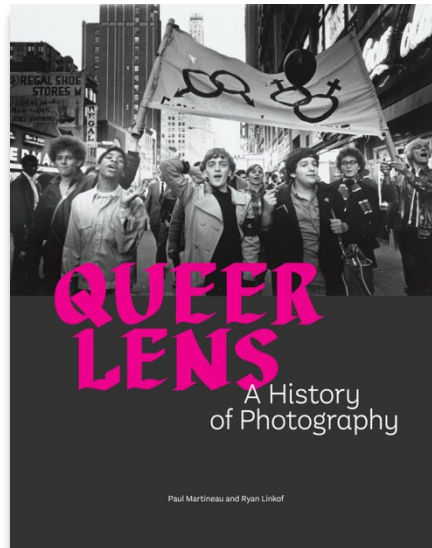


Photography Constructs and Subverts Concept of Queer Identity in New Volume

The authors explore the rich and multifaceted world of queer identity as built through photographs



LOS ANGELES, CA— First appearing in the English language in the sixteenth century as an adjective meaning “strange,” “odd,” or “peculiar,” *queer* was used to refer to nonnormative behavior, dress, and lifestyle. It was only in the mid-twentieth century, and mainly in the United States and Europe, that a generalized notion of a shared identity began to cohere in a way that we might recognize today, inclusive of men, women, and trans people who saw their sexuality and gender identity as constitutive of their sense of self. The advent of photography as a medium and its power to capture a subject—representing reality, or a close approximation—has inherently been linked with the construction and practice of identity. Since the camera’s invention in 1839, and despite periods of severe homophobia, the photographic art form has been used by and for individuals belonging to dynamic LGBTQ+ communities, helping shape and affirm queer culture and identity across its many intersections.

Queer Lens: A History of Photography (J. Paul Getty Museum, \$65) explores this transformative force of photography, which has played a pivotal role in increasing queer visibility. Lively essays by scholars and artists explore myriad manifestations of queer culture, both celebrating complex interpretations of people and relationships and resisting rigid definitions. Featuring a rich selection of images—including portraits of queer individuals, visual records of queer kinship, and documentary photographs of early queer groups and protests—this volume investigates the medium’s profound role in illuminating the vibrant tapestry of LGBTQ+ communities.

This volume accompanies the exhibition on view at the Getty Center, June 17–September 28, 2025.

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