

## Photographing GALA's t-shirt collection

GALA has a wonderful t-shirt collection, some collected by GALA, and others attached to personal and organisational collections. T-shirts were particularly prevalent in the hey-day of LGBTI activism of the 1990s, and reflect mile-stones in LGBTI history in South Africa, such as the fight for the retention of the Equality Clause in South Africa's constitution in the mid-1990s, the marriage campaign of the mid-2000s, and the fight against HIV/AIDS. They also remind us of remind of the early pride marches and early gay and lesbian organisations such as OLGA, LAGO, GLOW and ABIGALE. A large portion of the t-shirts form part of activist Zackie Achmat's collection and include a range of t-shirts from the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC).

GALA was fortunate enough to be contacted by Eric Gonzaba, a graduate student in the Department of History and Art History at George Mason University in Virginia, USA, who offered to photograph GALA's t-shirt collection and feature them on his website. Gonzaba started the project 'Wearing Gay History', a public history website documenting queer t-shirts, beginning with shirts found in collections in the USA, and now expanding to include t-shirts from around the world. Gonzaba got funding to come to GALA in May 2016 to photograph the collection, a great resource for GALA, featuring on the Wearing Gay History website.

<http://wearinggayhistory.com/collections/show/28>



Eric Gonzaba photographing GALA's t-shirts, 9 May 2016

From Wearing Gay History:

“Wearing Gay History began as a graduate student project at George Mason University in the Fall of 2014. Using Omeka, an open source, archival web-publishing platform created at the Roy Rosenzweig Centre for History and New Media, doctoral student Eric Gonzaba digitized the entire t-shirt collection of the Chris Gonzalez Library and Archives in Indiana in an effort to bring attention to LGBT history of “fly over” country. In January 2015, Wearing Gay History began expanding to include other textile collections across the country. The site currently includes shirts from most of the 50 states and over 25 different countries.

Whether to protest, satirize, or show pride, the LGBT community’s often ignored history can be seen vividly in the clothing we often throw out.”

[www.wearinggayhistory.com](http://www.wearinggayhistory.com)

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The below photographs from GALA’s archive collections show some of the t-shirts we have as they were worn.



Members of GLOW wearing Johannesburg Pride 1991 t-shirts at the first Cape Town Pride march in 1993. GALA has several t-shirts from the 1991 and 1992 Joburg pride marches.

Photograph: Teresa Raizenberg Collection



Simon Nkoli and Ivan Toms – Toms on the right is wearing a LAGO (Lesbians & Gays Against Oppression) t-shirt  
T-shirt: Sheila Lapinsky Collection, Photograph: Simon Nkoli Collection



Simon Nkoli wearing his GLOW (Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand) t-shirt while visiting Stonewall in New York City.  
T-shirt: Sheila Lapinsky Collection, Photograph: Simon Nkoli Collection



GALA staff and friends wearing t-shirts at the Constitutional Court in support of Rev. Ecclesia de Lange, October 2015  
Photograph and t-shirt from the *Journeys of Faith* exhibition collection at GALA.



Nelson Mandela and Zackie Achmat wearing Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) t-shirts, Khayelitsha, 2002. GALA has numerous TAC t-shirts in the Zackie Achmat Collection.  
Photograph: ©Eric Miller/MSF (not from GALA)



Members of ABIGALE (Association of Bisexuals, Gays and Lesbians) wearing their organisation's t-shirts: 'Read my lips', c. 1995.

ABIGALE t-shirts (x2): from the Zackie Achmat Collection.

Photograph: Teresa Raizenberg Collection



Cape Town's first pride march 1993 (see t-shirt on the left)

T-shirt: from the Zackie Achmat Collection, Photograph: Teresa Raizenberg Collection



Protestors at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, 2001. The man in the back can be seen wearing a conference t-shirt: "Homophobia: The Racism Within".

T-shirt: Zackie Achmat Collection, Photograph: ©Zanele Muholi.

Also included in some personal collections at GALA, such as those of Gerald Kraak and Zackie Achmat, are t-shirts relating to wider political struggles, representing organisations such as NUSAS, COSATU and the ANC.

Article written by Linda Chernis, GALA Archivist – May, 2016

## PLEA FROM THE ARCHIVES! DONATE YOUR T-SHIRTS!

If anyone has any LGBTI t-shirts to donate to GALA we would be extremely grateful. We don't mind how old, stained or faded they are. Some t-shirts we are looking for include:

- Any Pride t-shirts (excl. 1991 and 1992 Joburg, and 1993 Cape Town)
- Pink Loerie
- 1in9 Campaign
- Any organisational t-shirts from LGBTI groups in Southern Africa, including university groups
- GLOW BAR (see below photograph).



(Photograph from the Julia Nicol Collection)

Please contact the GALA archivist Linda Chernis: [linda.chernis@wits.ac.za](mailto:linda.chernis@wits.ac.za).