

LUHRING AUGUSTINE

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Bennett: Michael Bennett was known mainly as a theater director and choreographer. He was the creative force behind the original Broadway productions of both *A Chorus Line* and *Dreamgirls*. Wildly influential. He died of AIDS in 1987.

Larson: Jonathan Larson is best known as the writer of both the book and music of *RENT* who passed away just before his talent was fully acknowledged.

Kramer: Larry Kramer was a writer, a legendary LGBTQ activist, and a true crankshaft. He is best known for being a founding member of Gay Men's Health Crisis and ACT UP, as well as being the author of *The Normal Heart*. A major 20th century figure.

1,112 and Counting: This refers to Larry Kramer's infamous 1983 New York Native (a gay weekly publication) article. 1,112 was the number of reported AIDS cases in New York City at the time of its writing. In the article, Kramer angrily voiced his concerns and strongly urged gay men to abstain from anonymous sexual activities to help slow the spread of the new and mysterious disease to save lives. This was an unpopular position in the gay community and caused Kramer to be rather disliked (a.k.a. loathed and vilified).

525,600: Refers to the lyric "525,600 minutes" in the song *Seasons of Love* from the musical *RENT*.

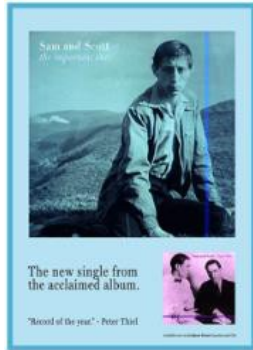
41 Rare: The historic first New York Times article about AIDS from 1981 had the headline, "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals".

Singular One-Night-Only Sensations: These are allusions to the lyric "one singular sensation" from *A Chorus Line* and the song "One Night Only" from *Dreamgirls*.

This is a portrait of the Bennett, Larson and Kramer, as well as a portrait of how AIDS and the AIDS "generation" influenced and affected the American Theater, as well as 20th and 21st century American "culture" in general.

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Sam and Scott: This refers to Sam Altman (CEO of Open AI) and Scott Bessent (Current Secretary of the Treasury). Unfortunately for the rest of us, they both identify as gay men. The image is of the tender and humble gay character Geoffrey in the 1961 film *A Taste of Honey*, played by Murray Melvin.

The Important One: E. M. Forster's mother gave him this nickname. I am using it for a kind of Ayn Randian belief that Sam Altman, Scott Bessent, and Peter Thiel all seem to have about themselves.

Peter Thiel: He's super rich, too, and has been affiliated with or founded PayPal, Facebook and Palantir. He identifies as a gay man and is really gross. LOL!

Super Men: This refers to the Nietzschean idea of the Super Man which can be applied to Altman, Bessant, Thiel, and Leopold and Loeb, as they have all adopted its self-aggrandizing principles. The image is of Leopold and Loeb when they were being tried for murdering a young boy, just to prove they were smart enough to get away with it. They didn't.

This is a portrait of some specific gay men and a very problematic ideology, and also behaviors that they all seem to personify.

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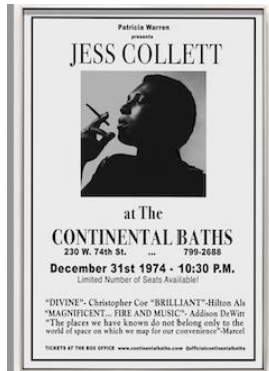
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A portrait of a generation lost to AIDS, using an image of a portion of a grid of obituary images from a 1989 Bay Area Reporter (a local San Francisco free gay newspaper), and a 1970s quote that was used to entice advertisers to After Dark magazine by highlighting what was unique about their readership.

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Patricia Warren: Author of the 1974 novel *The Front Runner*, purported to be the first explicitly “gay” book on the New York Times Best Seller list.

Jess Collett: Jess Collett is a fictional character from *The Front Runner*, who in the book opens for Bette Midler on New Year’s Eve 1974 at The Continental Baths. He is described as “the gay Jimi Hendrix.” I took the liberty of deciding that Warren was using Collett as stand-in for the fabulous singer Sylvester.

Christopher Coe: A divine author of two divine novels before dying of AIDS in 1994. His first novel, which is a favorite of mine, is entitled *I Look Divine*.

Hilton Als: Als is a Pulitzer Prize winning writer and critic.

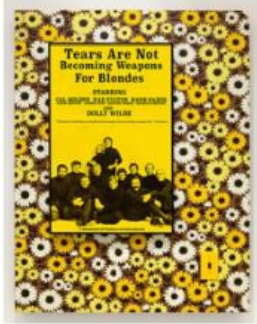
Addison DeWitt: The sharp and acid-tongued theatre critic character, impeccably portrayed by the actor George Saunders in the 1950 film *All About Eve*. These are quotes from the film.

Marcel: Marcel is the narrator of Marcel Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu*, also called *Remembrance of Things Past* or *In Search of Lost Time*. This is a direct quote from the novel.

This is a portrait of a fictional character, but also of a sensibility, an intellect, and a history. As always, it’s also a self-portrait of inspirational figures.

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Tears are not becoming weapons for blondes: a quote from a letter written by Dolly Wilde.

Cal Bolder, Rad Fulton, Rand Saxon, Race Gentry, and Chance Gentry: Stage names created for handsome young actors by the Hollywood talent agent Henry Willson. His most famous clients were Rock Hudson and Tab Hunter (both of whom he also named). He famously sold out Hunter to the magazine/gossip rag Confidential to squash the stories of Rock Hudson's gayness.

Jared Just: A reference to justjared.com, the early 21st century entertainment/gossip website.

Hilton Perez: A reference to Perez Hilton, the early 21st century entertainment/gossip "personality".

Dolly Wilde: She was the niece of Oscar Wilde. Oscar died when Dolly was about four years old, though she never met her uncle. She was said to have his wit, looks, style, charm, and way with words. She was also said to be a lesbian, a drug addict, and an alcoholic. Dolly was the toast of her lover Natalie Barney's historic Paris salons yet never produced any written works other than personal letters.

Vito Russo: Russo was a writer and activist. His most famous and influential work was *The Celluloid Closet*, about queer-coded yet closeted actors and characters in classic Hollywood films. He was also a passionate and brilliant public speaker and intellectual. He died of AIDS in 1990.

I see this piece as a portrait of an archetype of a 1970's gay man, his taste and environment. This is collapsed into a self-portrait through the blurring of eras and histories.

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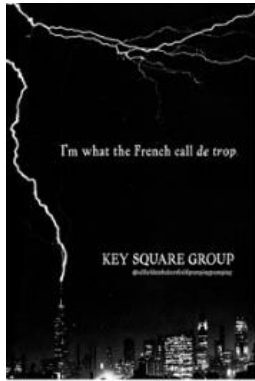
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This one is fairly self-explanatory. A self-portrait as well as a portrait of “gay icon” Barbra Streisand and the way we each see the world.

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I'm what the French call de trop: This is a line in the 1950 film *All About Eve*, spoken by the Celeste Holm, who plays Karen in the film. *All About Eve* holds a very special place in my heart, and, at one time, was quoted extensively by a past generation of gay men.

Key Square Group: KSG is a hedge fund started by the current US Secretary of the Treasury, Scott Bessent. Bessent identifies as a gay man.

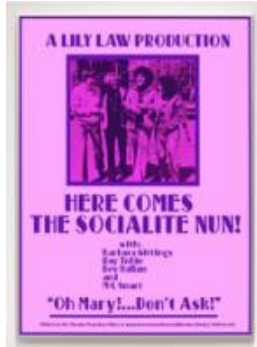
Oilfields in Bakersfield, pumping, pumping: During a drunken speech about how rich she is, the character Norma Desmond (played by Gloria Swanson) utters this line in the film

“Sunset Boulevard”: *Sunset* was made the same year as *Eve* and has my heart as well, and also was endlessly quoted by that same generation of gay men.

This is a portrait of Scott Bessent. For me, he is “de trop.” In my opinion, he and everything he stands for are unworthy of being identified with a gay community. No matter how wealthy or powerful he may be, he will never not be unwanted by me and “my kind.”

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“Lily Law,” “Here comes the socialite nun,” and “Oh Mary, don’t ask”: All are lines spoken by the character Emory in Mart Crowley’s 1968 gay classic *The Boys in the Band*. Watch the 1970 film version, NOT to be confused with any other later version.

Lily Law: Slang/code phrase used between queer people at the time to indicate a police officer was present (e.g., “Cool it, Lily Law just walked in”).

Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin: They were a lesbian couple who were prominent LGBTQ activists starting in the late 1950s and continued their work until the ends of their lives in the 21st Century. They addressed and fought for so many LGBTQ issues over that time. I am especially interested in their ideas about the power of intersectional activism within the queer community.

Bev Hallam and M-L Smart: Beverly Hallam, an artist, and Mary-Leigh Smart, a philanthropist, lived their lives together in Maine for decades. After they passed, their foundation created the Surf Point Foundation, an artists’ residency in York, Maine. It is housed in the home they had shared. I attended Surf Point in 2022. To my knowledge they have never been officially/publicly recognized as a romantic lesbian couple. But...

This is a portrait of the different aspects of the Lesbian community and a particular “gay male” text. It was made to express my reverence of Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin for their insistence on an intersectionality with the “Gay Male Community”, even when that was unfashionable. Plus, I just love “The Boys in the Band”, warts and all.

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Say Hello...Wave Goodbye.: A 1981 song by the electro duo Soft Cell.

Ryan White: Ryan was a hemophiliac who contracted HIV as a child and died at the age of 18. He faced extreme prejudice and became the face of AIDS discrimination, a hero and a martyr.

Pedro Zamora: Pedro was on the MTV series “The Real World” in 1993-1994. He had AIDS and became one of the first openly gay HIV+ people on a national TV series. He was an AIDS activist and died at the age of 22. Another hero and martyr.

Matthew Shepard: Matthew was a college student who was beaten and tortured in a homophobic hate crime. He was left to die, which he did at the age of 21 in 1998. The story made headlines globally and raised awareness of the violence faced by LGBTQ people.

The images are of Ryan, Pedro and Matthew. I used AI to “age” them, as they will never have that opportunity.

Travis, Doug, Fred, Jeff, Mark and Tim: All of them were friends of mine who died of AIDS.

You are not evicting time: Lyrics from the song “Time” by David Robert Jones a.k.a. David Bowie.

I see this as a self-portrait, a portrait of those named, a portrait of loss, a portrait of a certain time, and a portrait of time in general.