



For immediate release — Friday, October 11, 2019

Symposium and exhibit focus on local queer history

An exhibit devoted to local queer history, set to open on Saturday, Oct. 12 at the Galt Museum & Archives, is the first of its kind in southwestern Alberta.

For the past year, University of Lethbridge professors Drs. Kristine Alexander (history) and Suzanne Lenon (women and gender studies) have been working with Aimee Benoit, curator of the Galt Museum, undergraduate students and the teenage members of the Queer Impact Club (QIC) of the Boys & Girls Club of Lethbridge & District on a project that documents the queer histories of Lethbridge and southwestern Alberta.

The *Inquiries: 2SLGBTQ+ Histories of Southwestern Alberta* exhibit features a variety of objects from the community, including the first pair of high heels from a local drag queen, a chest binder, and costumes created by artist and scholar Shawn Singer to personify two-spirit people in Blackfoot history. Objects will be paired with a quote from the donor describing the object, what it means to them and their relationship to it. The exhibit will also showcase buttons and promotional material from Pride Fest and OUTreach and issues of *The Occasion*, a queer newsletter.

“Inquiries is, for me, a great starting point to begin challenging misconceptions about the history of Lethbridge and Alberta as a whole,” says Liam Devitt, a student involved in the project. *“Alberta is often thought of as a place of the “severely normal,” which overshadows much of this province’s rich queer history. With this exhibit and the upcoming symposium organized by the U of L’s Institute for Child and Youth Studies, I hope Lethbridge can become a hub for queer history research and we can begin to realize Alberta as a place of the severely queer.”*

A week after the exhibit opens, a one-day symposium on Friday, Oct. 18 will allow for further discussions of queer and community-engaged approaches to oral history, museums, and child and youth studies. The symposium features presentations by the QIC youth curators, keynote speakers, paper presentations by the U of L undergrads involved in the project and a roundtable discussion. The speakers are authors and professors with expertise in the history of queer communities in Western Canada, transgender children and youth and queer literature.

“Queer Youth Curating Queer History is an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the historical research and intergenerational collaboration that has resulted in *Inquiries: 2SLGBTQ+ Histories of Southwestern Alberta*, an exhibit open to the public until February, 2020,” says Alexander. “Featuring the work of queer youth, U of L undergraduate students and faculty, and invited keynote speakers from across North America, the symposium is going to make important contributions to academic and public discussions about resistance, community and queer histories in Lethbridge.”

This news release can be found online at [Inquiries](#).

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