

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

Juanita: 30 Years of MORE!

Showering Her With “Loads of Love”, The San Francisco Arts Commission Main Gallery Announces New Exhibition Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of Iconic San Francisco Drag Queen, Juanita MORE!



Image credits: L-R: Matt Ager, *Juanita*, 1992; Marcel Pardo Ariza, *Juanita*, 2022

SAN FRANCISCO, August 31, 2022 – The San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) Main Gallery is proud to present, ***Juanita: 30 Years of MORE!***, an exhibition that highlights and celebrates the groundbreaking and radical work of San Francisco drag icon and denizen of the limelight, philanthropist, fashionista, DJ, activist, community leader, chef, and drag mom to many, Juanita MORE!

Nearly thirty years ago on Halloween in 1992, famed New York City drag queen, Glamamore, also known as “Mr. David”, a longtime collaborator, friend, drag mother, and exclusive designer of every dress she has ever worn since, put Juanita in drag for the very first time. Before he painted her face he said, “You’re gonna be hideous!” In retelling this story, Juanita always follows with “Well I wasn’t and I’m not. I have loved it all and I haven’t stopped since.”

Juanita: 30 Years of MORE! will be on view at the SFAC Main Gallery in the War Memorial Veterans Building from September 30 through November 12, 2022, and will feature a curated selection of photographs, posters, over 40 original commissioned artworks, and dresses that offer a rare glimpse into Juanita’s extraordinary and fabulous life, representing just a fraction of the thousands of objects from her personal archives.

“When I think about the past thirty years, it all plays like a movie rewinding at high speed—full of detail, stories, and characters, rich with visuals that are full of vivid colors and textures that blur together like a kaleidoscope,” says Juanita MORE! “Yet, I’ve never claimed complete ownership of Juanita’s realization or activism. Instead, I’ve been the vehicle that brought her to life through the work of many talented artists, non-profits and a community I consider my chosen family. And this exhibition is my *loads of love* letters to all of them.”

Juanita: 30 Years of MORE! is curated by Oakland-based trans contemporary artist, curator, and educator, Marcel Pardo Ariza, whose practice celebrates intergenerational connection and image making while pushing against the boundaries of visual culture and media representation.

“Juanita’s practice embodies so many things we need more of right now—collective care, bringing people together, valuing and uplifting artists’ work, centering pleasure, friendship, and collaboration,” says Pardo Ariza. “She’s a fierce advocate for queer and trans rights, a true San Francisco icon, and a deeply loved member of the LGBTQIA+ community. Curating this exhibition has been an absolute honor.”

“We are thrilled to partner and work with artist and curator, Marcel Pardo Ariza, to showcase the art and legacy of Juanita MORE!,” said Ralph Remington, Director of Cultural Affairs for the San Francisco Arts Commission. “Over the past three decades, Juanita has worked tirelessly to not only advocate for and give back to San Francisco’s communities in need, but has also worked to support and uplift local artists across multiple disciplines, creating a more vibrant and inclusive arts scene in San Francisco.”

An avid supporter of the arts, Juanita has regularly commissioned other artists to create work inspired by and depicting her. To welcome visitors as they enter the Main Gallery, the exhibition will showcase a selection of over 40 original commissioned artworks that will be installed ‘salon-style’, recreating the cozy entrance of Juanita’s Tenderloin home. Included in this installation are works by Matthew Benedict, J. Manuel Carmona, Timothy Cummings, Ariel Dunitz-Johnson, Farika, Sean Freitas, Serge Gay Jr., Gooch, Koak, Scooter La Forge, Simon Malvaez, Aaron Plant, and Jim Winters among many others.

As visitors continue into the gallery, they will enter a “drag closet” like no other and find a selection of Juanita’s most iconic San Francisco Pride dresses designed by Mr. David, along with all the accessories needed to complete Juanita’s iconic looks, including hats, handbags, gloves, shoes, and jewelry.

Since 2005, Juanita has hosted an annual San Francisco Pride party and fundraiser, welcoming thousands of revelers into a fun and carefree safe space to dance and celebrate. Over the years, this event, along with numerous other fundraising initiatives hosted by Juanita MORE! has helped raised over an estimated one million dollars for local organizations advocating for the queer and trans community, including the GLBT Historical Society & Archives, Our Trans Youth, Q Foundation, Queer Lifespace, and Transgender Law Center, just to name a few.

Juanita MORE! has touched many lives with her work and advocacy over the years, and this exhibition features for the first time ever, a wall showcasing the many awards of recognition Juanita has received from local, state and federal government officials, as well as accolades from numerous beneficiaries she has raised funds for. To show the impact Juanita has had on individual lives, a wall will also be

dedicated to the hundreds of love letters Juanita has received from people whose lives she's changed. Postcards will be available for gallery visitors to leave Juanita a love letter of their own.

And finally, it wouldn't be a true Juanita MORE! exhibition without showcasing her "MOREboys", who will be featured in a special room in the gallery, fondly referred to as the Smut Room, in two bodies of photographic work by Juanita called *Naked Dinner Party* and *Booty Call*. Also in this room will be a backdrop of Juanita's closet and a glowing pink neon sign with Juanita's famous sign off "Loads of Love." MORE! selfies are highly encouraged!

SELECT PRESS PREVIEW

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

From 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Please RSVP to aaron@poinblankcomm.com; coma.te@sfgov.org

Select press images available on [SFAC's Flickr](#).

EXHIBITION DETAILS

September 30 - November 12, 2022

SFAC Main Gallery, 401 Van Ness Ave, Suite 126

Free and open to the public, Wednesday - Saturday, 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Closed Sunday - Tuesday

PLANNED PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

Opening Reception

Friday, September 30, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

SFAC Main Gallery

Free and open to the public.

MORE! Imposters

Thursday, October 6, 7:00 p.m.

SFAC Main Gallery

An evening of drag performances by Juanita MORE! lookalikes.

Naked Dinner Life Drawing Class

Wednesday, October 12, 7:00 p.m.

SFAC Main Gallery

The next best thing to attending one of Juanita's famous Naked Dinner parties is a naked dinner life drawing class.

Juanita MORE! Birthday Bash

Friday, October 28, 7:00 p.m.

SFAC Main Gallery

You only turn 30 once. Come out and celebrate 30 Years of MORE! Halloween attire required.

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About The San Francisco Arts Commission

The San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) is the City agency that champions the arts as essential to daily life by investing in a vibrant arts community, enlivening the urban environment and shaping innovative cultural policy. Our programs include: Civic Art Collection, Civic Design Review, Community Investments, Public Art, SFAC Galleries, and Art Vendor Licensing. To learn more, visit sfartscommission.org.

About Juanita MORE!

This year marks Miss MORE!'s 30th year as an active member of our community as a mother, civil rights activist, and philanthropist. She has long been a soldier in stilettos fighting on the frontlines for awareness and LGBTQ+ rights. Sharp and gorgeous, she pulls all those around her into her fashion fantasy for raising visibility and funds for queer community charities. To date, she has raised more than \$1 Million for LGBTQ+ non-profits.