

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 12, 2023

The Autry Museum of the American West Presents *That Damn Horse: The Stories of Gay Rodeo, a Performance that Brings Oral Histories to Life*

That Damn Horse includes over 60 interviews from the Gay Rodeo Oral History Project that represent the diversity of the International Gay Rodeo Association.

(October 12, 2023 - Los Angeles, CA)—*That Damn Horse: The Stories of Gay Rodeo* makes its California premiere on November 2, at the Autry Museum of the American West. This live performance shares the histories of the LGBTQ+ community in the sport of rodeo from the 1970s to the present.

The reading is accompanied by three additional components including an archives workshop, a tour of the *Imagined Wests* exhibition and a discussion about the experiences and roles of the panelists in capturing the histories embodied in the Gay Rodeo Oral History Project.



Blake Little, "Los Angeles Cowboys, Hollywood, California," 1990. Gift of Blake Little. Autry Museum; 2021.32.3

Queer histories are underrepresented in most accounts of the American West. *That Damn Horse*, a verbatim play based on interviews archived in the Gay Rodeo Oral History Project, aims to share more LGBTQ+ voices with audiences in the West and beyond.

Rebecca Scofield, the creator of the project says, “This community fought hard to defend their right to exist in the face of political hostility, the AIDS epidemic and historical erasure. Their stories provide invaluable insight into how groups of people can thrive across decades of change.”

That Damn Horse weaves together stories of survival, joy and persistence across racial, gender and sexual identities. In addition to leading the oral history project and the play, Scofield is the coauthor, with fellow historian Elyssa Ford, of the forthcoming [*Slapping Leather: Queer Cowfolx at the Gay Rodeo*](#), a new history of the institution.

The Autry Museum is the leading repository of gay rodeo archives and museum collections, building on the landmark donation of the International Gay Rodeo Association Institutional Archives in 2010.

The Autry’s Gay Rodeo Archive comprises the institutional archives of the International Gay Rodeo Association (IGRA) and the Golden State Gay Rodeo Association (GSGRA), as well as the Gay Rodeo Oral History Project and prints from the exhibition *Blake Little: Photographs from the Gay Rodeo*. The collection also includes donations of clothing and prize buckles from individual participants.

Some of these archives are featured in the Autry’s new long-term pop culture gallery *Imagined Wests*. This reframing of the American West includes over 250 objects from the museum’s permanent collection, juxtaposing diverse mediums such as film posters, clothing, art, firearms and archives. The exhibition is curated by Josh Garrett-Davis, the Autry’s Gamble Curator of Western History, Popular Culture and Firearms.

“We are so pleased to highlight the IGRA’s nearly 50 years of history in *Imagined Wests* and place it near the center of how we imagine and reimagine the West,” says Garrett-Davis. “*That Damn Horse* enlivens this history in a different way, with professional actors giving voice to the gay rodeo’s participants with an immediacy and humanity that only live performance can convey.”

After the performance, Roger Bergmann, former president and current archivist of the IGRA, will join in conversation with scholar Rebecca Scofield and Voices of Gay Rodeo Oral History Project team member Court Fund.

For more information, please visit TheAutry.org/ThatDamnHorse.

IN GRATITUDE:



That Damn Horse is part of the "Sharing Stories of the Gay Rodeo" program, supported in part by funding provided by the State of California, administered by the California State Library, and California Humanities, a non-profit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Visit www.calhum.org.



Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of California Humanities or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

About the Autry Museum of the American West

The Autry is a museum dedicated to exploring and sharing the stories, experiences and perceptions of the diverse peoples of the American West, connecting the past to the present to inspire our shared future. The museum presents a wide range of exhibitions and public programs—including lectures, film, theatre, festivals, family events and music—and performs scholarship, research and educational outreach. The Autry's collection of more than 600,000 pieces of art and cultural objects includes one of the largest and most significant of Native American materials in the United States. For more information, please visit TheAutry.org.

The Autry Museum of American West acknowledges the [Gabrielino/Tongva](#) peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (the Los Angeles basin and So. Channel Islands). We recognize that the Autry Museum and its campuses are located on the traditional lands of Gabrielino/Tongva peoples and we pay our respects to the Honuukvetam (Ancestors), 'Ahihirom (Elders) and 'Eyoohiinkem (our relatives/relations) past, present and emerging.

Autry Museum of the American West | Griffith Park

**AUTRY
MUSEUM**
OF THE AMERICAN WEST

4700 Western Heritage Way

Los Angeles, CA 90027-1462

[Website](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [TikTok](#)

Museum and Store Hours

Tuesday–Friday 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Saturday–Sunday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Press Contact:

Sarah Crispi

scrispi@theautry.com