## **Cultural Daily**

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

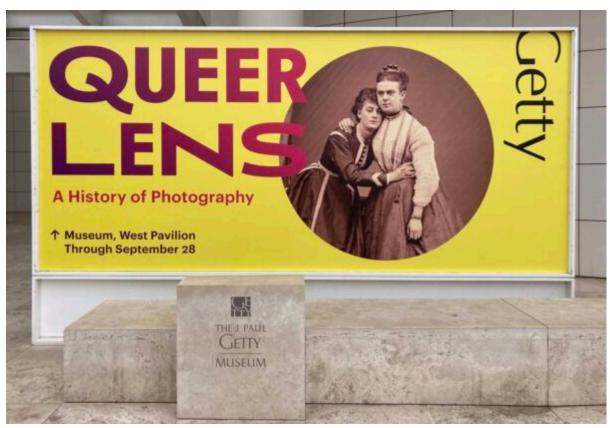
## **Queer Lens at Getty**

Elisa Leonelli · Monday, July 28th, 2025



Getty Center (c) Elisa Leonelli

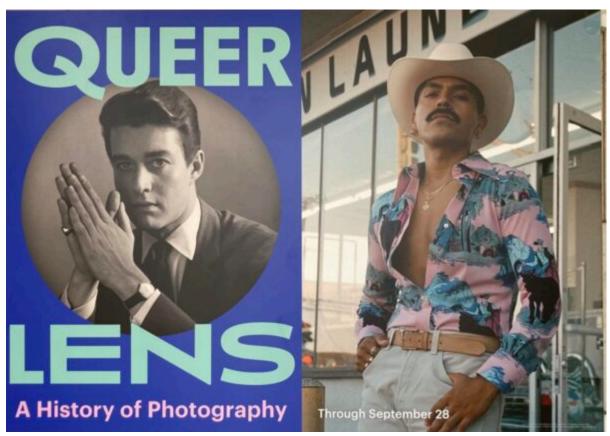
*Queer Lens*, a photo exhibit at the Getty Center (June 17-September 28, 2025) offers a unique opportunity to trace landmark episodes of queer history, starting from the arrest and trial of Fredrick Park and Ernest Boulton, aka Fanny and Stella, cross-dressing theater performers, also accused then cleared of homosexuality in 1870s London.



Queer Lens (c) Elisa Leonelli

It serves as the main poster with a photo by Fred Spalding.

A second poster features a 1966 BW portrait by Neal Barr of fashion designer Halston, next to a 2017 color photograph from the "Queer Brown Ranchero" series by Fabian Guerrero.



Queer Lens (c) Elisa Leonelli

As I explored the various rooms of the West Pavillion, I noticed images by photographers who were a direct inspiration for my early BW photography: Diane Arbus, Henry Cartier-Bresson, Duane Michals, Edmund Teske. Click on underlined words to read my articles.



Queer Lens (c) Elisa Leonelli

I knew about Weegee, because I had interviewed Joe Pesci who played him in *The Public Eye*, and wrote an article for VENICE, Los Angeles Arts and Entertainment Magazine.



Gay Deceiver 1939 (c) Weege

I had written about the Robert Mapplethorpe retrospective at LACMA and at the Getty. Here's one of the photos that created the controversy I talked about. Click here to read.



Man in Polyester Suit 1980 (c) Robert Mapplethorpe

I was excited to discover the work of several photographers I did not know about (besides Guerrero mentioned above).

Frances Benjamin Johnston, who opened a photography studio in Washington, D.C. in 1894, was official White House photographer under five presidents.



Frances Benjamin Johnston 1896 self-portrait

Joan Biren, author of the book Eye to Eye: Portraits of Lesbians (1979).



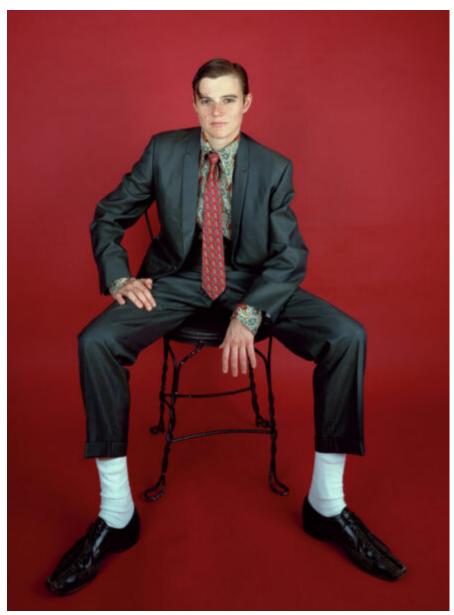
Priscilla and Regina 1994 (c) Joan Biren

Mickalene Thomas, African-American artist, member of the Post-Black Art movement.



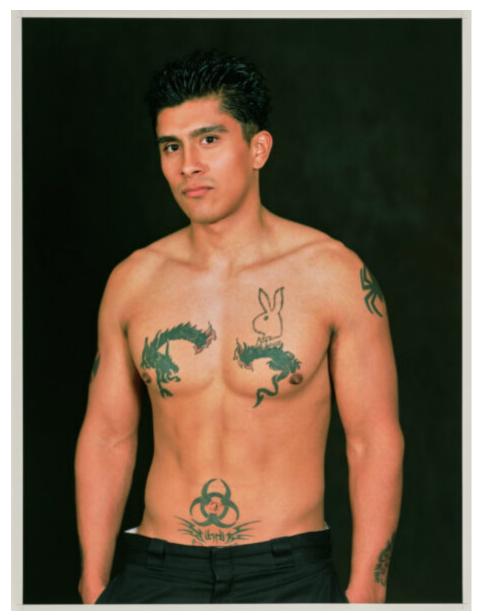
A Moment's Pleasure 2008 (c) Mickalene Thomas

Catherine Opie, professor of photography at UCLA.



A. Hans Scheirf 1993 © Catherine Opie

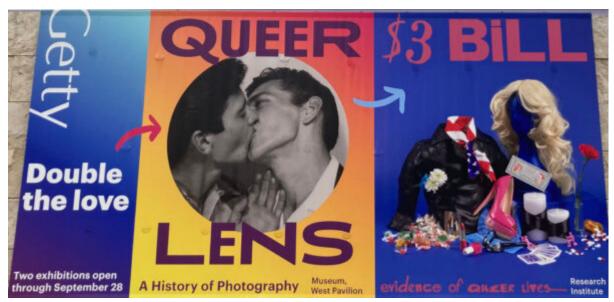
Ken Gonzales-Day, Mexican-American conceptual artist and historian.



Anthony 2006 © Ken Gonzales-Day

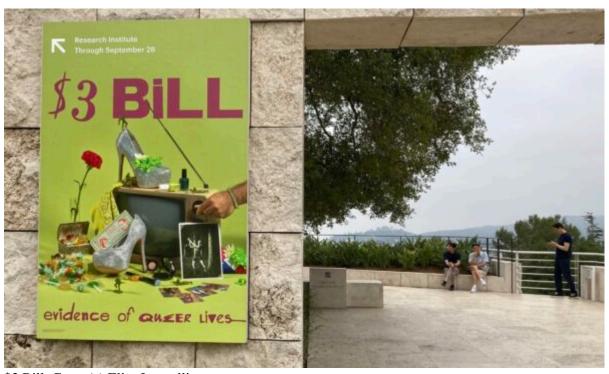
The Friends of Dorothy room features more than one hundred portraits of famous queer artists: Kenneth Anger, Richard Avedon, Leonard Bernstein, Dirk Bogarde, Noel Coward, James Dean, David Hockney, Rudolph Nureyev, Cole Porter, Andy Warhol, John Waters, Sarah Bernhardt, Jodie Foster, Billie Jean King, Annie Leibovitz, etc.

Click on underlined words to read my articles about Dorothy Parker, Nureyev, Leibovitz.



Queer Lens- \$3 Bill (c) Elisa Leonelli

A companion exhibit at the Getty, \$3 Bill: Evidence of Queer Lives, is extremely interesting and extensive. On the double poster a 1950s Photo Booth photo of Two Young Men Kissing.



\$3 Bill. Getty (c) Elisa Leonelli

We conclude with this title card: "In the time since this exhibition was conceived, rights for queer and trans people in the United States have been narrowed rather than expanded, making the themes that emerge in these galleries even more crucial."

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