
Finding aid prepared by Tim Wilson
James C. Hormel LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library
100 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-557-4567
info@sfpl.org
URL: http://sfpl.org/gaylesbian
2019
Title: Jeannie O'Connor AIDS Self-Portraits Collection


Identifier/Call Number: GLC 196

Creator: O'Connor, Jeannie

Physical Description: 1 box (3 binders of 462 negatives and contact sheets; 8 silver gelatin proof prints (8 x 10-inches); 5 archival pigment proof prints (8 x 10-inches); 8 Polaroid (4 x 5-inches) Type 55 positives) + 2 black and white proof prints (16 x 20-inches) (in 1 oversized folder).

Contributing Institution: James C. Hormel LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library

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Abstract: The collection consists of negatives, contact sheets, proof prints, Polaroid prints, and oversized prints of self-portraits made at several San Francisco Bay Area AIDS and HIV-positive care facilities. The subjects included people with AIDS and HIV, as well as staff members, volunteers, and their families.

Collection is stored onsite.

Language of Materials: Collection materials are in English.

Conditions Governing Access
The collection is available for use during San Francisco Historical Photographs hours (Tuesdays 1-5 pm, Thursday 1-5 pm, Saturdays 10-12, 1-5).

Conditions Governing Use
Copyright retained by Jeannie O'Connor. Outside of fair use, all permissions are to be handled by O'Connor.

Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Jeannie O'Connor AIDS Self-Portraits Collection (GLC 196), LGBTQIA Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Purchased by the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, October 2018.

Biographical / Historical
Jeannie O'Connor is an Oakland-based artist and photographer. She received a B.A. in Art (1967) and an M.A. in Painting (1969) from the University of California, Berkeley.

Scope and Contents
In 1989 and from 1992-1995, O'Connor received California Arts Council grants to bring art to several AIDS and HIV-positive care facilities. She developed a process whereby her subjects could control the shutter release and were therefore in control of the portrait taken. The photographs include people with AIDS and HIV, their families, and the staff members and volunteers at the various centers. The locations include: Hospitality House (San Francisco), Rest Stop (San Francisco), The Center for AIDS Services (Oakland), Unity Church (Richmond), and Shanti House (San Francisco). There are about a dozen photos taken at Jeannie O'Connor's studio at Nexus Art Collective in Berkeley.

O'Connor notes that “the very first rolls were taken with a medium format camera in 1989 at Hospitality House SF. These led me to think about how I might approach the portrait in a different way, so that each sitter had more control over the process. The 4x5 camera and the Polaroid film allowed for the picture to be seen instantaneously, and encouraged everyone to participate. The long shutter release really leveled the playing field by allowing each person to control the timing of the shutter release.”

Arrangement
The collection is arranged into 2 series: Series 1. Prints (arranged by format); and, Series 2. Negatives and Contact Sheets (arranged chronologically, and then by location).

Subjects and Indexing Terms
AIDS (Disease) -- Patients -- California -- Portraits
California Arts Council
Documentary photography -- California -- San Francisco -- 20th century
Portrait photographs

Series 1 Photographic Prints

Box 1, Folder 1  
Polaroid Type 55 positives (4 x 5-inches)  
Physical Description: 8 images

Box 1, Folder 2  
Silver gelatin proof prints (8 x 10-inches)  
Physical Description: 8 images

Box 1, Folder 3  
Archival pigment proof prints (8 x 10-inches)  
Physical Description: 5 images

Oversize-folder 1  
Black and white proof prints (16 x 20-inches)  
Physical Description: 2 images

Series 2 Negatives and Contact Sheets

Rest Stop (San Francisco, California)  
Box 1, Volume 1  
63 negatives and contact sheets, 1989

Box 1, Volume 1  
24 negatives and contact sheets, 1992

The Center for AIDS Services (Oakland, California)  
Box 1, Volume 1  
68 negatives and contact sheets, 1992

Box 1, Volume 2  
48 negatives and contact sheets, 1993

Box 1, Volume 3  
21 negatives and contact sheets, 1994

Box 1, Volume 3  
49 negatives and contact sheets, 1995

Shanti House (San Francisco, California)  
Box 1, Volume 2  
26 negatives and contact sheets, 1993

Box 1, Volume 3  
24 negatives and contact sheets, 1995

Unity Church, Tranquilliam (Richmond, California)  
Box 1, Volume 2  
35 negatives and contact sheets, 1993

Box 1, Volume 3  
23 negatives and contact sheets, 1994

Box 1, Volume 3  
32 negatives and contact sheets, 1995

Jeannie O’Connor’s studio (Berkeley, California)  
Box 1, Volume 3  
49 negatives and contact sheets, 1995