

UC Irvine

UC Irvine Previously Published Works

Title

Distribution, Bars, and Arcade Stars: Joe Anthony's Entrepreneurial Expansion in Houston's Gay Media Industries

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2t00h8c7>

Journal

Synoptique: An Online Journal of Film and Moving Image Studies, 9(2)

Author

Freibert, Finley

Publication Date

2021

Peer reviewed

Distribution, Bars, and Arcade Stars

Joe Anthony's Entrepreneurial Expansion in Houston's Gay Media Industries

FINLEY FREIBERT

In 1969, attorney John J. Sampson interviewed various parties across the supply chain of American adult media industries in order to provide a comprehensive portrait of industrial relations for the “Traffic and Distribution” component of the presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography. Whereas the general theatrical feature market for independent exploitation, arthouse, and erotic films was widely discussed in the Commission via high profile informants including David F. Friedman and Louis K. Sher,¹ the coverage of the smaller industry of gay-oriented “male” films amounted to sprinklings of information such as, “perhaps two dozen or more full-length features were produced specifically for the homosexual market in 1969, and some theaters catered specifically to this trade” (Sampson 1971, 29). While both the *Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography* (Lockhart 1970) and the expanded 1971 multi-volume *Technical Report* do not include citations for this estimate, the Commission records at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library reveal that the—likely sole—source on the gay theatrical film market was an unpredictable one. This key source was a father-son entrepreneurial duo, Joseph and Michael Anthony respectively, two figures who have up to this point escaped coverage in gay adult media historiography. Initially producing and distributing work for print and nontheatrical male markets, by Fall 1969 the Anthonys’ *Love’s Muscle; Troy* (1969) starring Michael and directed by Joseph was publicly exhibited at the legendary Park Theatre on Alvarado Boulevard in Los Angeles.

Sampson interviewed Joseph Anthony about the distribution of independent gay films and mail-order products, and on July 25, 1969 sent a thank you letter, consisting primarily of a generic form message, but briefly including the following personal note:

I certainly enjoyed meeting Chris and your son. I hope your resolve to supply me with the information we discussed when I met with you has not wavered. I am certainly looking forward to receiving your report. (Sampson 1969a)

While the identity of the individual referred to as Chris is unknown, other information can be surmised from related intertexts that following a discussion of gay media industries Sampson requested explicit documentation including a report on the workings of the industry and a list of subdistributor contacts (Sampson 1969b), to which Anthony appears to have agreed with slight reservations. It is unclear if Anthony sent the requested documentation, but shortly thereafter,

Joseph and Michael Anthony moved to Houston where they extended their adult media operations and eventually expanded into the management of gay bars in the area.

The Anthonys—both of whom were identified as gay in press accounts (Dryer and Reinert 1973, 58; McClurg 2009, 4)—overtly identified their numerous businesses with the historically emergent idea of a shared gay cultural identity. The Anthonys effectively developed “gay” as a locally meaningful advertising term in Houston, whether, promoting Coin-O-Matic as “Houston’s only gay owned and operated vending company” (Anthony’s Coin-O-Matic Advertisement, *Nuntius*, February 1971, 10), noting that “just for the record” their A&A bookstores constituted “a nationwide gay operated chain” (“Mr. Clean’ Congratulations,” *Nuntius*, September 1970, 20), or founding bars with names—including Mary’s and Gayboy—that unapologetically proclaimed the sexual identity of their target gay male consumer base.² Joseph Anthony even went a step further, mandating that his Gayboy International Club was “exclusively for the Gay Community, and the hets will not be welcome” (“Gayboy Opened by Anthony/Vecera,” *Nuntius*, June 1971, 4). Anthony boldly outlawed heterosexual slumming in his establishment, a move that reflected contemporaneous separationist and self-determining tactics of the gay liberation movement.

Alongside and sometimes within their retail establishments, the Anthonys produced and sold non-theatrical films, still photographs, magazines, and books. They also were vital to the development of Houston’s mini theatres, coin-operated loop machines that were installed within a set of privacy dividers. These enterprises comprised what I call gay useful media—media products that functioned in a utilitarian manner in relation to gay social life. While useful is not a qualifier previously applied to conceptualize gay media, many gay cultural histories focus on media utility and use. For example, presenting an account of the social and subcultural utility of gay communication networks from the 1950s to the 1970s, in *Contacts Desired* (2006), Martin Meeker uncovered at least four crucial uses of gay media including self-identification, community association, geographic place-making, and activist organizing (2006, 10–13). As Meeker argues the circulation of gay cultural products not only affected established gay social networks, but more importantly, created the possibility of constituting new collective formations where they did not previously exist (9). In Houston, which by the 1960s was considered “the homosexual playground of the South” (Sears 2001, 49), gay useful media were locally characteristic because they functioned as connective tissue that linked individuals to regional gay institutions, translocal gay community, and national gay communication networks. I define gay useful media from the 1960s and 1970s as gay cultural products that aimed to affect cultural change through their contributions to gay visual culture and their encouragement of once isolated individuals to find communities of collective acceptance. This definition of gay useful media follows Haidee Wasson and Charles R. Acland’s definition of useful cinema (2011, 4)—here adapted to a broader media landscape than film—to name a particular kind of relation between media and cultural infrastructures wherein products have a utilitarian value and function for the institutions they are nested within.

Gay useful media's divergence from Wasson and Acland's definition is not so much medium specific as it is determined by objectives toward which the media are used. The functions of useful cinema informing the concept in Wasson and Acland's book range among pedagogy, persuasion, and experimentation. These functions reflect the case studies' contexts that include educational institutions, propaganda and reportage, and consumer product expansion. Pedagogy, persuasion, and experimentation are revealed as the flavors of utility that new consumer and industrial grade film formats provided to already established institutions, as Wasson and Acland put it, "useful cinema has as much to do with the maintenance and longevity of institutions seemingly unrelated to cinema as it does with cinema per se" (4). On the contrary, gay useful media are not restricted to established institutions or even nontheatrical or emerging formats, but instead, underscore how past media formats (print, motion picture, or venue space) could be used to create new specifically gay institutions. As we will see, the Houston-based *Gayboy* franchise began as a magazine, which enabled the later establishment of a brick-and-mortar community institution, the GB International bar. Gay useful media historically developed toward the ends of bringing people together, whether that be in the physical place of a gay bar or through the dispersed sharing of an identity concept—like "homophile," "homosexual," or "gay"—within a distributed network of strangers. Hollis Griffin has reflected on this magnetic utility of media bringing gay men together in his expansion of the concept of media convergence to examine how local bar publications formed their publics (2017, 23–52). Griffin engages the collective definition of convergence—as in "coming together" (23)—to unpack the traditional media studies concept of convergence that usually refers to the processes of audience targeting and dispersion prompted by the historical transition from analog to digital production and consumption. In conversation with Griffin's investigation of convergence as "coming together," Ryan Powell (2019) has recently traced how postwar gay adult cinema elaborated multiple possibilities for gay men "coming together," a compelling double entendre that encapsulates the dual uses of gay adult media toward communal formation and collective sexual climax. In conversation with Griffin and Powell, I offer the term "gay useful media" to explore the array of qualitatively different uses that gay media historically permitted, uses that cannot be accounted for under the more restrictive terms "useful media" or "useful cinema."

The story of the *Anthonys* links together a number of stakes relevant to the broader fields of gay history and media history. This study gives evidence that a gay liberation ethos permeated gay media enterprises in Houston in a way that was congruent with the more well-documented gay cultural hubs on the coasts. At stake too is the history of gay kinship; for many gay men during the 1960s and 1970s the notion of coming out to one's father—let alone being accepted—was all but a pipe dream,³ particularly in a conservative southern state like Texas. The fact that a gay father and son were not only out to one another, but also actively collaborating in local gay culture provides a basis for imagining gay kinships that defied the pervasive bigotry epitomized by Anita Bryant's false opposition between gay men and families. Finally, the *Anthonys*' motion picture endeavors

trouble a rigid dichotomy between the terms “theatrical” and “non-theatrical” as they are employed in media history. While the pornographic loop machine would typically be considered a non-theatrical medium, the fact that Joe Anthony marketed one variety of his coin-operated machines as “mini theaters”—a term used elsewhere to denote adult storefront theatres—suggests these machines prompted an interstitial mode of exhibition between the theatrical and the nontheatrical. Whereas the gauge of Anthony’s mini theatres may have been synonymous with a nontheatrical format, their contexts of consumption within an adult retail store designated for cruising aligned with the “all male” theatrical mode of spectatorial cruising described by José Capino (2007).

Gay useful media have been well-documented in gay film and media history, yet underacknowledged under the terminology of “useful.” Yet, the story of gay media entrepreneurship has always been a story of use over form, with the function of gay enterprise reflecting social utility, individual desire, and collective political imperatives.⁴ Thomas Waugh’s seminal historical study of gay visual culture, *Hard to Imagine*, pinpoints how the advent of the photographic medium presented a critical turning point that enabled the modern form of homoerotic visual culture (1996, 3–58), and at the same time was understood for the medium’s utilitarian value that served “a self-appointed historiographic function” (II) of documenting anonymous gay life. David K. Johnson’s recent groundbreaking book *Buying Gay* (2019) has documented how physique publications exemplified pre-Stonewall gay rights efforts as gay consumer rights struggles, positioning the physique magazine as politically and socially useful precursor to gay liberation publications. Whitney Strub’s “Mondo Rocco” shows how the medium of film was an enabling agent for collective gay male occupation of public space, whether within theatres or in the public sphere with the emergence of gay theatrical policies. Yet Jeffrey Escoffier’s work has underscored how some gay media entrepreneurs, like the photographer-filmmaker Bob Mizer, saw nontheatrical mail-order products as more socially and financially lucrative endeavors than gay theatrical film (2009, 16–60). In defiance against heterosexual hegemony, liberation-era gay film and print media overflowed with softcore and hardcore gay content creating an increasingly public gay culture that simultaneously tied politics to sex media and proved to be the vanguard of “porno chic” (Capino 2007). In doing so, “adult” content constituted the primary format of gay visual culture in the 1970s (Hilderbrand 2016). On the other hand, regardless of their content gay media have historically been bracketed with pornography by anti-gay regulatory and legal regimes, useful to the bigoted cultural antipode of gay liberation.

This article offers a recovery history of a gay father-son media empire—historically exceptional in and of itself—that as a case study also exemplifies how gay useful media institutions have historically comprised direct-sale still photograph enterprises, theatrical and nontheatrical cinema, print publication operations, adult bookstores, and—perhaps surprisingly—gay bars. Adult media historians have marshalled the methods of historically rigorous case study in novel ways. Recently, these methods have been employed to (i) examine the ways archival policies have impeded lesbian adult media historiography (Embree 2019),

(2) recover how a socio-economically precarious softcore star has enabled the formation of a local industry with regional impact (Mini 2019), and (3) argue that microhistories—even when linked to economic failure—should be given equal scholarly attention as case histories of more profitable enterprises (Gorfinkel 2018). Inspired by such interventions, in this article I trace how Joseph and Michael Anthony moved from Los Angeles to Houston and in doing so expanded their gay media presence to include not only adult media distribution and retail, but also vending, live theatre, and gay bar management. The first section examines the Anthonys' early work in adult media distribution and retail in Southern California. In the second section, I detail the Anthonys involvement in the distribution and production of both theatrical and nontheatrical films during their operations in Los Angeles. The Anthonys then moved to Houston, as described in the third section, to expand the operations of a Southern California-based adult bookstore. The Anthonys' distribution conflicts with both law enforcement and a competing distributor are outlined in the fourth section. The fifth section reveals how the Anthonys entered the bar management arena, and how they developed a lifestyle magazine that functioned to cross-promote their bar operations. The research for this article was compiled through triangulating findings from a variety of institutional holdings including those of the ONE Archives, the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, public libraries in Newport Beach and Houston, and various agencies that hold public records. The lack of a centralized archival source on the Anthonys begs the question of how many other similar figures might be lost to history, a revelation reflected in the archival silences observed by researchers working on other marginalized forms of cultural production including the work of black women (Miller-Young 2014, 21–22) and lesbians (Embree 2019, 240–54). Retracing this history reveals the complex ways that gay media enterprises were able to expand, and offers an opportune avenue for considering the contours of gay useful media.

Production, Distribution, and Retail Operations in Los Angeles

Joseph and Michael Anthony's business endeavors were initially triangulated through four corporate entities Anthony Enterprises (sometimes listed as Anthony Studios, Anthony Productions, or Anthony Distributing), Golden West, A&A, and Anaco. In the gay press—and not including difficult to date physique publications—the earliest known reference to the Anthonys' operation was through an associated corporate name and logo that appeared in the first issue of Ken Green's *Gay West* from 1968. Among the advertisements included in the publication, one listed the Ken Green Group as a distributor for Anthony Studios' photographic stills (Green 1968). Evidence of the Anthonys' business operations in the more popular homophile newspaper *Los Angeles Advocate* begin in 1969, with advertisements featuring photographs of Michael Anthony under promotions for mail-order products of Anthony Productions and Golden West Productions. The first ad appeared in January and listed Golden West's mailing address as P.O. Box 4277 in the Irvine and Newport Beach area of Orange County. The ad proclaimed, "Presenting the Model of the Year Troy McDonald" (Golden West Productions

Advertisement, *Los Angeles Advocate*, January 1969, 22), one of Michael Anthony's numerous pseudonyms, and listed a set of eight 4 by 5 black and white photographs for \$3.50. Anthony Productions' initial address was Department 134 at 5466 Santa Monica Boulevard in Hollywood, an address that Golden West would begin to employ by April.

Anthony Studios and Anthony Enterprises appear to have been production and distribution outfits designed to associate products with the brand name. While "Anthony" may have been Joseph and Michael's real surname, it is notable that the name also created a nominative link to already well-known physique pioneers including Bob Anthony (who also had an outfit called Anthony Studios) and Richard Anthony (who also used the name Dick Fontaine). By May 1969, an advertisement designed to look like a business card was emblazoned with the name Anthony Distributing Company in order to advertise Joe Anthony's wholesale distribution services to retailers. In the ad, Anthony Distributing was billed with the—likely wildly overstated—tagline "World's largest distributor of Girl & Boy ART Mags" (Anthony Productions Advertisement, *Los Angeles Advocate*, September 1969, 15).⁵ Given the date, Anthony's distribution experiences appear to have emerged out of his involvement with two other poles of the supply chain,

retail and production.

The Golden West production, distribution, and retail operation was a general adult product entity that contracted with Anthony for gay-oriented product. Run by Joseph Reitano and his son, Golden West operated a mail-order service out of post office boxes in Newport Beach and Santa Ana and had a brick-and-mortar bookshop in downtown Santa Ana at 1216 South Main Street. In late 1970, the Reitanos were indicted for advertising and distribution as part of a larger pornography crackdown that included the high-profile physique entrepreneur Conrad Germain ("U.S. Porn Statute Ruled Invalid; Busts Continue," *Advocate*, November 25, 1970, 6). Other than Golden West, the Reitanos also used corporate names The Reel Thing and Collectors' Specialties, and managed warehouse space in Westminster and Fountain Valley that



Figure 1.

Adonis Bookstall Flyer. c.a. 1969. Studio and Distributor Marketing Ephemera Collection (Coll2012.170). Folder: Adonis Bookstall. ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, USC, Los Angeles, CA. Courtesy of ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

were raided the following year (“Police Raid Porn Dealer,” *Advocate*, June 9, 1971, 7; “Orange County Pornography Case: Appeal Set on Sex-Film Evidence Ban,” *Independent Press-Telegram* [Long Beach, CA], August 14, 1971, B6.).

A company called A&A and its associated distribution arm Anaco distributed some of the Anthonys’ products, though it is unclear whether the Anthonys initially held roles in these companies. However, following Joseph and Michael Anthony’s moved to Houston the two were thereafter referred to as heading the A&A company. Initially, A&A Bookshops emerged in Southern California in the late 1960s and eventually attained a larger retail presence than Golden West. In January 1969, the company opened the Adonis Bookstall at 708 South Alvarado, a bookstore attached to the legendary Park Theatre where two of Joseph Anthony’s films were later screened.

By November 1969, A&A boasted six locations in Los Angeles County: two in Long Beach, two in Los Angeles, one in Huntington Park, and one in Santa Fe Springs (Adult Bookshops Advertisement, *Long Beach Independent*, November 12, 1969, C16; A&A Books Advertisement, *Los Angeles Advocate*, December 1969, 14). Throughout raids on the Long Beach locations in 1970, the owner was reported as Martin Allen (Mader 1970, A3), but it was ambiguous in press reporting whether he was only the owner of the Long Beach locations or of the entire A&A operation in Los Angeles County. Advertisements in the *Los Angeles Advocate* for products distributed by Anaco initially listed the Long Beach address 1128 Saint Louis Avenue as the Anaco headquarters (A&A Advertisement, *Los Angeles Advocate*, March 1970, 26). A Long Beach directory from the same period listed this Saint Louis Avenue address to A&A’s Martin D. Allen and his mother Hazel V. Allen (Polk’s Long Beach City Directory 1969, 15–16). Keeping this address linking Anaco to A&A in mind, it appears that Anaco was likely a name derived from a fusion of letters from a stylized alternate spelling of A&A: A ‘n’ A Co. (wherein ‘n’ is an abbreviation of “and” and “Co.” an abbreviation for company). All available evidence considered, it is conceivable that A&A was perhaps run by both Martin Allen and Joseph Anthony with the two As in the company name possibly standing for the first letters of their last names. By 1970, *Advocate* ads for Anaco began to list a P.O. Box in Houston instead of the Long Beach address, and as we will see, a second phase of both A&A and Anaco appeared in Houston at the same time that Joseph and Michael Anthony moved to that city.

Nontheatrical and Theatrical Films

The Anthonys’ foray into motion picture media began with gay-oriented nontheatrical film designed for home consumption. The earliest advertisement in the *Los Angeles Advocate* was for a 200 foot 8mm film entitled *Naked Breed* in “flaming color” (Golden West Productions Advertisement, *Los Angeles Advocate*, April 1969, 12.). The advertisement represented the film with a censored nude still of Michael (billed as Troy McDonald), and listed it as distributed by Golden West Productions for a price of \$30. It is unclear how many short nontheatrical films Mike Anthony appeared in, but in a later interview in Houston he stated he had appeared in 21 short subjects from 1968–70 (“Portrait of a Model,” *Nuntius*,

September 1970, 24). In the interview he also mentioned that he had appeared in two “major motion pictures” (24) by which it appears he meant films publicly screened at cinemas and not necessarily feature length.

Joseph and Michael Anthony’s motion picture endeavors expanded into the theatrical realm with two productions that premiered on August 20, 1969 at the Park Theatre in Los Angeles and a week later screened at the Park-Miller in New York City. The two films were titled *Love’s Muscle; Troy* and *Over Easy*, and they were the theatres’ weekly main attractions accompanied by several previously released shorts: Joe Tiffenbach’s “heterosexual” short *Kiss* involving a nude male-female romance and several fantastical short films from Dimitri Alexis Svigelj including *Sunday Morning*, *Bedtime Fun*, *Wizzard of Azz*, *Afternoon of a Faun*, and *Rock-Hard Marble Boy*.⁶ Because they are not currently available to view, the content and structure of *Love’s Muscle; Troy* and *Over Easy* are relatively unclear, however, a few observations can be made. First, taglines used in the programs from the Park suggest that Michael Anthony (aka Troy), the star of *Love’s Muscle; Troy*, was already familiar to viewers, “you’ve seen him in all the magazines...now see him and his friends in action” whereas Tom White, the star of *Over Easy*, was an up and coming icon “a friend of Troy’s, and one of the true discoveries of ‘69.” Second, the program also confirms that Joe Anthony directed both *Love’s Muscle; Troy* and *Over Easy* (“Have a Cool Autumn ‘69, at the Park!” 1969, 3).⁷ Third, font size and film title ordering in the Park program and in popular press advertisements all privileged the former film as the centerpiece of the program and *Over Easy* as a secondary feature. Notably, the *Los Angeles Times* ad and program listing conflated the two films, the ad associating an image of Tom White’s face with *Troy* through visual proximity and the program listing amalgamating the titles into the single *Troy and the Over Easy Boys* (Park Theatre Advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, August

22, IV–16; “Independent Theatre Guide: Los Angeles Neighborhood: Park,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 22, 1969, IV–16.). Out of the two Anthony pictures *Love’s Muscle; Troy* appears to be the only one definitively extant, and information on the surviving elements at the Kinsey Institute Library and Archives indicate a single 16mm reel exists (Anthony 1969), making it probable that the pair of Anthony films were screened together as headlining shorts rather than either being multi-reel features.

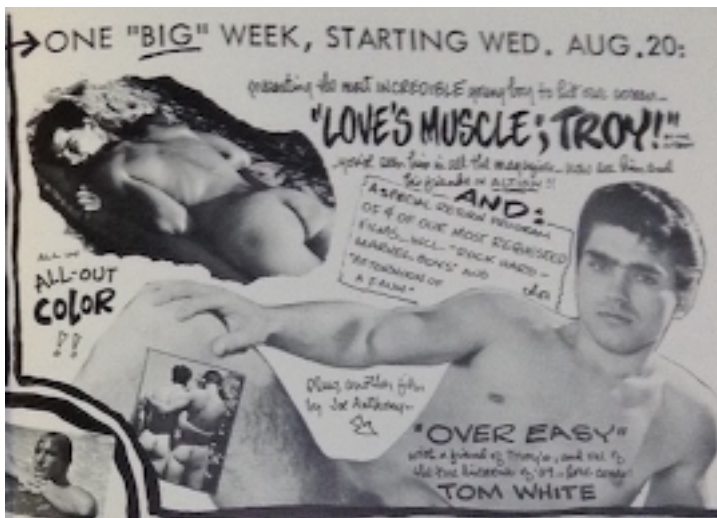


Figure 2.

Detail for Park Theatre program showing the premiere of *Love’s Muscle; Troy*. “Have a Cool Autumn ‘69, at the Park!” 1969. Park Theatre Program. ONE Subject Files Collection (Coll2012.001). Folder: Park Theatre. ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, USC, Los Angeles, CA. Courtesy of ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

Capitalizing on the publicity from the advertisement and screening of their films at the Park and Park-Miller the previous month, in September Anthony Productions released a 200 foot 8mm color short entitled *Troy and His Friends*. Priced at \$19.00, which included shipping and handling along with a free Anthony Productions 1969 catalog, the package was billed as a “Get Acquainted (sic) Offer” (Anthony Productions Advertisement, *Los Angeles Advocate*, September 1969, 15). The “Get Acquainted” line teased the prospect that the consumer’s act of purchasing was virtually a step towards becoming a “friend” of Troy, while also suggesting that the Anthonys’ mail-order distribution enterprise was just being introduced. Advertising stills accompanying the ad, were placed in a five-panel sequence bordered above and below by sprocket holes to visually emphasize the product was a motion picture film. The stills’ contents conveyed an all-male nudist retreat involving at least three individuals in a variety of outdoor scenarios including sunbathing, comradeship, and horseplay. Soon after these advertisements were run, the Anthonys’ emerged in Houston’s adult bookstore industry.

“A Nationwide Gay Operated Chain”: The Anthonys’ Move to Houston

In late 1969, A&A announced that two new locations—their first two outside California—would be opening in Houston. In November, Martin Allen filed an assumed name statement in Houston for the entity A&A Bookshop (Allen 1969, 3), with locations at 1216 Westheimer Road and 1006 North Shepherd Drive. By this time, the chain already had ten locations in California, four in Long Beach, one attached to the famed Park Theater in Los Angeles, and one each in Huntington Park, Ventura, and Bakersfield. The chain advertised the expansion as a gay-centric enterprise with the rhyming catchphrase “The Gay Way is to A&A” (A&A Advertisement, *Los Angeles Advocate*, March 1970, 26). “Way” suggests a nighttime thoroughfare with sensational amusements, akin to the Broadway nickname “the Great White Way,” and in doing so it not only celebrated the company’s growth in a glitzy mode referencing the sensational brilliance of nighttime business but also emphasized that A&A had a history of expansion—the addresses for each store in the chain were numbered chronologically by each store’s opening date—which could be linearly followed as if they were addresses on a singular “Gay Way.” By late 1970, the chain had opened three other locations—eventually each referred to by the store name Adult Library—at 1312 West Alabama, 609 La Branch, and 1203 Waugh.

While the exact dates of Joseph and Michael Anthony’s move to Houston are unclear, the Houston-based gay newspaper *Nuntius* mention that Joseph was “home again” (“Bar Hop with Nose and Hic: Like We See It,” *Nuntius*, September 1970, 14) in September 1970 and that “this gent has plans for his company and they include us” (14), indicating a strategic relationship between Anthony and *Nuntius* likely including at least an arrangement for Anthony to carry the newspaper at A&A stores. In fact, that same September issue featured a portrait of Mike on the cover page, behind superimposed article text. A profile of Mike in the issue mentioned that he had become the vice president of A&A Bookshops and that he could mostly be found at A&A’s central shop, the 1312 W. Alabama location.

In the coming months, A&A continued to expand rapidly with a new shop in San Antonio announced in October and a fourth location in Houston opening in February 1971. During that time the stores went through rebranding under the name Adult Library, and eventually the flagship location on W. Alabama became known as the Storybook.

Given that the A&A stores were the public faces of the Anthonys' larger business operations that included behind the scenes endeavors like distribution and vending, these adult bookstores became more susceptible to police raids, particularly as they advertised extended hours for cruising after the bars closed with a twenty-four hour policy and slogans like "everybody's here after the bars close!" (Storybook Advertisement, *Gayboy* 1, no. 4, 1972, 5). While the A&A company advertised itself as "a nationwide gay operated chain" ("Mr. Clean' Congratulations," *Nuntius*, September 1970, 20), it appears that the "nationwide" more accurately described its distribution reach than retail presence, which appears to have only included California and Texas.

Distribution Trouble

The above-mentioned Anaco distribution company was evidently a business alias because it was not registered with either the California or Texas secretary of state under that name. Therefore, it is difficult to tell how the company was structured without obtaining internal documents, and it is a complicated task to gauge individuals' involvement given that the primary available sources are a set of selective public self-disclosures (Caldwell 2009). It can be deduced from post office box numbers and locations along with the gay press' reporting on Anaco that the company was primarily a publishing and distribution arm of the Anthonys' enterprises. In September 1970, Anaco was described as "the sister company to A&A Incorporated" and a local gay bar personality and manager of the W. Alabama bookshop, Lynn Hudspeth, was hired as Anaco's distribution manager for all Southern States ("Mr. Clean' Congratulations," *Nuntius*, September 1970, 20). Whereas the California-based iteration of Anaco appears to have focused on distribution via direct mail, the Houston operation began advertising coin-operated technologies—branded under the name Coin-O-Matic—that could be installed in adult media enterprises either in open "arcade" settings or for "mini theatres" that allowed more private consumption. In October, Anaco announced that it was in the process of outfitting coin-operated mini theatres in numerous adult bookstores in the area including the two initial A&A shops, three other Houston stores, and one each in Waco and San Antonio (Anaco Advertisement, *Nuntius*, October 1970, 23). The flagship W. Alabama store itself included both an arcade and three mini theatres.

It was the presence of the coin-operated loop machines that led to raids on the Adult Libraries as part of a larger police siege on Houston's adult theatres in late 1970. On November 20, 1970, police arrested a total of ten employees of four adult establishments: two theatres, one "lounge," and the W. Alabama location of A&A. Whereas, other adult establishments had shifted to softcore following earlier raids, the four locations had allegedly incorporated hardcore footage into

or between softcore films and loops, a process of product differentiation that one vice officer referred to as “trying to draw their customers by running hard-core pornography on a hit-and-miss basis” (“Raids on Nudie Movies Will Continue, Vice Squad Says,” *Houston Post*, November 22, 1970, 28). The owner of the Zipper Lounge, Norman Duke, described the decision to intersperse softcore and hardcore—rather than running hardcore only—as a self-censorial adjustment “in hopes that the vice squad would leave us alone” (28), however, incensed by the new raids he promised to buck the softcore and return to running his “31 reels of earthy movies” (“Six Are Charged in Sex Film Raids,” *Houston Chronicle*, November 22, 1970, sec. 2, 4). Raids continued on November 25 with two locations of A&A sieged and employees arrested. In December, an owner of two of the A&A stores, Tom Vecera, filed a lawsuit in a federal district court that sought \$300,000 in damages and an injunction against further raids (“Adult Book Stores File Federal Suit,” *Houston Chronicle*, December 5, 1970, 1:3; “Suits Filed in U.S. District Courts: 7-H-1311,” *Daily Court Review* (Houston, TX), December 10, 1970, 7).

Besides the policing of retail spaces, the Anthonys specifically were targeted for their distribution operations. Shortly after Vecera’s locations were raided, an incident occurred involving the A&A bookstore at 1203 Waugh Drive run by Michael Anthony. On January 5, 1971 at a Delta Airlines location near Houston, one of four cartons shipped from H. Lynn Womack’s Potomac News Company to Anthony broke open, revealing adult materials. H. Lynn Womack was a legendary physique publisher known for appealing one of his earlier obscenity cases to the Supreme Court, which resulted in the landmark *MANual Enterprises, Inc. v. Day*, 370 U.S. 478 (1962), a decision that enabled “all the features of the magazines we associate with a post-Stonewall, gay liberationist era” (Johnson 2019, 187).⁸ While the cartons mailed to Michael Anthony were held in the chambers of a federal judge in advance of a pretrial obscenity hearing, Anthony filed a civil suit challenging two federal obscenity statutes against US Attorney General John Mitchell, his assistant Will Wilson, and Southern District Attorney Anthony J. P. Farris (“Seized Books Held By Judge,” *Houston Post*, January 7, 1971, 20; “Suits Filed in U.S. District Courts: 71-H-6,” *Daily Court Review* (Houston, TX), January 14, 1971, 7).

Federal government regulators were not the only ones who took notice of the Anthonys’ robust distribution presence in Houston; competitors also aimed to intervene. Most notably, one of their main competitors was Michael Thevis, an Atlanta-based adult media magnate who controlled a largescale distribution empire and had alleged links to organized crime (Nesmith 1972). While the extent of Mafia involvement in Houston’s adult enterprises and gay bars is unclear, in other cities such as New York the Mafia’s interest in gay bars and in-bar vending has been well-documented (Duberman 1994, 181–87; Crawford 2014). In larger cities in California, gay organizations like the Tavern Guild were formed to combat Mafia control of gay bars, but it does not appear that a similar organization emerged in Houston in the early 1970s. The Anthonys were involved with at least three business sectors where organized crime was assumed to have a significant influence (vending machines, gay bars, and adult bookstores), but other than the

following confrontation allegedly involving Thevis there is no indication that the Mafia had any interactions with the Anthonys. In April 1971, Joseph Anthony met with a representative of Liverpool Books, a major adult paperback publisher, and secured an exclusive distribution deal for the Houston area. The distributorship was previously held by Satellite News Agency, a regional wholesaler and local distributor based in Houston that was operated by Michael Thevis. Infuriated by Anthony's distribution deal with Liverpool, Thevis allegedly stated to the Liverpool agent, "Joe Anthony will not do anything more in Houston, Texas" ("Bookstore Operator Beaten/Robbed," *Nuntius*, May 1971, 2). The following day, the Anthonys were robbed and Joseph Anthony was severely beaten. Near the end of the decade, this story was capsulized by the federal government under the heading "The Anthony Extortion" as part of federal racketeering charges against Thevis where the government argued "the beating was administered by the enterprise to force Anthony to abandon a valuable pornographic distributorship which he held in that city" (*United States v. Thevis* 1979, 66). It is unclear whether the federal investigation of Michael Anthony, or the assault of Joseph Anthony majorly affected their adult businesses. However, by 1973 the two had shifted their focus from adult bookstores to gay bars.

"Well, Mary. Now that You Own the Bar, What Are You Going to Call It?"

Around the time that Anaco was marketing its Coin-O-Matic loop machines to adult bookstores, Joseph Anthony's company Anthony's Coin-O-Matic—a larger vending company providing and servicing the machines—was advertising a panoply of vending products to gay bars in the area. With its address listed as 1203 Waugh—one of the A&A bookstore locations—Coin-O-Matic advertised pinball machines, jukeboxes, pool tables, and vending machines for candy and cigarettes. Advertisements framed the company as "Houston's only gay owned and operated vending company" ("Anthony's Coin-O-Matic Advertisement," *Nuntius*, February 1971, 10). A bar news column in *Nuntius* described the company's specializing in sound equipment as well, enhancing jukebox and speaker setups in area bars, "a help to the gay in the immediate Houston area is the new Anthony's Coin-O-Matic—revival of good sound equipment in our clubs and bars—Our Thanks Joe" ("Bar-Hopping with Nose & Hic," *Nuntius*, May 1971, 6.). It was allegedly this vending and equipment connection to bars owners that led to Joseph Anthony's founding of Houston's famed Mary's Lounge.

As the story goes, Joseph Anthony was servicing a machine in a small tavern at 1022 Westheimer called Tommy's Lounge. Tommy's had been operated by a wife and husband, Tommie L. and David C. Musslewhite, since 1956 when they began leasing the building from the property owner (May 1961, 182). Tommie Musslewhite offered Anthony the business for \$6000 and Anthony reportedly paid it in vending machine money (Montrose Mouth 1982, 3; McClurg 2009, 4). Legend has it that the name Mary's originated from Michael Anthony's quip to his father following the purchase, "Well, Mary. Now that you own the bar, what are you going to call it?" (McClurg 2009, 4). Anthony subsequently increased the bar's size by combining it with an adjacent business area and extending the bar's

counter space (Darbonne 1990, 1). Mary's began advertising in *Nuntius* in March 1971, and the bar was California-themed and among the first in the area to include scantily clad and nude go-go boys.

Expanding on the theme-centricity of Mary's, Joe and Mike Anthony made larger plans for another entrepreneurial concept spanning across a variety of media formats that could cross-promote one another. Under the name Gayboy, the Anthonys planned crosspollinating media lines including a bar, a glossy magazine, a country club, and an annual convention. Modeled after the lifestyle-based Playboy empire of Hugh Hefner, the Gayboy enterprise aimed to capitalize on the emergent notion of a "gay lifestyle," a concept developing after Stonewall and centered around imagining how white middle-class gay men might create and interact within gay affirmative capitalist infrastructures. It should be noted that in 1965 H. Lynn Womack had planned a lifestyle-type magazine entitled *GayBoy* (Priam 1965, 14), however, it appears that magazine never came to fruition.

While there is some gray area of overlap, generally, gay lifestyle magazines (Hilderbrand 2013, 376-386) could be distinguished from other gay publications due to their particular mix of image and textual content. Different from both gay newspapers (like *The Advocate*, *The Blade*, and *Nuntius*) and gay bar publications (periodicals that featured event coverage and bar-related gossip like *Data-Boy*, *Magpie*, and *Voice of the Valley*), much of the textual content of lifestyle magazines did not typically focus on the particular historical circumstances directly preceding each publication, such as news reporting and recent bar chatter, respectively. Instead, lifestyle magazines (like *In Touch*, *Ciao!*, and *After Dark*) were composed primarily of essays on themes imagined to be central to white middle-class gay life such as exercise, travel, sex life, and other cultural pursuits including music and film. They also frequently incorporated space for short fiction to port into their claims to a literary cultural status. Gay lifestyle magazines were known for their pictorial content, scantily clad and sometimes nude men, a feature emerging out of the tradition of physique magazines and incorporated to a lesser extent in contemporaneous gay newspapers and bar rags. A final distinguishing feature of lifestyle magazines was their material construction, which reflected their class-elevated sensibility; specifically, these magazines were typically printed on glossy sheets of sturdy stock in dimensions approximating 8 ½ by 11 inches (larger than bar rags) and with at least a selection of full-color photo spreads.

Judging from the November 1970 advertisements for the first volume of *Gayboy* magazine in *Nuntius* and *The Advocate*, the magazine appears to have commenced publication in the last quarter of 1970. From the magazine announcements and given the various locations of editorial letter writers, Anaco distributed the magazine nationally ("Anaco Proudly Presents" 1970, 4). Initially planned as a quarterly, *Gayboy* later announced a shift to monthly publication and advertised a yearly subscription rate. However, extant archival copies and the lack of further advertisements in the gay press suggest that only six issues were published. From references to events in the magazine, the dates of the six issues can be estimated as November 1970, March 1971, and then March, April, May, and June 1972. Each issue was composed primarily of pictorial content; however, each subsequent

issue featured increasing textual content centered on lifestyle-oriented themes including nightlife, bodybuilding, travel, nutrition, and ecological activism. The magazine provided numerous opportunities for reader interaction including a section for general questions, a section for praise for the magazine, and a section for exercise advice. Reader letters show the wide distribution reach, instantiating coast-to-coast readership, and also reveal some snippets of business relationships, such as when Woody Daniels—owner of the famous Woody’s Adult Books on Hollywood Boulevard—wrote in to complement the magazine as “the hottest thing we’ve had in all the years I have been in business” (Daniels 1972, 7).

The magazine not only reflected industrial links, but also political affiliation. Notably, the first issue provided ample space to promote Houston’s Gay Liberation Front, a radical leftist group that *Nuntius* frequently villainized via redbaiting. *Gayboy*’s early communitarian focus prefigured Joseph Anthony’s later significant role in developing Houston’s first gay community center, the Montrose Gaze (“Montrose Gaze Needs You,” *Nuntius*, November 1972, 2). As Anthony expressed the following year in an interview with *Texas Monthly*, he imagined gay community interests and gay business interests working for each other (Dreyer and Reinert 1973, 58–60), not operating independently.

While the magazine was always compiled under the managerial editorship of Joseph and Michael Anthony and distributed by Anaco, by the middle of the magazine’s run there was a notable shift in personnel. For the first three issues, physique illustrator Ray Houston, of K & R Studios based in Brenham, provided a substantial amount of pictorial content for the magazine and also was credited in an editorial capacity. Area businessman and bar operator with an interest in the A&A stores, Tom Vecera was credited as the advertising director for the first three issues. In the final three issues Houston’s art appeared only sparingly and Vecera was replaced. Additionally, the final three issues credited a new story and copy editor, Gay Crystal, who had worked for area newspapers *Houston Chronicle* and *Liberty Vindicator* before she tragically passed away in 1975 as a result of a car accident (“Local Deaths: Willcox,” *Houston Chronicle*, February 10, 1975, sec. 4, 22). While the reasons for the shift in personnel are unclear, many of the personnel were involved with other components of the *Gayboy* franchise.

Tom Vecera and Joe Anthony announced the opening of Houston’s *Gayboy* International Club (later GB International) in June 1971, promoting the club as the gay answer to the *Playboy* Club chain. Waiters were referred to as “*Gayboy* Bucks”—the male analogue of *Playboy* Bunnies—and were dressed in revealing “European” attire with “small tails cunningly attached in the appropriate places” (“*Gayboy* Opened by Anthony/Vecera,” *Nuntius*, June 1971, 4). Initially, the club was announced to open at 2151 Richmond Street, which was previously occupied by the gay bar *Romulus*. However, following disagreements between Anthony and the bar’s previous owner and vandalism that disrupted the building’s air conditioning (“Thompson Loses Club,” *Nuntius*, June 1971, 21; “GB Sabotaged,” *Nuntius*, July 1971, 12), GB International opened in July at 1840 Westheimer, a location previously known as *Queen’s Haven* also run by Anthony.

The club's opening in July was an event centralized around a production of the popular show *Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical*, which was intended to draw gay customers to the venue to experience the site's new Gayboy concept. This Gayboy version of *Hair* was produced by Joseph Anthony and starred Michael Anthony, the previously mentioned popular press editor Gay Crystal, and a young Alex Devron who later gained prominence in gay publishing under his real name John W. Rowberry (Janis 1974). The production was so popular that it continued to run for several months and ended up becoming a traveling show, playing in Dallas and reportedly even as far as Los Angeles ("Notebook: New 'Hair' Version Here Deletes Words But Keeps Music," *Houston Chronicle*, January 14, 1972, sec. 2, 4).

Hair was a particularly key choice of a promotional event for the Gayboy franchise because of its dual cultural cache and controversial status, both potential publicity engines. As Mary Rizzo has recently uncovered, *Hair* was the central post-Stonewall musical that embodied a gay liberation ethos and acquired widespread popularity among gay audiences, yet for numerous reasons it is all but unremembered today in histories of gay liberation's cultural moment (Rizzo 2020). The Gayboy production of *Hair* reportedly ran for an hour and a half but was relatively pared down. Most dialogue was excised in order to underscore the songs for which the musical accompaniment was played from a tape ("Notebook: New 'Hair' Version Here Deletes Words But Keeps Music," *Houston Chronicle*, January 14, 1972, sec. 2, 4). This structure had the effect of emphasizing the play's components of spectacle, the musical numbers and nude sequences, which perhaps was a contributing factor to the production's vulnerability to police intervention. On January 18, 1972 during a performance at the Bayou Landing in Dallas, both Michael Anthony and Gay Crystal were arrested due to the musical's nude sequence ("4 Busted at Texas-Size Club," *Advocate*, February 16, 1972, 13), but in late-March the sequence was judged not obscene (Rizzo 2020, 19). Also, since mid-January the production was booked for an indefinite run at the Pavilion on Old Market Square in Houston, and on March 9 Michael and Gay were again arrested, yet, acquitted by the end of the month ("Despite Acquittal, More 'Hair' Arrests Promised," *Houston Chronicle*, March



Figure 3.

Image of Alex Devron accompanying a report on his appearance in Gayboy's *Hair*. Cover image, *Entertainment West*, no. 111 (1974). Photograph by Richard Fontaine courtesy of ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

31, 1972, 1:7). On the one hand, law enforcements' siege on *Hair* appears to have chilled the Anthonys' interests in continuing the production. On the other hand, the Gayboy production of *Hair* succeeded in launching the Gayboy brand to a more widespread audience, gaining popular press coverage in both the *Houston Chronicle* and the *Houston Post* due to the raids, a feat not accomplished by the vast majority of contemporaneous gay bars in the city.

Aiming to continually expand the Gayboy franchise, announcements were made that additional Gayboy International bars would open and that a "Nude Dude Ranch" was in the works ("Looking Ahead," *Gayboy* 1, no. 3, 1972, 62).⁹ The Anthonys also planned the Gayboy Gay Days National Convention for July 1 to July 7, 1972 in Houston, an event marketed as the "first national gay convention ever to be held in Houston" ("Gayboy Comment," *Gayboy* 1, no. 4, 1972, 4). This convention was scheduled as a follow-up to Dallas' first gay pride parade organized by the homophile group Circle of Friends for the previous month. It is unclear whether the Gayboy convention actually took place because there was no report of it in *Nuntius*, however from its description in *Gayboy* magazine it appears to have been planned as a fusion of a gay pride event, a homophile conference, and a model contest in the vein of the annual LA-based Groovy Guy competition ("Gayboy Comment," *Gayboy* 1, no. 4, 1972, 4). By mid-1972, there were high hopes for Gayboy with readers comparing the company to Playboy ("Male Box," *Gayboy* 1, no. 4, 1972, 9) and Michael discussing a visit to the Playboy Hotel in Miami as an aspirational goal of his company ("Trippin' with Troy," *Gayboy* 1, no. 4, 1972, 29). The Gayboy franchise was the crucial link between the Anthonys' earlier trade in adult media—through direct-sale and brick-and-mortar bookstores—and their later association with the "adult media" enterprise of gay bars.

References to the Anthonys in Houston's gay press drop off by 1973. It is unclear whether they moved or aimed to attain a low profile, perhaps due to the federal seizure of their shipment, the Thevis incident, issues with the IRS, or for other reasons. However, by the early 1980s the two reemerged when the gay press reported on their new gay bars The Hole at 109 Tuam and Happy Trails at 715 Fairview. Business records filed with the county show that The Hole, Happy Trails, and Coin-O-Matic were owned by a J. M. Trail ("Coin-O-Matic Nut Company," 1978; "Happy Trails," 1982; "The Hole," 1982).¹⁰ Further, the Articles of Incorporation for Coin-O-Matic filed with the Texas Secretary of State reveal the board of directors to include a John Michael Trail and Joe Anthony Trail ("Coin-O-Matic" 1983, 2).¹¹ The presence of the names Michael and Joe along with the middle name Anthony appear to be more than coincidental, however, at this juncture it is unclear whether the listed names were Michael and Joseph Anthony's legal names. By mid-decade, the Anthonys were seldom mentioned again in the Houston gay press. Only Joseph Anthony's name would attain a legendary status as the first owner of Mary's ("Montrose Mouth," *Montrose Voice*, June 4, 1982, 3; Darbonne 1990; McClurg 2009).

Concluding Discussion

In sum, the Anthonys' business goals and advertising tactics aimed to promote self-sustained and self-contained gay markets both locally and nationally. In doing so, they extensively contributed to expanding the market for gay consumer products, which was developed by physique entrepreneurs decades before (Johnson 2019), into the local Houston gay scene. While certainly earlier gay-oriented newspapers, physique publications, and other media had been bought and sold in Houston, the Anthonys publicly proclaimed a 'buy gay' ethic focalized into a 'buy local gay' mindset specific to Houston and its surrounding localities. The Anthony's 'buy local gay' message registered in business and editorial decisions, such as a slogan frequently printed in their *Gayboy* magazine, "Made in Texas by Texans" (*Gayboy* 1, no. 4, 1972, Back Cover). This case study reminds us that gay social networks forged in adult media and enabled by capitalism were as much "a gay consumer rights revolution" (Johnson 2010, 884–88) as they were a revolution in advertising.

The circular loop of gay entrepreneurs generating products and services for gay consumers was also echoed in *Nuntius*' call for readers to patronize gay establishments with the paper's frequently printed slogans "Patronize Our Advertisers" (*Nuntius*, December 1971, 3) and simply "Buy Gay" (*Nuntius*, August 1972, 12). From 1970 to 1972 the Anthonys' were in fact one of the most prominent advertisers in *Nuntius*, wherein they promoted their adult bookstores (A&A and Adult Libraries), distribution company (Anaco), magazine (*Gayboy*), vending company (Anthony's Coin-O-Matic), and bars (Mary's and Gayboy International among others). Yet the Anthonys' extended their promotional tactics to benefit the larger gay community of Houston. For example, the Anthonys were one of the earliest supporters of a project to create a non-profit gay community center in Houston, the Montrose Gaze.

While they did have extensive self-promotional campaigns for their many enterprises, the Anthonys also implored their customers to patronize *all* local gay businesses. For example, in a local events column in their magazine, it was emphasized to readers: "there are no gay establishments, in Houston, that we could say are bad to patronize, as Houston has one of the most unique situations in these United States, because all the bars, all the gay businesses, and all the gay people work together in a very happy community" ("Gayboy Comment," *Gayboy* 1, no. 4, 1972, 4). It is unlikely that Houston's gay businesses landscape was as utopic as this quote suggests, given parallel reports in *Nuntius* of gay business-related clique formations, rivalries, and even alleged arsons. Yet, it is significant that *Gayboy* did not overtly engage with local rivalries, particularly when considering that—unlike *Nuntius*—*Gayboy* advocated patronizing *all* gay establishments and not just those from which it was deriving advertising revenue.

A consideration of the Anthonys' enterprises contributes to a history of the larger market for gay useful media. Gay useful media in this context could be understood as liberation-era cultural products that mediated gay group formations and facilitated the connections of individuals to larger gay networks. Functioning as counterpublic catalysts, gay useful media include theatrical and nontheatrical films, newspapers, live theatre, and even—perhaps surprisingly—

gay bars. In his groundbreaking social history of the relationship between gay cinema and gay sociocultural formations, Ryan Powell has recently unearthed an incisive rhetorical question posed by the New York City Gay Liberation Front in 1970, “Do you suppose the gay bar is gay media?” (qt. in Powell 2019, 66). As Powell has insightfully unpacked, the function and design of the liberation-era gay bar operated in the same capacity as a filmic *mise-en-scène*:

purposely organized to modulate and elaborate certain ways of patterning and seeing gay life. Just as the “gay bar” is a place, it is also an arena of mediated engagement, a cultural location not unlike a film, play, or stage performance wherein what one sees, hears, and feels in and around oneself can become an opportunity for self-reflection and group affiliation. (66)

Gay bars, like other gay useful media, have historically emerged as entrepreneurial gateways that embodied avenues for gay worldmaking and have facilitated alternative ways of existing in the world. As John D’Emilio (1983) argued in his seminal intervention in gay historiography, it is capitalism that shaped the possibility of gay community formations—and by extension gay life—because the accumulation of monetary means facilitated the emergence of self-sustaining gay infrastructures.

The local salience of the word “gay” and the associated development of a post-Stonewall gay consciousness revolutionized gay media industry endeavors as much as they were attached to revolutionary interventions—such as gay zaps—in establishment media industries. For the Anthonys and gay Houston, it mattered that a company not only catered to gay consumers, but that it was openly gay owned-and-operated. While the content and qualities of such companies’ products were surely taken into account by some consumers, it was the circular relational structure—for gay Texans by gay Texans—that made these products socially impactful and communally useful.

Acknowledgements

I’m immensely grateful to archivists of the ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives who continue to do groundbreaking work in preserving gay history, and coordinating access to materials that assisted greatly in tracing this specific history. I thank Jenna Dufour of UCI Libraries for facilitating access to library resources. For the scanning and digital archiving of historical Houston-area LGBT publications I’m appreciative to the JD Doyle Archives, the Gulf Coast Archive and Museum Digital Archive, and the University of Houston Digital Library. For providing information on the preservational status of *Love’s Muscle; Troy*, I thank Shawn Wilson of the Kinsey Institute Library. I’m extremely grateful to Desirae Embree who has been so generous in sharing materials, going above and beyond to expedite access to research resources. I thank Tim of timinvermont.com who provided access to archival materials from his personal collection. Additionally, I thank the archivists and librarians of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library and the Newport Beach Public Library.

Notes

1. David F. Friedman was a prominent postwar exploitation film showman-producer-distributor who ran the distribution companies Entertainment Ventures and later TVX. In the mid-1960s, he cofounded the legendary Pussycat Theater chain based in Los Angeles, and in the 1970s, he served as president of the Adult Film Association of America for several terms. Louis K. Sher founded the well-known Ohio-based chain Art Theater Guild in the mid-1950s, and was also involved in the production and distribution of prominent adult films through his companies, most notably Sherpix.
2. The term “gay” was employed previously as an advertising term in other locales, for example, George Chauncey has determined that as early as the 1930s a speakeasy in New York was employing a slogan “in the Gay 20’s” (1994, 19) that solicited gay patronage while also suggesting the speakeasy’s physical location on East Twenty-eight Street.
3. Film and television from the time grappled with these ideas of coming out to one’s father or son, see for example, *The Experiment* (1973) and *That Certain Summer* (1972), respectively.
4. For example, while their form suggested appreciation for male athleticism and bodybuilding, midcentury physique magazines have been recognized for their use value which nearly always took precedence over their form. Magazines like *MANual*, *Trim*, and *Grecian Guild Pictorial* were perceived by antigay forces as embodying the broad federal definition of obscenity, matter “intended or adapted for any indecent or immoral use” (quoted in *MANual Enterprises, Inc. v. Day* 1962, 508). Contrastingly, physique publications were used by gay men “as means of sexual self-identification and served as an entryway into the gay community” (Johnson 2010, 867).
5. Here “ART”—emphasized in all capital letters—was a euphemism for nudity or sexual content. Thomas Waugh discusses appeals to high art in the context of physique photography as the “artistic alibi” (1996, 223–224), and David Church refers to the deployment of the term “art” in framing heterosexual-oriented sexploitation films and magazines as one of sex media producers’ “defensively euphemistic strategies” (2014, III).
6. Of these five Svigelj-directed shorts, *Wizzard of Azz* is the only to have gained a contemporary rerelease (*Bob Mizer: Films of Mythos 1955-1971* 2014), and it follows a youth’s surreal daydream in which a bottomless magician hypnotizes the youth to do his every whim. *Rock-Hard Marble Boy* was a retelling of *Pygmalion* with the Galatea figure embodied as a young man. *Afternoon of a Faun*, Svigelj’s first breakout short, was likely a partial adaptation of Vaslav Nijinsky’s 1912 ballet *L’Après Midi d’un Faune* (Freibert 2020, 37). The contents of the other two Svigelj shorts on the program are unknown. For a biographical excavation of Dimitri Alexis Svigelj as an overlooked gay filmmaker and artist see my article “Spartacus: Architect, Artist, Filmmaker” (Freibert 2020).
7. Park Theater. 1969. “Have a Cool Autumn ’69, at the Park!” Park Theatre Program. ONE Subject Files Collection (Coll2012.001). Folder: Park Theatre. ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, CA.

8. Such features include erotic content involving semi-nude men, personals ads, reviews of gay films and books, community news, and information on gay travel, among others.
9. The planned “Nude Dude Ranch” appears to refer to either a ranch-themed club with nude male dancers or a venue for nudist retreats in a ranch setting.
10. “Coin-O-Matic Nut Company.” 1978. Assumed Names File 380017; “Happy Trails.” 1982. Assumed Names File 521000; “The Hole.” 1982. Assumed Names File 517151. Harris County Clerk, Houston, TX.
11. “Coin-O-Matic.” 1983. Texas SOS File Number 0064826700. Texas Secretary of State, Austin, TX.

References

- Acland, Charles R., and Haidee Wasson, eds. 2011. *Useful Cinema*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Allen, M. 1969. “Assumed Names, A&A Book Shop.” *Daily Court Review* [Houston, TX], November 7, 3.
- Anthony, Joseph P. 1969. *Love’s Muscle; Troy*. 16mm. Call no. XX9132022. Kinsey Institute Library, IU, Bloomington, IN. <https://iucat.iu.edu/kinsey/9132022>.
- Bob Mizer: Films of Mythos 1955–1971*. 2014. DVD. Americana Collection 4. Bob Mizer Foundation Film Archive.
- Caldwell, John Thornton. 2009. “Cultures of Production: Studying Industry’s Deep Texts, Reflexive Rituals, and Managed Self-Disclosures.” In *Media Industries: History, Theory, and Method*, edited by Jennifer Holt and Alisa Perren, 199–212. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Capino, José B. 2007. “Seizing Moving Image Pornography.” *Cinema Journal* 46 (4): 121–26.
- Chauncey, George. 1994. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940*. New York: Basic Books.
- Church, David. 2014. “Between Fantasy and Reality: Sexploitation, Fan Magazines, and William Rotsler’s ‘Adults-Only’ Career.” *Film History* 26 (3): 106–43.
- Crawford Jr., Phillip. 2015. *The Mafia and the Gays*. Scotts Valley: CreateSpace.
- Darbonne, Sheri Cohen. 1990. “Mary’s Celebrates 20th Anniversary (...Naturally).” *Montrose Voice*, May 18, 1.
- D’Emilio, John. 1983. “Capitalism and Gay Identity.” In *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, edited by Ann Barr Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson, 100–113. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Dreyer, Thorne, and Al Reinert. 1973. “Montrose Lives!” *Texas Monthly*, April 1973, 56–63, 77–78, 82–83.
- Duberman, Martin. 1994. *Stonewall*. New York: Plume.
- Embree, Desirae. 2019. “Archive Trouble: Searching for Lesbian Adult Media.” *Feminist Media Histories* 5 (2): 240–54.
- Escoffier, Jeffrey. 2009. *Bigger than Life: The History of Gay Porn Cinema from Beefcake to Hardcore*. Philadelphia: Running Press.
- Freibert, Finley. 2020. “Spartacus: Architect, Artist, Filmmaker.” *Physique Pictorial: Official Quarterly of the Bob Mizer Foundation*, no. 52 (Spring): 34–39.

- Gorfinkel, Elena. 2018. "Microhistories and Materiality in Adult Film History, or the Case of Erotic Salad." *JCMS: Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* 58 (1): 147–52.
- Green, Ken, ed. 1968. "Anthony Studios Male Nude Pix Bonanza." *Gay West*, no. 1.
- Griffin, F. Hollis. 2017. *Feeling Normal: Sexuality and Media Criticism in the Digital Age*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hilderbrand, Lucas. 2013. "A Suitcase Full of Vaseline, or Travels in the 1970s Gay World." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 22 (3): 373–402.
- . 2016. "Historical Fantasies: 1970s Gay Male Pornography in the Archives." In *Porno Chic and the Sex Wars: American Sexual Representation in the 1970s*, edited by Carolyn Bronstein and Whitney Strub, 327–48. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Janis, Jan. 1974. "Cover Story." *Entertainment West*, no. III, 7–9.
- Johnson, David K. 2010. "Physique Pioneers: The Politics of 1960s Gay Consumer Culture." *Journal of Social History* 43 (4): 867–92.
- . 2019. *Buying Gay: How Physique Entrepreneurs Sparked a Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lockhart, William B. 1970. *The Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography*. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- Mader, Vint. 1970. "L. B. Bookstore Owner, 3 Aides to Face Smut Trial Nov. 27." *Independent Press-Telegram* (Long Beach, CA), November 7, 1970, A3.
- MANual Enterprises, Inc. v. Day*. 1962. 370 U.S. 478.
- May, Ida Catherine. Contract with Tommie Lee Musslewhite and David C. Musslewhite. 1961. "Contract Records: Vol 1390 Page 182," November 3, 1961. Real Property Department, Harris County Clerk, Houston, TX.
- McClurg, Henry. 2009. "So Long from the House That Fanny Built." *Montrose GEM*, November 9, 2009, 4.
- Meeker, Martin. 2006. *Contacts Desired: Gay and Lesbian Communications and Community, 1940s-1970s*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Miller-Young, Mireille. 2014. *A Taste for Brown Sugar: Black Women in Pornography*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Mini, Darshana Sreedhar. 2019. "The Rise of Soft Porn in Malayalam Cinema and the Precarious Stardom of Shakeela." *Feminist Media Histories* 5 (2): 49–82.
- Nesmith, Jeff. 1972. "'Porno Kingpin' Title Irks Thevis." *Atlanta Constitution*, May, 15A.
- Polk's Long Beach City Directory*. 1969. Monterey Park, CA: R.L. Polk & Co. Publishers.
- Powell, Ryan. 2019. *Coming Together: The Cinematic Elaboration of Gay Male Life, 1945–1979*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Priam, Peter. 1965. "A New Magazine for Homosexuals: Gayboy." *Manorama*, no. 24 (July): 14.
- Rizzo, Mary. 2020. "An Obscure Form of Protest: Politicized Pleasure, Gay Liberation and Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical." *American Studies* 59, no. 1: 5–26.

- Sampson, John J. 1971. *Technical Report of The Commission on Obscenity and Pornography Volume III: The Marketplace: The Industry*. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- . Letter to Joe Anthony. 1969a. “RE: Commission on Obscenity and Pornography,” July 25, 1969. Commission on Obscenity and Pornography (7B11-13). Box 19, Folder 2: Joe Anthony. Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, TX.
- . Letter to Joe Anthony. 1969b, August 15, 1969. Commission on Obscenity and Pornography (7B11-13). Box 19, Folder 2: Joe Anthony. Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, TX.
- Sears, James T. 2001. *Rebels, Rubyfruit, and Rhinestones: Queering Space in the Stonewall South*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Strub, Whitney. 2012. “Mondo Rocco: Mapping Gay Los Angeles Sexual Geography in the Late-1960s Films of Pat Rocco.” *Radical History Review*, no. 113 (Spring): 13–34.
- United States v. Thevis*. 1979. 84 F.R.D. 57. (N.D. Ga. 1979).
- Waugh, Thomas. 1996. *Hard to Imagine: Gay Male Eroticism in Photography and Film from Their Beginnings to Stonewall*. New York: Columbia University Press.