

Los Angeles Department of City Planning

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2015-4253-HCM
ENV-2015-4254-CE

HEARING DATE: December 3, 2015
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA
90012

Location: 6649 Santa Monica Blvd. and 6648-6650
Lexington Avenue
Council District: 4
Community Plan Area: Hollywood
Area Planning Commission: Central
Neighborhood Council: Central Hollywood
Legal Description: TR 1362 Lot FR 4 Block None
and Tract PM 2708 Lot A Block None

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the
CIRCUS DISCO

REQUEST: Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

OWNER: Tinseltown Studios, LLC c/o Eugene LaPietra
6655 Santa Monica Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90038

APPLICANT: Hollywood Heritage
2100 N. Highland Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90068

RECOMMENDATION **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Take the property under consideration** as a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.10 because the application and accompanying photo documentation suggest the submittal warrants further investigation.
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE
Director of Planning

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager
Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect
Office of Historic Resources

[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]

Shannon Ryan, City Planning Associate
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: Historic-Cultural Monument Application

SUMMARY

Circus Disco, located in Hollywood, was established in 1974 as a nightclub catering to the Latino LGBT community. One of the earliest nightclubs developed for Latino gay men, Circus Disco was founded in reaction to discrimination gay men of color received at West Hollywood clubs with a predominately white clientele. The 26,937 square-foot building originally served as a warehouse as part of an industrial site.

Circus Disco sits between Lexington Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard east of Las Palmas Avenue. It can be accessed from Lexington Avenue or from a driveway/parking area off of Santa Monica Boulevard to the south. The masonry building is rectangular in plan, with a flat roof and a scored stucco exterior. The primary entrance faces south and is distinguished by a large clown face that is attached to an overhanging canopy entrance. Guests walk through the open mouth of the clown to enter into the club. The canopy is made up of tiered circles. The front of the club is further called out by a fiberglass tiger that appears to be leaping off of the top of the entrance. The east elevation contains four sets of metal casement windows, a pair of port-hole doors, and a patio with a set of arches. The extant entrance was likely added in the 1980s or 1990s during a remodel. The interior is primarily one large open room.

LGBT life in Los Angeles in the 1970s was largely underground and functioned along the lines of a subculture. This was primarily due to social and cultural intolerance as well as laws which either directly or indirectly discriminated against gays and lesbians. As a result of persecution and harassment, especially from law enforcement, most in the LGBT community could only socialize publicly in businesses that were openly supportive. In turn, these businesses also became centers for political activism and the fight for civil rights. Circus Disco is one of a few remaining LGBT serving businesses of this type from the era.

In continuous operation since 1974, Circus Disco first served as a disco for gay men of color. It was also used for social justice causes and political fundraising. On May 20, 1979 actors Jane Fonda and Jon Voight hosted a picnic at the club to campaign for Economic Democracy which helped El Monte Citizens for Fair Housing with their rent-relief campaign. In 1983, a fundraiser was thrown at the club for City Councilwoman Peggy Stevenson who was a champion for gay and lesbian civil rights in a time when supporting the issue was politically unpopular. That same year, the Project Just Business, a lesbian and gay coalition, invited César Chávez to speak on the topic of corporate boycotts and fundraising tactics. The owners of Circus Disco prepared a buffet dinner for 100 and César Chávez was given a standing ovation.

CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon) building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

FINDINGS

Based on the facts set forth in the summary and application, the Commission determines that the application is complete and that the property may be significant enough to warrant further investigation as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument.



HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

1. PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

Proposed Monument Name: Circus Disco		Current name of property	
Other Associated Names:			
Street Address: 6655 Santa Monica Blvd.		Zip: 90038	Council District:
Range of Addresses on Property: 6648-50 Lexington Ave., 6650 Lexington		Community Name: Hollywood/Los Angeles	
Assessor Parcel Number: 5532-022-025	Tract: P M 2708	Block:	Lot: A
Identification cont'd: Property Boundary Description: P M 50-18 Lot A			
Proposed Monument Property Type:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Building	<input type="radio"/> Structure	<input type="radio"/> Object
	<input type="radio"/> Site/Open Space	<input type="radio"/> Natural Feature	
Describe any additional resources located on the property to be included in the nomination, here:			

2. CONSTRUCTION HISTORY & CURRENT STATUS

Year built: 1974	Factual <input type="radio"/> Estimated <input checked="" type="radio"/>	Threatened? Private Development
Architect/Designer:	Contractor:	
Original Use: Union Ice Company	Present Use: Nightclub	
Is the Proposed Monument on its Original Site?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No (explain in section 7) <input type="radio"/> Unknown (explain in section 7)

3. STYLE & MATERIALS

Architectural Style: Select from menu or type style directly into box		Stories: 2	Plan Shape:
FEATURE	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	
CONSTRUCTION	Type: Brick	Type: Select	
CLADDING	Material: Select	Material: Select	
ROOF	Type: Flat	Type: Select	
	Material: Rolled asphalt	Material: Select	
WINDOWS	Type: Fixed	Type:	
	Material: Steel	Material: Select	
ENTRY	Style: Recessed	Style:	
DOOR	Type: Select	Type: Select	



HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

4. ALTERATION HISTORY

List date and write a brief description of any major alterations or additions. This section may also be completed on a separate document. Include copies of permits in the nomination packet. Make sure to list any major alterations for which there are no permits, as well.	
1923	Building Permits, Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Numbers LA56577, 60762
1976	Certificate of Occupancy, Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Number LA51067
1986	Demolition/Alteration Permit, Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety
1986	Change of Occupancy from warehouse to restaurant, Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety
1986	Certificate of Occupancy, Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, LA81822

5. EXISTING HISTORIC RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION (if known)

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places	
Listed in the California Register of Historical Resources	
Formally determined eligible for the National and/or California Registers	
Located in an Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)	Contributing feature Non-contributing feature
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Determined eligible for national, state, or local landmark status by an historic resources survey(s)	Survey Name(s): SurveyLA LGBT Historic Context Statement 2014
Other historical or cultural resource designations:	

6. APPLICABLE HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT CRITERIA

The proposed monument exemplifies the following Cultural Heritage Ordinance Criteria (Section 22.171.7):	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reflects the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history
<input type="checkbox"/>	Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for study of a period, style, or method of construction
<input type="checkbox"/>	A notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age



HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

7. WRITTEN STATEMENTS

This section allows you to discuss at length the significance of the proposed monument and why it should be designated an Historic-Cultural Monument. Type your response on separate documents and attach them to this form.

A. Proposed Monument Description - Describe the proposed monument's physical characteristics and relationship to its surrounding environment. Expand on sections 2 and 3 with a more detailed description of the site. Expand on section 4 and discuss the construction/alteration history in detail if that is necessary to explain the proposed monument's current form. Identify and describe any character-defining elements, structures, interior spaces, or landscape features.

B. Statement of Significance - Address the proposed monument's historic, cultural, and/or architectural significance by discussing how it satisfies the HCM criteria you selected in Section 6. You must support your argument with substantial evidence and analysis. The Statement of Significance is your main argument for designation so it is important to substantiate any claims you make with supporting documentation and research.

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

Applicant

Name: Richard Adkins		Company: Hollywood Heritage	
Street Address: 2100 N. Highland Ave.		City: Los Angeles	State: CA
Zip: 90068	Phone Number: 323-874-4005	Email:	

Property Owner

Is the owner in support of the nomination? Yes No Unknown

Name: Mark Janda		Company: AvalonBay Communities	
Street Address: 2050 Main St. #1200		City: Irvine	State: CA
Zip: 92614	Phone Number: 949-955-6200	Email:	

Nomination Preparer/Applicant's Representative

Name: Richard Adkins		Company: Hollywood Heritage	
Street Address: 2100 N. Highland Ave.		City: Los Angeles	State: CA
Zip: 90068	Phone Number: 323-874-4005	Email:	

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
 Office of Historic Resources/Cultural Heritage Commission
**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
 NOMINATION FORM**



9. SUBMITTAL

When you have completed preparing your nomination, compile all materials in the order specified below. Although the entire packet must not exceed 100 pages, you may send additional material on a CD or flash drive.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nomination Form | 5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Copies of Primary/Secondary Documentation |
| 2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written Statements A and B | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of Building Permits for Major Alterations (Include first construction permits) |
| 3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bibliography | 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional, Contemporary Photos |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Two Primary Photos of Exterior/Main Facade (8x10, the main photo of the proposed monument. Also email a digital copy of the main photo to: planning.ohr@lacity.org) | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historical Photos |
| | 9. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zimas Parcel Report for all Nominated Parcels (Including map) |

10. RELEASE

Please read each statement and check the corresponding boxes to indicate that you agree with the statement, then sign below in the provided space. Either the applicant or preparer may sign.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all documents submitted will become public records under the California Public Records Act, and understand that the documents will be made available upon request to members of the public for inspection and copying.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all photographs and images submitted as part of this application will become the property of the City of Los Angeles, and understand that permission is granted for use of the photographs and images by the City without any expectation of compensation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that I have the right to submit or have obtained the appropriate permission to submit all information contained in this application.

Name: RICHARD ADKINS Date: 11/17/15 Signature: Richard Adkins

Mail your Historic-Cultural Monument Submittal to the Office of Historic Resources.

Office of Historic Resources
 Department of City Planning
 200 N. Spring Street, Room 620
 Los Angeles, CA 90012
 Phone: 213-978-1200
 Website: preservation.lacity.org



City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning

11/23/2015

PARCEL PROFILE REPORT

PROPERTY ADDRESSES

6649 W SANTA MONICA BLVD

ZIP CODES

90038

RECENT ACTIVITY

Hollywood Signage SUD

CHC-2015-4253-HCM

ENV-2015-4254-CE

CASE NUMBERS

CPC-2014-669-CPU

CPC-2007-5866-SN

CPC-2006-9797-MPR-CUB

CPC-2005-6082-CPU

CPC-2002-4173-SUD

CPC-1997-43-CPU

CPC-1986-831-GPC

CPC-1984-1-HD

ORD-183451

ORD-182960

ORD-182173-SA17:3

ORD-176172

ORD-164704

ORD-161116-SA19

DIR-2008-2516-SPP

ZA-1993-989-RV

ZA-1990-957-CUB-CUZ

ZA-1988-1458-CUB-PAB

ZA-1987-243-CUB-CUX

BZA-4007

BZA-3648

VTT-67577

ENV-2014-670-SE

ENV-2008-2736-CE

ENV-2008-2517-CE

ENV-2006-9653-EIR

ENV-2005-2158-EIR

ENV-2003-1377-MND

ENV-2001-3933-CE

88-906-CUB

AFF-65282

AFF-65281

AF-94-283704-MB

Address/Legal Information

PIN Number	144B185 656
Lot/Parcel Area (Calculated)	14,434.5 (sq ft)
Thomas Brothers Grid	PAGE 593 - GRID E5
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5532022024
Tract	TR 1362
Map Reference	M B 18-101
Block	None
Lot	FR 4
Arb (Lot Cut Reference)	None
Map Sheet	144B185

Jurisdictional Information

Community Plan Area	Hollywood
Area Planning Commission	Central
Neighborhood Council	Central Hollywood
Council District	CD 4 - David Ryu
Census Tract #	1919.01
LADBS District Office	Los Angeles Metro

Planning and Zoning Information

Special Notes	None
Zoning	[T][Q]C2-2D-SN
Zoning Information (ZI)	ZI-2330 Hollywood
	ZI-2433 Revised Hollywood Injunction
	ZI-2374 LOS ANGELES STATE ENTERPRISE ZONE
General Plan Land Use	General Commercial
General Plan Footnote(s)	Yes
Hillside Area (Zoning Code)	No
Baseline Hillside Ordinance	No
Baseline Mansionization Ordinance	No
Specific Plan Area	None
Special Land Use / Zoning	None
Design Review Board	No
Historic Preservation Review	No
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone	None
Other Historic Designations	None
Other Historic Survey Information	None
Mills Act Contract	None
POD - Pedestrian Oriented Districts	None
CDO - Community Design Overlay	None
NSO - Neighborhood Stabilization Overlay	No
Sign District	Hollywood
Streetscape	No
Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area	None
Ellis Act Property	No
CRA - Community Redevelopment Agency	None
Central City Parking	No
Downtown Parking	No

This report is subject to the terms and conditions as set forth on the website. For more details, please refer to the terms and conditions at zimas.lacity.org
 (*) - APN Area is provided "as is" from the Los Angeles County's Public Works, Flood Control, Benefit Assessment.

Building Line	None
500 Ft School Zone	No
500 Ft Park Zone	No
Assessor Information	
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5532022024
Ownership (Assessor)	
Owner1	TINSELTOWN STUDIOS LLC C/O C/O EUGENE LAPIETRA
Address	6655 SANTA MONICA BLVD LOS ANGELES CA 90038
Ownership (City Clerk)	
Owner	LA PIETRA, EUGENE J. (TR) EUGENE J. LA PIETRA TRUST 10-10-96 LA PIETRA, EUGENE J. (TR) EUGENE J. LA PIETRA TRUST 10-10-96
Address	6655 SANTA MONICA BLVD LOS ANGELES CA 90038 6655 SANTA MONICA BLVD. LOS ANGELES CA 90038
APN Area (Co. Public Works)*	1.950 (ac)
Use Code	2100 - Restaurant Lounge Tavern
Assessed Land Val.	\$3,907,016
Assessed Improvement Val.	\$1,720,640
Last Owner Change	12/13/12
Last Sale Amount	\$9
Tax Rate Area	67
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk)	693004
	54
	46
	391641
	2065619-20
	1523744
	1431002
	1382176
Building 1	
Year Built	1923
Building Class	CX
Number of Units	0
Number of Bedrooms	0
Number of Bathrooms	0
Building Square Footage	16,329.0 (sq ft)
Building 2	
Year Built	1966
Building Class	C6
Number of Units	0
Number of Bedrooms	0
Number of Bathrooms	0
Building Square Footage	17,166.0 (sq ft)
Building 3	No data for building 3
Building 4	No data for building 4
Building 5	No data for building 5
Additional Information	
Airport Hazard	None
Coastal Zone	None
Farmland	Area Not Mapped
Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone	No
Fire District No. 1	No

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Flood Zone	None
Watercourse	No
Hazardous Waste / Border Zone Properties	No
Methane Hazard Site	Methane Buffer Zone
High Wind Velocity Areas	No
Special Grading Area (BOE Basic Grid Map A-13372)	No
Oil Wells	None

Seismic Hazards

Active Fault Near-Source Zone

Nearest Fault (Distance in km)	1.65235128
Nearest Fault (Name)	Hollywood Fault
Region	Transverse Ranges and Los Angeles Basin
Fault Type	B
Slip Rate (mm/year)	1.00000000
Slip Geometry	Left Lateral - Reverse - Oblique
Slip Type	Poorly Constrained
Down Dip Width (km)	14.00000000
Rupture Top	0.00000000
Rupture Bottom	13.00000000
Dip Angle (degrees)	70.00000000
Maximum Magnitude	6.40000000

Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone	No
Landslide	No
Liquefaction	No
Preliminary Fault Rupture Study Area	No
Tsunami Inundation Zone	No

Economic Development Areas

Business Improvement District	HOLLYWOOD MEDIA DISTRICT
Promise Zone	Yes
Renewal Community	No
Revitalization Zone	Central City
State Enterprise Zone	LOS ANGELES STATE ENTERPRISE ZONE
Targeted Neighborhood Initiative	None

Public Safety

Police Information

Bureau	West
Division / Station	Hollywood
Reporting District	665

Fire Information

Division	3
Batallion	5
District / Fire Station	27
Red Flag Restricted Parking	No

CASE SUMMARIES

Note: Information for case summaries is retrieved from the Planning Department's Plan Case Tracking System (PCTS) database.

Case Number:	CPC-2014-669-CPU
Required Action(s):	CPU-COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE/GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT
Case Number:	CPC-2007-5866-SN
Required Action(s):	SN-SIGN DISTRICT
Project Descriptions(s):	HOLLYWOOD SIGN SUD AMENDMENT
Case Number:	CPC-2006-9797-MPR-CUB
Required Action(s):	CUB-Conditional Use Beverage-Alcohol MPR-MAJOR PLAN REVIEW (BIG BATCH)
Project Descriptions(s):	GENERAL PLAN FROM LIMITED INDUSTRIAL TO GENERAL COMMERCIAL AND VESTING ZONE CHANGE FROM [Q] M1-1VL-SN TO C2-2D-SN AND CONDITIONAL USE TO PERMIT ON-SITE AND OFF-SITE CONSUMPTION OF FULL LINE ALCOHOL IN CONJUNCTION WITH RESTAURANT AND STORE.
Case Number:	CPC-2005-6082-CPU
Required Action(s):	CPU-COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Project Descriptions(s):	Data Not Available
Case Number:	CPC-2002-4173-SUD
Required Action(s):	SUD-SUPPLEMENTAL USE DISTRICT ("K" DIST., "O" DISTRICT, ETC.)
Project Descriptions(s):	Data Not Available
Case Number:	CPC-1997-43-CPU
Required Action(s):	CPU-COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE FOR HOLLYWOOD WHICH IDENTIFIES AND REDEFINES OUTDATED LAND USE ISSUES AND INCONSISTENT ZONING, REVIEWS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS REVISING AND UPDATING THE PLAN MAP AND TEXT
Case Number:	CPC-1986-831-GPC
Required Action(s):	GPC-GENERAL PLAN/ZONING CONSISTENCY (AB283)
Project Descriptions(s):	HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY PLAN REVISION/GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY PLAN AMENDMENT, ZONE CHANGES AND HEIGHT DISTRICT CHANGES
Case Number:	CPC-1984-1-HD
Required Action(s):	HD-HEIGHT DISTRICT
Project Descriptions(s):	CHANGE OF HEIGHT DISTRICT WITHIN THE "CORE AREA OF L.A."- GENERAL PLAN ZONE CONSISTENCY PROGRAM.
Case Number:	DIR-2008-2516-SPP
Required Action(s):	SPP-SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT PERMIT COMPLIANCE
Project Descriptions(s):	SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT PERMIT COMPLIANCE FOR TWO SUPERGRAPHIC TEMPORARY SPECIAL DISPLAY SIGNS ON BUILDING.
Case Number:	ZA-1993-989-RV
Required Action(s):	RV-REVOCAION
Project Descriptions(s):	ARENA NIGHTCLUB - POSSIBLE REVOCATION PROCEEDINGS
Case Number:	ZA-1990-957-CUB-CUZ
Required Action(s):	CUB-Conditional Use Beverage-Alcohol CUZ-ALL OTHER CONDITIONAL USE CASES
Project Descriptions(s):	Data Not Available
Case Number:	ZA-1988-1458-CUB-PAB
Required Action(s):	PAB-PLAN APPROVAL BOOZE CUB-Conditional Use Beverage-Alcohol
Project Descriptions(s):	Data Not Available
Case Number:	ZA-1987-243-CUB-CUX
Required Action(s):	CUB-Conditional Use Beverage-Alcohol CUX-ADULT ENTERTAINMENTS
Project Descriptions(s):	Data Not Available
Case Number:	VTT-67577
Required Action(s):	Data Not Available
Project Descriptions(s):	VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT (1 MASTER LOT AND 10 AIR SPACE LOTS) FOR A MIXED USE COMMERCIAL AND 787 RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUMS.
Case Number:	ENV-2014-670-SE
Required Action(s):	SE-STATUTORY EXEMPTIONS

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Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE/GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT
Case Number:	ENV-2008-2736-CE
Required Action(s):	CE-CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
Project Descriptions(s):	TO PERMIT THE OPERATION OF A DANCE HALL, LOUNGE, AND FULL SERVICE RESTAURANT IN THE M2-1 ZONE.
Case Number:	ENV-2008-2517-CE
Required Action(s):	CE-CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
Project Descriptions(s):	SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT PERMIT COMPLIANCE FOR TWO SUPERGRAPHIC TEMPORARY SPECIAL DISPLAY SIGNS ON BUILDING.
Case Number:	ENV-2006-9653-EIR
Required Action(s):	EIR-ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
Project Descriptions(s):	VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT (1 MASTER LOT AND 10 AIR SPACE LOTS) FOR A MIXED USE COMMERCIAL AND 787 RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUMS.
Case Number:	ENV-2005-2158-EIR
Required Action(s):	EIR-ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE FOR HOLLYWOOD WHICH IDENTIFIES AND REDEFINES OUTDATED LAND USE ISSUES AND INCONSISTENT ZONING, REVIEWS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS REVISING AND UPDATING THE PLAN MAP AND TEXT
Case Number:	ENV-2003-1377-MND
Required Action(s):	MND-MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION
Project Descriptions(s):	Approval of a proposed Sign Supplemental Use District pursuant to Section 13.11 of the LAMC for the Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area
Case Number:	ENV-2001-3933-CE
Required Action(s):	CE-CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
Project Descriptions(s):	TO PERMIT THE OPERATION OF A DANCE HALL, LOUNGE, AND FULL SERVICE RESTAURANT IN THE M2-1 ZONE.
Case Number:	88-906-CUB
Required Action(s):	CUB-Conditional Use Beverage-Alcohol
Project Descriptions(s):	Data Not Available

DATA NOT AVAILABLE

ORD-183451
 ORD-182960
 ORD-182173-SA17:3
 ORD-176172
 ORD-164704
 ORD-161116-SA19
 BZA-4007
 BZA-3648
 AFF-65282
 AFF-65281
 AF-94-283704-MB

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City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning

11/17/2015 PARCEL PROFILE REPORT

PROPERTY ADDRESSES

6648 W LEXINGTON AVE
6650 W LEXINGTON AVE

ZIP CODES

90038

RECENT ACTIVITY

Hollywood Signage SUD

CASE NUMBERS

CPC-2014-669-CPU
CPC-2007-5866-SN
CPC-2006-9797-MPR-CUB
CPC-2005-6082-CPU
CPC-2002-4173-SUD
CPC-1997-43-CPU
CPC-1986-831-GPC
CPC-1984-1-HD
ORD-183451
ORD-182960
ORD-182173-SA17:3
ORD-176172
ORD-164704
ORD-161116-SA19
ZAI-1979-37-B
ZA-1993-990-RV
ZA-1983-1416-CF
ZA-1982-440-PAB
CUB-1982-440
BZA-3109
BZA-2689
PMV-2308
VTT-67577
ENV-2014-670-SE
ENV-2010-1203-CE
ENV-2006-9653-EIR
ENV-2005-2158-EIR
ENV-2003-1377-MND
ND-83-70-ZV
PKG-5128
AFF-63994
AFF-54617
AFF-54398
AFF-42259
CFG-2000

Address/Legal Information

PIN Number 144B185 468
Lot/Parcel Area (Calculated) 43,912.2 (sq ft)
Thomas Brothers Grid PAGE 593 - GRID E5
Assessor Parcel No. (APN) 5532022025
Tract P M 2708
Map Reference BK 50-18
Block None
Lot A
Arb (Lot Cut Reference) None
Map Sheet 144B185

Jurisdictional Information

Community Plan Area Hollywood
Area Planning Commission Central
Neighborhood Council Central Hollywood
Council District CD 4 - David Ryu
Census Tract # 1919.01
LADBS District Office Los Angeles Metro

Planning and Zoning Information

Special Notes None
Zoning [T][Q]C2-2D-SN
Zoning Information (ZI) ZI-2433 Revised Hollywood Injunction
ZI-2330 Hollywood
ZI-2374 LOS ANGELES STATE ENTERPRISE ZONE
General Plan Land Use General Commercial
General Plan Footnote(s) Yes
Hillside Area (Zoning Code) No
Baseline Hillside Ordinance No
Baseline Mansionization Ordinance No
Specific Plan Area None
Special Land Use / Zoning None
Design Review Board No
Historic Preservation Review No
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone None
Other Historic Designations None
Other Historic Survey Information None
Mills Act Contract None
POD - Pedestrian Oriented Districts None
CDO - Community Design Overlay None
NSO - Neighborhood Stabilization Overlay No
Sign District Hollywood
Streetscape No
Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area None
Ellis Act Property No
CRA - Community Redevelopment Agency None
Central City Parking No
Downtown Parking No

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Building Line	None
500 Ft School Zone	No
500 Ft Park Zone	No
Assessor Information	
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5532022025
Ownership (Assessor)	
Owner1	TINSELTOWN STUDIOS LLC C/O C/O EUGENE LAPIETRA
Address	6655 SANTA MONICA BLVD LOS ANGELES CA 90038
Ownership (City Clerk)	
Owner	LAPIETRA, EUGENE J (TR) EUGENE J. LAPIETRA TRUST, DTD 10-10-1996
Address	6655 SANTA MONICA BLVD. LOS ANGELES CA 90038
APN Area (Co. Public Works)*	1.004 (ac)
Use Code	3100 - Light Manufacturing(Machine Shops/ Printing)
Assessed Land Val.	\$1,410,888
Assessed Improvement Val.	\$836,081
Last Owner Change	12/13/12
Last Sale Amount	\$9
Tax Rate Area	67
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk)	368937
	2065619-20
	2-310,311
	1772437
	1066822
	0-413
Building 1	
Year Built	1974
Building Class	C65B
Number of Units	0
Number of Bedrooms	0
Number of Bathrooms	0
Building Square Footage	23,424.0 (sq ft)
Building 2	No data for building 2
Building 3	No data for building 3
Building 4	No data for building 4
Building 5	No data for building 5
Additional Information	
Airport Hazard	None
Coastal Zone	None
Farmland	Area Not Mapped
Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone	No
Fire District No. 1	No
Flood Zone	None
Watercourse	No
Hazardous Waste / Border Zone Properties	No
Methane Hazard Site	None
High Wind Velocity Areas	No
Special Grading Area (BOE Basic Grid Map A-13372)	No
Oil Wells	None
Seismic Hazards	
Active Fault Near-Source Zone	
Nearest Fault (Distance in km)	1.52585928
Nearest Fault (Name)	Hollywood Fault

This report is subject to the terms and conditions as set forth on the website. For more details, please refer to the terms and conditions at zimas.lacity.org
 (*) - APN Area is provided "as is" from the Los Angeles County's Public Works, Flood Control, Benefit Assessment.

Region	Transverse Ranges and Los Angeles Basin
Fault Type	B
Slip Rate (mm/year)	1.00000000
Slip Geometry	Left Lateral - Reverse - Oblique
Slip Type	Poorly Constrained
Down Dip Width (km)	14.00000000
Rupture Top	0.00000000
Rupture Bottom	13.00000000
Dip Angle (degrees)	70.00000000
Maximum Magnitude	6.40000000
Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone	No
Landslide	No
Liquefaction	No
Preliminary Fault Rupture Study Area	No
Tsunami Inundation Zone	No
Economic Development Areas	
Business Improvement District	HOLLYWOOD MEDIA DISTRICT
Promise Zone	Yes
Renewal Community	No
Revitalization Zone	Central City
State Enterprise Zone	LOS ANGELES STATE ENTERPRISE ZONE
Targeted Neighborhood Initiative	None
Public Safety	
Police Information	
Bureau	West
Division / Station	Hollywood
Reporting District	665
Fire Information	
Division	3
Batallion	5
District / Fire Station	27
Red Flag Restricted Parking	No

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 (*) - APN Area is provided "as is" from the Los Angeles County's Public Works, Flood Control, Benefit Assessment.

CASE SUMMARIES

Note: Information for case summaries is retrieved from the Planning Department's Plan Case Tracking System (PCTS) database.

Case Number:	CPC-2014-669-CPU
Required Action(s):	CPU-COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE/GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT
Case Number:	CPC-2007-5866-SN
Required Action(s):	SN-SIGN DISTRICT
Project Descriptions(s):	HOLLYWOOD SIGN SUD AMENDMENT
Case Number:	CPC-2006-9797-MPR-CUB
Required Action(s):	CUB-Conditional Use Beverage-Alcohol MPR-MAJOR PLAN REVIEW (BIG BATCH)
Project Descriptions(s):	GENERAL PLAN FROM LIMITED INDUSTRIAL TO GENERAL COMMERCIAL AND VESTING ZONE CHANGE FROM [Q] M1-1VL-SN TO C2-2D-SN AND CONDITIONAL USE TO PERMIT ON-SITE AND OFF-SITE CONSUMPTION OF FULL LINE ALCOHOL IN CONJUNCTION WITH RESTAURANT AND STORE.
Case Number:	CPC-2005-6082-CPU
Required Action(s):	CPU-COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Project Descriptions(s):	Data Not Available
Case Number:	CPC-2002-4173-SUD
Required Action(s):	SUD-SUPPLEMENTAL USE DISTRICT ("K" DIST., "O" DISTRICT, ETC.)
Project Descriptions(s):	Data Not Available
Case Number:	CPC-1997-43-CPU
Required Action(s):	CPU-COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE
Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE FOR HOLLYWOOD WHICH IDENTIFIES AND REDEFINES OUTDATED LAND USE ISSUES AND INCONSISTENT ZONING, REVIEWS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS REVISING AND UPDATING THE PLAN MAP AND TEXT
Case Number:	CPC-1986-831-GPC
Required Action(s):	GPC-GENERAL PLAN/ZONING CONSISTENCY (AB283)
Project Descriptions(s):	HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY PLAN REVISION/GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY PLAN AMENDMENT, ZONE CHANGES AND HEIGHT DISTRICT CHANGES
Case Number:	CPC-1984-1-HD
Required Action(s):	HD-HEIGHT DISTRICT
Project Descriptions(s):	CHANGE OF HEIGHT DISTRICT WITHIN THE "CORE AREA OF L.A."- GENERAL PLAN ZONE CONSISTENCY PROGRAM.
Case Number:	ZAI-1979-37-B
Required Action(s):	B-PRIVATE STREET MODIFICATIONS (2ND REQUEST)
Project Descriptions(s):	
Case Number:	ZA-1993-990-RV
Required Action(s):	RV-REVOCATION
Project Descriptions(s):	CIRCUS DISCO - POSSIBLE REVOCATION PROCEEDINGS
Case Number:	ZA-1982-440-PAB
Required Action(s):	PAB-PLAN APPROVAL BOOZE
Project Descriptions(s):	
Case Number:	CUB-1982-440
Required Action(s):	Data Not Available
Project Descriptions(s):	
Case Number:	VTT-67577
Required Action(s):	Data Not Available
Project Descriptions(s):	VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT (1 MASTER LOT AND 10 AIR SPACE LOTS) FOR A MIXED USE COMMERCIAL AND 787 RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUMS.
Case Number:	ENV-2014-670-SE
Required Action(s):	SE-STATUTORY EXEMPTIONS
Project Descriptions(s):	COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE/GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT
Case Number:	ENV-2010-1203-CE
Required Action(s):	CE-CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
Project Descriptions(s):	PLAN APPROVAL FOR A KITCHEN ADDITION TO EXISTING RESTAURANT AND NIGHTCLUB.
Case Number:	ENV-2006-9653-EIR
Required Action(s):	EIR-ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

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Project Descriptions(s): VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT (1 MASTER LOT AND 10 AIR SPACE LOTS) FOR A MIXED USE COMMERCIAL AND 787 RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUMS.

Case Number: ENV-2005-2158-EIR

Required Action(s): EIR-ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Project Descriptions(s): COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE FOR HOLLYWOOD WHICH IDENTIFIES AND REDEFINES OUTDATED LAND USE ISSUES AND INCONSISTENT ZONING, REVIEWS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS REVISING AND UPDATING THE PLAN MAP AND TEXT

Case Number: ENV-2003-1377-MND

Required Action(s): MND-MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Project Descriptions(s): Approval of a proposed Sign Supplemental Use District pursuant to Section 13.11 of the LAMC for the Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area

Case Number: ND-83-70-ZV

Required Action(s): ZV-ZONE VARIANCE

Project Descriptions(s): Data Not Available

DATA NOT AVAILABLE

ORD-183451

ORD-182960

ORD-182173-SA17:3

ORD-176172

ORD-164704

ORD-161116-SA19

ZA-1983-1416-CF

BZA-3109

BZA-2689

PMV-2308

PKG-5128

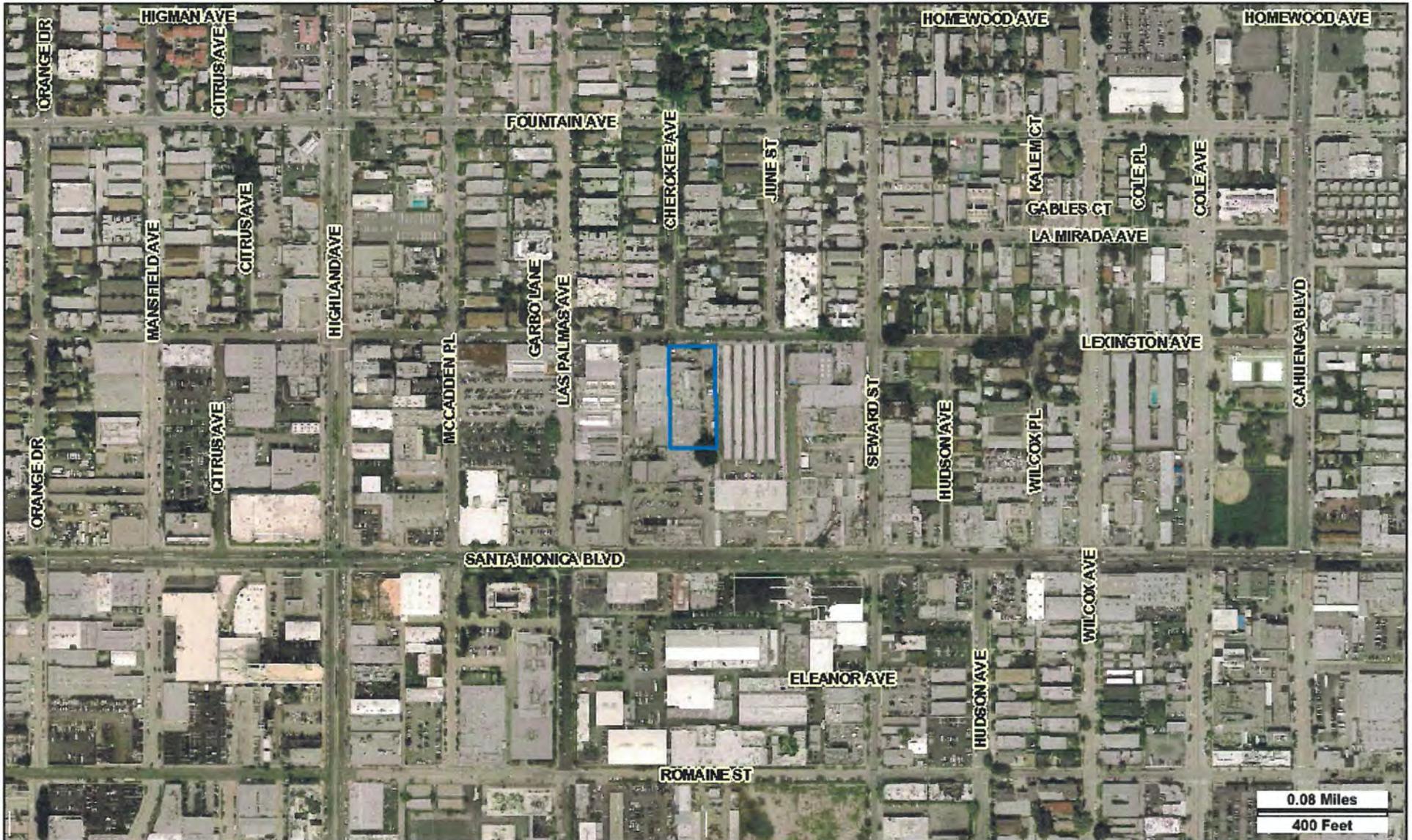
AFF-63994

AFF-54617

AFF-54398

AFF-42259

CFG-2000



Address: 6648 W LEXINGTON AVE
 APN: 5532022025
 PIN #: 144B185 468

Tract: P M 2708
 Block: None
 Lot: A
 Arb: None

Zoning: [T][Q]C2-2D-SN
 General Plan: General Commercial



PROPOSED MONUMENT DESCRIPTION

The Circus Disco building located at 6648-50 Lexington Avenue is a 26,937-square foot nightclub. The building is located on the northwestern portion of the site of a proposed mixed-use project. According to the City of Los Angeles Parcel Profile Report for parcel 5532-022-025, the nightclub building was built in 1974. It has a paved, asphalt parking area on the northern portion of the parcel and is accessible from Lexington Avenue. Constructed of masonry with a scored stucco finish, the building is basically rectangular in plan and has a flat roof.

The front of the building is located on the south elevation (adjacent to the east of the storage/warehouse buildings) and includes a recessed entrance covered by a projecting canopy in the form of a stylized tiered wedding-cake shape and supports a fiberglass rearing lion. There are four free-standing columns surrounding the front entrance which appear to be used at night to light the front entrance to the club. The east elevation fenestration includes a set of four large window openings containing metal industrial-type casement windows. Also on this facade are a pair of port-hole doors and a patio with a set of arches. There are additional facilities outdoors for the nightclub on the north of the building. The north (rear) elevation has few openings. The building appears to have been remodeled during the 1980s or 1990s when the front entrance, lion sculpture, and free-standing columns were added to the building.

The interior space is primarily one large room with unfinished veiling and space for stages and a dance floor. Adjacent to the patio is a drum-shaped DJ booth.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Circus Disco is possibly the oldest, continuously operating nightclubs for gay Latinos in Hollywood and Los Angeles, and is associated with the history of the LGBT community in LA. It expresses the cultural, economic, and social history of this population in the 1970s, as the LGBT civil rights movement was growing. Gay and lesbian bars and nightclubs were not only places to socialize and have fun, but also safe spaces for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community to develop a sense of identity, community, and social support.

HISTORIC CONTEXT FOR LGBT GATHERING SPOTS IN LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles' LGBT community has existed more than 100 years. During the 20th century, Los Angeles became home to several significant firsts in LGBT history: the world's first gay pride parade; the world's first LGBTQ synagogue; the oldest, continuously operating Christian LGBTQ ministry; and the country's longest-running LGBTQ publication.

Los Angeles also is the site of three post-World War II protests against police harassment that designate it as the birthplace of the LGBT civil rights movement.

From the late 19th century to the 1970s, LGBTQ life in Los Angeles was largely underground and functioned along the lines of a subculture. Some of the earliest known gathering spots for gays and lesbians in Los Angeles date to the late 19th century. The Merced Theater - located at El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historical Park - hosted masked balls for male and female prostitutes and became a covert gay lodging house. Tolerance for these events ended in 1898 when the City of Los Angeles enacted an anti-masquerading ordinance in response to La Fiesta - a weeklong celebration, along the same lines as Mardi Gras, which culminated in All Fool's Night. The celebration was organized by the Los Angeles Merchants

Association, and scorned by religious groups who were disturbed by cross-dressing. After the ordinance was approved, the public disdained members of LGBT community, who also suffered years of relentless harassment by the LAPD, which attempted squash almost all public expressions of nonconforming sexual and gender behavior.

During the early part of the 20th century, much of the LGBT subculture was centered around Downtown Los Angeles' Main Street, a working class entertainment district. Several bars, dance halls, and theaters catered to gays and lesbians and featured male and female impersonation acts. Since the connection between theatrical impersonation and sexual behavior had not yet been made by American audiences, the anti-masquerading ordinance was not enforced against entertainers.

California made sodomy a felony in 1850 and oral sex a felony in 1915. But while those laws didn't mention a person's sexual orientation, they were used to entrap, arrest, and prosecute gay and bisexual men. As a result, bars, nightclubs, parks, and bathhouses were under constant surveillance by the LAPD Vice Squad.

Lesbians were not entrapped as frequently by the police because they rarely had sex in public places. Women living with one another were also not viewed with the same suspicion as men living with each other. As a result, they had more opportunities to develop relationships in private. One of the main reasons men resorted to having sex in public and semi-public places was out of fear that their landlords or neighbors would learn their true identities, and the ensuing exposure could ruin careers and lives.

THE EMERGENCE OF LGBT BARS, NIGHTCLUBS: 1920s-1960s

For decades, non-heterosexual behavior in Los Angeles was either illegal or cause for investigation. Bars and private residences served as primary social spaces for

LGBT people to gather; police harassment was common in public establishments.

During the early decades of the 20th century, bars, nightclubs, and other venues were neither exclusively gay nor exclusively heterosexual. Masked balls at places like the Merced Theater provided cover for nonconforming sexual and gender behavior. There were also numerous bars, dance halls, and theaters in Downtown Los Angeles where like-minded men and women could meet one another. Club Alabam, a jazz music venue on Central Avenue, hosted an annual drag ball that attracted a multi-racial crowd.

However, such places tended to be more favored by working-class gay and bisexual men than lesbians. The earliest concentration of gay bars and establishments in Los Angeles began on Bunker Hill and extended south on Hill Street to Pershing Square and then east to Main Street, specifically between Hill and Main. Bunker Hill and Pershing Square have great significance in early gay life in Los Angeles. Bunker Hill was a bohemian neighborhood that was already known to gay men by the 1910s, and it persisted as a haven for gay men through the 1950s. Pershing Square was the center of The Run, a circuit of gay-friendly establishments and cruising spots that served from the 1920s to the 1960s as “the premier homosexual spot.” It also was a centralized place where people could meet and socialize in the absence of a strong out gay community. The Run included the Central Library, the bar at the Biltmore Hotel, and the Subway Terminal Building's bathrooms.

After Prohibition - which made the sale of alcohol illegal across the country - went into effect, an underground speakeasy culture developed in cities such as Los Angeles. In these venues, people from all walks of life - in search of a drink - socialized with one another. These speakeasies allowed for the emergence of a more visible and tolerated gay and lesbian life in a largely middle-class context for the first time.

When Prohibition was repealed in 1933, drinking alcohol was once again legal, but being homosexual was not. Male and female impersonators continued to perform,

but not in drag. A new law had been enacted forbidding even entertainers from wearing clothing of the opposite gender.

The LAPD continued to crack down on LGBT nightclubs. However, instead of being issued liquor law violations, the owners, performers, and patrons were charged with indecency or lewd conduct.

LGBT persons and gay-friendly businesses adopted several survival strategies in response to the escalation in surveillance and harassment from the LAPD during the 1930s. Many bars and nightclubs moved to the Sunset Strip. Positioned between Hollywood and Beverly Hills, the Sunset Strip, at the time, was an unincorporated area of Los Angeles County.

Many of the remaining establishments in Los Angeles responded by keeping a lower profile. One approach was to cater to both gays and lesbians and sympathetic straight persons, making it difficult to tell a gay bar from a straight one. Bars and nightclubs had self-imposed conduct rules that prohibited same-sex dancing or even touching. These restrictions reduced the possibility of entrapment by the LAPD Vice Squad.

Middle-class LGBT persons had the option of patronizing hotel bars such as the Biltmore in Downtown or the Christie in Hollywood. During the Great Depression, such businesses went into survival mode, just like gays and lesbians. Needing all of the customers they could get, gays, bisexuals, and lesbians were permitted, so long as they were discreet.

During World War II, Los Angeles was home to not only a large Naval presence, but also a booming defense industry. Filled with employment opportunities as well as gay and lesbian sailors and soldiers who publicly hid their sexuality, the new economy and population led to the proliferation of gay and lesbian bars, which were some of the first exclusively gay and lesbian bars in the United States.

According to Allan Bérubé, —these may have been among the first exclusively gay and lesbian bars in America.

Gay bars operating during World War II included the Crown Jewel, Harold's, and Maxwell's in Downtown and the House of Ivy and the Windup in Hollywood. The bar and nightclub scene expanded beyond Downtown and Hollywood during the 1950s. This expansion resulted from a California Supreme Court case that allowed gay people to assemble in public places - long as they were not committing any illegal or immoral acts on the premises.

The state's most common way of controlling the growth of the gay subculture was through the revocation of an establishment's liquor licenses. In 1951, the State Board of Equalization suspended the liquor license of San Francisco's Black Cat because it was a gay bar. The owner, Sol Stoumen hired an attorney to appeal the decision, which made its way to the Supreme Court. The Court ruled in *Stoumen v. Reilly* that a bar could not lose its liquor license because it catered to a gay clientele. As a result, California became the first state where gay bars could legally operate.

EMERGENCE OF GAY NIGHTCLUBS FOR MINORITIES: 1950s-1980s

During the 1950s, the number of lesbian bars and nightclubs, particularly in the neighborhoods of Westlake and North Hollywood, increased. These gathering places illustrate class distinctions in the LGBT community. Middle-class lesbians tended to socialize in private homes with small groups of friends. Professional women during this period could not risk being arrested in a lesbian bar for fear of losing their jobs. But for working-class and young women still living at home, bars were the only places to meet other lesbians and feel like they were part of a community. The Lakeshore Club, the If Club, and Open Door became fixtures in Westlake with working-class lesbians of all races and ethnicities.

Redheads and the Star Room were also working-class lesbian bars, but they catered to specific ethnic/racial groups. Redheads, later just Reds and now Redz, began operation in Boyle Heights in the 1950s and drew a predominately Latina clientele. The Star Room, although not in the City of Los Angeles, was notable for attracting mostly African American patrons from South Los Angeles and Watts.¹¹¹

After the redevelopment of Bunker Hill, the Westlake neighborhood also became popular with gay men. The decline of Bunker Hill as a gay neighborhood and the rise of Westlake, Echo Park, and Silver Lake during the 1950s, resulted in an increasing level of class and ethnic/racial segregation of the remaining Downtown venues, where gender-transgressive persons and lower-income African Americans and Latinos became the primary patrons.

In 1955, the state once again tried to reign in the number of gay and lesbian bars. The California legislature made it illegal for a bar to serve as a “resort for illegal possessors or users of narcotics, prostitution, pimps, panderers, or sexual perverts.” This legislation emboldened the Department of Alcohol and Beverage Control to suspend or revoke the licenses of gay bars simply as a result of seeing persons they deemed homosexual on the premises, because homosexuality was considered a sexual perversion. It wasn’t until 1959 that the California Supreme Court ruled that “a license may not be suspended or revoked simply because homosexuals or sexual perverts patronize the bar in question.”¹¹² *This ruling, however, can hardly be viewed as a victory for gay rights. On the one hand the Court ruled again that it was legal for LGBT persons to congregate, but on the other hand the language in the ruling conflated homosexuality with sexual perversion.*

CIRCUS DISCO AND OTHER GAY BARS AS SITES OF POLITICAL ACTIVISM

During this period, LGBT persons began to realize that they would continue to be treated like second-class citizens unless they took action. As a result, gay bars also became significant places for people to become politically active. The first known resistance to police harassment in Los Angeles occurred at Cooper's Donuts, a popular gathering place for transgender persons on E. 5th Street, in 1959.

This rebellion is significant because it occurred 10 years before the better-known rebellion at the Stonewall Inn in New York City and seven years before a similar occurrence at Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco. The Cooper's Donuts event demonstrated that while the lives of gays and lesbians was difficult, transgender individuals were the most abused and discriminated against members in the LGBT community because they were so visibly nonconforming.

Two other gay bars played prominent roles in the gay liberation movement in Los Angeles. In 1967, the LAPD swarmed the Black Cat in Silver Lake, beating and arresting 16 patrons and bartenders for exchanging same-sex kisses. The police raid sparked the largest public gay rights demonstration to date.

In 1968, a nonviolent protest took place at The Patch in Wilmington. After some of his patrons were arrested and falsely accused of lewd conduct - one man slapped another man, a friend, on the butt, bar owner Lee Glaze and about a dozen patrons went to a nearby flower shop owned by one of them and bought all the gladioli, mums, carnations, roses and daisies. At 3 a.m., the demonstrators carried the huge bouquets into the Harbor Station and staged a "flower power" protest as they waited for the arrested men to be released.

EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES AT GAY NIGHTCLUBS, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CIRCUS DISCO

The increase in the number of neighborhood bars and nightclubs during the 1960s reflected not only the geographic dispersion of the LGBT community, but also an increasing segregation and formation of new communities of patrons built along gender, ethnic/racial, and class lines. Many of these LGBT bars and clubs are modest in appearance and require a deeper look beyond their facades to fully understand their stories and cultural value.

One place that epitomizes this phenomenon is Circus Disco in Hollywood, which was established in 1974 as one of the earliest discos for LGBT Latinos. It also is one of the oldest and continuously operating gay Latino nightclubs in Hollywood

and Los Angeles It was founded in response to the discrimination gay men of color experienced at West Hollywood clubs that had a predominately white clientele.

The building itself, a warehouse that was part of an industrial site in Hollywood, was constructed the previous year. Founders-owners-partners Gene LaPietra and Ermilio “Ed” Lemos wanted to create a friendly and inclusive atmosphere within Los Angeles' burgeoning disco scene after LaPietra witnessed his non-white friends and Lemos being discriminated against and prevented entry at West Hollywood clubs, including Studio One. These clubs would discourage non-whites from entering the premises by demanding multiple forms of identification. While its clientele was largely Latino, Circus Disco considered itself a haven for anyone who felt unwelcome at other establishments.

Though Circus Disco was a sanctuary for the gay Latino community, the nightclub faced resistance from neighbors, and patrons were harassed by the LAPD.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CIRCUS DISCO TO THE LGBT LATINO COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CAUSES

Many gay Latinos frequented Circus Disco because it was a safe space where they would meet other people and share coming out stories. Many of these gay men wouldn't visit West Hollywood because it felt exclusionary to them. Circus Disco was the place to create a community for gay men of color.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the owners of Circus Disco allowed the space to be used for let for social justice causes and political fundraising. On May 20, 1979, Oscar winners Jane Fonda and Jon Voight hosted a disco picnic at the club for the Campaign for Economic Democracy, which helped the El Monte Citizens for Fair Housing with their rent-relief campaign. In September 1983, Circus Disco spotlighted a Hollywood Talent Showcase of cabaret entertainers who raised money for the Lobby Project for AIDS research.

In November 1983, club owner Gene LaPietra hosted a fundraiser at Circus Disco for Los Angeles City Councilwoman Peggy Stevenson, who LaPietra said was a champion for gay and lesbian civil rights when it was politically popular to support the issue.

Club owners also let organizers in the broader civil and labor rights movement use the nightclub to work with the LGBT community on specific campaigns. In March, 1983, César Chávez met with the Project Just Business, a lesbian and gay coalition, at Circus Disco. The coalition had invited Chávez to speak on the topic of corporate boycotts and fundraising tactics. The owners of Circus Disco prepared a buffet dinner for 100 guests, and César Chávez was given a standing ovation at the conclusion of his speech. Chávez told the diverse crowd, “Your coalition...it’s really important, because you represent to us people who are dedicated to a principle. And you know very well what it is to be discriminated.”

Circus Disco is scheduled to close after a Dec. 31 New Year’s Eve party.

SIGNIFICANT LGBT NIGHTCLUBS AT RISK

Circus Disco is slated for demolition as part of a major redevelopment planned for Santa Monica Boulevard and Las Palmas Avenue. The project was approved by the Los Angeles City Council in February 2015. The EIR did not include any cultural or historic resources for the site and didn’t mention Circus Disco’s inclusion in the Survey LA: LGBT Historic Context Statement.

Circus Disco isn’t the only significant LGBT nightclub at risk for demolition. In West Hollywood, Faring Capital, the owner of The Factory, has proposed

demolishing the industrial building for a new hotel and retail project. The Factory has a rich history, serving originally as the Mitchell Camera production facility and, from 1975 to 1988, as the site of the iconic gay discotheque Studio One. This threat landed The Factory on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 2015 list of America's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places, in large part due to its LGBTQ history. The West Hollywood Heritage Project is one of the main groups advocating for its preservation.

The owner of Jewel's Catch One in Los Angeles' Mid-City, regarded as the first large scale nightclub to cater to black members of the LGBTQ community, closed the club in July 2015 and announced plans to sell the building.

Taken together, these three nightclubs tell a critical story about race, gender, class, and sexuality in Los Angeles. These places are more than just bars; they served as vital community centers.

Jewel's Catch One in the Mid-City neighborhood, which was reportedly the nation's first black gay and lesbian disco when it opened in 1972, served a similar purpose.

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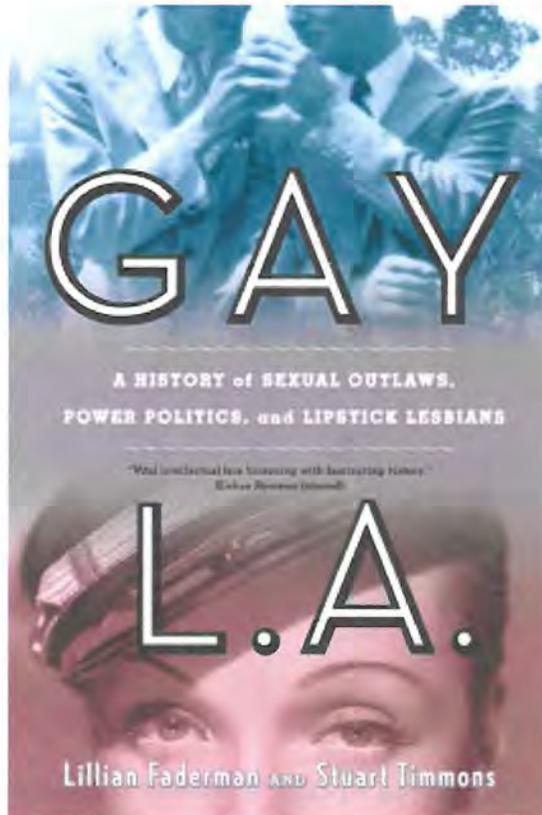
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Los Angeles, Long Beach's gay history explored in 'Gay L.A.'

Posted on [January 5, 2012](#) by [Phillip Zonkel](#)



This article is the second in a series on local and regional LGBT history and pioneers. This article was originally published in 2006 in the Press-Telegram.

Lillian Faderman says Los Angeles' contributions to LGBT history are left in the closet.

"The cliché that gay people didn't fight back until Stonewall isn't true. There was a mini-riot in 1959 at a downtown L.A. coffee shop, and gay men protested for several days after the Black Cat was raided in 1967, two years before Stonewall (the infamous raid on a Greenwich Village, N.Y. gay bar)," says Faderman, who, along with Stuart Timmons, authored "Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics and Lipstick Lesbians."

"What is particularly disturbing is L.A. is presented as La-La Land, home of the movie industry, filled with vain people, smog and crowded freeways," Faderman says.

The 361-page book provides an in-depth account of Los Angeles' overlooked but worthy place in gay history and the gay rights movement.

"L.A. is the place where the U.S. gay rights movement was born," says University of Illinois at Chicago history professor John D'Emilio.

The authors discuss a host of topics: The first missionary encounters with Native American cross-gendered "two-spirits," how Long Beach played a role in making oral sex illegal, the remarkable freedom of Hollywood lesbians in the 1930s, gender-bending styles of matinee idols and screen sirens who influenced the country and the Los Angeles Police Department's 80-year reputation as the nation's most homophobic police force.

"We have a history that is sometimes glorious and can make you proud," Faderman says.

Here, Faderman talks about seven significant milestones in Los Angeles' gay history.



- In 1947 Edith Eyde, known under the pen name of Lisa Ben, began the earliest known publication created exclusively for lesbians in the United States.

1) "In 1914, the overly zealous Long Beach Police Department raided two private clubs, the 606 Club and the 96 Club, and arrested 31 men, who were accused of fellatio. Sodomy had been a felony in California law since the 19th century, but oral sex had not been. The whole incident was interesting because it was one of the first incidents of police entrapment. The arrests received major attention. Several newspapers published a 'List of the Guilty Ones' and one man, John Lamb, committed suicide.

"As a result of those arrests, Long Beach passed a law making oral sex illegal. The following year, the California legislature passed a bill outlawing oral sex. The law remained on the books in California until 1975."

2) Long Beach resident Lee Glaze was an early gay rights rebels. He led a Stonewall-like rebellion in his Wilmington gay bar, The Patch, in 1968, a year before the Stonewall Rebellion, which got much more press. Glaze had been warned by the police commission that if he wanted his bar to stay in business, he had to prohibit not only drag but also groping, male-male dancing and more than one person at a time in the bathrooms.

Glaze tried to comply, but boldly reinstated dancing. Then vice squad officers burst in with half a dozen uniformed policeman and began making arrests. Glaze told the crowd that the Patch would post bail for the arrested men. Glaze and the patrons went to a nearby flower shop owned by one of the patrons and bought all the gladioli, mums, carnations, roses and daisies. At 3 a.m., the demonstrators carried huge bouquets into the Los Angeles Police Department Harbor Station and staged a "flower power" protest as they waited for the arrested men to be released.

3) "We found all sorts of traces of gay culture in the late 19th century. In the 1890s, downtown Los Angeles businesses were suffering from an economic depression. In 1894, the Los Angeles Merchants started the annual, week-long Mardi Gras type festival, La Fiesta. In its second year, the carnival gathering drew 100,000 people.

On the last night, a no-holds barred, culminating event was held. It was called 'All Fools Night.' Women dressed as men and men dressed as women, and the religious right of the era was upset. Conservative Protestant groups protested about the 'vile' behavior. The City Council was torn between the economic benefit from tourists and the pressures of the Religious Right. But the Right won. In 1898, the city council banned the festival and 'masquerading.'

4) "Gay talent in Hollywood has influenced movies from the beginning and has certainly influenced fashions all over the country. In the 1930s, bisexual actresses such as Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo and Katharine Hepburn, for instance, made it fashionable and sexy for women to wear pants..

"Before then, pants were pretty much the choice of lesbians in nightclubs, which is where those actresses may have gotten the taste to begin with. But they spread the fashion all over America. It was shocking and exciting. It gave a lot of women ideas on how to be shocking and exciting."

5) "The first lesbian magazine in the country, Vice Versa, began in Los Angeles in 1947. It didn't have a huge circulation, but what was exciting was that the editor, who went by the name 'Lisa Ben,' had the idea to do it. The notion that she could speak to other lesbians in print with book reviews and play reviews was astonishing.

"She said in an interview that she worked at RKO as a secretary, but saw images that made her brave. She saw actress Elizabeth Scott walking around the lot holding hands with her lover. Lisa Ben said L.A. was a place where lesbians could find other lesbians."

6) The first on-going gay organization in America, Mattachine, began in Los Angeles in 1951.

"There had been attempts to start gay-male groups in New York after World War II and in Chicago in the 1920s, but both were brief and folded. The cops were merciless with gay men in the post-World War II years.

"Very few lesbians joined the group because Mattachine's main concerns were issues affecting gay men, such as police entrapment. Harry Hay, the group's founder, chose the name Mattachine, which referred to medieval jesters who performed behind masks."

7) "The first gay church, Metropolitan Community Church, began in L.A. in 1968. Troy Perry, a Pentecostal minister who was expelled by his Tennessee congregation because they found out Perry was gay, was at the Patch the night it was raided. His date, Tony Valdez, was one of the men arrested. After Valdez's release, Perry tried to comfort him with by talking about God, but Valdez was uninterested and said God didn't care about gay people.

"Perry saw the moment as an epiphany and later that year started the Metropolitan Community Church, which has 275 congregations in 23 countries and houses of worship in all but four states."



This entry was posted in [Education](#) and tagged [history](#), [Lee Glaze](#), [long beach](#), [long beach police](#), [Los Angeles](#), [Los Angeles Police](#), [The Patch](#), [Wilmington](#) by [Phillip Zonkel](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#) [<http://blogs.presstelegram.com/outinthe562/2012/01/05/los-angeles-long-beachs-gay-history-explored-in-gay-la/>].

Police Attitude on Gay Bars Assailed by 4 on Council

By **DAVID JOHNSTON**
and **HENRY MENDOZA**

Times Staff Writers

After hearing complaints that the Los Angeles police allegedly harass gay bar and disco patrons, four City Council members Wednesday sharply criticized the police for devoting too much attention to gay bars and not enough to serious crime.

The four suggested that in an era of tight budgets the Police Department should give "victimless" crimes a lower priority and give greater emphasis to catching murderers, bandits, burglars and rapists.

Councilmen Zev Yaroslavsky suggested cutting the department's budget unless victimless crimes are given a lower priority.

The council's Police, Fire and Public Safety Committee heard from several gay bar and disco owners and patrons, plus some citizens who said they are concerned about how their tax dollars are used.

Gene La Pietra, owner of Circus Disco, a Hollywood establishment whose clientele is predominantly homosexual, told of repeated police raids that effectively shut down his business but resulted in no prosecutions.

Last Halloween, La Pietra said, more than 50 uniformed officers, some with "riot guns," came and ordered everyone to produce identification. He said a helicopter hovered overhead.

La Pietra said Capt. Jerry Feinberg, commander of the Hollywood Division, later told him officers were responding to what turned out to be a phony report over a stolen police radio that an officer had been shot.

On other occasions, La Pietra said, police have turned off the music, turned up the lights and ordered everyone to "freeze" while their identification papers were examined.

Capt. Feinberg told the Times that the Halloween night incident "doesn't ring any bells with me." But later he

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POLICE RAIDS ON GAY BARS

Continued from First Page

said he recalled one incident, but not the date, in which La Pietra had complained about police conduct. Feinberg said after investigating that incident he determined that in his view "everything was appropriate."

Pat Hiles, an attorney who said she is neither gay nor a patron of gay bars, objected to "tax dollars being wasted and used illegally to deprive people of their civil rights" when there are not enough police to pursue dangerous criminals.

La Pietra said each time his place has been raided and he has complained, the police have said the report that sent them to Circus Disco turned out to be false. Both he and Yaroslavsky questioned whether the police were telling the truth in attributing the raids to reports that later turned out to be phony.

Assistant Police Chief Robert Vernon promised a complete investigation of each incident reported by the witnesses at the hearing.

Vernon, who is acting chief while Chief Daryl F. Gates is out of town at a convention, told the committee, "The policy of the Los Angeles Police Department is and remains that we treat all people fairly and justly," but added, "I am also a realist and I know this is not always the case."

Councilwoman Peggy Stevenson,

who chairs the committee and has long been a supporter of the Police Department, criticized the police for devoting what she said was too much attention to gay bars and discos.

Stevenson, who has a large gay constituency in her district, said citizens who have committed no crime are justifiably angry when their evening is interrupted and police force them to produce identification.

Councilman Joel Wachs, who like Stevenson has a large gay contingent in his district, asked "why policemen are in gay bars in the numbers they are in when there are serious crimes all over the city?"

Council President John Ferraro, a former police commissioner, sent the

committee a letter expressing "grave concern" about rising crime and the police response to it.

"It is incumbent upon us to examine the way we are deploying our manpower," said Ferraro, a longtime department supporter. "We can no longer afford the luxury of giving inordinate amounts of attention and time to so-called victimless crimes at the expense of burglaries, murders, rapes and aggravated assaults . . . the (crime) statistics will not support this type of prioritization."

Assistant Chief Vernon, in addition to promising an investigation of each incident described on Wednesday, said Capt. Feinberg of the Hollywood Division and Capt. Chet Spencer of Northeast Division would appear before the committee later to comment on each reported claim of police misconduct.

Vernon said citizens may misunderstand police actions if they are not fully aware of why police were called and that once given all the facts they may agree the police acted properly.

In an interview, Vernon, commenting on complaints of excessive numbers of police appearing at gay bars such as Circus Disco and Griff's, said "the issue isn't sexual orientation, it's danger to officers. We have straight bars that are known to be dangerous places for officers, too."



UPDATED: Can Circus Disco be saved from demolition?

Posted on [April 1, 2015](#) by [Phillip Zonkel](#)

Gay Latino LA: Circus Disco and Owner Gene La Pietra



Is [Circus Disco](#) going to have its last dance?

The venerable 40-year-old nightclub, which has been a cultural haven and dancing hotspot for the LGBT Latino community for decades, is being considered for demolition to make way for a multi-million dollar, mega mixed-use development project that would include 695 residential units and 1,391 parking spaces on the almost 6-acre site.

But LGBT Latino advocates and historic preservationists say time out. They say they were not aware of the project and never given a chance to participate in any public hearings or comment about the project.

They contend that the proposed plan, called The Lexington Project, which also includes bulldozing [Circus Disco's](#) sister club, [Arena Cafe](#), is flawed.

EIR MISSING HISTORIC INFO

Specifically, they point to [The Lexington Project's environmental impact report](#) – a document required by state law that includes a detailed and comprehensive analysis and public disclosure of all potential environmental impacts for development projects as well as all feasible solutions to mitigate those impacts. The report also must take into consideration historic and cultural resources, such as buildings, at a proposed site and the impact if those structures are demolished. Property owner Gene La Pietra, who has owned both clubs since their inceptions, is the applicant for the Lexington Project and could not be reached for comment.

But in the Lexington Project's environmental impact report it says, "The project site does not contain any historic resources," despite the fact that Circus Disco is listed by the City of Los Angeles' Office of Historic Resources in its [Survey LA's LGBT Historic Context Statement](#), which was prepared by the City of Los Angeles' Office of Historic Resources. The club also has been renowned in the LGBT Latino community for decades as a cultural landmark.

On February 24, the City Council council approved an [ordinance that certified the EIR and made a zoning change](#) allowing residential use of the proposed Lexington site, which was restricted to industrial and commercial. The ordinance was approved 14 to 0; Councilman Jose Huizar was absent. The ordinance goes into effect April 8, but LGBT Latino advocates and historic preservation experts want the council to reopen the EIR and have it amended to include historical and cultural information about Circus Disco and have a discussion about what should be done with the property.

EIR SHOULD RE-OPENED, CIRCUS DISCO A CULTURAL SPACE, ADVOCATES SAY

"The fact that Circus Disco is on [Survey LA](#) and a potential historic resource means it should have been included in the EIR," said [historic preservation attorney Susan Brandt-Hawley](#). "It sounds like it's an inadequate EIR. The city council needs to re-open it and supplement it to include this information."

Jonathan Menendez, who directed the 2012 documentary "[Gay Latino LA](#)" and has been researching Los Angeles' gay Latino history – including Circus Disco – for eight years, said, "Obviously that EIR is false. I completely support the city council amending it."

"Circus is so important because the space has meaning. It's a sacred cultural space," Menendez said. "The space is meaningful because for gay Latino men it's a home away from home. If you destroy that cultural space, you destroy a cultural landmark."

Richard Zaldivar, executive director of [The Wall Las Memorias](#), a Highland Park social services group that works with gay and bisexual Latinos, also said Circus Disco has tremendous historical and cultural significance to the LGBT Latino community.

A SAFE SPACE, CREATING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

"For many years, you wouldn't necessarily hang out in West Hollywood. Latinos felt comfortable going to Circus, Zaldivar said. "Some of your most prestigious Latino officials would go on certain nights. It was the place to be.

"It was a place gay Latinos could go and meet other people and share coming out stories," he said. "It has tremendous significance from a cultural perspective."

Anthony C. Ocampo, a Cal Poly Pomona sociology professor, said Circus Disco is vital for some gay Latino men coming out of the closet.

"For a lot of young men of color, Latino and African-American, when they first come out of the closet, West Hollywood is not the first place to go. There are a lot of class differences and ethnic differences. West Hollywood has a feeling of excluding," he said.

'LIKE GOING TO CHURCH'

"As a result, Circus plays a tremendous role and crucial role in creating community for gay men of color. When they first come out of the closet, it's a safe space," Ocampo said. "You find people like you. I've had gay Latinos refer to Circus as going to church. It was that essential to their life.

Ocampo said demolishing Circus Disco would erase gay Latino history.

"If Circus Disco is torn down, it will be a great loss for Latino and African-American gay men. Their history is not written

down in books or on the TV news," he said. "They get their history from going to events that cater to gay Latino and African-American men and meeting people from different generations.

"Without those venues, their history is being erased," Ocampo said.

OFFICIALS DON'T COMMENT

When asked why Circus Disco wasn't mentioned as a cultural and historic resource, Robert Carnachan of [Caja Environmental Services](#), which prepared the EIR, said, "I don't know."

Does Carnachan think the EIR should be re-opened and amended to include this new information?

"I'm really busy now," he said. "I'll have to call you back."

Charlie Rausch in the city's Planning Department, who oversaw the Lexington Project's environmental impact report, has not returned several calls from Out in the 562 seeking comment about why the EIR did not mention anything about Circus Disco being a designated historic and cultural resource by Survey LA.

[Ken Bernstein](#), manager of the Office of Historic Resources, which is part of the planning department, said he was unaware of the proposed plan to demolish Circus Disco until he received a phone call from Out in the 562.

"This is the first time I've been made aware that one of our resources was impacted," Bernstein said. "It's very surprising. If someone with the planning department or the developer had raised the issue that a site might have historic merit, our office would have been brought in."

Bernstein also said he didn't know why the issue wasn't raised by members of the public. Maybe because the public didn't know about it.

LATINO COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS UNAWARE OF POTENTIAL DEMOLITION

Melendez and others LGBT Latino advocates, including Richard Zaldivar, executive director of [The Wall Las Memorias](#), a Highland Park social services group that works with gay and bisexual Latinos, said they were unaware of the Lexington

Project until they were contacted by Out in the 562.

"It shocks me that Councilman Tom La Bonge didn't out reach to leadership in the community, especially since it's so important to the LGBT community," Zaldivar said. "It's about taking advantage of our community. It's irresponsible and appalling to not outreach to leadership. But it's not unbelievable."

Officials from the LA Conservancy and [Hollywood Heritage](#) also said they were unaware of proposed plans to destroy Circus Disco and Arena Cafe.

The EIR includes a list of public agencies that commented on the project, such as the Native American Heritage Commission, Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, but no LGBT or historic preservation groups are mentioned.

LA LGBT CENTER REFUSES TO COMMENT, CITY COUNCILMAN DOESN'T RETURN CALLS

[The Los Angeles LGBT Center](#), whose [The Village at Ed Gould Plaza](#) is across the street from Circus Disco, were notified about the Lexington Project, as required by law due to the Center's proximity to the proposed construction site.

But when asked what The Center thought about the possible destruction of an LGBT historic and cultural site to the Latino, spokesman Gil Diaz said via email "No comment" and refused to answer any other questions on the topic.

[Councilman Tom LaBonge](#), whose 4th District includes the proposed Lexington Project at the corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Las Palmas Avenue, said the site includes "lots and lots of history." But when asked why Circus Disco is not listed as a designated historic and cultural resource via Survey LA in the EIR, he said, "I don't know," and said he would call back with an answer. But LaBonge has neither called back nor returned several follow-up calls.

HISTORIC CONSERVATIONISTS SEE VALUE IN THE SPACE

Richard Adkins of Hollywood Heritage said the Lexington Project EIR is "erroneously light on historic context. It didn't mention the cultural aspects of the club at all.

"It was dismissed. That's wrong," Adkins said. "It's odd that not one party that could have included that history and cultural

context was communicated with. That conversation has to take place."

Adrian Scott Fine, the [LA Conservancy](#)'s advocacy director, said he doesn't know if historic resources were intentionally left out of the environmental impact report, but "This EIR was bare bones. It wouldn't take more than a Google search to find out that Circus Disco is more than a nightclub and the significant impact it's had in Los Angeles and with the Latino community.

"The EIR is flawed in that it didn't identify a cultural resource that exists," Fine said. "That's what's unique about cultural sites – They don't have to be architecturally stellar. They are unremarkable buildings, but have remarkable history. That's the case with Circus Disco.

"LGBT nightclubs are important places. Circus Disco allowed, and still plays a role, in helping LGBT Latinos and other marginalized people feel welcome and find a sense of community," Fine said. "These places are valuable."

In its assessment of Circus Disco, Survey LA said, *"The increase in the number of neighborhood bars and nightclubs during the 1960s reflected not only the geographic dispersion of the LGBT community, but also an increasing segregation of patrons along gender, ethnic/racial, and class lines. The places that epitomize this phenomenon (include) . . . Circus Disco in Hollywood. . . Circus was established in 1975 for Latinos. . . (and) founded in response to the discrimination gay men of color experienced at predominately white venues in West Hollywood. Nightclubs like Studio One would discourage non-whites from entering by demanding multiple forms of identification. Both places are still in business and played vital roles for LGBT persons of color, not just places to have fun but also places to develop social support."*



This entry was posted in [African-Americans](#), [bisexual](#), [Blacks](#), [development](#), [discrimination](#), [drag queens](#), [gay](#), [gender identity](#), [historic preservation](#), [Latinos](#), [lesbian](#), [lesbians](#), [LGBT](#), [LGBTQ](#), [news](#), [nightclubs](#), [pop culture](#), [queer](#) and tagged [adrian scott fine](#), [Arena Cafe](#), [circus disco](#), [Gene La Pietra](#), [gil diaz](#), [hollywood](#), [LA Conservancy](#), [Lexington Avenue](#), [Los Angeles](#), [los angeles conservancy](#), [Los Angeles LGBT Center](#), [los angeles office of historic resources](#), [Office of Historic Resources](#), [Santa Monica Boulevard](#), [Survey LA](#), [Survey LA LGBT Historic context statement](#), [Susan Brandt-Hawley](#), [The Lexington Project](#) by [Phillip Zonkel](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#) [<http://blogs.presstelegram.com/outinthe562/2015/04/01/circus-disco-saved-demolition/>]

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Smith, Doug
Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File); Mar 31, 1983;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times
pg. WS1

UFW Leader Addresses 100 at Buffet-Dance

Cesar Chavez Tells Gays How to Woo Corporate Funds: Boycott

By DOUG SMITH, *Times Staff Writer*

Circus Disco, a gay and lesbian dance spot on the south side of Hollywood, opened its doors and turned its music down low one evening last week as United Farm Workers leader Cesar Chavez and the homosexual community consummated a long political affiliation.

Leaders of several Los Angeles gay and lesbian organizations had called upon the famous organizer of field workers to give his blessing to Project Just Business, the homosexual community's first venture into corporate grantsmanship.

The unusual fund-raising effort is necessary, because, like all groups that rely upon government grants to survive, the organizations serving the city's homosexual population are facing shrinking budgets, said Steve Schulte and Brenda

Underhill, co-leaders of Project Just Business.

Eleven of those organizations, from Southern California Women for Understanding to Black and White Men Together, have joined to ask the business world for help.

For their official campaign kickoff the homosexual leaders turned to Chavez, the charismatic labor leader whose 20-year campaign to organize the state's migrant field workers has made him a hero to some and a villain to others.

Chavez answered the call, making his second public appearance before a homosexual gathering.

For the rare meeting of charismatic labor leader and homosexual activists, the owners of Circus Disco opened the

bar and prepared a buffet dinner.

Garden tables with white tablecloths and small floral-centerpieces were lined up on the wood dance floor. In place of the thumping beat of disco music, songs from movie musicals sounded softly over the loudspeakers.

A circle of neon elephants chasing neon thunderbolts around the ceiling had been turned off for the event, but the ballroom's six mirrored balls were still turning. The spots of light reflecting from the balls spun at a delirious speed on the dance floor.

Chavez arrived early but quickly disappeared into an anteroom as leaders of the city's gay and lesbian groups filed into the semidark ballroom.

The crowd was young and diverse.

There were blacks and whites, Asians and Latinos. The sexes were almost evenly divided.

Some guests wore three-piece suits and business dresses, some dressed casually in jeans and work sweaters.

They greeted with handshakes and hugs.

Women and men mixed in cheery conversations that suggested the meeting of old friends.

One young Latino man wore a clerical collar and a black velvet coat with a pink carnation in the lapel.

A black man in a Mexican serape and leather cowboy hat was interviewing several guests for a homosexual newspaper.

Please see CHAVEZ, Page 14

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NIGHT MOVES

From the Circus to the Arena, Club Owner Makes Everyone Welcome

January 06, 1991 | STEVE APPLEFORD | *Appleford is a regular contributor to Westside/Valley Calendar.*

The night is still very early, but young club-goers are already drifting into the dance music bombast that is Arena. They shuffle in, brushing past the lobby's gray limestone floor, marble walls and scattered artworks. They're also shuffling past owner Gene LaPietra, smiling there in his black leather jacket, perhaps still marveling at the scale of his newest Hollywood nighttime establishment.

It's Friday night, and LaPietra is in his element. In Arena's first six months, the massive 22,000-square-foot club already has become a regular stop for local dance enthusiasts, while also hosting giant premiere parties for such films as Adrian Lyne's "Jacob's Ladder" and David Lynch's "Wild at Heart." One recent weekend, pop star Madonna even made an unexpected appearance.

Keeping this sort of company wasn't always a possibility for the club owner and his longtime friend and partner, Ed Lemos. Back in the heyday of 1970s disco, LaPietra and his buddies were much like anyone else who worked during the week, waiting for the city's weekend night life to relax and enjoy themselves. But at the dance clubs of the day, there was one recurring, distasteful element that always seemed to spoil their evenings.

"We had experienced forms of discrimination," said LaPietra, 42. "Ed was Latin, and we would go to various clubs and were denied admission. At other places, he was required to show three pieces of ID, while I was required to show no ID. And he was two years older than me."

One night, LaPietra, Lemos and five other friends were out celebrating a birthday when they arrived at a popular disco. None of the white friends was asked for any identification, but Lemos was asked for his, and the man at the door intimated strongly that the black member of the group was not getting in at all.

Then in his mid-20s, LaPietra was so outraged that he promised his friends that night they would soon open their own nightclub, allowing anyone in who was just looking for a good time. Taking their credit cards to their absolute limits, Lemos and LaPietra opened a club called Circus in a large building behind the Union Ice building on Santa Monica Boulevard. The partners repainted the walls and did much of the other needed work on the building. On opening night, LaPietra worked as the doorman, while Lemos did the busboy duties.

Circus has been a steady success since it opened 15 years ago, with 4.5 million people walking through its doors so far, LaPietra said. "In the nightclub business, that's about 13 years longer than most," he said. "We had a novelty, which nobody else was doing: allowing everyone to come in. That just was not heard of in 1975."

After Union Ice decided to close its Hollywood branch in 1985, LaPietra and Lemos bought the huge freezer building on the boulevard. At first, the partners

were most interested in the additional parking their club would have on the adjacent property. And plans were to lease the towering rectangular freezer to someone else.

When no one was interested in renting the monolithic structure, the Circus owners decided to open another club, promising themselves to use everything they had learned in their near-dozen years of business. By June, Arena was the result.

The old building was completely refurbished, with a grand new entrance placed below a 50-foot-high glass atrium of LaPietra's own design. Inside, just past a wall of video screens, is the wide, wooden dance floor and a long ramp leading gradually to the second floor. On each level are a collection of full-service bars and a variety of colorful, submarine-shaped furniture.

Dinner is included with the price of admission, which can range from less than \$10 to more than \$20, depending on the night's entertainment. Dancers can rest and eat at tables lining the second floor, below a row of porthole windows. A glass-walled room nearby allows people to escape the pounding dance rhythms, while still viewing the bustling dance floor.

But perhaps most important to LaPietra is the continuation of the open admission policy he first established years ago for Circus with partner Lemos, who died of a heart attack in September. This at a time when some other local clubs are now the subject of lawsuits brought by would-be customers stopped at the door.

With the opening of Arena right next to Circus, LaPietra said he's now running a total of about 50,000 square feet of entertainment space on a single city block. But he said he is unconcerned that operating adjacent discos would dilute his clientele, while raising his expenses. He gets around some of that by focusing the clubs on different types of crowds on different nights.

While Friday and Saturday at the Arena cater mainly to a straight dance crowd, Sunday is intended for gay customers. Meanwhile at Circus, Sunday offers live rock 'n' roll.

At Arena on Fridays, from 7 to 10 p.m., is the "Singers" showcase. Featuring live rhythm-and-blues and gospel, the weekly show has featured such noted vocalists as Evelyn (Champagne) King, said Sean Hollingsworth, who books the program.

"Most of the singers are background session singers," Hollingsworth said. "They're the people you hear in the background on hit records. It's like a jam session for professional singers."

It's part of LaPietra's strategy for attracting customers for a variety of reasons. "People don't go out as often as they used to," he said. "Times are a little tougher and they're more cautious with their entertainment dollars. So you're not going to get the same people every single night."

Marina Bilic, a Sherman Oaks leasing agent, has been coming to Circus for the past 10 years. But she has since switched her allegiance to the newer Arena. "I love this place," she said, walking up the staircase into the club. "This is the best version of what Circus used to be. What that was, this is 10 times more."

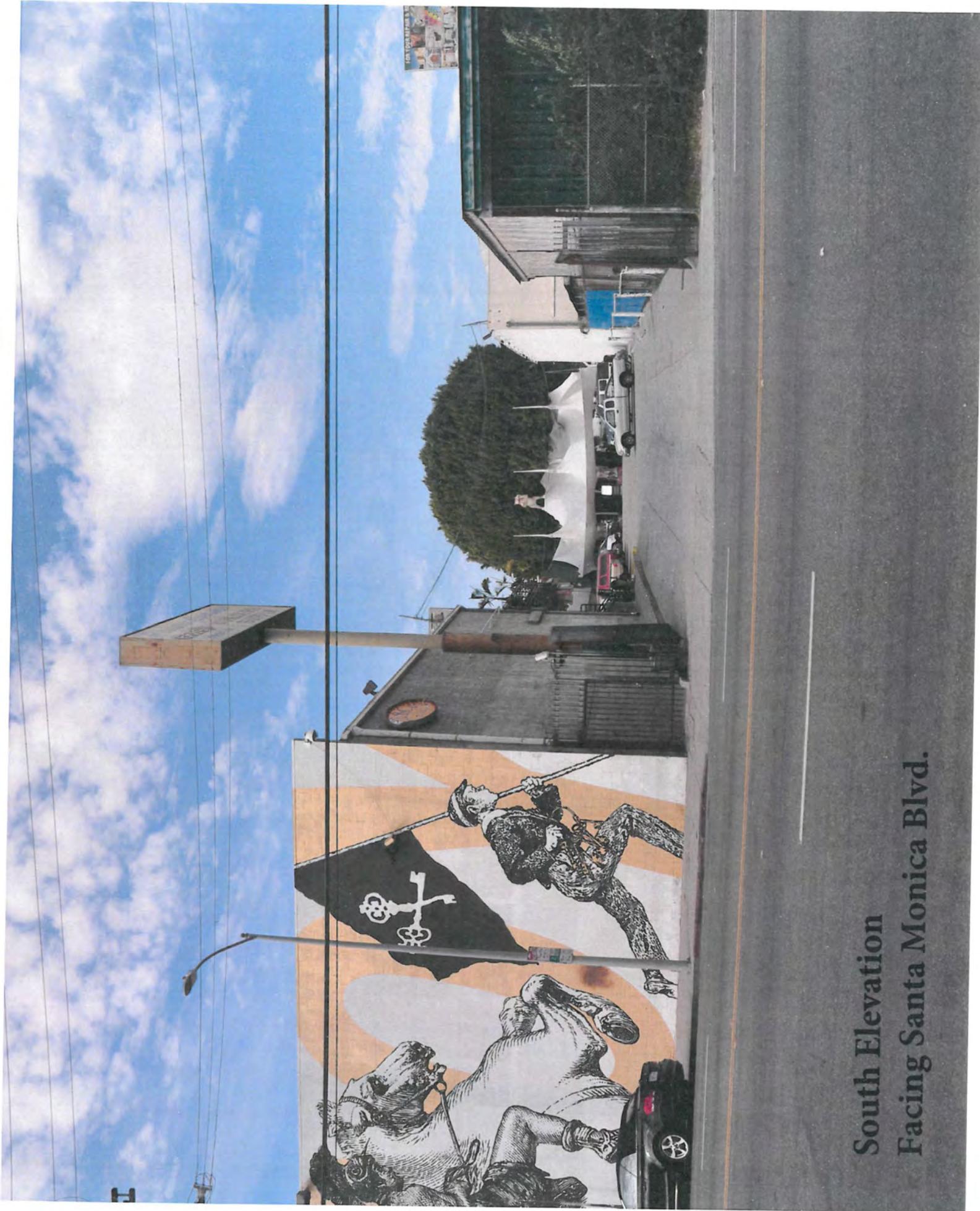
For William Wazmajian, who grew up in the Hollywood neighborhood next to the two clubs, getting inside was a long time coming. Not until he turned 21 in August was he allowed to see what was going on inside. "I always tried to get in, but they would never let me."

LaPietra spends most of his nights at Circus. It's home to him, as it has been since it opened. It was the final destination of a Providence, R.I.,-born youngster

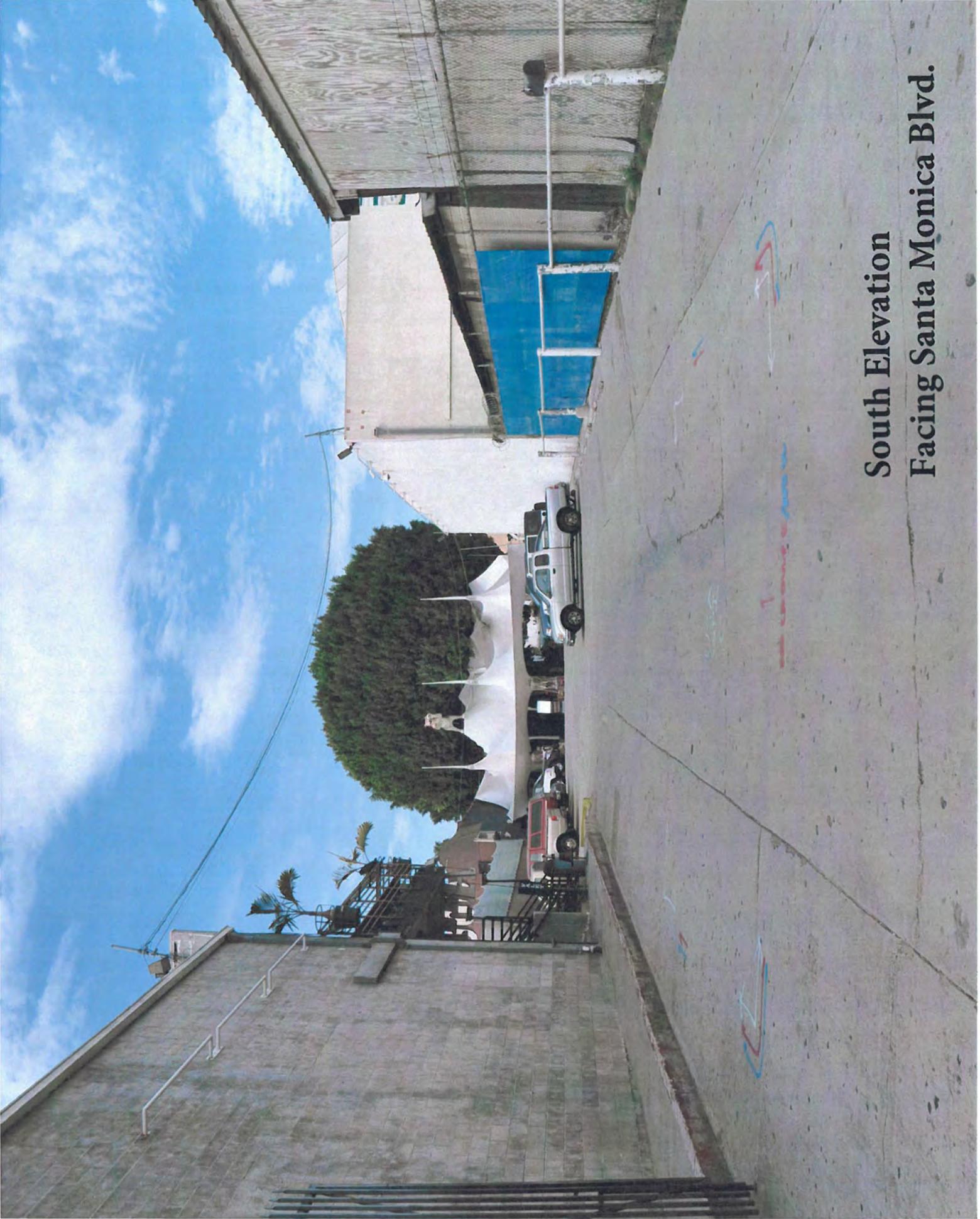
who left home to hitchhike across the country to Los Angeles.

"I enjoy it. You know, there really is nothing else for me to do in my life. This is it. I don't enjoy watching sports on television. I wouldn't know what to do with myself if I had to sit at home at night. Watch TV and drink beer? I'd rather be here. It keeps you young."

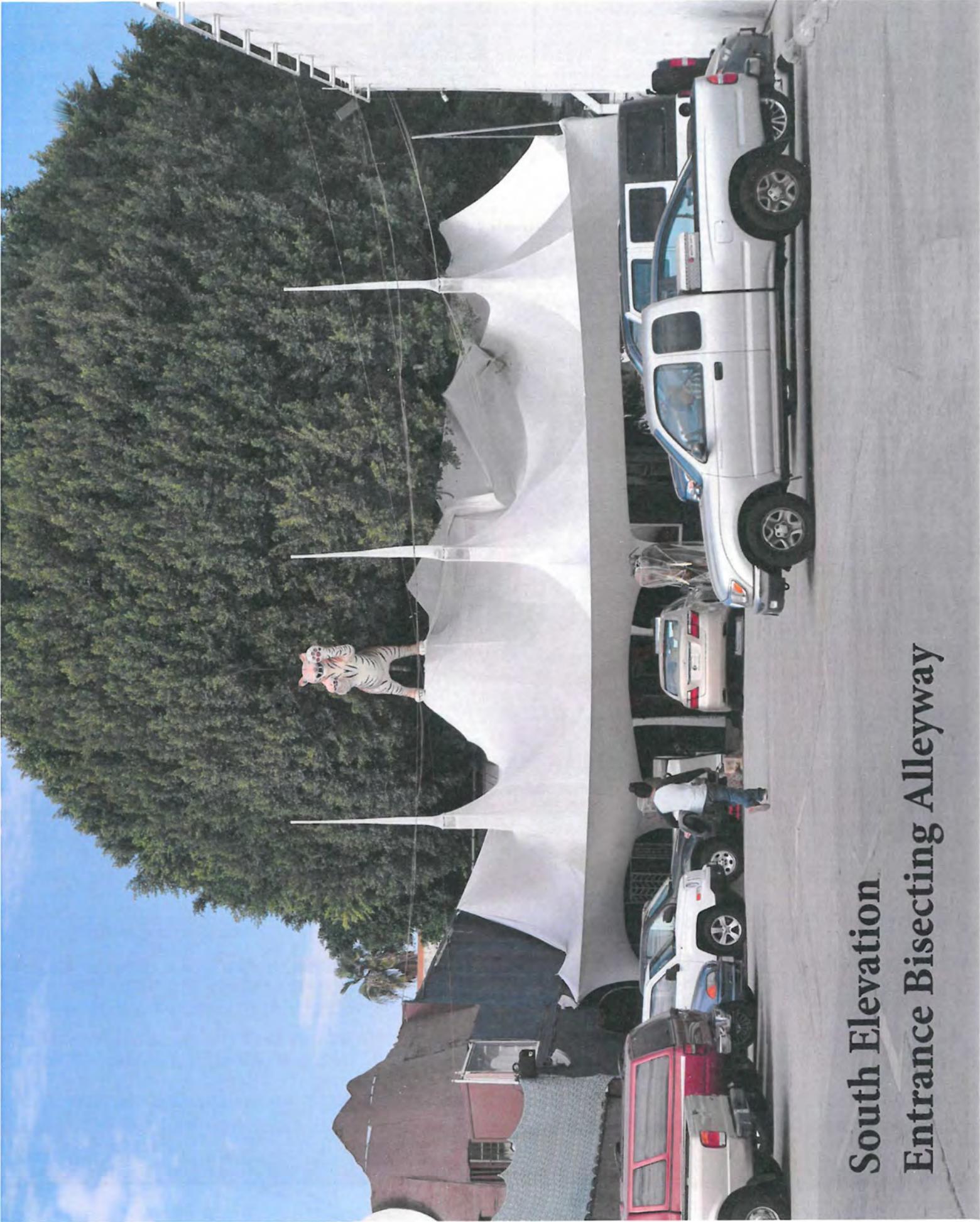
Arena, 6655 Santa Monica Blvd. in Hollywood, is open 9 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. Fridays through Sundays. Valet parking. Admission varies depending on entertainment. Call ahead for the night's entertainment and admission price, (213) 962-4485.



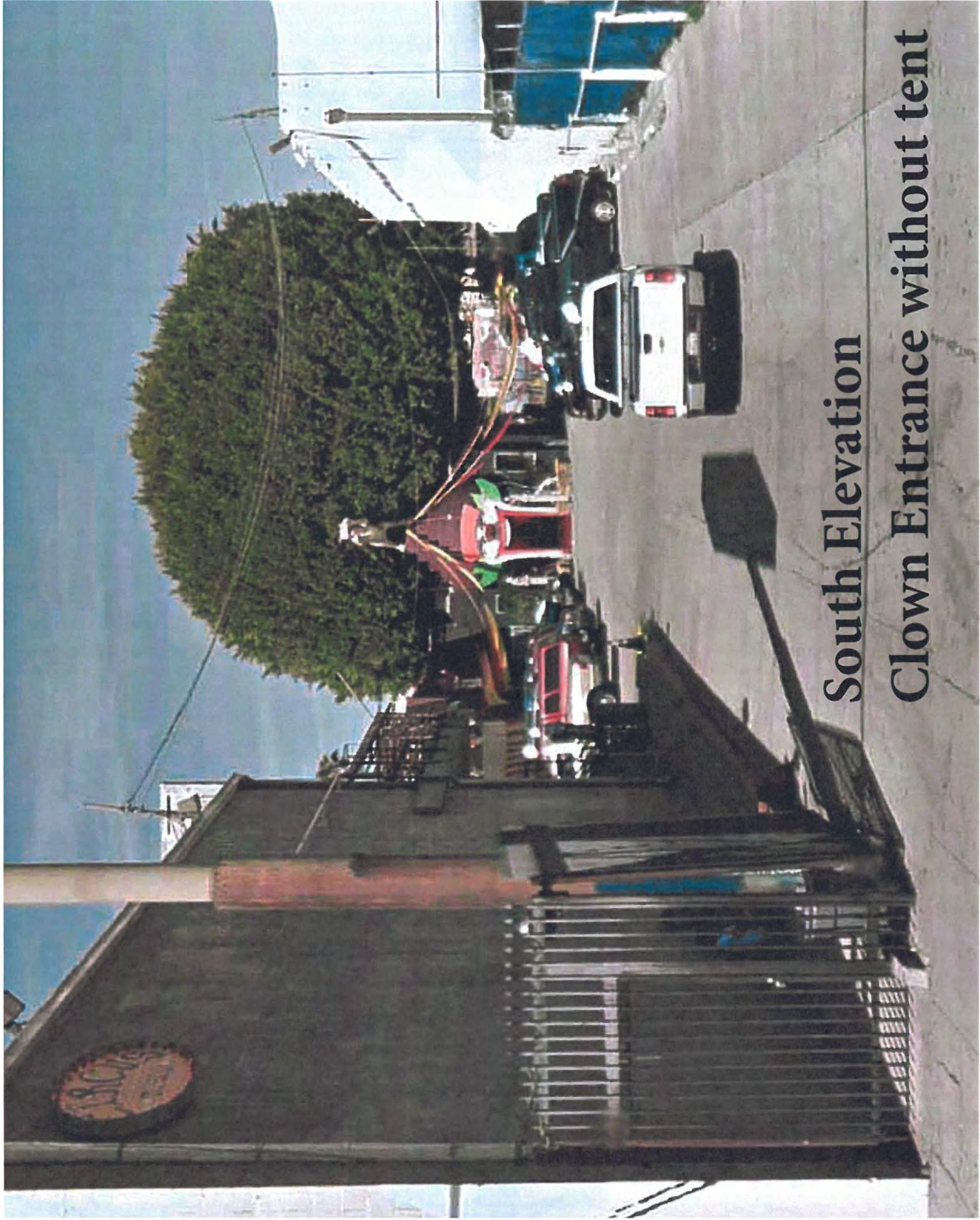
South Elevation
Facing Santa Monica Blvd.



**South Elevation
Facing Santa Monica Blvd.**



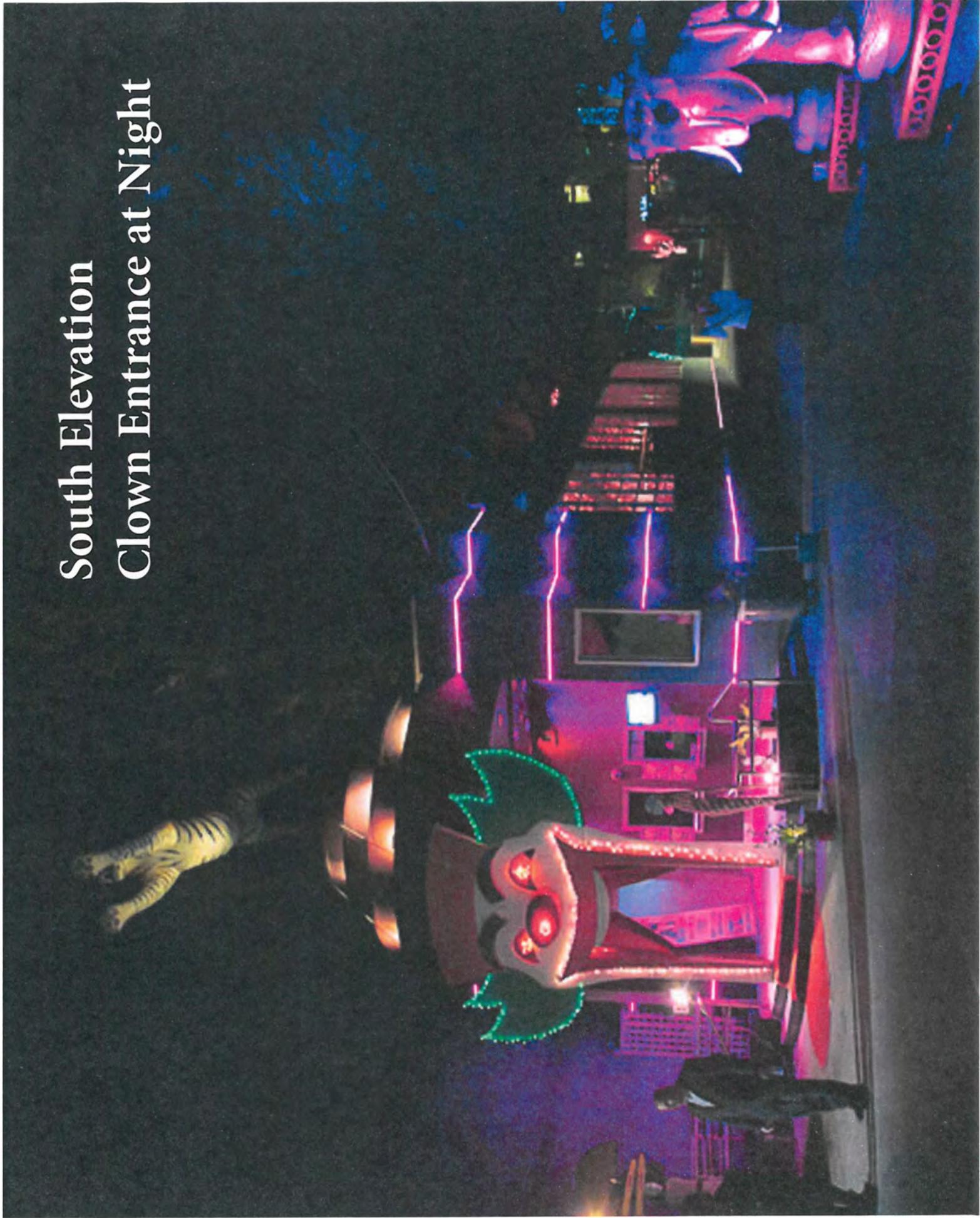
**South Elevation
Entrance Bisecting Alleyway**



South Elevation

Clown Entrance without tent

South Elevation Clown Entrance at Night



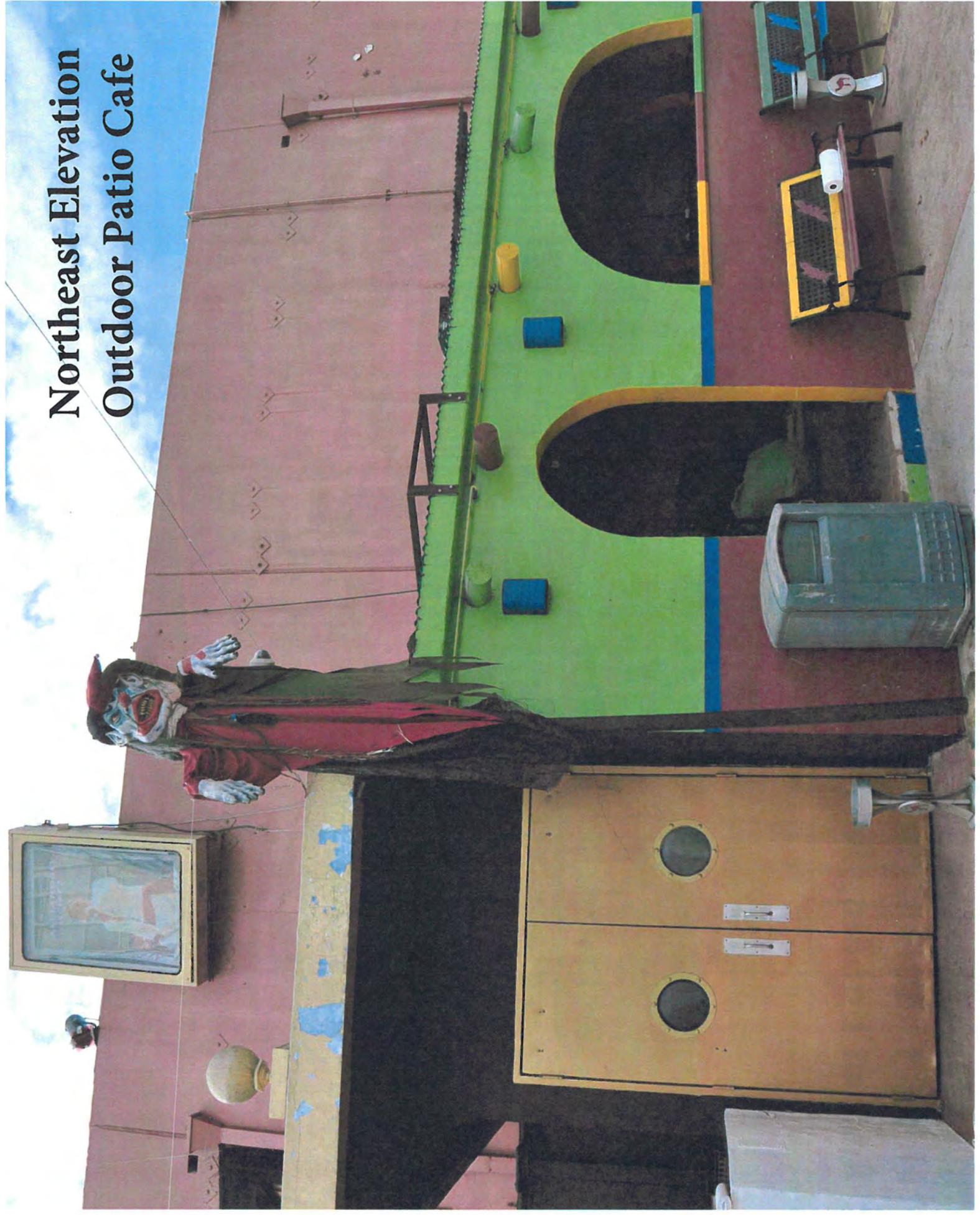


**North Elevation (Lexington Ave. at bottom)
Original Entrance 1978**

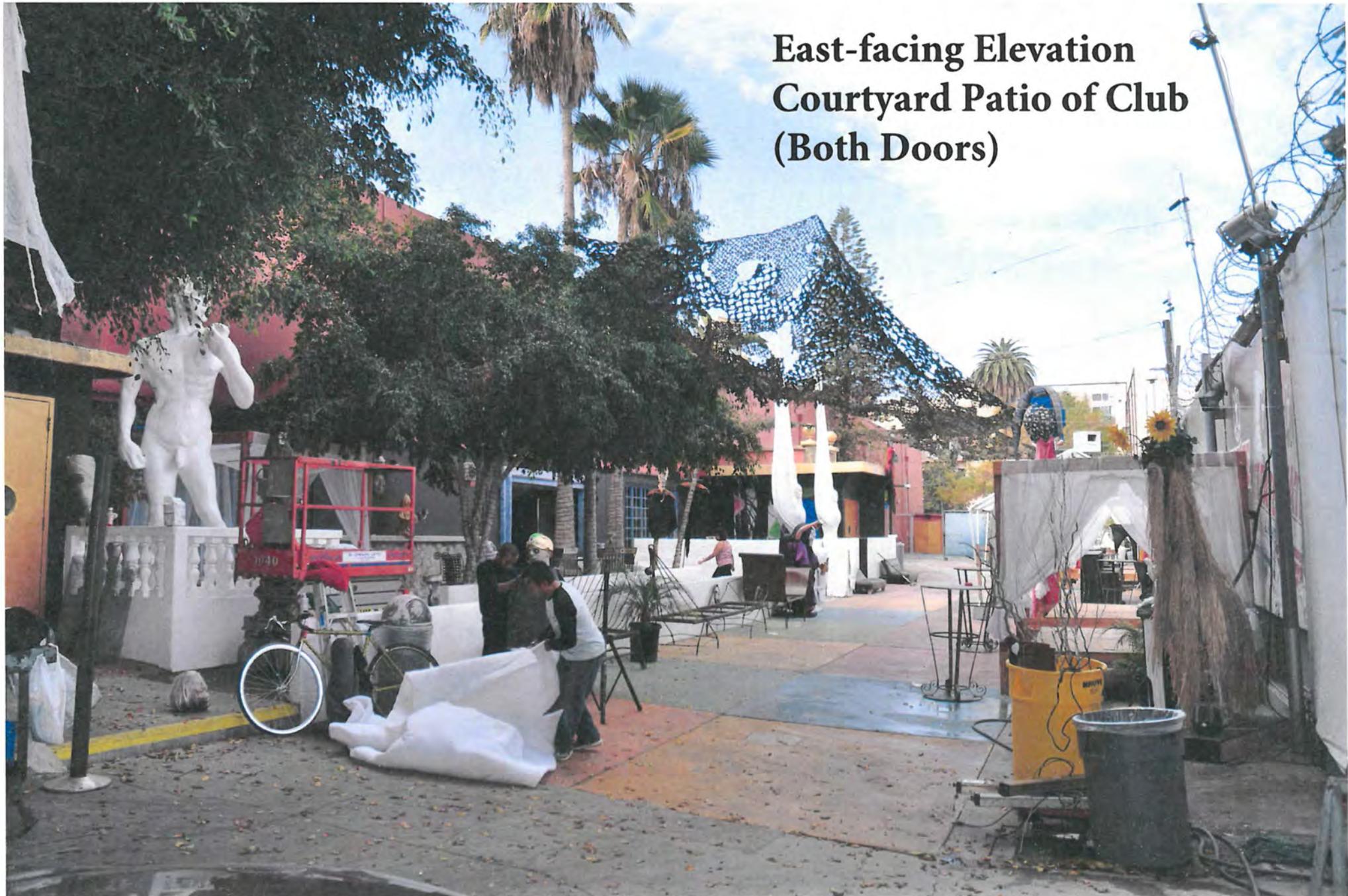
**North Elevation
Back of Building Facing Lexington Ave.**

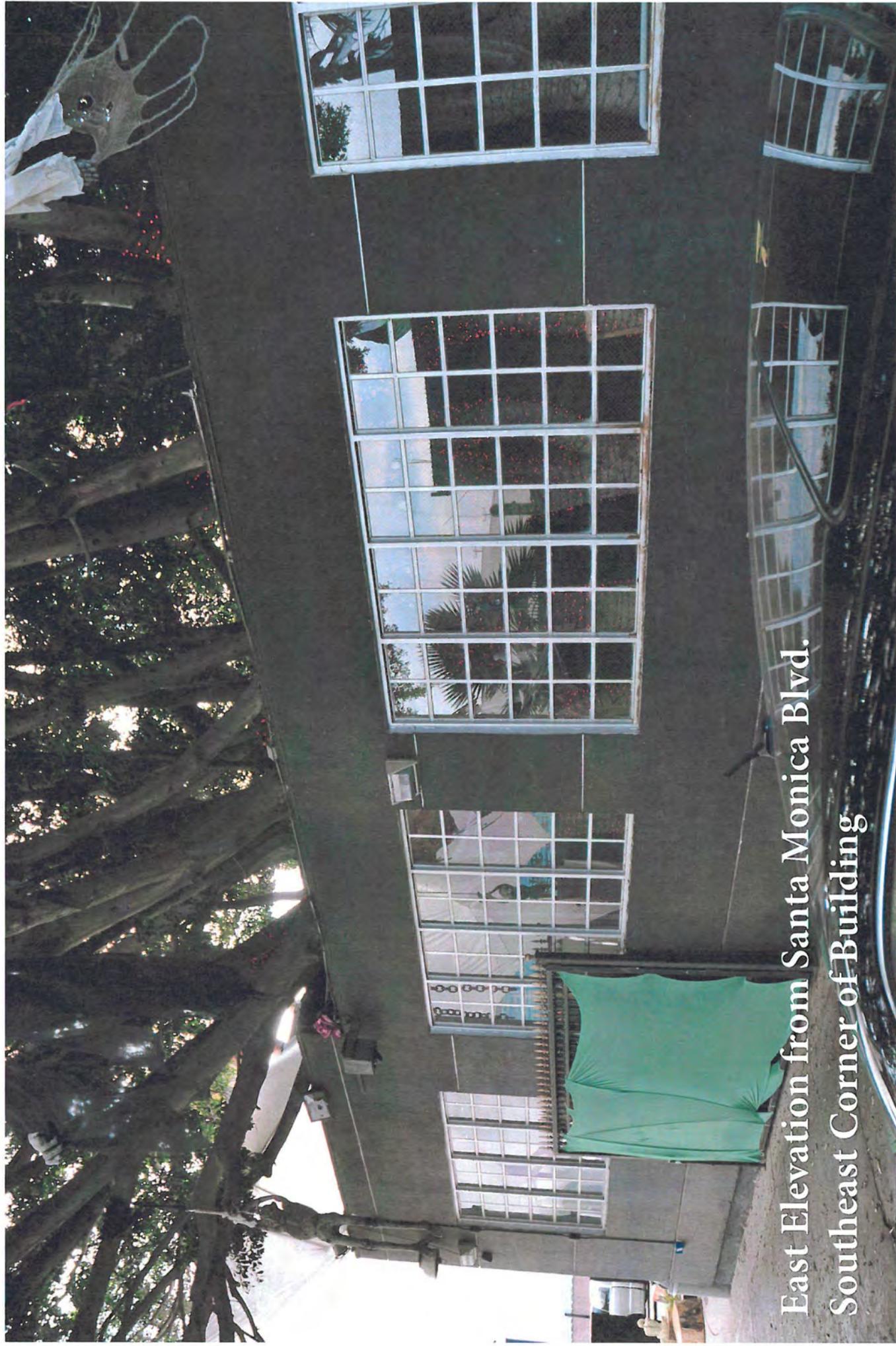


Northeast Elevation Outdoor Patio Cafe



**East-facing Elevation
Courtyard Patio of Club
(Both Doors)**

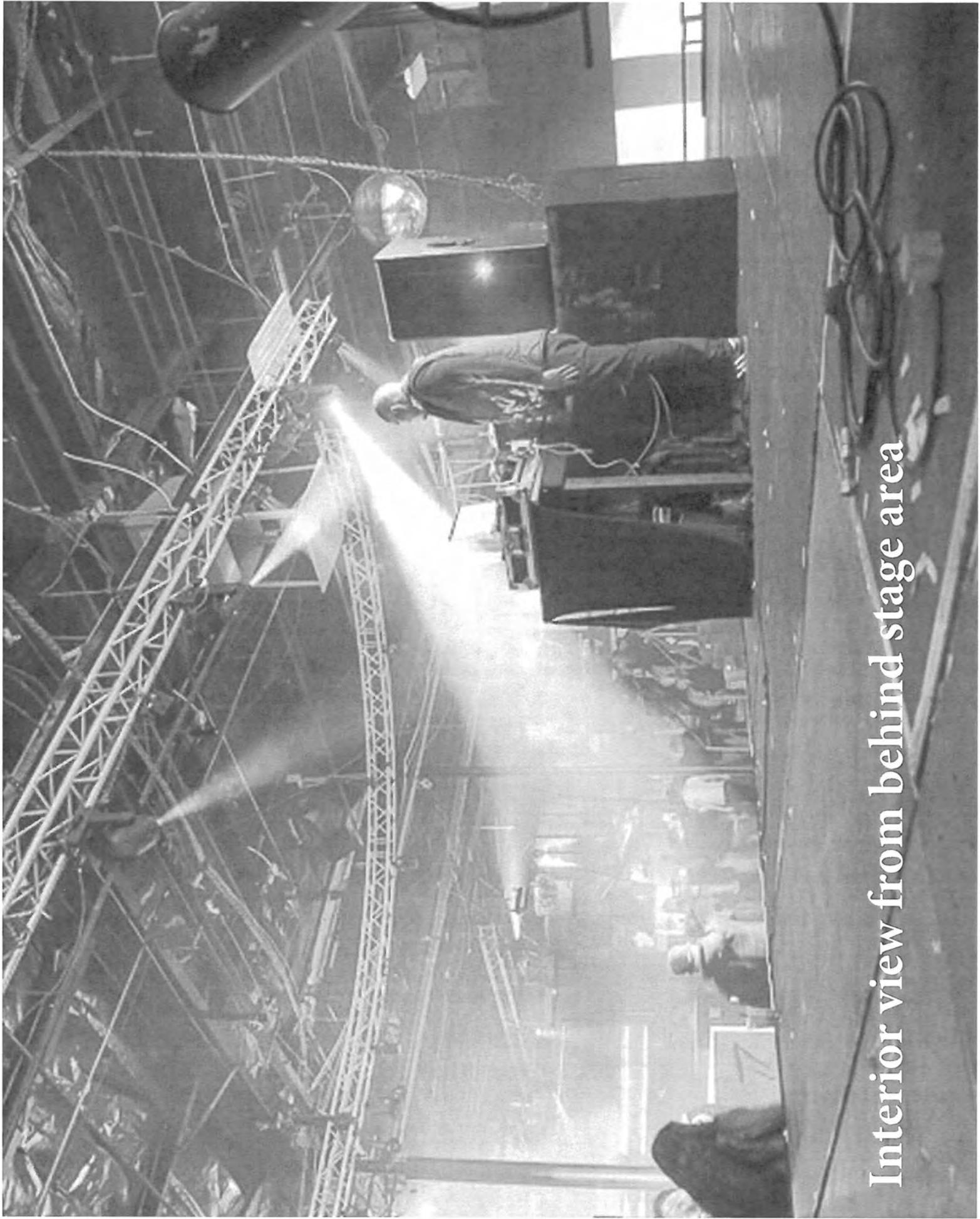




East Elevation from Santa Monica Blvd.
Southeast Corner of Building

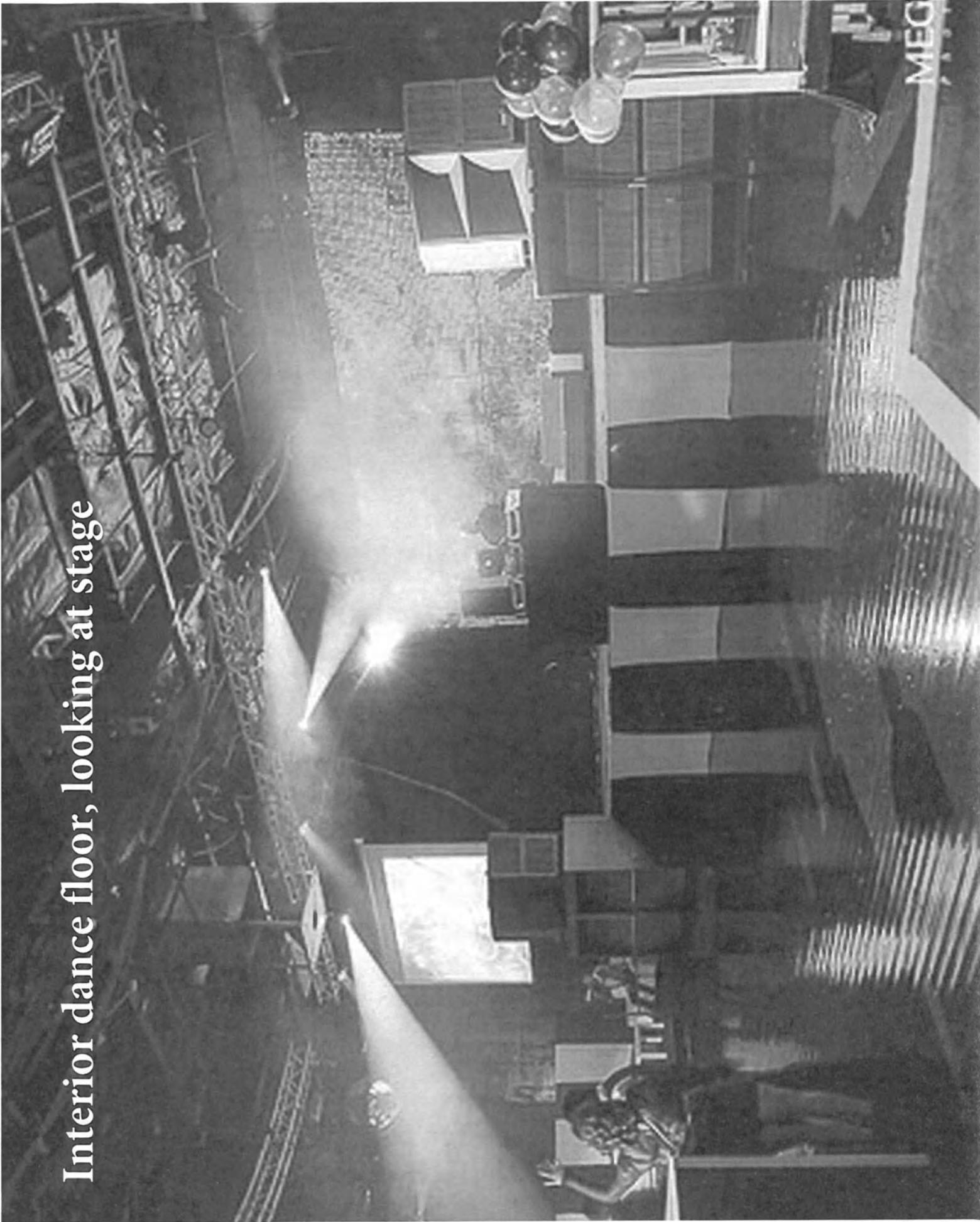
**Metropolitan Studios and Union Ice Company
Looking North to Santa Monica Blvd. and Las Palmas Ave.**





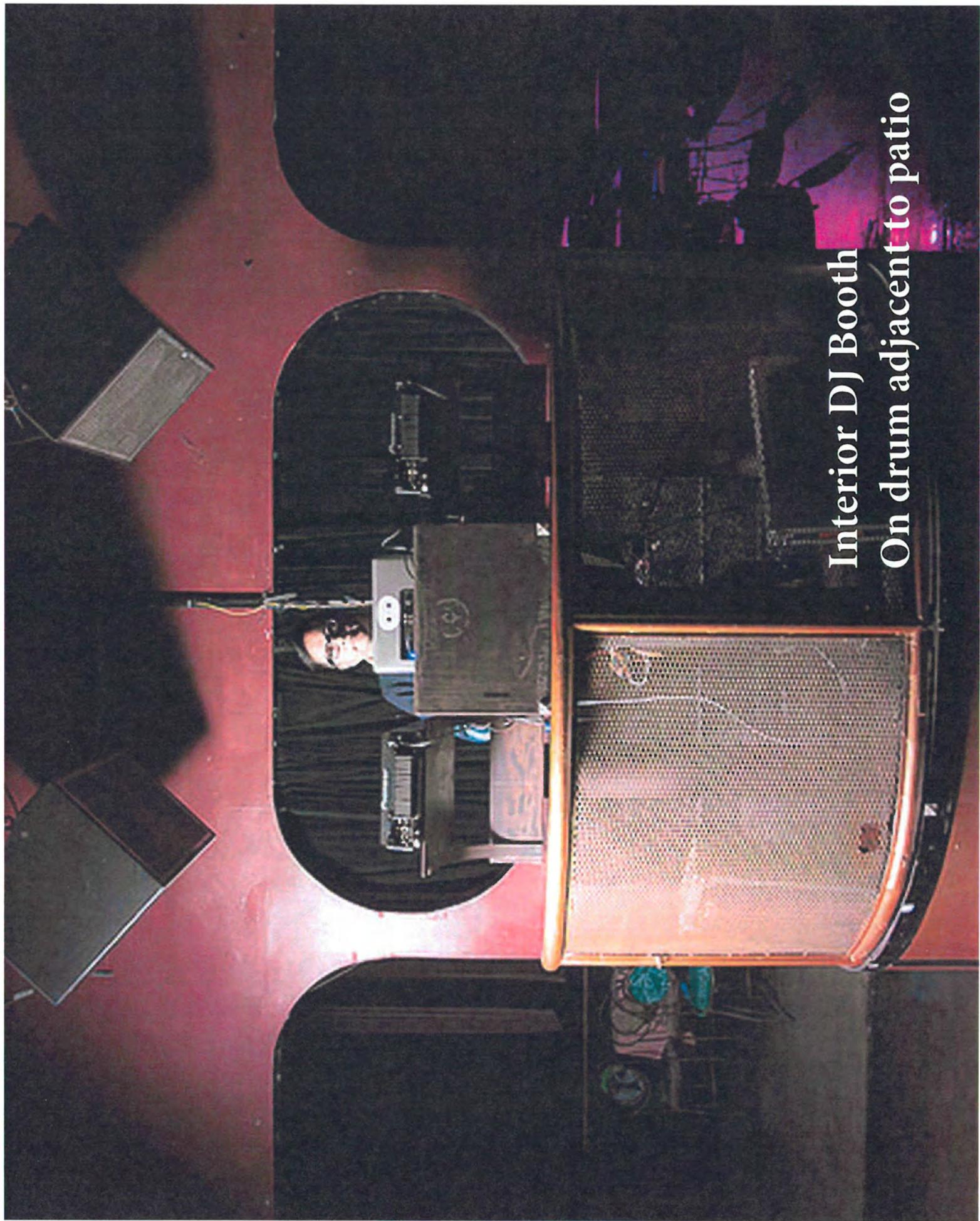
Interior view from behind stage area

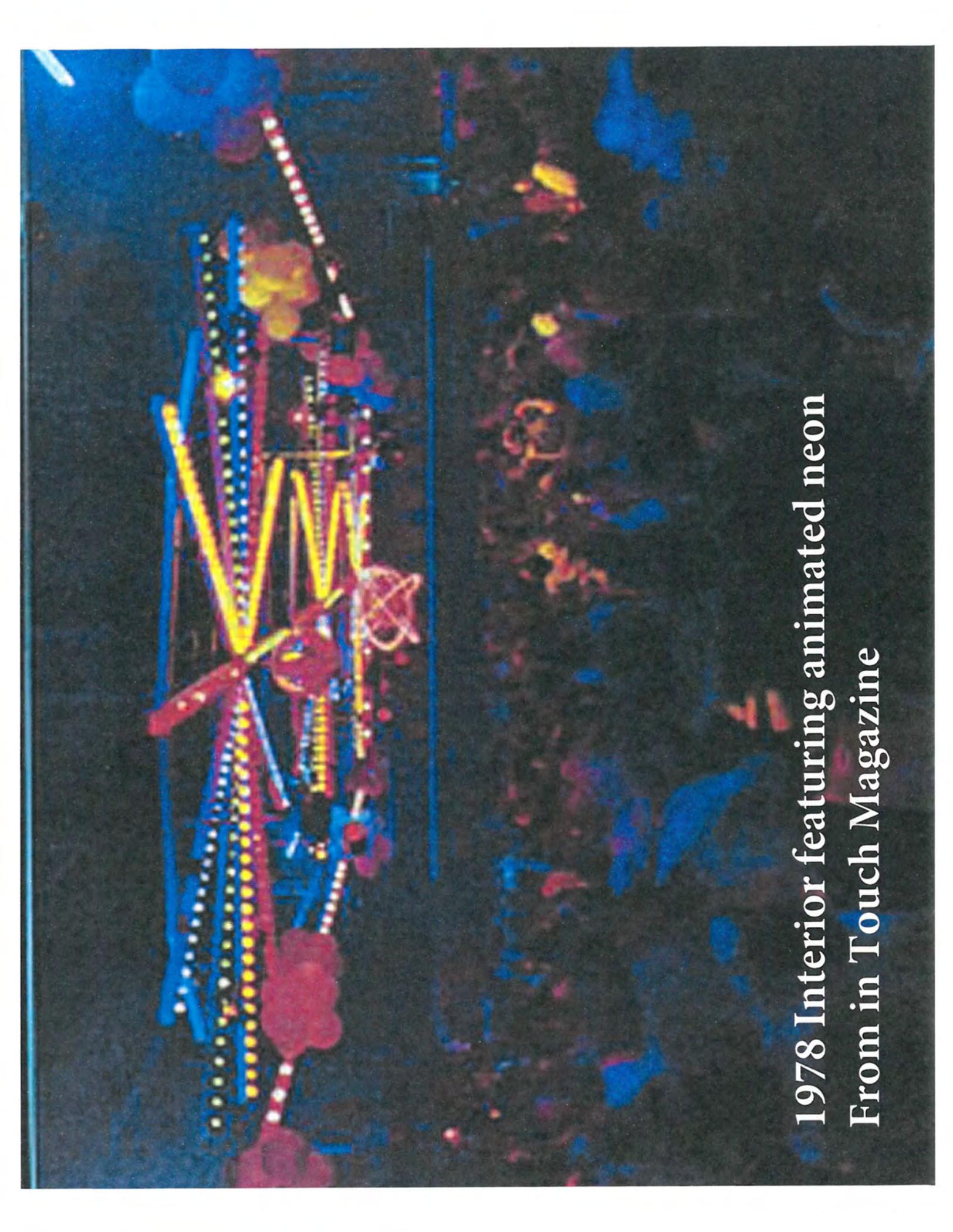
Interior dance floor, looking at stage



MEG

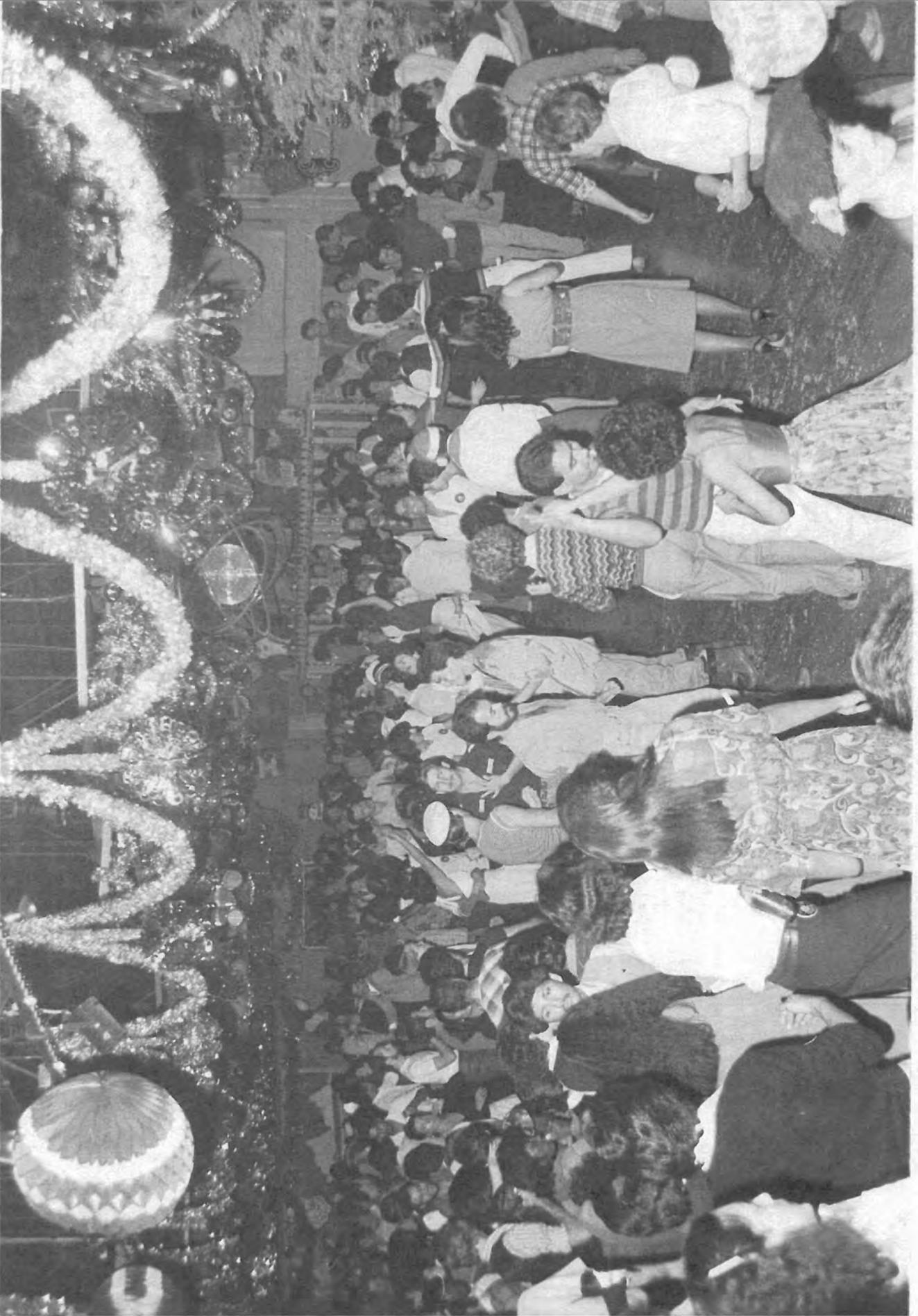
Interior DJ Booth
On drum adjacent to patio



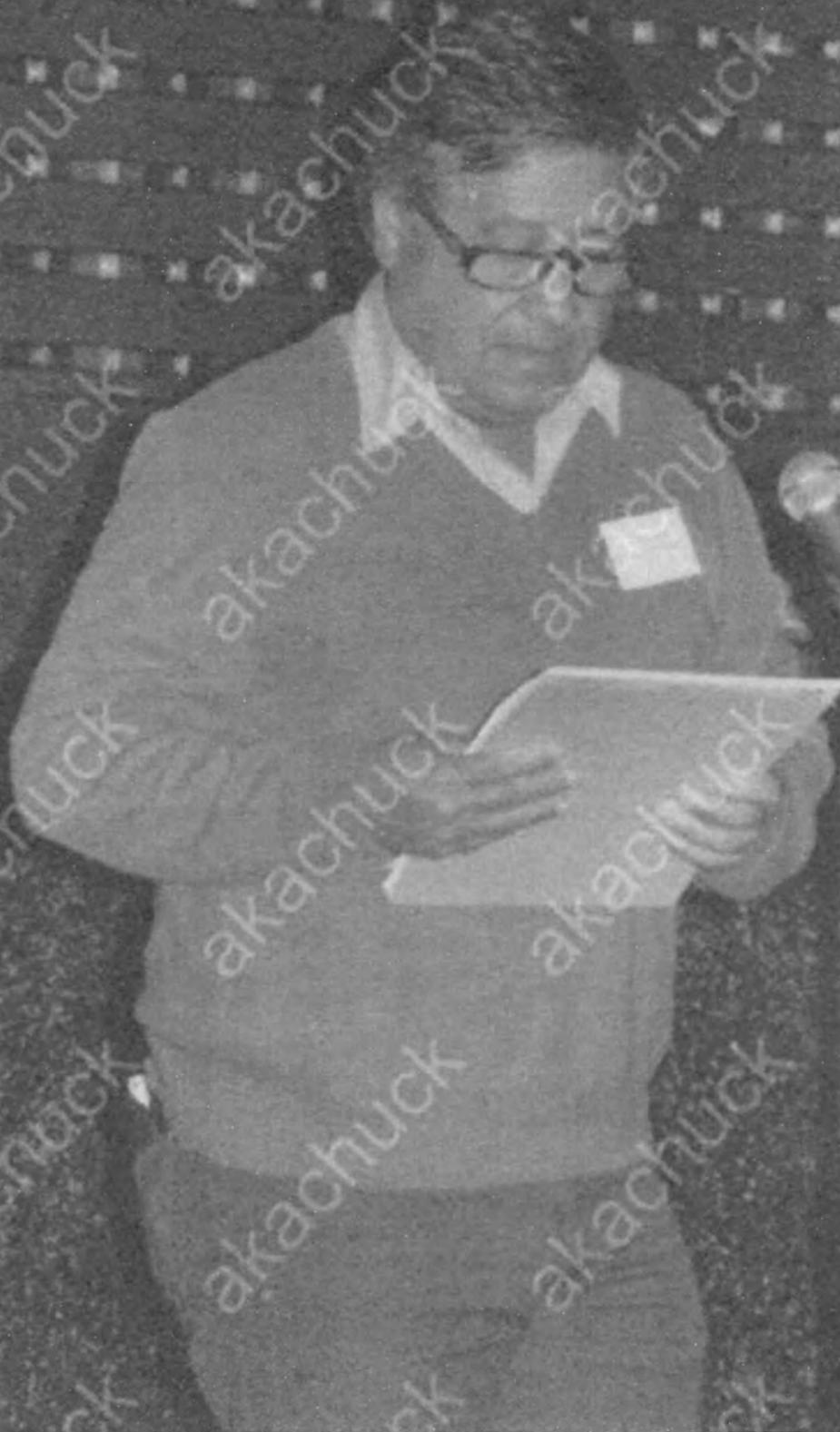
The image displays a complex, abstract neon sculpture. It consists of numerous glowing lines and shapes in vibrant colors: red, yellow, and blue. The lines are arranged in a dense, overlapping pattern, creating a sense of depth and movement. Some lines are straight, while others are curved or looped. The overall effect is a dynamic and colorful composition that changes as the viewer's perspective shifts. The background is dark, which makes the bright neon colors stand out prominently.

1978 Interior featuring animated neon
From in Touch Magazine

Christmas at Circus Disco



Cesar Chavez



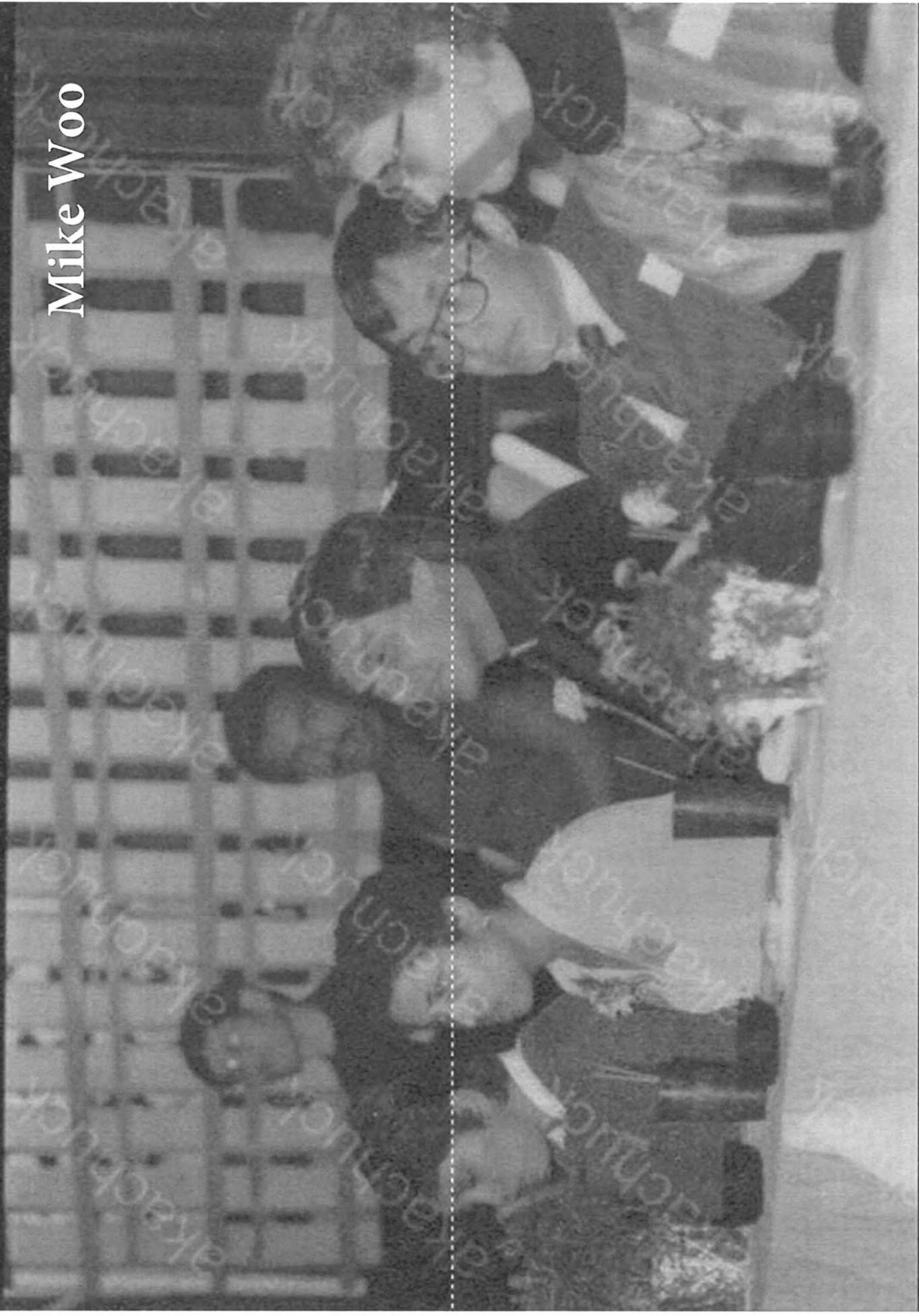
Cesar Chavez
Zev Yaroslavsky



Jane Fonda



Mike Woo



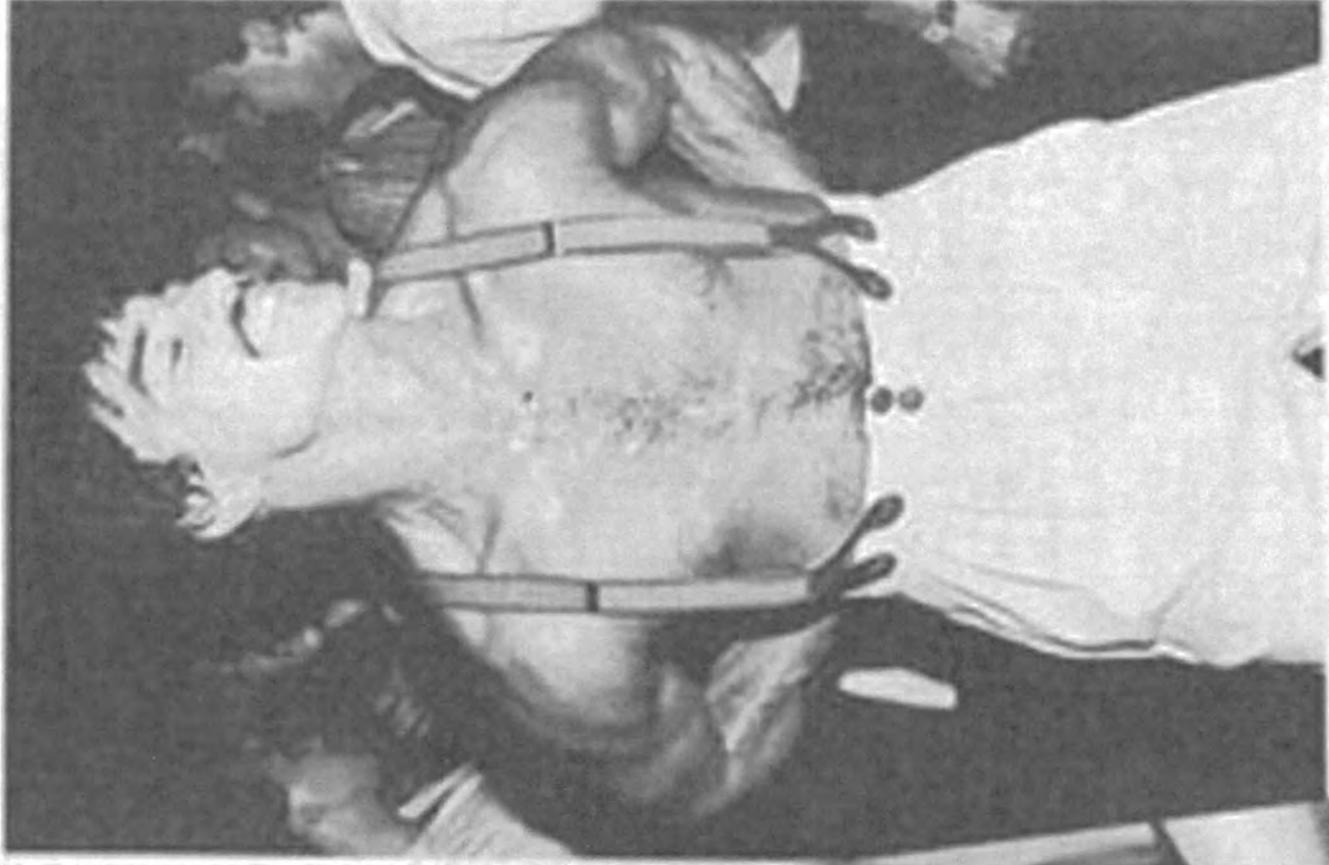
Steve Schulte



Circus Dancers



PHOTOS BY GEORGE LEAN



"Hot" is the word for the music—and the clientele—at L.A.'s popular Circus Disco.

ELECTRIC DISCO



HOLLYWOOD, CA.

We would like to thank these Los Angeles City Councilpersons who recently voted for and supported the City's Equal Rights ordinance prohibiting discrimination in employment and housing of gays.

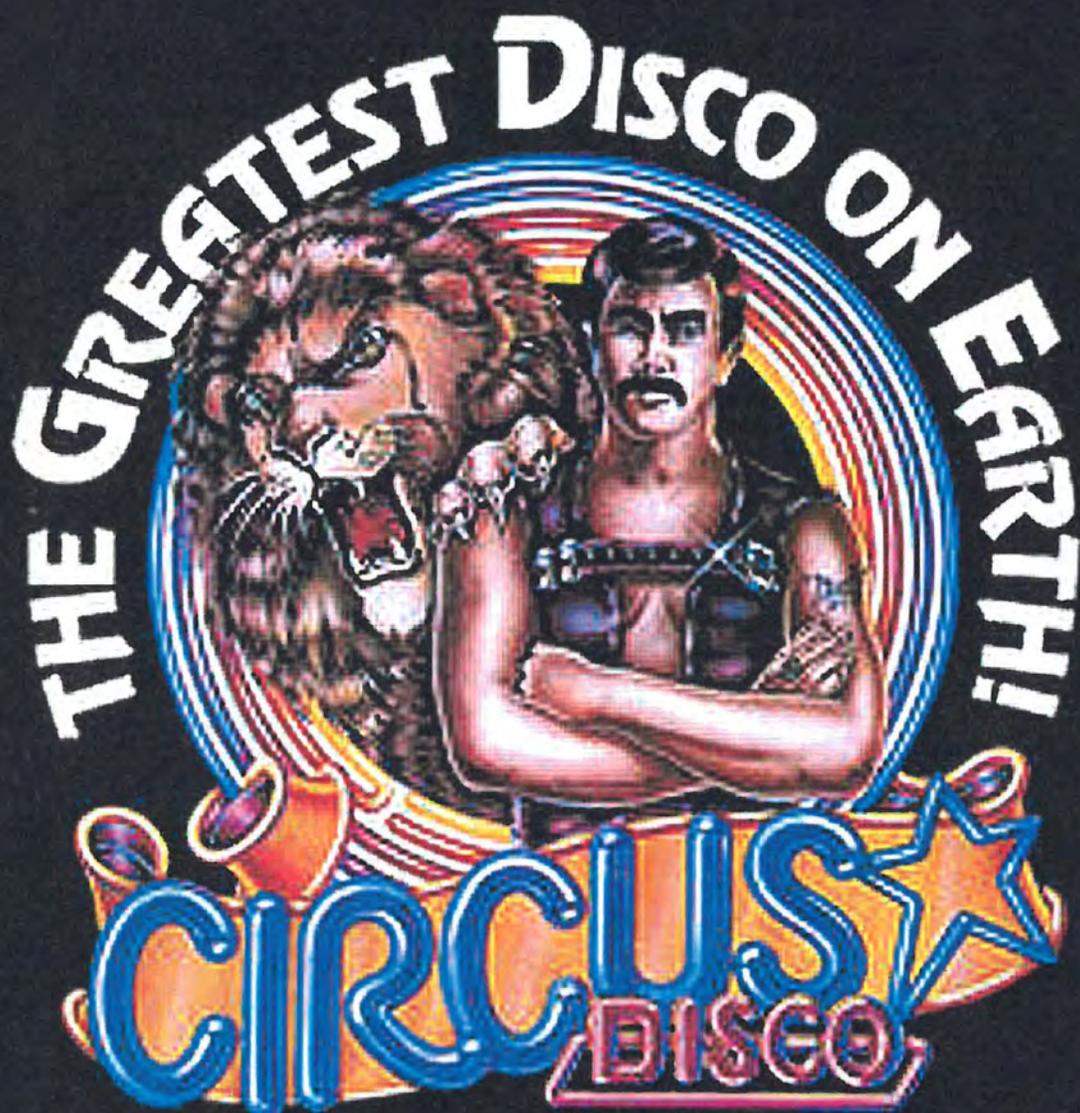
Art Snyder

Peggy Stevenson ★ Joel Wachter ★ John Ferraro

Robert Farrell ★ Joy Picus ★ Bob Renka

Pat Russell ★ Zev Yaroslavsky ★ David Cunningham

Marvin Braude ★ Gilbert Lindsay ★ Emami Bernardi



Sponsored by the Circus Disco Political Action Committee.



Project Site

Lexington Ave

Las Palmas Ave

Santa Monica Blvd

Seward St

Disco Entry Through Drive