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ONE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES FULL PROGRAM FOR CIRCA: QUEER HISTORIES FESTIVAL 2026

More Than 40 Events Include *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* Screening at The Ford, LACMA Tours of LGBTQ+ Artists, *Chocolate Babies* Screening at Vidiots, Gay and Lesbian Rodeo Heritage Foundation exhibit, and More

Tickets and Reservations for All Events Now Available



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Los Angeles, CA (September 10, 2026) — Today, One Institute unveiled the full program for this year's Circa: Queer Histories Festival, taking place at venues across Los Angeles County and virtually October 1-31.

The lineup, which is available on the newly launched [Circa website](https://circafestival.org), features more than 40 free-to-low-cost arts and humanities programs that spotlight queer and trans history in action and are created by queer, trans, and allied community members, artists, activists, scholars, youth, educators, cultural institutions, and community organizations. The festival launch and opening reception for the headlining exhibition, “Hold Each Other’s Hands,” will be held Thursday, September 24 at 7:00 p.m. at OXY ARTS. Tickets for all events are now on sale at circafestival.org.

“For four years, Circa: Queer Histories Festival has celebrated the impressive history of our queer and trans trailblazers and honors their impact on our culture,” said Tony Valenzuela, Executive Director of One Institute. “As the U.S. government attempts to oppress and vilify our communities, we know the truth: we have always been here and we will always be here. From our headlining exhibition to screenings, workshops, and performances, Circa shows us how our history can inspire, empower, and give us hope for the future.”

The 2026 edition of Circa features programming from 70+ contributors and organizations from across the nation. Featured events include a screening of the queer cult phenomenon *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* at The Ford produced in partnership with Street Food Cinema and One Institute; weekly tours highlighting works by LACMA’s LGBTQ+ artists through the museum’s Visible and Vibrant series; an exhibition of 50+ years of gay rodeo history, presented with the Gay and Lesbian Rodeo Heritage Foundation in collaboration with the International Gay Rodeo Association; a 30th anniversary screening of Stephen Winter’s groundbreaking 1996 Black queer cult classic *Chocolate Babies* followed by a conversation with the director at Vidiots; a marathon of five-minute performances at STORIES: The AIDS Monument titled ACTION=LIFE, co-presented by Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE) and Performance Art Museum (PAM); and an exploration of the origins of transgender identity with acclaimed historian and author Jules Gill-Peterson, Chair in Transgender Studies at University of Victoria, presented by the Paul D. Lerner and Stephen Reis Lectures on LGBTQ+ History.

The festival’s performances and workshops, led by queer and trans thinkers and doers contributing to history in the making, invite audiences to gather, learn, and celebrate. Highlights include “Finding Transcestors,” a workshop organized by trans activist, author, and NYC Trans Archives founder Eli Erlick, and Meg Metcalf, former Women’s, Gender, and LGBTQIA+ Studies Collection Specialist at the Library of Congress; the “Scissor Siblings: Cut Collage Zine Making Workshop” presented by Neta Zine; and a live performance of intergenerational queer and trans voices presented by The Outwords Archive. Virtual programming highlights include “Printed Matter as Queer Method: Tracing Stains, Ruins, and Utopian Shadows,” an illustrated talk and panel conversation on queer artistic, archival, and publishing practices, presented by Nathan Storey, founder and director of STOREY GALLERY and UNDERTOW; and “Drag King History” about the legacy of female-born performers who donned men’s attire for theatrical purposes

dating back to the Tang Dynasty, led by Mo B. Dick, one of the founding fathers of the modern-day drag king movement.

“We are thrilled to welcome the Los Angeles County community and online audiences from around the world to experience these essential exhibitions and new works during LGBTQ+ History Month,” said Rory Hayes, One Institute’s Exhibitions and Public Programs Manager. “This year’s festival showcases the extraordinary talent and passion of artists, activists, advocates, and allies whose thoughtful reflections and meditations on queer and trans history inspire us all.”

As previously announced, 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.

Following the Circa opening reception on September 24, “Hold Each Other’s Hands” will be on view at OXY ARTS through December 5.

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. Sign up on the festival website circafestival.org to receive the latest updates.

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).

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