circa

one INSTITUTE

QUEER HISTORIES FESTIVAL

Presented by One Institute
Open Call for Proposals 2026

Application Deadline: 11:59 P.M. PST on Friday, March 27.
All applications must be submitted via our online Jotform application.

Late or incomplete applications will not be reviewed.
Please direct application inquiries to circa@oneinstitute.org.

ABOUT CIRCA

Returning for a fourth year, Circa: Queer Histories Festival is the first and only LGBTQ+ histories festival in the United States. Hosted by One Institute, the oldest active queer organization in the country, Circa will take place during LGBTQ+ History Month, October 2026. The month-long programming series showcases the trailblazing histories and vibrant cultural contributions of LGBTQ+ communities through the lens of present-day challenges and triumphs. Spanning the arts, humanities, politics, and culture, Circa features queer and trans thinkers and doers contributing to history in the making. Circa also provides opportunities for cultural practitioners to present new works and works-in-progress, and for audiences to gather, learn, and celebrate.

What we mean by Queer Histories Programming
One Institute invites queer, trans, and allied community members, artists, activists, scholars, youth, educators, cultural institutions, and community organizations to submit innovative, thought-provoking program proposals. We welcome proposals from across the arts, cultural, and humanities disciplines in the form of: performances, screenings, readings, speaking engagements (lectures, panel discussions), workshops, and exhibitions. We are currently prioritizing in-person programs from Los Angeles-based programmers and accept virtual programs from any location accessible to broader audiences. Please note we cannot accommodate travel support for out of state folks.

WHAT'S NEW IN 2026?

One Institute curates Circa Festival programs prioritizing quality, inclusion, and alignment with our mission.
- In 2026, around 20 in-person programs will be accepted through the open call for proposals process. This does not include the programs One Institute produces outside the open call process or virtual programs (see more under "Virtual Program Guidelines").
- Instead of a theme this year, Circa 2026 will encourage proposals focused on One Institute's mission, "queer and trans history in action."

- One Institute will host one exhibition at the One Gallery for the duration of the festival. Program proposals for exhibitions accepted into the 2026 festival will need to secure their own exhibition space if not granted the exclusive usage of One Gallery.
- Accepted program proposals will be required to attend an in-person orientation, with accommodations made for those who live out of state. Failure to attend this or make an appointment to make up for an absence may lead to your spot in the festival being forfeited.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

All Circa program proposals must address queer and trans history, or creatively and expansively approach the festival's criteria. If the proposed program centers contemporary topics, the programmer must include in their presentation the subject's ties to LGBTQ+ history. In other words, we all stand on the shoulders of our ancestors. Who and what led us to where we are today?

Program proposals may be subject to being compiled into group events/double bills if their themes and subject matter align with other proposals.

CIRCA PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1. By submitting your proposal, you or your organization agree to take part in the Circa Festival, and to produce and host a program during LGBTQ+ History Month, October 2026, in person in Los Angeles County or virtually from anywhere in the world.
2. Accessibility is required for all programs. At the least, all programs must be ADA compliant. We are happy to work with programmers to address additional accessibility needs such as ASL and language interpretation.
3. Proposals may be for new works or works-in-progress. Previously presented work may also be considered if there is demonstrated relevance.
4. Programs are self-funded by the individual, group, or organization that submits the proposal. Program support (such as the stipend, venue access, and marketing) for eligible applicants is described below.
5. All accepted programs will receive print and online marketing and publicity support, including inclusion in the Circa festival calendar, microsite, and social media marketing campaign. Limited IG posts are made weekly, and *all programmers are required to supplement marketing efforts with their own outreach to their audiences*.
6. A limited number of program venue spaces will be made available at low to no cost to accepted proposals at one of our Circa program hubs such as the One Gallery and STORIES: The AIDS Monument in West Hollywood, and OXY ARTS gallery at Occidental College. These venues offer space and limited audio/visual equipment. There may be a cost to the programmer for tech heavy programs, or programs that require rehearsals.
   - Indicate on application if you would like to be considered for free to low cost venue space.
   - The usage of the One Gallery is free to use for all programmers.

- o The usage fees of venue hubs vary based on their personal offerings.These costs can be handled by One Institute and be offset if you receive a stipend and/or via revenue share dependent on ticket sales.
7. If your program proposal is for a mounted exhibition, we can only accommodate one exhibition at the One Gallery. Any other exhibitions will need to find their own venue and be responsible for rental fees, curation and installation.
8. Late or incomplete program proposals, or those that do not fit Circa's guidelines, may be rejected. Please read all guidelines thoroughly.
9. Please limit your application to one program idea per proposal. One program per applicant will be considered if the applicant chooses to submit multiple proposals.

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS GUIDELINES

- One Institute welcomes virtual programs based anywhere in the world following the same guidelines as in person programs. Please note, stipends are more limited for virtual programs.
    - We are especially dedicated to accessibility for programmers in states, countries, regions, etc. where in person queer programming is not possible or for programmers with disabilities that make in-person events inaccessible.
- All virtual programs are able to utilize our Zoom Pro account, with a webinar feature that can host up to 500 attendees.
- Virtual programs should account for Pacific Standard Time and be timed realistically for a West Coast audience.
- Virtual programs taking place on venues such as Meta Platforms, Twitch, Youtube, Gathertown, University Domains, etc. are responsible for coordinating the technical logistics of those platforms.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

One Institute recognizes the time and effort that goes into producing high-quality programming for our communities. We offer additional programming support to participating individuals and organizations, according to these eligibility guidelines:
- A limited number of stipends of up to $500 are reserved for small and emerging nonprofits and individuals who may be asked to demonstrate need. Stipends are not guaranteed.
- Applicants are eligible for free to low-cost program venue spaces on a case-by-case basis, depending on availability.
- Accepted programs are eligible for a percentage of revenue from ticket sales.
- All applicants are eligible for social media and marketing support.

HOW WE SCORE CIRCA PROGRAM PROPOSALS

The curatorial and educational choices made by One Institute are guided by our commitment to excellence, social equity, and justice. We engage with the complexity of LGBTQ+ history and representation through highlighting the intersectional narratives of

Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), women, gender- nonconforming and transgender people, people of various abilities and disabilities, youth, and elders across all socio-economic classes. We highly value programs that are based in community, and we accept programs on a wide spectrum of interest, relevance, and scope.

To evaluate proposals, the Circa Steering Committee will score applications on a scale of 1-5 through the following categories:

Scoring Rubric
- <u>1- Incomplete</u>
  This application does not address the evaluation critique.
- <u>2- Novice</u>
  This application minimally addresses the criteria and showcases a limited understanding of the application's requirements.
- <u>3- Developing</u>
  This application addresses and meets the criteria with significant room for growth. The application understands the expected criteria but has demonstrated some weak points.
- <u>4- Good</u>
  This application addresses and meets the criteria well and confidently, but with some room for improvement. The applicant understands and applied the expected criteria, but one or more aspects needed improvement.
- <u>5- Outstanding</u>
  This application addresses, applies, and meets the criteria on all fronts. The applicant provided all of the information required, and demonstrated a clear understanding of the application.

Evaluation Categories
- <u>Program Design</u>
  Circa seeks original proposals with a strong and clear vision centering LGBTQ+ history, historical events, and individuals. Committee members will assess program quality, originality, clarity of execution, demonstrated social relevance to the LGBTQ+ community, and alignment with One Institute's mission. *Please be clear in describing what your audience will experience from the beginning to the end of your program.*
- <u>Intended Audience & Equity</u>
  Circa believes in the importance of inclusive, accessible, and engaging programming. Committee members will assess each program's ability to reach underserved and marginalized audiences, as well as marketability and aptitude for serving as a high-profile event, and plausibility of audience size communicated in the application. *We recognize not every program will attract similar audiences,*

but submissions should communicate its potential for significant reach and a desire to expand access to underrepresented communities.

- Experience & Expertise
Circa takes place in Los Angeles, home to a diverse range of talent who execute programming experiences with varying levels of available resources. Committee members will assess applicants' history of programming as well as their experience with production and event logistics.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Please submit your program proposal via our online Jotform application by 11:59 P.M. PST on Friday, March 27th. Applicants will be notified on a rolling basis via email starting May 9th.

Prospective applicants may register for Circa Applicant Information Sessions, held on Thursday, March 5, 2026 6-7:30 p.m. (in-person), and Thursday, March 19, 2026 5-6 p.m. (virtual). Register below using the links in the Key Dates section.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Asterisks denote required fields. All applications must be submitted via our online Jotform application. It is strongly recommended that you draft your answers to the following questions in a separate document and enter into the Jotform for submission when complete.

- Individual or Organization Name*
- Primary Contact Information (Name, pronouns, email, phone required)* *Primary contact must remain consistent throughout the application process and festival, unless revised with One Institute's Public Programs Manager.*
- Additional contacts (up to 3)
- Are you based in Los Angeles? (Yes or No)*
    - If No, where do you currently reside? *Note: Although LA-based programmers will be prioritized, we welcome applicants from outside Los Angeles to submit a Circa proposal.*
    - *Please provide a zipcode of where you or your organization primarily works.*
- Organization Mission/Description (if applicable; up to 250 words)
- Program/Project Title*
- Program/Project Description (up to 500 words)* *Clearly describe your program including what your intended audience will experience from beginning to end. See event and exhibition descriptions from Circa 2025 for examples.*
- How does your proposed program relate to One Institute's mission?*
- Program Type (performances, screenings, readings, speaking engagements (lectures, panel discussions), workshops, exhibitions)*
    - Please note that information required will vary based on program type. For example, film screenings should include runtimes.
- List of Program Participant(s) with brief bios* *Note: One Institute understands your program participants may not yet be final. Please indicate if each participant is proposed or committed.*
- Work Samples: Upload a PDF with links to artist portfolio, website, program images, video, audio, etc.

- Proposed Date(s) (must be in October 2026), if you have one. Your proposed date is not guaranteed. *Please note, if you would like to be considered for free to low cost venue space, we will discuss available dates at the time proposals are notified.*
- Expected attendance*
- Please describe your outreach plan to market your program if it is accepted (up to 250 words)*
- Would you like to be considered for a free to low cost venue space in one of our programming hubs? (Yes, No)*
  - If No, and if you already have a proposed venue, what is the venue?
  - If No, how will you address accessibility needs at this venue?
- Would you like to be considered for a stipend of up to $500? (Yes, No)
  - If Yes, please provide an itemized program budget (Template included in form). *Please note that stipend funds are not released until after your Circa program is complete.*

2026 CIRCA: QUEER HISTORIES FESTIVAL KEY DATES

- Thurs, Feb 19: Circa Call for Proposals open to public
- March 5, 2026 & March 19, 2026: Circa proposal information sessions
  - [Register for Session #1](#) on Thursday, March 5, 2026 6-7:30 p.m. (in-person)
  - [Register for Session #2](#) on Thursday, March 19, 2026 6-7 p.m. (Virtual via Zoom)
- Fri, March 27: Proposals due by midnight, Pacific Standard Time
- Fri, May 8: Program and stipend notifications begin
- Fri, May 22: Accepted Circa programs must confirm their participation by this date*
- Thurs, May 28: Programmer orientation via Zoom*
- Sat, May 30: In person programmer orientation (11-1 p.m. PST) at the One Gallery, West Hollywood*
- June 11: Programmer meeting (5-6 p.m. PST) via Zoom
- Fri, July 10: Preliminary program information due*
  - Program title, participants, program image, venue, date, time
- Fri, July 24: Final program information due*
  - Includes final participants and bios, program title, description, venue, date, time
  - Image assets: Headshots, logos, final program image, etc due for Circa microsite
- Tues, Sept 8: Circa microsite launches with full Festival lineup and ticket reservations
- TBD Circa: Queer Histories Festival launch weekend at OXY ARTS featuring Trans Exhibition curated by Umi Hsu
- October 1-31: Circa Queer Histories Festival throughout LA County and virtual

*Required for festival participation, receipt of stipend, and revenue share