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.

Lucy J. Fair

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 Steffeck 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.