

SF WEEKLY

Off Shore: Cultural Hub for Queer, Drag, Gay, and Sex Culture

by Laura Jaye Cramer

June 13, 2014



Southern Exposure's summer series *Off Shore*, is in its third week, giving various artists a chance to show audiences how waterways and bays can be used as an artistic medium. So far the gallery has explored forgotten waterways within the city examined the historical Mission Creek neighborhood. Next, *Off Shore* moves into the water with a floating installation performance by iconic local queer businesses such as the Lusty Lady and Esta Noche -- put together by artist Constance Hockaday.

SF Weekly caught up with Hockaday to find out what to expect in her piece, *All These Darlings and Now Us*:

It looks like you grew up next to the water. Can you tell us a little about your background?:

I grew up in South Texas on the Gulf of Mexico, five mile from where the Rio Grande hits the gulf. My father is a marine biologist and my mother is from South America, from Chile. When I got to be around college age I was going to UT Austin and I got pretty depressed, found out I was gay, dropped out and moved [back] to that really small town in the south of Texas where I met this group of people called The Floating Neutrinos. [They are] a people who have been living in and building rafts for the past 40 years and have this whole psychological and spiritual movement around liberating themselves from oppressive social programming. So anyway, I signed on to be a Neutrino, I started learning how to build boats, and learning about the water, and eventually after much travel ended up my schooling at Prescott College in Prescott Arizona.

The venue is describes as a floating performance space. Is it important to your project that the show is intentionally not on land because of your background with The Neutrinos?:

Well, [with The Neutrinos] I learned that there are different laws on the water than there are on the land - especially with ownership about space. So, on the water you can only own the space that you occupy, as long as you aren't in a shipping channel or whatnot. The water opens up possibilities for spaces. You can't own moving water.

S O U T H E R N E X P O S U R E

So *The Neutrinos*, and then a lot of other reading that I've done inspired by 19th-century floating brothels on the east and west coast, have lead me to make projects about the kinds of space -- both internal and external -- that are available when the move their efforts toward the water.

Southern Exposure describes *Off Shore* as the bringing of, "historical waterways to light, [and to] celebrate a space for outsider communities and imagine the possibilities of water as an expanded territory." In your case, you take us to Bay View Boat Club. How did you choose that location?:

The boat club sort of is sort of a beautiful cultural moment. There's so much San Francisco history that's contained in that building. I find it to be a really beautiful place and I find it to share a lot of my values around having access to the water in an intimate and unmediated way.

What connection do you have to these iconic queer businesses?:

I picked the performers because they all represent -- well, the people that are dancing from *The Lusty Lady* and the people from *Daddy's Plastik*, and a couple of the other drag queens and performers all represent -- I'm just tipping my hat to all of these businesses that have been shut down in the last year that have been cultural hubs for queer, drag, gay, and sex culture.