

Bad Boy Art

South of Market

One afternoon I was developing prints in my darkroom. It was late 1977. I heard a knock downstairs on the outside door. It's a long flight of stairs, so I was in the habit of leaving the front door unlocked when I was home during the day. I would lock it when I was working in the darkroom. I finished spreading my prints of naked Bill Essex on Mount Tamalpais out to dry on the kitchen table and headed down. A handsome man, with dark hair and a trimmed beard, stood on my front stoop. He looked vaguely familiar, like someone I might have cruised in a bar South of Market.

"Are you Jim Stewart?"

I looked up and down Clementina Alley. "I might be..." He didn't look like a process server or an undercover vice cop, but then neither did Al Pacino in *Serpico*. Was he an old trick back to claim I gave him the clap?

"I'm Robert Opel."

"Then I'm Jim Stewart."

"I'm up from L.A."

"Why do I think I know you? Have we fucked?"

"I streaked the Academy Awards."

Ah. The light dawned. The Oscars. That's why he looked familiar. Robert Opel was iconic. Running naked in public during the 1970s had become a national craze. The bigger the audience, the greater the glory. Robert Opel streaked the live telecast of the 1974 Academy Awards just when host David Niven was about to introduce Elizabeth Taylor. That was a big coup. Niven had turned to the camera and quipped "the only laugh that man will probably ever get is for stripping and showing his shortcomings."

Jack Fritscher, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved

HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS WORK

"I'm opening an art gallery here in the neighborhood," Opel said. "I need hot artists to hang."

At last, finally, and about time, opportunity was knocking! I'd had a show, *Men South of Market, Photos by Jim Stewart* at the Ambush Bar on Harrison Street in late 1976. John Embry, the shady owner of *Drummer* magazine, up on a scouting trip from L.A., had seen my photos at the Ambush. He approached me about publishing my work in upcoming *Drummer* issue Number 14. I agreed. Continuing the great tradition of starving artists, I would not be paid, but I would get a free ad layout for my Keyhole Studios. In that first decade after Stonewall, *Drummer* was new and touted as "America's Mag for the Macho Male." In the *mise en scene* of the sex comedy I was living on Clementina Alley, opportunity played knock-knock often on my door, offering sex, drugs and art.

As it happened, *Drummer* and Robert Opel, after both being busted in separate anti-gay incidents by the LAPD, were fleeing from right-wing oppression in L. A. Both were moving to the freedom of San Francisco to reinvent themselves. I went for the deal. In both my photo spread and the ad for Keyhole Studios, I listed my address as 768-A Clementina. That was an "underground" address I cobbled up by sawing a mail-drop slot in the gangway door that led to the building's unoccupied basement. My flat on the top floor was 766 Clementina.

Because the legality of my softcore porn business was still open to SFPD interpretation, I had hoped to throw off any vice cops with this little ruse. It hadn't thrown off Robert Opel, who had a nose for vice. Having seen my photos, he used his *Drummer* contacts to track me down.

I invited him in.

We headed upstairs and back to the kitchen. Robert peeked in the open door of my red-lit darkroom and inhaled the photo chemicals like poppers. The kitchen, a huge room the full width of the flat, had a big round table. There I'd spread out to dry dozens of newly printed five-by-seven naked pix of Bill Essex, early body builder extraordinaire and gay San Francisco deputy sheriff.

Robert Opel began inspecting his way around the table,

walking his fingers first. There was Bill Essex as quarterback, ready to score. There was Essex at bat. Essex the jock. Robert Opel grinned. "Stewart and Essex, Essex and Stewart. Regal, royal, rebellious. Doomed." He pulled his cock out. David Niven had been wrong. Robert Opel did not have shortcomings. As he pumped his way around the table he got bigger and harder.

By the time he made the full circuit of the table, talent scout Robert Opel had his deposit in hand. My Keyhole Studios had just passed the Robert Opel test. If art work made him cum, he'd hang it in his gallery.

"Do you think a hardcore leather art gallery can make it here, South of Market?" Robert Opel said.

"If not now, when? Gay bars are our only galleries. We struggle to be part of the art exhibits that change monthly at the Ambush bar over on 10th and Harrison. Chuck Arnett, Tom Hinde, and I have had some really hot shows over there. But it's still a bar, not an art gallery. We're ready for a full-blown leather art gallery. Gay art should get written up with real reviews, in publications like *Drummer*."

"Which I write for," Robert Opel said.

"I've seen your own photos, both inside and on *Drummer's* cover," I said.

"Is there any other showcasing for leather art here?"

I told Robert Opel about the new Open Studio movement, organized by the South of Market Artists Association. It encouraged artists to open their studios to the public once a year, on weekends. South of Market was just then beginning to be called SoMa, and Open Studio was mostly straight artists, but notices in the arty "Pink Section" of the *San Francisco Chronicle* lured the checkbooks and purses from Pacific Heights to the seedy side of the City. It let the polished side of the City go slumming in the afternoon, where gays played rough at night.

"Was your Open Studio show a success?" Robert said.

"Define *success*," I said. "It cost me. Open Studio makes each artist foot the bill. I called my show *Keyhole Studios' Hot Stuff Etc., Photos by Jim Stewart*. My flat was open to voyeurs on the weekends this past April. The straights who came by thought it

was all about sex. They wanted the cheap thrill of ‘dirty’ pictures. The gays who came by thought it was about sex too, not art. They tried to wrangle an invitation into The Other Room.”

“Sex sells,” Robert Opel said. “Sex brings cash in through the door.”

“Cash brings sex through the door.” We both laughed. “I got exposure and experience from Open Studio, but my flat is not a real gallery. It’s like self-publishing. We need a legit gallery.”

Before Robert left that afternoon, I told him he should contact Jack Fritscher who was on the cusp of turning *Drummer* magazine from a little L.A. bar rag into an international leather and arts publication. Around his own kitchen table, Jack was recruiting and creating his *Drummer* salon of leather writers and photographers, and artists of all sorts, including Robert Mapplethorpe. This was ages before Mapplethorpe’s work would get busted.

“I have Jack’s number in my little black book.”

It was to the advantage of the artists, the public, and Robert Opel himself, that Fey-Way Studios open, and that it succeed. I had remodeled my flat on Clementina and had been the design carpenter for the Leatherneck bar at 11th and Folsom. I pitched in, leading the unemployed construction crew of starving artists with grunt work at Robert Opel’s storefront dump at 1287 Howard Street.

The storefront became a gallery, and the gallery became a salon that merged with the greater salon Jack Fritscher was creating around *Drummer* magazine. An invitation to an opening night at Fey-Way Studios was more sought after than a ticket to *Thaïs* with Beverly Sills at the San Francisco Opera. Get hung tonight at Fey-Way! Get published tomorrow in *Drummer*!

The inaugural show at Robert Opel’s Fey-Way Studios, entitled *X: Pornographic Art*, opened with an invitation-only preview party on March 10, 1978. Fortunately my work had turned Opel’s eye for this historic show, together with works by well-known artists such as San Francisco’s Chuck Arnett, as well as Robert Mapplethorpe. Mapplethorpe was then an unknown to whom Jack Fritscher, once known as a religious seminarian, assigned a

cover shoot for *Drummer* Number 24. It was Mapplethorpe's first cover and signaled the beginning of their infamous affair of sex and art that was seen as a scandal.

Over the next year, Robert Opel's shows displayed work by the famous, the infamous, and the unknown. Fey-Way Studios helped launch the homomasculine art movement in San Francisco's South of Market District. It was a catalyst, much as the 1913 Armory Show in New York was, when it helped launch the Modern Art Movement in America.

Within our own salon it was liberating, if less public. It was like Lytton Strachey liberating the Bloomsbury salonistas gathered in Virginia Woolf's parlor by pointing at a stain on her sister Vanessa's dress and saying simply, "Semen?"

Whatever it was, Robert Opel's Fey-Way Studios, amplified by Jack Fritscher's *Drummer*, changed the way gay art was perceived, valued, and reviewed by gay culture.

In the first 14 months that Robert Opel's Fey-Way Studios was open, there were two or three dozen leather artists showcased. Rex, The Hun, Domino, Etienne, Chuck Arnett, Robert Mapplethorpe, Tom Hinde, Olaf, Lou Rudolph, and others. Two shows, however, stand out in my mind.

Riding high in early 1979, Robert Opel gave me a card that read "TOM" across the top, followed by "Kindly Join Us..." The drawing was of a bare-chested man in full leathers, with his thumb stuck out; a hitchhiker you couldn't refuse.

Although this was the second West Coast showing of Tom of Finland's work, after Eons Gallery in L. A., Fey-Way Studios was packed. As a European artists made famous by mail-order and underground magazines, Tom of Finland had been an icon of the gay leather scene since the late 1950s. At age 59 this was his first trip to the States.

Seeing him across a crowded gallery was as much a thrill as first seeing some of his drawings in those little muscle magazines like *Tomorrow's Man*, *Mars*, and *Physique Pictorial* that featured black-and-white photos of guys in posing straps or a conveniently draped towel.

When I was in my teens, I'd buy those hot little rags that

preceded the gay press. I'd stuff them down the front of my pants, untuck my shirt to hang over them, and sneak past my folks to my room for a jack-off session. By the time the new issue was out, I had tired of the pix of all-American boys. I never tired of the grown men whom "twinkie-free" Tom of Finland drew. He gave us endlessly suggestive men as erotic cops, horny bikers, and heroic soldiers. He also depicted the villainous Nazis he had to deal with in his youth during the 1930s and '40s.

When I walked into Fey-Way Studios and saw Tom of Finland, I knew how Edward Carpenter must have felt when he first met Walt Whitman a century earlier. There he was. The man himself, the granddaddy of homoerotic leather art, signing his drawings for some of the hottest men in The City.

Speculation circulated throughout the gallery. Who would spend the night with Tom of Finland? Facing age 60, in the second decade of the youth culture, Tom was still a catch. My long-time pal, Max Morales, also defied time. He was in his early 40s, and made his living dancing a famous *pas de deux* with a woman in straight North Beach strip clubs. Max, who had modeled many times for my Nikon, sidled up to me and whispered "I'm going to take that man home."

I looked around the room at some of the handsome leathermen circling Tom. "I bet you do," I said. He did.

One can only wonder what the two masters with 100 years of experience between them did behind closed doors. Erotically, what does one do with the artist or the author who may not be the men he draws or the stories he tells? Secrets.

In all the sex, lies, and art of this drama that turned into a murder mystery, Robert Opel had wide and diverse tastes which he introduced to American gay culture. For instance, although Go Mishima of Tokyo was not at Fey-Way Studios in person, like Tom of Finland, he was represented by his rugged BDSM drawings of grown men. I had read the essays and fiction by Yukio Mishima, and felt my heart race when I read of his romantic, albeit right-wing, samurai suicide with his lover. I wondered how I had never seen the work of Go Mishima until I saw it at Robert Opel's Fey-Way Studios. I was stunned by my expanding horizon.

Like the oeuvre of Yukio Mishima, the paintings of Go Mishima, with rough homomasculine men in bondage, depicted the heartbeat of leather life South of Market. Like my own photos, his work jettisoned the pretty-boy principles of mainstream gay culture.

Most work at South of Market art shows, although offered at bargain-basement prices, was still beyond my budget. I was often able, at the end of the show, to trade my own work with an artist for work he had not sold. Since Go Mishima was in Japan, this option was not available to me.

There was one of his works I had to have. It was a naked young Japanese man with a gigantic hard-on. He wore a Marlon Brando motorcycle cap and was bound at the wrists to a pole. His teeth clutched a black leather jockstrap, and a pair of boxing gloves were tied together and slung over his erection. Was this “Japanese virility” bound by postwar American occupation? The price of this Bound Boxer was \$375. That was over two months rent on Clementina Street. Nevertheless, I bought it and let sex pay for it by scheduling extra sessions in The Other Room. Pleasure for pleasure. The joy of collecting. And a fine investment.

Within our circle, Gregg Coates was a master of fine line art. He could take an ultra-fine-point Sharpie and create magic to carry you out of this world. I first met him when I was working for Allan Lowery, constructing his Leatherneck bar.

Gregg was designing the bar’s logo. Part of Gregg’s design was a jarhead Marine wearing aviator glasses, military cap and a dog collar. What made it interesting was that the word *Leatherneck* seemed to float from the dog collar like a leash. Was that word *Leatherneck* a pliable belt ready to come down on your bare ass? Or was it a strop ready to sharpen a straight razor before shaving your head? What was that at the end? Was it the end of a belt peeking through a buckle, or was it a tongue about to lick your dick? That erotic ambiguity was the magic of Gregg’s art.

Gregg dropped by Clementina one night to talk about the upcoming South of Market Open Studio show that had been moved from April to October, 1978. We headed for the big round

kitchen table at the back of my flat.

I got a couple of beers from my 1950s pink refrigerator. I never got around to painting it. The pink had grown on me and had become an inside joke about the weird irony of macho men who bought used appliances and became collectors of retro camp.

“Want a toot?” Gregg said.

I got out my beveled antique mirror and razor blade and laid them on the table. Gregg got out a new white bindle with a pale blue seal balancing a ball on its nose. He laid out four lines with the single-edged razor blade and handed me a short silver straw. I got to choose any two lines I wanted. They all looked the same to me. I snorted one up each nostril and handed the straw back to Gregg. He snorted the other two. With our fingers we cleaned the residue of our lines from the mirror and rubbed it on our gums.

“Ahh,” we grinned in unison. As our gums grew numb, we each took a small sip of cold beer.

“So what’s the deal on Open Studio next month,” Gregg said. “Do I have to live South of Market?”

“Doesn’t everyone who’s anyone live South of Market? Here on lovely Clementina? Yeah. You have to be a denizen.”

“Hmm.” Gregg started to pull out his bindle again.

“No, no, my turn,” I retrieved my own bindle from the little leather coin purse with the silver closure that had been my grandfather’s. It was perfect to cart coke and its paraphernalia. I laid out four lines.

“I was wondering,” Gregg said. I knew where he was headed.

“You know,” I jumped the gun on him, “this place is big enough we could both have a show here. You could live here without living here. You could live inside my mail-drop slot in the gangway door.”

“That would be great.” I let Gregg pull out his bindle again.

By the time both bindles were empty and we were down to our last beers, we had planned our joint venture. Our two-man show would be titled *Double Exposure*. I would hang photos. Gregg would hang drawings.

Choosing my photos for this Open Studio show was a challenge. I decided to re-hang a few that had been in previous shows

but to work them in with what became my basic themes for this show. Drugs. Bondage. Discipline.

Before Luc left for France, we had driven to The Geysers in Sonoma County, 50 miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge. During the 1960s the Geysers had been a destination hangout for hippies and gay men.

The Friday afternoon in August we arrived, the Geysers was deserted. We paid our small camping fee and hiked up the creek. We would frequently find small bath-water-warm pools in the stream bubbling down from the geysers. Before we reached the largest pool, we slipped on the wet rocks and dropped the jug wine. Our cheap *vin rouge*, meant to last the weekend, flowed in holy sanguination with the warm water of the geysers.

We stripped and bathed, hoping to cure with hippie gay geyser magic whatever maladies we felt at the time. Drugs and sex activate superstitious ritual within gay men. When we emerged, I luxuriously buckled padded restraints on Luc's wet wrists and ankles and pulled out my Nikon. I captured close-up water beads on his dark sinewy hands and feet, bound with broad black-leather bands. These photos formed the core around which I organized my Open Studio show that fall.

To these photos of Luc, I added four photos of Max Morales. They were all taken from the rear, to display Max's hot butt. The first, titled "Spring," showed that ass in open black-leather chaps and a broad-band leather body harness. The second, "Summer," displayed more of the same ass, as Max wore only a black-leather jockstrap. The "Autumn" photo repeated "Spring" with a black motorcycle jacket slung over Max's shoulder. The final photo, "Winter," caught Max in the leather skin of both chaps and jacket, displaying only the firm orbs of his ass. The photos were shot against a black background.

As an homage to Alphonse Mucha, whose art nouveau "The Seasons" had been so popular in the hippie 1960s, I published my "Mad about Max" series as advertising posters for the Leatherneck bar. They had never been offered as art photos.

There were other black-and-white high-contrast photos. I included a series of my neighbor from El Paso, his arms crisscrossed

with black rawhide, self-injecting a needle of Nirvana. We were such bad boys then. Another photo I took at Paul Hatlestad's place. I shot a silver straw and rocks and lines of blow laid out on a black silk top-hat. Paul later placed the top-hat on the martyred Harvey Milk's casket when it lay in state at City Hall.

My *pièce de résistance* was a triptych in a brushed steel frame. The center panel was an ebony and silver crucifix, bound with black rawhide, shot against folds of black velvet. The two side panels, hinged to swing free, were both taken from a single negative reversed. It was a quarter profile shot of Rocky Ramirez, bound to a cross, against the black background bar-light of the Leatherneck. It was from the series of pix I had taken at the Leatherneck for a *Drummer* article on hot leather bars. I merely flipped the negative to create two malefactors facing each other. The triptych was the first to ring up the red "sold" sticker.

Gregg's fine-line drawings reflected variations on the same themes. One was a Pop Art drawing of a Hoover vacuum cleaner with a silver straw and razor blade titled "Super Sucker." Another was a continuous line drawing of three nuns with long straws ascending from their noses upwards to cumulus clouds titled "Heavenly Stash."

Over the next month, Gregg and I transformed my flat on Clementina into an ad hoc and credible art gallery. We moved all the furniture and things on the walls out of the double front living rooms, the front bedroom, and the hallway. They were crammed into either The Other Room or the big back kitchen. Only the black-leather tuxedo couch I bought on the cheap at Unclaimed Freight remained, in the bay window of the front room.

The walls, from wainscoting to ceiling, were repainted, covering the rectangular imprints of "ghosts of pictures past" left behind by the kind of tobacco patina more often found in French cafés. We installed a track strip of can-lights the length of the hallway. The old theater spotlights I had mounted on the ceilings of the double living rooms were perfect for gallery display.

Our invitation featured a shadow and ghost of a man pissing toward three toilets in the back of the Leatherneck. We invited in Max Morales, who set up his sound equipment in the overcrowded

Other Room, where he could build the intensity and tempo of the music as the crowd grew, and then bring it back down as closing time approached.

We hired a leatherman to impersonate a uniformed security guard, whom we posted at the bottom of the stairs to forestall any problems with party-crasher bullies. Joelle and two of her girlfriends agreed to handle sales. Allan Lowery donated beer and wine from the Leatherneck bar. Paul Hatlestad brought his handsome houseboy to tend bar. Filmmaker Wakefield Poole, fresh off his hits *Boys in the Sand* and *Bijou*, agreed to record the opening on his 35mm camera, complete with shoulder-mount sun-gun. We all wanted this show documented as evidence, for the South of Market Artists' Association, that what was happening here was more than dirty fag pictures for straight slummers to snicker at.

Less than a week before the show, Gregg and I were sitting on the living room floor assembling frames, polishing glass, and attaching photos and drawings to pre-cut mats. We hoped it all came together as the cutting-edge event we wanted to stage.

"Shall we have the last of the toot?" Gregg said. He slid my antique mirror with razor blade and silver straw across the carpet.

"Let's," I said. We had polished off my bindle over an hour before. Gregg laid out four fat lines of Bogotá's best. We took turns snorting lines and waited a minute or less for the euphoria to set in.

"Ahh," we both sighed at the same time.

"Back to work," Gregg said. He reached for the glass cleaner. "Out of glass cleaner," he said, as he held up the empty spray nozzle bottle. "Have any more?"

"I never clean my windows. I get more interesting light through them when they're dirty and streaked. The filth casts *film noir* shadows across naked bodies I shoot in the late afternoon sun."

The coke made this somehow sound very profound to us both. We sat in silence for a moment. Then funny. We both laughed.

"Do you have any more at home?" I said. Gregg had brought over the now empty bottle of glass cleaner from the all-male commune where he lived.

"Coke or glass cleaner," Gregg said.

"Either," I said.

"No. Neither," Gregg said.

"Any vinegar," I said.

"Vinegar?"

"Vinegar and newspaper clean glass better than glass cleaner."

There was another pause.

"Do you have any?"

"No."

"What we really need is another bindle," I said, as I pulled out my wallet to check my cash supply. I was low. "I don't have enough."

"Let me see what I have."

We each snuffed our noses, gave long sighs, and laid out our money on the carpet, just as the coke was reaching its peak of perfection. We had just enough for another bindle.

"But what about the glass cleaner?" I said.

"When we're famous, and art critics and historians are writing about us, do you want them to say they spent their last dime on cocaine or on Windex?"

"I'll call Paul," I said. "Maybe he'll have some vinegar, too."

He did.

Opening night of the *Double Exposure* show was all we had hoped for. Both Gregg's fine-line drawings and my photos sold well. Some of the hottest men, movers and shakers in the leather culture South of Market showed up at the top of the stairs on Clementina Alley to add their macho sweat and talents to the inside street theater that our opening reception turned out to be.

There were just enough glitches to lend interest to the night. At one point, a young nerd-hippie showed up at the door. The uniformed "security guard" questioned the validity of his invitation. I was called down the stairs to straighten it out. He had been given the invitation by a friend of a friend of a friend. I invited him up. He got an eyeful and a hard-on. He had a beer before he went back to Berkeley, but showed up again at the public viewing the next day. He came back three times. He also came three times. Gregg and I saw to that.

In the small toilet-only room, I had laid out a mirror with a razor blade and straw on the back of the toilet tank below two framed pictures. One showed two naked Colt models tweaking each other's tits; the other was of two bare-breasted late 16th-century women; one pinches her sister's nipple while the other offers a ring. As the beer flowed, the line for the only toilet grew longer and longer down the hall.

"Stop sucking cock in there and get out. We all have to piss." The door slowly opened. Joelle and her two girlfriends squeezed out the door snorting up the last of the coke.

"We're not cocksuckers, honey, just pussy lickers," Joelle's younger tart cooed. The waiting piss-line burst out laughing.

We ran out of beer. Allan rushed off to the Leatherneck two blocks away to bring back more.

"You won't run out at the bar?" I said, when he returned.

"Hardly," Allan said, "Looks like you've hijacked all my customers!"

For the rest of October and the first weekend of November, Saturday and Sunday afternoons were open house for the temporary art gallery on Clementina. Saturdays were slow. Sundays turned into an at-home salon. Timmy Meeks, the houseboy I shared with Joe Taylor downstairs, answered the door, passed the hors d'oeuvres, and, in the small toilet room, pleased anyone who was willing.

One afternoon twin Grace Jones clones with shaved heads joined the small group gathered on the floor around the leather tuxedo couch in the front room. A bald man in his 50s was talking, like animated charades, regarding the difference between art and pornography, between hardcore and softcore. "When you get to be my age," he said, "it's all soft."

"Like hell it is, Daddy," one of the Jones clones said.

"What's your name?" the other clone said.

"Doug."

The dark willowy twins flirted with Daddy Doug for the rest of the afternoon. They all seemed to enjoy the frolic they were giving each other. At five o'clock we closed for the day. I never saw the Jones clones again, but Daddy Doug became a good friend.

He told tales of life as a maturing leatherman; of trips to Greece, where dark Mediterranean hustlers took him for Mr. Daddy Dollars until, exhausted from pleasure, he told them he was an unemployed taxi driver who spent his last dime to reach Athens; of cheap rental rooms in the Zee Hotel on Eddy Street in San Francisco's Tenderloin, where he took hustler boys he picked up in front of Flagg Brothers' shoe store on Market Street.

He made senior sound sexy. I took glamour shots of Daddy Doug with his woven metal butcher's glove and my gambler's pistol, with his leather aviator's helmet and riding quirt. I wove them into my next show at the Ambush.

The *Double Exposure* reception was October 13, 1978.

On Halloween, October 31, 1978, I was building a catwalk for a fundraiser against the Briggs Initiative or Prop 6. If passed it would outlaw gays and gay supporters from working at any level in the California public schools. The fundraiser was in a large cavernous two-story building near the northeast corner of Castro and Market Street. It had an inside balcony across the back, from which I helped Wakefield Poole project various slide shows and a short film of Kate Smith singing *God Bless America*. Gays are patriotic and American.

The fundraiser was organized as a Second World War USO canteen. A dollar a dance, a dollar a cup of coffee. Red, white, and blue bunting and American flags decorated the hall. Some dressed as soldiers, some as 1940s pinup girls. The catwalk was for people to strut their stuff as they entered in Halloween drag. In the front corner was a tiny office where Harvey Milk had moved his Castro Camera shop. He didn't do much business there. He was busy at City Hall.

"Are you sure that thing's not going to collapse?" Harvey Milk said, as he nodded at my catwalk. He had just come into the building on his way to his new minuscule camera shop.

"It'll be fine," I said. I finished toenailing the support struts in place.

"Some of those queens are pretty hefty. The last thing we need is a disaster here," Harvey said.

“Everything’s safe,” I said.

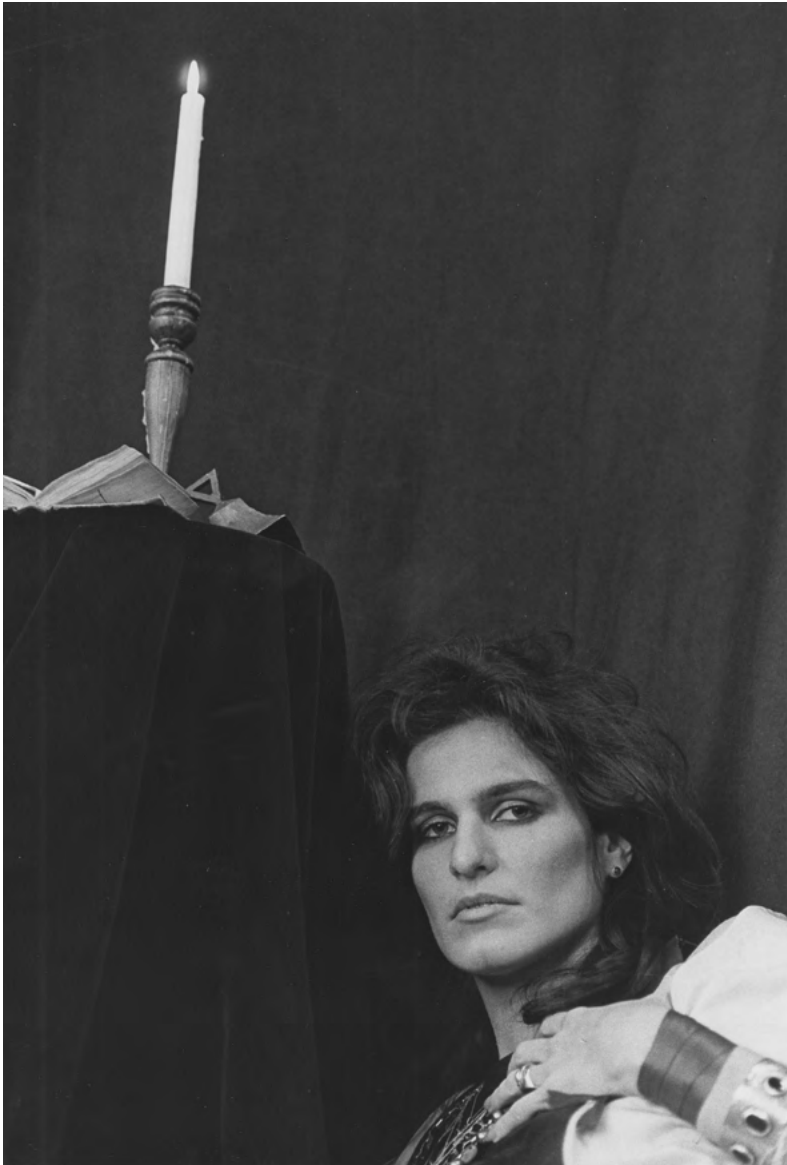
On November 5, 1978, I closed the *Double Exposure* show.

On November 7, 1978, the Briggs Initiative was soundly defeated by the voters.

On November 18, 1978, over 900 followers of San Francisco-based cult leader Jim Jones’ People’s Temple committed mass suicide by drinking cyanide-laced Kool-Aid. Congressman Leo Ryan, who had flown to Jonestown, Guyana, the day before to investigate, was assassinated on the small airstrip by gunmen from Jonestown. So was most of his party, and the news cameraman who had accompanied him.

My pal, Mike McNamee, who was a TV cameraman, had been asked to fly to Jonestown with Congressman Ryan. Fortunately, Mike did not have a current passport. Another cameraman was assigned to the Congressman’s investigative trip.

On November 27, 1978, Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone were shot to death in city hall by ex-policeman, ex-fireman, ex-supervisor Dan White. Everything had not been safe.



Camille O'Grady Bell, Book, and Candle

1979: photo by Jim Stewart.