2016

Out and About 2016

Colgate University. Office of LGBTQ Initiatives

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From LGBTQ Initiatives Director, khrystian kemp-delisser

Like Helene, I am honored to work closely with the dedicated community of students, staff, and faculty that promote LGBTQ visibility and inclusion at Colgate. I am further honored to be a part of a history and tradition of change makers. Over the summer I participated in a National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum panel in Peterboro, NY. I was one of several local activists and educators, most of whom were Colgate affiliates, to discuss efforts that remained for racial justice and liberation of LGBTQ communities of color. Someone in the audience repeated a statement I have heard before but has never rung true in my mind: that the political and social acceptance of the LGBTQ community has come at a faster rate than any other civil rights movement.

Tell that to the men who founded the Mattachine Society and the women who started Daughters of Bilitis, two early “gay liberation” groups, in the 50s. Tell that to Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, the trans women of color whose pivotal role in the 1969 Stonewall Rebellions is still known by too few. Or the people whose HIV/AIDS diagnosis went unnamed because they were too poor and/or too gay to be acknowledged in the 80s. Or the dozens of transgender people who have been murdered this year alone.

And tell that to the Colgate students who have navigated the often socially restrictive campus climate since the late 60s. Many have been out to friends and family, knowing that some of their peers attended this school explicitly to get the social conditioning and practice they needed to conform. Some of them actually shunned others who are “too gay,” only to find and claim their activist identity when the positive message of “coming our doors” was undermined by anti-gay graffiti written in blue ink. Trans students, by their very day-to-day resistance, have shattered social codes and re-written policies to be as inclusive as possible. These stories of Colgate’s history were gathered from LGBTQ and ally alumni who participated in the Queer History Project. The project began in the summer of 2016 when several current student leaders and I recorded interviews of alumni. Those interviews were then transcribed in the Fall by LGBTQ Initiatives Interns and the themes shared in a presentation conducted by Colgate faculty, staff and students.

The hiring in 2016 of our first fully-appointed tenure-track professor and the inauguration of openly gay president, Brian Casey, are two milestones that open a new era of queer visibility and inclusion. Colgate’s LGBTQ History is in fact still in the making but what gains and changes we can celebrate were hard fought in large thanks to the students, faculty, and administrators who came before us, not to mention those from the surrounding community like those gathered that day in Peterboro in order to recognize the work that is being done and yet to come to advance a social justice civil rights agenda. To speak of our efforts as “fast” or “rapidly” achieved would be to minimize our community’s sacrifices and amazing resilience.

From LGBTQ Studies Director Hélène Julien:

What an honor to be serving this cherished program again, and to be working with this most dedicated community of students, staff, and faculty. LGBTQ studies may still be a young program, barely entering its ninth year, but so vibrant and vital is it to our collective identity that I find myself unable to remember Colgate before it. Nurtured by the commitment of its members and supporters, it has particularly flourished under Suzanne Spring’s inspired leadership last year. It now boasts its first full-time tenure-stream position, held by Danny Barreto, who brings his passion, broad expertise, and generosity, and has already added several new exciting courses to our curriculum. As the close partnership between LGBTQ Studies and Initiatives continues, building on years of collaborative activism and academic exploration, this promises to be another successful and enriching year. I am immensely grateful to be part of it.
Student Highlights:

**Em Rubey ’18**
**Summer Research**

Toiletiquette: How Dirt and Danger Shape Bathroom Behavior, Gender in Public Spaces, explores why bathrooms have become the battleground for the transgender rights movement through considerations of privacy, gender and hygiene. In the public bathroom, we are forced into contact with the public while performing extremely private bodily functions. Stalls are in place, but there is enough of a crack to see through. This leaves users to create their own methods for maintaining privacy, choosing what acts they are willing to commit in this pseudo-private space. Much like the tension of privacy in public toilets, there is a tension between private and public surrounding gender. If gender is how one feels, an internal sense of self, then gender is a private, personal conception. However, the way that gender exists in our society is extremely public. The act of deciding another person’s gender does not necessarily correspond to how they self-identify. It is exclusively based in their public appearance and societal beliefs of how men and women look. With tensions between public and private spheres surrounding issues of toilets and gender, gender-segregated public restrooms are a contentious topic.

**Bennie Guzman ’17**
**Exhibit in Picker Gallery**

My work primarily takes from the quote by William Morris: “History has remembered Kings and Warriors because they destroy; art has remembered people because they create.” I titled my self-portrait this to emphasize this aspect of my work. My painting focus on memorializing people and their work. One of the inspirations for this was the work of Kehinde Wiley. In Wiley’s work I saw the people who are pushed to the margins of society and the stories that aren’t told be put front and center. However, in Wiley’s work I also saw that the stories and people took on a style that wasn’t related to the people and stories he wanted to represent. In my work I wanted to depict people and put them on backdrops that reflect their stories. In the backdrops I put images, words and phrases that either reflect the issues of the people or reflect what our society has put onto them. In my work I wanted to break down all the notions we have of narrative and push against the history we have been told. I wanted to present the honest truth about these stories and do so in a way that is balanced: the works are both objective and subjective, chaotic and organized, stereotypical and honest.

LGBTQ Initiatives & Studies are proud to welcome three new staff members:

**Bennie Guzman**

*’17*

HI WORLD.
I’m Bennie Guzman and I use any and all pronouns. I became an intern because I see a huge need for more LGBTQ+ visibility on this campus. We live in a world where many voices do not get heard or are silenced, and I feel that it is my job to help these voices get heard. I’m a storyteller.

**Hailey Biscow**

*’17*

she/her/hers

I am queer and proud to be. I love being outside and finding the beauty in little things. I am unlearning and trying to illuminate and dismantle the oppressive structures in which we are all seeped. I will never stop learning. I am on a journey of being the best being I can be.

**Maxine Campbell**

she/her/hers

I am excited to work with and be a part of this caring community. As an ally I want to engage and support, to be informed. In my leisure time I enjoy a home that I share with my kitties. I have two daughters and a grandson that I adore. I have met so many intelligent, thoughtful and fun people and look forward to working with everyone here.

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