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**ONE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES “HOLD EACH OTHER’S HANDS”
CO-PRESENTED WITH OXY ARTS
AS HEADLINE EXHIBITION OF
CIRCA: QUEER HISTORIES FESTIVAL 2026**

Festival Returns For Its Fourth Annual Edition

**Opening Reception September 24; Exhibition and Additional Events Run
Throughout LGBTQ+ History Month**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Los Angeles, CA (August 19, 2026) — One Institute announced today that the exhibition “Hold Each Other’s Hands: Trans Mutual Aid, 1966-1996,” co-presented by One Institute and OXY ARTS, Occidental College’s public art center rooted in social justice and community engagement, will headline this year’s Circa: Queer Histories Festival.

The exhibit features archival installations, contemporary artworks, speakers, and community programming that explore trans mutual aid, including how people with various relationships to gender nonconformity have worked together to create communities of care and support and meet essential needs such as housing, healthcare, and safety.

The Circa Festival launch and opening reception for “Hold Each Other’s Hands” will take place Thursday, September 24 at 7:00 p.m. at OXY ARTS. “Hold Each Other’s Hands” will be on view at OXY ARTS through December 5.

Reservations for the Circa festival launch and reception are available [here](#). The full Circa lineup, featuring dozens of events around Los Angeles and online throughout the month of October, will be available on Thursday, September 10 at circafestival.org.

“We are proud to open our fourth edition of Circa with ‘Hold Each Other’s Hands,’ an exhibition that is a beacon of hope, holding space for expansive thinking and public dialogue around collectivity, co-existence, and care during LGBTQ+ History Month,” said Tony Valenzuela, Executive Director of One Institute. “As access to basic rights for queer and trans people is being systematically dismantled, the festival and its exhibitions serve as a reminder of the challenges of the past, the tenacity of our community to persevere, and a demand for all of us to take action.”

The title of the exhibition is inspired by the words of Stonewall veteran Marsha P. Johnson as she described coalitional futures in liberation work during a rare 1988 interview preserved at the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries: “We all should just try to keep on doing our best to hold each other’s hand and keep on going right to the other side of the rainbow.” The archival installations illuminate moments in trans history from the 1960s to the 1990s, and illustrate the systems created for survival, solidarity, and resistance.

The exhibition showcases materials from ONE Archives at USC Libraries, GLBT Historical Society, Digital Transgender Archive, University of Victoria Library, gender.network, The ArQuives, Transgender Oral History Project, The LGBT Community Center National History Archive, New York University Libraries, New York Public Library, Pacifica Radio Archives, Invisible Histories Project, Northeastern University Archives and Special Collections, and Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Duke University.

In addition, six Los Angeles-based artists, Leslie Foster, Prima Jalichandra-Sakuntabhai, Salvador de la Torre, Xixi Edelsbrunner, Wesleigh Gates, and Whisper (fka Sammie Veeler), present works that wrestle with hidden histories and speculate on possible past and future realities.

“Hold Each Other’s Hands” is curated by Umi Hsu, Fall 2026 Professor of Practice at Occidental College and independent curator.

“Mutualism is a concept derived from ecological sciences. From archival research and working with artists and activists, I’ve learned that communities around trans and gender-nonconforming people have come together to build ecologies of care,” said Hsu. “This exhibition shows that the spirit of mutualism reverberates from history and it illuminates vestiges of the past that are still visible in today’s struggles.”

“It’s an honor for us to present this crucial exhibition on the history of trans solidarity and care with One Institute,” said Meldia Yesayan, Executive Director of OXY ARTS. “It is especially meaningful to have the exhibition deeply embedded in course work and scholarship, particularly at a time when access to trans histories and perspectives is increasingly contested.”

Founded in 2023 by One Institute, Circa: Queer Histories Festival is the only LGBTQ+ History Festival in the U.S., attracting thousands of attendees throughout LGBTQ+ History Month. Circa events include exhibitions, performances, workshops, screenings, lectures, comedy shows, parties, and more. Sign up on the festival website circafestival.org to receive updates on programming and tickets.

One Institute is a non-profit organization that relies on a variety of funding sources to sustain its core programming, including many members and supporters who contribute throughout the year. To join them and support important LGBTQ+ programming for current and future generations, make a gift today at oneinstitute.org/donate/.

ABOUT ONE INSTITUTE:

Founded in 1952, One Institute is the oldest active LGBTQ+ organization in the United States. One Institute preserves, celebrates, and shares queer, trans, and HIV/AIDS histories through education, arts, and cultural programs that connect the past to the present and inspire future generations. Its programs include Circa: Queer Histories Festival, the only LGBTQ+ history festival in the U.S.; exhibitions at the ONE Gallery in West Hollywood; and K–12 teacher trainings, lesson plans, and youth mentorship programs that bring LGBTQ+ history into classrooms and communities. One Institute is the independent community partner of ONE Archives at the USC Libraries, home to the largest collection of LGBTQ+ materials in the world, and steward of STORIES: The AIDS Monument in partnership with the City of West Hollywood.

The curatorial and educational choices made by One Institute are guided by its commitment to social equity and justice. One Institute engages with the complexity of LGBTQ+ history and representation by 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 One Institute on Facebook and Instagram [@oneinstitute](https://www.facebook.com/oneinstitute) and [@theaidsmonument](https://www.instagram.com/theaidsmonument).

ABOUT OXY ARTS:

OXY ARTS is Occidental College's public art center rooted in social justice and community engagement. The center is a vital public space for discovery, experimentation and learning at the intersection of art, culture, and social movements. Located in the heart of the Highland Park neighborhood in Northeast Los Angeles, OXY ARTS is committed to facilitating projects that hold space for complex ideas and dialogue, spark curiosity, and invest in artists and community growth. Learn more at oxyarts.oxy.edu, and connect on Instagram [@oxyarts](https://www.instagram.com/oxyarts).

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Image Credit:

Unknown, Sylvia Rivera holding a banner at Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade, 1983, LGBT Community Center National History Archive. Promotional image by One Institute.

All press images are available for download [here](#).