Fairoaks Project collection

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2020
Descriptive Summary
Title: Fairoaks Project collection
Dates: circa 1978
Collection Number: 2018-84
Creator/Collector: Gary Freeman
Extent: 1 oversized folder
Repository: GLBT Historical Society
San Francisco, California 94103
Abstract: The Fairoaks Project collection includes 10 photographic prints, restored and enlarged by project curator Gary Freeman, from the Fairoaks Polaroids by Frank Melleno (1942-2010). Print titles include: 10, Aida, Brazilian, de Sade, DJ, Hanuman, Locker Room, Pool, Shower, and Stairwell. Melleno was the night manager of the Fairoaks Hotel in San Francisco in 1978 and documented the life at the hotel / bathhouse. Melleno was a trained photographer of the Vietnam War era and used these skills in capturing the images.
Language of Material: English
Access
Collection is open for research.
Publication Rights
Copyright retained by donor, Gary Freeman.
Preferred Citation
Fairoaks Project collection. GLBT Historical Society
Acquisition Information
Gift of Gary R. Freeman, November 2018.
Scope and Content of Collection
The Fairoaks Project collection includes 10 photographic prints, restored and enlarged by project curator Gary Freeman, from the Fairoaks Polaroids by Frank Melleno (1942-2010). Print titles include: 10, Aida, Brazilian, de Sade, DJ, Hanuman, Locker Room, Pool, Shower, and Stairwell. Melleno was the night manager of the Fairoaks Hotel (also known as Fairoaks Baths) in San Francisco in 1978 and documented the life at the hotel / bathhouse. Melleno was a trained photographer of the Vietnam War era and used these skills in capturing the images. From the introduction, written by Mark Thompson, to the Fairoaks Project book edited by Gary Freeman: “The Fairoaks Project is a bold and unapologetic celebration of gay male sexual culture featuring Polaroids taken at The Fairoaks Hotel in San Francisco by Frank Melleno in the spring and summer of 1978...the Fairoaks Hotel which was located at the corner of Oak and Steiner in the Hayes Valley district. The hotel was a converted Victorian apartment building owned and operated from 1977 to 1979 by a group of men who had formerly lived together in a commune...Most significantly, the Fairoaks was racially inclusive, and was promoted as a party location...most of these Polaroids, kept in a cardboard box for nearly 30 years have survived. These photographs were casual snapshots of the men at the bathhouse taken with subject's permission and displayed in the lobby on a bulletin board for viewing the next week.”
Indexing Terms
Photography
Bathhouses
Gay men