



**The Museum of the City of New York To Present**  
***Gay Gotham: Art and Underground Culture in New York***  
**An Exhibition Showcasing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender**  
**Artistic Life in New York City**



Cecil Beaton, *Andy Warhol and Candy Darling*, 1969, Courtesy of the Cecil Beaton Studio Archives at Sotheby's

**Through the Work and Social Networks of**

***Leonard Bernstein, Mercedes de Acosta, Harmony Hammond, Bill T. Jones,  
Lincoln Kirstein, Greer Lankton, George Platt Lynes, Robert Mapplethorpe,  
Richard Bruce Nugent, and Andy Warhol***

***October 7, 2016 – February 26, 2017***

***Gay Gotham Reveals an Often-Hidden Side of New York City History and  
Celebrates the Power of Artistic Collaboration to Transcend Oppression***

**New York, NY (July 20, 2016)** – On October 7, 2016. The Museum of the City of New York (MCNY) will open *Gay Gotham: Art and Underground Culture in New York*, a groundbreaking exhibition that explores New York’s role as a beacon for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) artists seeking freedom, acceptance, and community.

The first exhibition of its kind to be presented by a New York City cultural institution in terms of depth and scope, *Gay Gotham* peels back the layers of New York City’s LGBT, or queer, life that thrived even in the shadows to reveal an often-hidden side of the city’s history and underscore the power of artistic collaboration to transcend oppression. The exhibition, which runs through February 26, 2017, will examine the worlds of New York’s famous LGBT cultural innovators, as well as those of ordinary citizens. The exhibition will also identify historical trends that led to the increased visibility of LGBT artists over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

“New York City, an international source of creativity throughout its history, provided the canvas, stage, and backdrop for LGBT artists and cultural innovators, and helped make it possible for them to transcend oppression and discrimination,” says Whitney Donhauser, *Ronay Menschel Director* of the Museum of the City of New York. “*Gay Gotham* not only exhibits, but also celebrates the vibrant lives of artists who were suffering from injustice, and offers optimism for tomorrow.”

*Gay Gotham* brings to life the queer networks that sprang up in the city from the early-20<sup>th</sup> century through the mid-1990s—a series of artistic subcultures whose radical ideas had lasting effects on the mainstream. It explores the artistic achievements and creative networks of ten individuals, as well as four key ways that such networks are made: place-making (making places to meet and work together); posing (creating portraits of friends and artists); printing (creating publications); and performing (representing LGBT life in theater and film).

Occupying two full galleries, *Gay Gotham* features 225 works from a mix of iconic and lesser-known LGBT artists, whose work will be presented chronologically to reveal the trajectory of queer life in 20<sup>th</sup>-century New York: composer Leonard Bernstein; playwright, poet and novelist Mercedes de Acosta; activist Harmony Hammond; dancer and choreographer Bill T. Jones; arts impresario Lincoln Kirstein; artist Greer Lankton; photographer George Platt Lynes; artist and photographer Robert Mapplethorpe; artist and author Richard Bruce Nugent and artist Andy Warhol. Each of these individuals will be examined within the overlapping networks of numerous fellow artists and colleagues who advanced their professional careers, sustained their social lives, and propelled them into the city and nation’s cultural mainstream.

*Gay Gotham*, curated by Donald Albrecht, MCNY curator of architecture and design, and Stephen Vider, MCNY Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, includes paintings, drawings, photographs, sound recordings, and films that will explore queer artistic achievements in music, the visual arts and theater during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ephemera such as correspondence and scrapbooks also will be displayed, illuminating the artists’ personal bonds and revealing secrets that were scandal provoking in their time and remain largely unknown today.

Some of the works that will be featured in the show are: Bernstein's own annotated copy of *Romeo and Juliet*, the inspiration for the 1957 Broadway musical *West Side Story*, alongside original drawings of the production's sets and costumes; a circa 1970 handmade, collaged scrapbook by Robert Mapplethorpe that includes images of friends and lovers like Patti Smith; Arnie Zane's video of Keith Haring hand painting the body of Zane's partner, dancer and choreographer Bill T. Jones -- a collaboration of three leaders of the 1980s queer downtown art scene; several of artist Greer Lankton's dolls, including a life-size one of Diana Vreeland made in 1989 for a Barneys display window.

The exhibition also will feature maps setting artistic explorations against the evolving backdrops of LGBT life in New York City, including gay neighborhoods and nightspots, activist groups and key social and cultural events, such as protests and parades.

*Gay Gotham* will be accompanied by a 304-page book, *Gay Gotham: Art and Underground Culture in New York*, by Donald Albrecht, with Stephen Vider and published by Skira Rizzoli. It includes more than 350 images, illustrations and background essays on the social and cultural themes of the LGBT artistic underground, as well as portraits of the show's iconic artistic figures.

*Gay Gotham* is made possible by the M.A.C. AIDS Fund, the John Burton Harter Charitable Trust, and Todd DeGarmo/STUDIOS Architecture, with support from the Keith Haring Foundation for the exhibit's related education programs. The exhibition co-chairs are Todd DeGarmo, Peter Hosier, Nancy Mahon, and Calvin Tsao & Zack McKown.

For more information, visit [Gay Gotham](#).

## ***Gay Gotham Public Programs***

### **PROGRAMS**

To find out more about other programs or to register, visit [www.mcny.org/programs](http://www.mcny.org/programs)

#### **Gay Gotham**

**Thursday, October 6, at 5:30 p.m.**

With Harmony Hammond, Bryan Lowder, & Sarah Schulman

### **GROUP TOURS**

Take a closer look at Gay Gotham with a Museum scholar or curator. Visit [www.mcny.org/tours](http://www.mcny.org/tours) to learn more.

### **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Visit [www.mcny.org/families](http://www.mcny.org/families) to learn more. Family Programs are funded by the Keith Haring Foundation.

**LGBTQ Teen Summit**  
**February 20, 2017**

**I Am Jazz Read Aloud**  
**October 2016**

**Winter Holiday Dance Performance**  
**December 2016**

**Body Painting Inspired by Keith Haring**  
**January 2017**

**Print Making Inspired by Andy Warhol**  
**February 2017**

#### **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

Discover primary source materials and connect with colleagues. Visit [www.mcny.org/education](http://www.mcny.org/education) to learn more about opportunities for teachers and students.

#### **About the Museum of the City of New York**

Founded in 1923 as a private, nonprofit corporation, the Museum of the City of New York celebrates and interprets the city, educating the public about its distinctive character, especially its heritage of diversity, opportunity, and perpetual transformation. The Museum connects the past, present, and future of New York City, and serves the people of the city as well as visitors from around the world through exhibitions, school and public programs, publications, and collections. To connect with the Museum on social media, follow us on Instagram and Twitter at @MuseumofCityNY and visit our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/MuseumofCityNY](https://www.facebook.com/MuseumofCityNY). For more information please visit [www.mcny.org](http://www.mcny.org).

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