

Finding Aid to Christopher Lee papers

(#2023-88)

Repository: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society

Collection Title: Christopher Lee papers

Collection Number: 2023-88

Physical Description: 1 linear foot (1 carton)

Creator: Lee, Christopher

Date (inclusive): 1993-2003

Language of Material: English

Abstract: Christopher Lee (1964-2012) was a Chinese and Polish American trans activist and filmmaker. He co-founded the San Francisco Transgender Film Festival in 1997 and was active in Asian American LGBT organizations. This collection includes ephemera from Asian American LGBT organizations and events, including Trikone and Asian and Pacific Islander Lesbian and Bisexual Network; and SF Transgender Film Festival programs, articles, and ephemera. Also included are the 16 VHS tapes from “Asian Lesbian and Bisexual Movement 1994-1995,” a documentary project that included footage of Asian American LGBT events and activism and interviews with Asian and Asian American activists.

Preferred Citation:

[Identification of item], Christopher Lee papers (#2023-88), The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Conditions Governing Access:

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights:

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Acquisition Information:

The collection was formally donated to the GLBT Historical Society by Jae Carranza in April, 2024. It is unclear when the collection originally arrived at GLBTHS. Contact the Archivist for additional information.

Processing Information:

This collection was rehoused, arranged, and described by Ash Waltz in 2024. The Abstract was originally written by Devin McGeehan Muchmore in 2023.

A majority of the collection arrived already divided into distinct groupings by event or organization. These groupings and their folder titles have been retained. A collection of materials were held in an envelope labeled, "Misc. Asian Queer Events U.S.A." These materials have been divided into folders entitled "Event ephemera and articles, 1993-1996" and "Magazines and programs, 1993-1997" to best accommodate their size and preservation needs.

This finding aid uses terminology for LGBTQ people that was in current use at the time of its creation. Descriptive language for queer identities evolves quickly and some of these terms may now be dated or even offensive. Finding aids are themselves historical documents; they reflect the moment in which they were written and often reflect the terms that subjects used for themselves. Please contact the GLBT Historical Society Archivist with questions or comments.

Biographical Note:

Christopher Lee was born on September 4, 1964 in San Diego, California. In the early 1990's, Lee initially found community with Bay Area Asian/Pacific Islander lesbian groups, which were the subject of work he produced for DYKE TV as well as his own documentary film project, "Asian Lesbian and Bisexual Movement 1994-1995". In the mid-1990's, Lee came out as a transgender man and intimately portrayed his experience with transition in his film, *Christopher's Chronicles* (1996).

His following works--*Trappings of Transhood* (1997), *Alley of the Tranny Boys* (1998), and *Sex Flesh in Blood* (1999)--also featured trans men and aimed to constantly subvert norms around sex, sexuality and gender. Lee's films are recognized as some of the first works created by and about BIPOC trans men and his work is also credited as the origins of radical transgender porn. His films have been shown (and continue to be shown) in film festivals nationally and internationally.

In 1997, Lee co-founded the San Francisco Transgender Film Festival alongside Alison Austin. The festival was the first of its kind in North America and provided a space for artists and filmmakers to display the range and richness of trans life. In 2002, Lee became the first openly transgender man to be elected as Grand Marshall of the San Francisco Pride Parade. Throughout the 2000's, Lee was active in the recovery community and two-spirit community. He was living with chronic fatigue and immune deficiency syndrome (CFIDS), which deeply shaped his housing and living conditions.

Lee passed away on December 12, 2012 at the age of 48. After Lee was misgendered on his death certificate, his chosen family members spearheaded a political battle to pass the AB 1577 "Respect After Death Act", allowing for death certificates to reflect an individual's lived gender.

Scope and Content: This collection includes materials primarily related to Christopher Lee's documentary film project, "Asian Lesbian and Bisexual Movement 1994-1995". The 16 VHS tapes contain footage from a variety of events organized by and/or featuring contingents of API lesbian and bisexual groups. Additionally, the tapes feature dozens of interviews conducted by Lee, many of which were taken in relation to one of the featured events. The interviewees include prominent members of the API lesbian/bisexual social and activist scene in the Bay Area as well as API lesbians/bisexuals living throughout the country and internationally. The tapes are accompanied by a detailed outline that includes the events, dates, locations, persons, organizations, and/or topics featured in each of the 16 tapes.

The ephemera files primarily correlate to the events and groups depicted in the tapes, namely Stonewall 25, the First Asian and Pacific Lesbians and Bisexual Women Midwest Retreat, Pride Ustav '95, the Asian and Pacific Islander Lesbian and Bisexual Network (APLBN), and Trikone. These files contain flyers, brochures, event programs, correspondence, newsletters/periodicals, periodicals, and some meeting minutes/agendas. Additionally, there is a "weekend scrapbook" for the Asian and Pacific Lesbians and Bisexual Women Midwest Retreat that features photocopied photographs and notes from the event. The APLBN file also contains planning documents related to the 1993 West Coast Retreat. Programs, articles, and ephemera for the SF Transgender Film Festival do not appear to be related to the documentary but provide insight on Lee's organizing work. Also included are magazines, programs, event ephemera and articles related to queer API people and events from 1993-1997 that had originally been filed separately by Lee.

Indexing Terms:

LGBTQ

Asian and Pacific Islander people

Transgender people

Trans men

People of color

Motion pictures
Activism
Lesbians
Bisexual People
San Francisco Bay Area (Calif.)
Documentary films

Arrangement: The series is arranged alphabetically by folder title, primarily given that the materials are heavily concentrated within the same time frame.

Container Listing

Carton 1:Folder 1	Asian and Pacific Islander Lesbian and Bisexual Network (APLBN), 1993-1995
1:2	Asian Lesbian and Bisexual Movement 1994-1995 summary, circa 1995-2002
1:3	Event ephemera and articles, 1993-1996
1:4	First Asian and Pacific Lesbians and Bisexual Women Midwest Retreat, 1995
1:5	Pride Ustav '95, 1995
1:6	San Francisco Transgender Film Festival, 1997-2001
1:7	Stonewall 25, 1994
1:8	Trikone, 1993-1995
Carton 1	Asian Lesbian and Bisexual Movement 1994-1995 VHS tapes 1-16, 1994-1995
OS Folder	Magazines and programs, 1993-1997