

tic, and in 1857 simply coopted the holiday. By the end of the century it had tied Carnival into the world of New Orleans high society. The Mardi Gras season became the social season; debutantes reigned, and continue to reign today, as queens of the fifty or more "krewes," the Carnival organizations that hold parades; and the spectacular masked balls to which the parades lead function as the city's debutante parties.

The pageantry and costuming, the anonymity of masking, and the freewheeling tolerance and sexual permissiveness characteristic Carnival made it a natural attraction for homosexuals. From early on, individuals as well as organized groups took part in the festival, first with greater decorum and later with greater abandon. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, groups of affluent young men, still dressed in white-tie formals from balls the night before, drank, sang, and danced together in the streets on Mardi Gras day, but went little further.

Black celebrants, on the other hand, showed considerably more exuberance. A group of black transvestites calling themselves "The Million Dollar Dolls," made Carnival appearances from the 1920s through the 1940s dressed in extravagant wigs, sequined blouses, and leotards covered with hundreds of one-dollar bills. In 1931 the King of Zulu, the major black Carnival krewe, chose as his queen one of the city's most outrageous female impersonators. And the relationships of the *runners*, *spy boys*, and *flag boys*, youths who attend the needs of the *braves* of the nine famous, and curious, straight, black, all-male Carnival groups called "Indians," are reminiscent of the relationships between ancient Greek warriors and their young pages.

In 1959 a number of individuals who had been masking in groups for some years formally organized the first gay Mardi Gras krewe, Yuga-Duga. Established *ad hoc* as a mockery of straight krewes and balls, it caught on and lasted a rocky three

years, including a police raid on its first ball, only to disband in 1962. But other gay krewes, intent upon establishing permanent social organizations, immediately formed. By the end of the eighties, there were twelve, including one all-female organization. The gay krewes now closely copy, and often equal in size and wealth, the straight krewes they once parodied. Each holds a series of "King Cake" parties that begin on Twelfth-night (January 6) and end at Mardi Gras; some have elaborate parades. All stage, during Carnival season, huge masked balls featuring spectacular tableaux that rival, or sometimes surpass, their straight counterparts. The gay balls fill the five weeks before Mardi Gras day. Though technically private affairs, the balls fill with invited guests, most of whom are straight, the 2,000-plus-seat civic arenas in which they are held. This popularity makes them, far and away, the largest regularly scheduled gay social events in the world.

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MARÉES, HANS VON (1837-1887)

German painter. Marées was born into comfortable circumstances in Dessau, where his father was a jurist and poet and his mother a cultivated scion of a Jewish banking family. After study with Karl Steffek in Berlin in 1853-54, he gravitated to Munich, then Germany's premier center of artistic culture. There he struck up a friendship with the society painter Franz von Lenbach, who in 1864 took him to Italy where Marées subsisted for a time making copies of the Old Masters. Since the time of Goethe, Italy had been the promised land of sensitive Germans, and Marées, even more loyal than the Italo-philic painters of the time (the "Deutsch-Römer"), was to remain there for the rest of his life—except for the period 1869-73 which he passed in Berlin and Dresden. Italian landscapes and Italian men (especially peasants and fishermen)—together

with such Renaissance masters as Signorelli, Giorgione, and Michelangelo—were to provide unfailing sources of inspiration. These interests contributed to his mastery—unsurpassed for his time—of the theme of the male nude. Marées' frescoes in the Zoological Institute of Naples (1873) were his first monumental works—an impulse he continued in his celebrated triptychs.

Marées, who never married, maintained a lifelong pair bond with the art theorist Konrad Fiedler (1841–1895). His deepest attachment, however, was to the sculptor Adolph von Hildebrand, ten years his junior, who helped him with the Naples frescoes. For several months the two artists lived in virtual isolation in the monastery of San Francesco near Florence, where Hildebrand posed for a major Marées canvas *Three Youths among Orange Trees* (1875–80). Later, to the painter's sorrow, relations lapsed.

Marées' work is characterized by a rich coloristic chiaroscuro that creates a mysterious bond between his figures and their landscape setting. The prevailing mood is one of Arcadian nostalgia, suffused with classical and medieval reminiscences—the former recalling such contemporaries as the French painters Puvis de Chavannes and Odilon Redon, and the latter the English Pre-Raphaelites. Several canvases show a man who, while embracing a woman, looks wistfully at a third figure, a man—as if pondering the choice between female and male love. Marées' last major work is an enigmatic version of *The Rape of Ganymede* (1885).

Marées had no immediate followers and was little appreciated until the twentieth century. Even today his works defy assimilation into any of the standard sequences of the history of art; they belong to a category of their own, accessible only to a select few

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MARLOWE, CHRISTOPHER (1564–1593)

English playwright and poet. Born two months before Shakespeare, Marlowe was the son of an established and respectable shoemaker in Canterbury, where he attended the King's School, later going on to take both his B.A. and M.A. degrees at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. One month before he was to appear for his commencement in 1587, amid rumors of his conversion to Catholicism and flight to France, the university received a letter from the Queen's Privy Council excusing his absence and assuring them of his loyal service to Elizabeth. This letter has created a great deal of speculation about the dashing and iconoclastic young man's activities, suggesting that he was probably working as a government spy.

The final six years of his short life were spent in London where "Kit" Marlowe was usually involved in something scandalous or illegal, resulting in several scrapes with the law and at least one prison confinement. During these years, he produced his slender but highly important and influential canon: *Dido Queen of Carthage* (1586), *Tamburlaine I and II* (1597), *The Jew of Malta* (1589), *The Massacre at Paris* (1590), *Edward II* (1591), *Doctor Faustus* (1592), and the unfinished narrative poem *Hero and Leander*. The first genuine poet to write for the English theatre was killed, perhaps assassinated, under highly suspicious circumstances by a knife wound to the head in a private dining room in an inn in Deptford on May 30, 1593.

Twelve days before his death, Marlowe had been arrested on charges of atheism, stemming in part from his reputation and from accusations made against him by fellow playwright Thomas Kyd, who had been charged earlier; Kyd's claim was based on documents seized during a search of the rooms both men used for writing. This sort of sensation followed Marlowe throughout his life and, seemingly, was fostered by the poet himself.