations of a Ruined City," on **Wednesday, October 22, 7:00 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.**, as well as **Ron Athey's** "Torture Trilogy" which will include excerpts from his controversial "Four Scenes in a Harsh Life" (1993), and "Deliverance" (1994), never presented before in Los Angeles, on **Friday, October 24, 8:00-9:00 p.m. at the LA LGBT Center's Renberg Theater** followed by a conversation with special guests.

Tickets for the exhibition and panel as well as the full lineup for this year's **Circa: Queer Histories Festival** will be available in September. Sign up on the festival website to receive updates and to be the first to know when tickets are made available: circafestival.org.

The Sky is Always Falling: HIV/AIDS Activists Unleashing Power in Los Angeles Then and Now is organized by One Institute and co-presented by the Los Angeles LGBT Center. Special thanks as well to ONE Archives at the USC Libraries for their support.

Founded in 2023 by One Institute, **Circa** is the first and only LGBTQ+ History Festival in the U.S., attracting thousands of attendees throughout LGBTQ+ History Month. The festival celebrates the historic contributions of queer and trans communities in this country. At this year's festival, attendees will be able to explore the themes of queer freedom, discrimination, and resistance through queer art and activism.

About One Institute

Founded in 1952, One Institute (formerly ONE Archives Foundation) is the oldest active LGBTQ+ organization in the United States. One Institute produces one-of-a-kind exhibitions and public programs that elevate queer and trans history and embrace emerging stories. Through K-12 teacher trainings, lesson plans, and youth mentorship

programs, One empowers the next generation of teachers and students bringing queer and trans history into classrooms and communities. Additionally, the Institute assists in promoting the materials within ONE Archives at the USC Libraries, which houses the largest collection of LGBTQ+ materials in the world.

The curatorial and educational choices made by One Institute are guided by our commitment to social equity and justice. We engage with the complexity of LGBTQ+ history and representation through highlighting the intersectional and authentic narratives of Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), women, gender-nonconforming and transgender people, people of various abilities, youth, and elders across all socio-economic classes. Learn more at oneinstitute.org, and connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @oneinstitutela.

SELECTED PRESS IMAGES



THE SKY IS ALWAYS FALLING:
HIV/AIDS ACTIVISTS
UNLEASHING POWER
IN LOS ANGELES
THEN & NOW



On View: Sept 28 - Oct 31
Opening Reception: Sept 28. 4-7pm
ADVOCATE & GOCHIS GALLERIES

1125 N MCCADDEN PL LOS ANGELES, CA 90038

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QUEER HISTORIES FESTIVAL



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2. ACT UP/LA action at Westwood Federal Building, October 7, 1989. Photo by Chuck Stallard. ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.
3. ACT UP/LA Demonstration at the Westwood Federal Building, August 18, 1989. ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.
4. Abdo and Soch during rehearsals for *Quotations from a Ruined City*, 1993. Courtesy of the Estate of Rezah Abdo.

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