

HIV and Transgender Activists and Artists Celebrate Nightlife as a Queer Sanctuary

Body Hack's NYC Pride event "Sanctuary After Dark: Legacies in Queer Nightlife" honored the lasting influence of a famed '90s lesbian bar.

July 3, 2026 By [Trent Straube](#)

Clubs and bars have always been vital spaces [for HIV](#) and [LGBTQ communities](#). More than places to socialize and party, they're foundational sanctuaries where folks create community, educate one another, rally, share history, heal, bond, grieve, regroup, find safety and more. On June 27, a New York City Pride event held at the [Brooklyn club Nowadays](#) celebrated that enduring history. Titled Sanctuary After Dark: Legacies of Queer Nightlife, it paid honor to the lasting legacy of the '90 lesbian bar Clit Club.

A presentation at Sanctuary After Dark: Legacies of Queer Nightlife, at Nowadays in Brooklyn, June 27, 2026 Courtesy of Creative Time/Ally Caple

The event was spearheaded by [Body Hack](#), a party collective that supports transgender and gender-nonconforming people, along with the arts nonprofit [Creative Time](#), as part of the latter's Toward Sanctuary series of events.

Event organizers described the event in a press statement as follows:

The event celebrates the lineage between Clit Club, the notorious Lesbian club in the Meatpacking District in the '90s, and Body Hack. The artists involved—[Julie Tolentino](#), [Alice O'Malley](#) and [Lola Flash](#)—all took part in Clit Club in some way: Tolentino was the founder, Flash tended bar, and O'Malley worked in a coat check. All three have a photographic practice, and we have some amazing archival photos from their time with Clit Club.

There will be a conversation between these artists and a younger cohort at Body Hack, who are continuing this legacy of providing Queer space and joy through clubbing.

The event is also a fundraiser for mutual-aid campaigns supporting trans healthcare, decarceration, housing and overall stability. Clit Club did the same in the '90s and was one of the first collectives raising money and advocating for Lesbian healthcare.

Though visual and performance artist [Julie Tolentino](#) was unable to attend, she wrote a moving text piece based on the lineage of Clit Club/Body Hack, which artist and writer [Buffy](#) and choreographer and writer [Anh Vo](#) performed following the talk with Flash, viento izquierdo ugaz and O'Malley.

Choreographer and writer Anh Vo in a spoken word performance during Sanctuary After Dark: Legacies of Queer Nightlife, at Nowadays in Brooklyn, June 27, 2026
Courtesy of Creative Time/Ally Caple

In 2023, POZ featured Flash's photography in the feature, ["Traveling With the Ancestors."](#) Click the link to view a slideshow. The article reads in part:

In the early years of the AIDS crisis, Lola Flash was an active member of [ACT UP](#) New York and its affinity group ART+ Positive, which was founded to fight homophobia, AIDSphobia and censorship in the arts. In 1989, Flash was featured in the now famous "Kissing Doesn't Kill" poster by the activist artist collective Gran Fury. The poster appeared on buses throughout New York City.

As a photographer, Flash’s early work focused on social and political issues, which included HIV and AIDS. Over the past 40 years, their art has continued to challenge stereotypes and preconceptions about sex, gender and race.

Sanctuary After Dark was part of Body Hack’s 2026 Pride Nonstop at Nowadays, described as “a weekend-long party supporting mutual aid campaigns for trans healthcare, decarceration, housing, and overall stability while revealing vital resonances between multiple generations of queer nightlife sanctuary spaces.”

The Pride Nonstop lineup included:



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