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## **Trannyshack Collection, 1996-2008**

Finding aid prepared by Nell Jehu; revised by Tim Wilson.

James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library

100 Larkin Street

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2008

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**Title:** Trannyshack Collection,

**Date (inclusive):** 1996-2008

**Collection Identifier:** GLC 58

**Creator:** Trannyshack.

**Physical Description:** 13 folders, 1 oversized folder(0.5 cubic feet)

**Contributing Institution:** James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library

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**Abstract:** The club Trannyshack was founded in February 1996 by Steven Grygelko, known by the professional moniker Heklina. Trannyshack was a drag show staged every Tuesday at the Stud, a South of Market gay bar in San Francisco, California. The Tuesday night shows ran for over 12 years until August 2008. The Trannyshack Collection contains posters, press releases, photographs, DVDs, and a series of "Historical Bulletins."

**Physical Location:** Collection is stored onsite.

**Language of Materials:** Collection materials are in English.

#### **Access**

The collection is open for research, with photographs available for viewing during Photo Desk hours: Tuesday: 1-5; Thursday: 1-5; Saturday: 10-12, 1-5.

#### **Publication Rights**

All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the City Archivist. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the San Francisco Public Library as the owner of the physical items.

#### **Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Trannyshack Collection (GLC 58), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

#### **Provenance**

The Trannyshack Collection was donated by Heklina (also known as Stefan [Steven] Grygelko), December 2008.

#### **Technical requirements note**

Collection includes CD-ROMs.

#### **Historical Note**

The club Trannyshack was founded in February of 1996, by Steven Grygelko (b. June 17, 1967- ) known by the professional moniker Heklina. Trannyshack was staged every Tuesday at midnight at the Stud, a South of Market gay bar in San Francisco, where it ran for over 12 years. The Tuesday night Trannyshack shows ended in August 2008.

A bartender at The Stud, Heklina was invited by the manager to create an event that would bring in patrons on Tuesdays, the slowest night of the week. As a participant in Klubstitute, a notorious traveling drag show founded by Diet Popstitute (aka, Michael Joseph Collins, 1958-1995) in 1990, Heklina had witnessed the fun and possibilities of Drag without bounds. Trannyshack quickly gained an avid audience, who would wait sometimes until 1:30 in the morning for the show to begin. Many first time performers grew to fame on the tiny Trannyshack stage, some staying on to become co-host and hostesses of various theme nights, and some, such as Peaches Christ and Annamatronic of the Scissor Sisters, who went on to even greater fame.

With so many creative people in such close proximity, competition was natural and spurred the performers to heights of glamour and vulgarity which challenged long-held notions of what defines "Drag." The inclusive atmosphere encouraged experimentation of all kinds, both on stage and off. Costumes and acts ranged from the extreme, to the bizarre to the hysterical, edging out but never quite obliterating the traditional canons of drag. Transsexuals, drag queens, drag kings, faux queens, and even faux kings filled the Stud along with regular folks both gay and straight who came to watch the spectacle.

The popularity of Tuesday nights at the Stud inspired Heklina to take the show on the road, starting in 1999 with what was to become an annual event, the Trannyshack Easter trip to Reno. A Hornblower Yacht trip followed in 2000, along with semi-regular away Trannyshacks in Los Angeles and Seattle. The largest non-Tuesday event, was the annual Miss Trannyshack Pageant, which quickly outgrew the Stud, and was hosted at a variety of venues, eventually ending up at the Regency Center. The much larger stage allowed performers to expand their acts, both physically and conceptually, and big production numbers became the norm. The Miss Trannyshack pageant was also expected to be controversial and winners

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were always contested, most dramatically when the first faux queen Fauxnique won in 2003, sparking dialogue about the very nature of drag.

As Trannyshack gained renown, it attracted some of the biggest stars in the drag pantheon, including Joey Arias, Lady Bunny, Chi-Chi La Rue, Sherry Vine, Jackie Beat, and Holly Woodlawn. An assortment of stars from music and television made appearances as well, such as Mary Wilson of the Supremes, Linda Lavin, Gina Shock of the Go-Go's, and Charo who judged her own look-alike contest. The club became something of a tourist attraction, and garnered inclusion on many "Best of" lists. In fact, Trannyshack's popularity spawned a number of unlicensed copycat "Trannyshacks," in the U.S. and even London, of which only the London club was granted legal rights by Heklina to keep the name.

Though the Tuesday night shows at The Stud have ended, Heklina has plans to continue the Trannyshack legacy with the Easter show, and other special events, and to keep the Heklina/Trannyshack brand alive indefinitely.

#### **Scope and Contents**

The Trannyshack Collection is comprised of posters, press releases, photographs, DVDs, and a series of "Historical Bulletins" written by Bobby Barber which reveal background information on the performers and a history of each of the Tuesday night shows hosted in 2008, the club's final year. The DVDs include two documentaries, *Filthy Gorgeous* and *Blood, Sweat and Glitter*, amateur footage taken from the final Trannyshack Kiss-Off show, and a video oral history from December 2008. The photographs include 500 color prints, with about 100 performers and Trannyshack alumna identified by name, and 760 high resolution digital images on disc.

#### **Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into five series, based on material type and media: Series 1. Press and Publicity; Series 2. Historical Bulletins; Series 3. Photographs; Series 4. DVDs; and Series 5. Posters.

#### **Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Heklina

Trannyshack--Archives

Drag queens--California--San Francisco

Drag shows--California--San Francisco

Transvestites--California--San Francisco

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#### **Series 1 Press and Publicity, 2005-2008**

**Physical Description:** 3.0 folders

##### **Scope and Contents**

Press releases and publicity for the Miss Trannyshack pageants, the 10-year anniversary party, New Year 2008, the final Kiss-Off party, and other events from later in Trannyshack's history.

##### **Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically.

Folder 1

#### **Press releases, 2005-2008**

##### **General note**

These primarily relate to the Miss Trannyshack Pageant, the 10-year anniversary party, New Year 2008, and the final Kiss-Off party.

Folder 2

#### **Gloss [magazine], 2006-2008**

**General Physical Description note:** (3 issues)

##### **General note**

Cover stories on Trannyshack/Heklina. Issue 5.22 (Nov. 3-16, 2006); Year 6 issue 22 (Nov. 2-15, 2007); Year 7 issue 16 (Aug. 8-21, 2008).

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Folder 3

**Newspaper coverage regarding the end of the Tuesday night shows at the Stud, 2008**

**General Note**

*San Francisco Chronicle* August 19, 2008; *Bay Area Reporter* August 7, 2008; and *S.F. Gate* August 19, 2008.

Folder 4

Series 2 **"Historical Bulletins," January 15, 2008-July 15, 2008**

**Scope and Contents**

Written by Bobby Barber with background information on the performers and a history of each of the Tuesday night shows hosted in 2008, the club's final year.

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically.

Series 3 **Photographs, 1996-2007**

**Physical Description:** 3.0 folders

**Scope and Contents**

The series contains ca. 1,300 images (in print and on disc) of Trannyshack performers and events throughout the course of its existence. Some are from its earliest days in 1996, and there are some duplicates.

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically.

Folder 5

**Photographs, 1996-1999**

**General Physical Description:** ca. 500 photographs, most in color, most are 3 x 5 in. or 4 x 6 in.

**General note**

These pictures are almost entirely unattributed to any photographer, but were given to the Stud to hang behind the bar, and cover the years 1996 through approximately 1999, primarily from the Tuesday night shows.

Folder 6

**Performers and personalities identified, 1996-1999**

**General note**

Color, ca. 100 images selected from Folder 5.

Folder 7

**Photograph files, 2004-2005, 2007**

**General Physical Description note:** (2 discs)

**General Note**

Disc 1 contains 300 photos of the 2007 Miss Trannyshack Pageant. Disc 2 contains 164 pictures from the 2007 Miss Trannyshack Pageant, plus 296 pictures dating from 2004 and 2005, from the Tuesday night shows.

Series 4 **DVDs, 2005, 2008**

**Physical Description:** 5.0 folders

**General Physical Description note:** (5 discs, 1 document)

**Scope and Contents**

The series contains two documentaries on Trannyshack, footage of the final "Kiss-Off" event in 2008, and an oral history interview of Heklina.

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically.

- Folder 8                    **Filthy Gorgeous, 2005**  
                                  **General Physical Description note:** (1 disc)  
                                  **General Note**  
                                  A documentary about Trannyshack. Features interviews with many of the primary Trannyshack performers. Directed by Sean Mullins.
- Folder 9                    **Blood, Sweat and Glitter, [2005]**  
                                  **General Physical Description note:** (1 disc)  
                                  **General Note**  
                                  A documentary which follows competitors as they prepare for the 2004 Miss Trannyshack Pageant. Mass of Black Lace Productions presents a film by Sasha Aickin. Produced and directed by Sasha Aickin; edited by Sasha Aickin and Bill Weber.
- Folder 10                  **Trannyshack Kiss-Off [final event] footage, 2008**  
                                  **General Physical Description note:** (2 discs)  
                                  **General Note**  
                                  Taped and burned by Kegel Kater.
- Folder 11                  **Oral history interview of Heklina, December 2008**  
                                  **General Physical Description note:** (1 disc)  
                                  **General Note**  
                                  Nell Jehu, interviewer.
- Folder 12                  **Oral history interview of Heklina. Transcript, December 2008**  
                                  **General Physical Description note:** (15 p.)
- Series 5 **Posters, 1999-2008**  
                                  **Physical Description:** 2.0 folders(132 items)  
                                  **Scope and Contents**  
                                  Contains posters for the weekly and annual Trannyshack events.  
                                  **Arrangement**  
                                  Arranged by size, and then in roughly chronological order.
- Folder 13                  **Posters (8-1/2 x 11 in.), 1999-2008**  
                                  **General Physical Description note:** (124 items)  
                                  **General Note**  
                                  Includes the following events: Tuesday Night shows at the Stud (76), Miss Trannyshack Pageant (7), Mr. Trannyshack Pageant (3), Trannyshack Easter trip to Reno (7), The Trannyshack Bay Cruise (3), Trannyshack Halloween and New Year's shows (5), Trannyshack in Seattle, Los Angeles, and Russian River (8), San Francisco performances and appearances featuring Heklina (3), Trannyshack events at clubs other than the Stud (7).
- Oversize-Folder  
14                            **Posters (11 x 17 in.), 2005-2008**  
                                  **General Physical Description note:** (8 items)  
                                  **General Note**  
                                  Includes the Miss Trannyshack Pageant, Trannyshack Seattle, the Monster Show at Harvey's Bar (with Cookie Dough), and a hand-painted portrait of Heklina by a fan.
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