

VERMONT LAW SCHOOL  
PRESENTS



## SEX, GENDER, EXPRESSION AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT

The Project's Series of Events:

**THURSDAY, MARCH 20<sup>th</sup>:** Evie Lovett's Art Exhibit Opening & Project Kick-Off

- Yates Hall at 5:30 PM

**MONDAY, MARCH 24<sup>th</sup>:** Film Screening: *Paris is Burning*

- Oakes 208 at 7:00 PM

**THURSDAY, APRIL 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Transgender Rights Panel

- Chase Center at 5:30 PM

**FRIDAY, APRIL 4<sup>th</sup>:** GAYLA

- Chase Center at 7:00 PM

**THURSDAY, APRIL 10<sup>th</sup>:** Life After *U.S. v. Windsor* Panel

- Chase Center at 5:00 PM

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## DETAILS AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### What is the project?

Vermont Law School's Alliance and National Lawyers Guild invites you to participate in our *Sex, Gender, Expression and the First Amendment Project* to be held in late March and early April of 2014. Alliance is a coalition of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and straight members of the law school community, who strives to achieve equality before the law, promote diversity, and educate the community about LGBTQQ identities. National Lawyers Guild is legal and political organization of lawyers, legal workers, and law students, who represent progressive political movements, using the law to protect human rights above property interests and to attain social justice.

Our project this spring will consist of a series of panel discussions, speakers, a film showing, an art exhibit, and Gayla, a celebration of the historic queer art form of drag. This project will highlight conceptual issues related to the rights to free expression, assembly, and association as they concern sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and queer intersectionality.

### March 17<sup>th</sup> - April 12<sup>th</sup>

Evie Lovett's *Backstage at the Rainbow Cattle Co. Exhibit*, will be displayed at Vermont Law School in **Oakes Hall and the Second Floor of the Cornell Library**. In this exhibition of photography and audio, photographer Evie offers a unique and highly personal portrait of drag queens in rural Vermont. We see the backstage metamorphosis before the glittering show—waistlines synched, cleavage created, hips inserted, rough skin smoothed with foundation. We hear Miss Candi describe a trip to Lord and Taylor to buy an evening gown, and about Mama's first time in drag.

Evie describes photographing the Ladies of the Rainbow Cattle Co. as a personally transformative experience. "I went into the basement with curiosity and an interest in how drag queens use dressing up to explore different parts of themselves. I didn't think I had much in common with someone who dressed as a drag queen. I emerged wishing I had more in common: more guts to explore a different side of myself, to be courageous and outrageous, to write my own story rather than follow a prescribed path that I feel I should walk. My time with the Ladies has prompted me to ask myself: how can I achieve that degree of freedom—and fun—in my own life?"

The Vermont Folklife Center collaborated with Evie to conduct interviews with the five main drag performers and to curate a traveling exhibition, which incorporates lively audio excerpts of these interviews. Thanks to a grant from the Samara Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation, the show will travel to all fourteen counties in Vermont. Thanks go to statewide LGBTTQQ advocacy organizations RU12?, Outright Vermont and Vermont Cares for their support and collaboration.

Evie Lovett's work inspired the *Project* and will set the tone for a month of education. We hope to create a dialogue that not only brings these complicated and highly contentious issues to the forefront, but that will provide enlightening, honest, and fun discourse.

### March 20<sup>th</sup>

Evie Lovett's *Backstage at the Rainbow Cattle Co.: the Drag Queens of Dummerston, Vermont Exhibit Opening at 5:30 PM in Yates Hall*, will also serve as the kick-off for a month-long exploration of expression and First Amendment issues. Evie Lovett will speak about her years-long experience shooting the work and the unique collaboration between photographer and subject.

## DETAILS AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### March 24<sup>th</sup>

A Film Showing of “**Paris is Burning**” and an introductory guest speaker at **7:00 PM in Oakes 208**. A chronicle of New York's drag scene in the 1980s, focusing on balls, voguing and the ambitions and dreams of those who gave the era its warmth and vitality. Fascinating, discomfiting, and poignant (sometimes all at once). These are folks who endure multiple layers of discrimination, as they are minorities both sexually and racially. But while their tales of rejection by both society and their own families are woeful and bitter, the participants come alive when they hit the "runway" (actually the floor of an old gymnasium) to strut their stuff, liberated from the pressure of blending in with the mainstream. They construct their own families: queer assemblages of love, support, and of course, competition for the crown.

### April 2<sup>nd</sup>

The **Transgender Rights Panel** will be introduced by keynote speaker Vermont **Governor Peter Shumlin** and led by GLAD Attorney **Jennifer Levi** and VLS Professor **Greg Johnson at 5:30 PM in Chase Center**. Professor Levi will discuss how the First Amendment protects the right to dress in a way that is consistent with one's gender identity. Gender expression – including the way we choose to dress – forms an important part of our gender identity. Professor Levi will also discuss litigation she has participated in that involved gender non-conforming youth and the backlash they experienced at their schools. Professor Johnson will discuss the issues that transgender service members face in the military. This session is CLE-approved.

### April 4<sup>th</sup>

**GAYLA** celebrates the historic queer art form of drag and will be the culmination to a month long educational series on sex, gender, expression and the First Amendment. Every year, Alliance puts on Gayla, a drag revue that makes everyone's loafers a little lighter and puts glitter in the crisp spring air here in South Royalton, Vermont. Many come out to see their classmates, staff, faculty, and community members “drag it up” in honor of Stonewall and the modern queer rights movement.

### April 10<sup>th</sup>

A **Post-Argument Panel Discussion, *Life After US v. Windsor***, will act as the finale to the *Sex, Gender, Expression and the First Amendment Project at 5:00 PM in Chase Center. Almost a year after Justice Kennedy declared the federal definition of marriage under DOMA unconstitutional, the panel will discuss some of the immediate and long-term impacts of the decision on federal law and the 1,138 federal benefits available to citizens. The panel will discuss the second prong of DOMA, which provides that the individual states do not have to recognize and give full faith and credit to marriages of other states, thus allowing states that have statutory or constitutional bans on same-sex marriage to refuse to recognize such marriages from other states. Vermont Supreme Court **Justice Beth Robinson** will be the keynote speaker, and the panelists include VLS Professor **Cheryl Hanna**, State Representative **Bill Lippert**, ADF Spokeswoman **Kellie Fiedorek**, and BYU Law Professor **Lynn Wardle**. This session is CLE-approved.*

Co-Sponsored by:



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VLS Sex, Gender, Expression, & the First  
Amendment Project: Spring 2014



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