

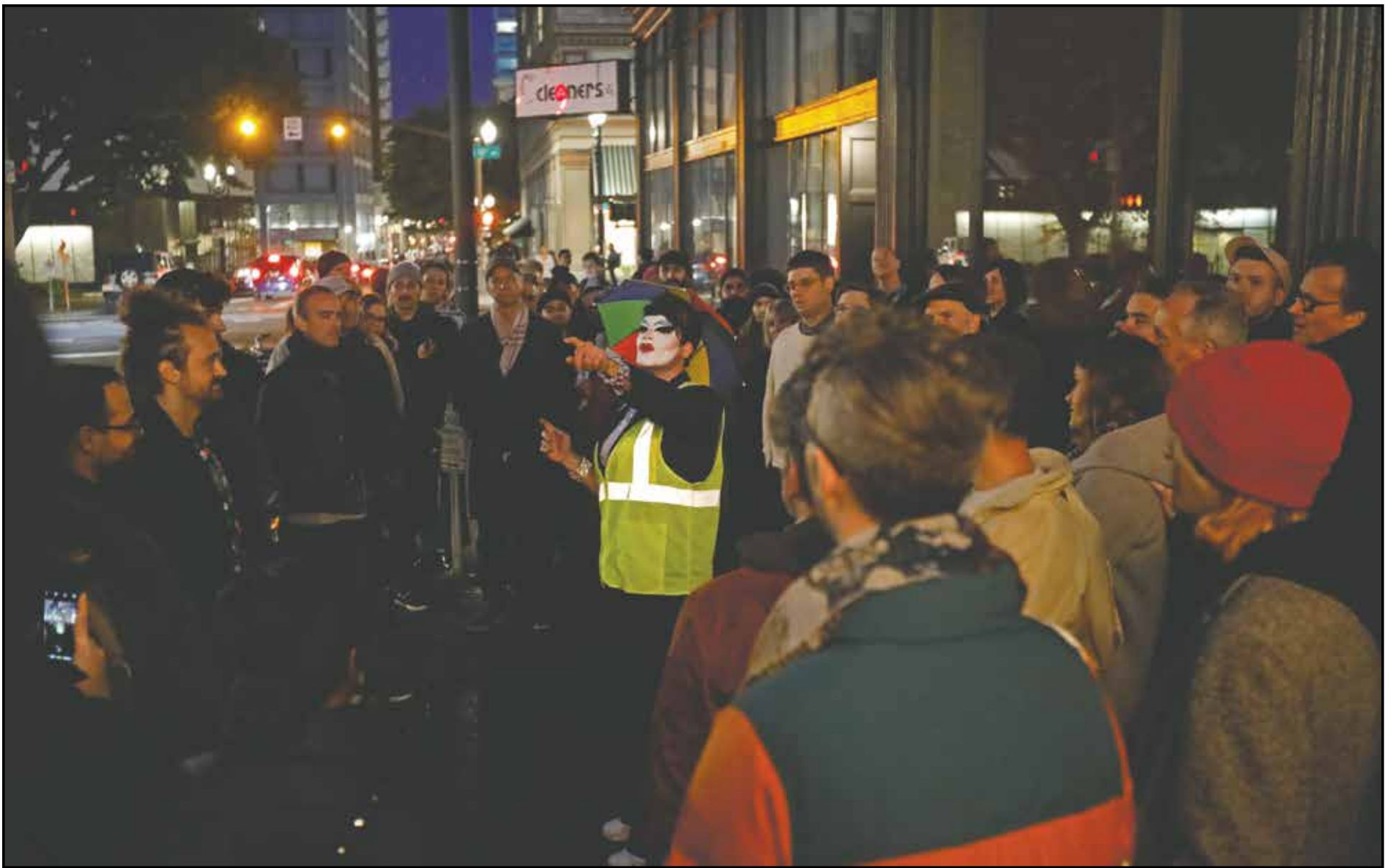


Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Tribal member Anthony Hudson as Carla Rossi leads a tour of what was a center of the gay community in Portland on Saturday, Oct. 19. Rossi gave the history of the area and explained how gentrification has changed it.

‘The show is so crazy, but it works’

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though drag, performance, video and theater.

From this came the character of Carla Rossi, who has evolved into Portland’s premier drag clown hosting nightlife events that include everything from neighborhood gentrification tours to queer horror film screening nights, always with a smattering of humor.

This coming May, Hudson and Rossi will take the stage at the world premiere of Hudson’s first full-length play, “Looking for Tiger Lily,” produced by Portland’s Artists Repertory Theatre.

The storyline is that Rossi has taken over Hudson’s life and he is trying to get it back. With an identity including a mix of Indigenous/white/queer, Hudson grew up looking to the Indian princess Tiger Lily from “Peter Pan” for cultural guidance.

“As a kid, I saw this mythical, invented image of our culture,” he says.

The play’s story follows this quest to find validation as a Native artist and be at peace with a confused identity.

“Carla Rossi is my way of confronting whiteness within myself,” Hudson says. “She’s the intersection of my half-Native, half-German mixed heritage. ... As a queer performer, Carla is also an avenue for publicly and politically negotiating gender in a heterosexist binary.”

Hudson and Rossi have been featured at Seattle PrideFest, the

Native Two Spirit people reclaiming their status

Although the term “Two Spirit” is included in the umbrella of LGBTQ+, it doesn’t mean only someone who is a Native American/Alaska Native and gay.

Traditionally, Native American Two Spirit people were male, female and sometimes intersexed individuals who combined activities of both men and women with traits unique to their status. In most Tribes, they were considered neither men nor women; they occupied a distinct, alternative gender status.

Although there were variations in their roles in Tribes across North America, they shared some common traits. These included specialized work roles, gender variation, spiritual leadership and same-sex relations. Among the Lakota, Mohave, Crow, Cheyenne and others, Two Spirit people were believed to be lucky in love and able to bring this luck to others.

Most Indigenous communities today have specific terms in their own languages for the gender-variant members of their communities, and the social and spiritual roles they fulfill. Even with the relatively recent adoption of umbrella terms like Two Spirit, not all cultures will perceive it the same way.

The disruptions caused by colonial conquest and disease, together with the efforts of missionaries, government agents, boarding schools and white settlers resulted in the loss of many Native American traditions. Two Spirit roles were singled out for condemnation as “sinful” and often subjected to violence. As a result, these traditions and practices were conducted in secret or completely disappeared in many Tribes.

Today, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Native people throughout North America are reviving the Two Spirit role and traditions. National gatherings have been held since the early 1990s, and regional gatherings are held in several parts of the United States.

Source: Indian Health Service

Risk/Reward Festival and the Cascade AIDS Project Auction, among other events across the United States and abroad. They also host and program the film series “Queer Horror” bimonthly at Portland’s Hollywood Theatre, where Hudson also serves as community programmer.

‘Looking for Tiger Lily’

“Looking for Tiger Lily,” which will premiere on May 2, is Artists Repertory’s second commissioned work by an Indigenous playwright.

The play began as a solo show in 2016 that Hudson performed at Hollywood Theater with support from the Regional Arts & Culture

Council. At one of those performances he caught the attention of Artists Repertory’s Luan Schooler, director of new play development.

Marketing Director Kisha Jarrett got to know Hudson after reading a first draft of the play. She calls Hudson’s progress remarkable.

“The show is so crazy, but it works,” Jarrett says. “It’s almost like a tripped-out ‘Sesame Street.’ Then you throw in Carla’s personality and it’s really funny. I’m glad Luan believed in Anthony and put this play in our new world premiere.”

Since the Arts & Culture Council grant, Hudson has received Western Arts Alliance’s Native Launchpad program grant, was named Native Arts & Culture Foundation’s National Artist Fellow in Artistic Innovation, received a Creative Highways Award from the Oregon Community Foundation and an individual artist fellowship from the Oregon Arts Commission.

The solo show made its New England premiere in April 2018 at the Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H., and toured internationally to Vancouver, B.C.’s Talking Stick Festival in February 2019 and Melbourne’s Yirramboi Festival in Victoria, Australia, in May 2019.

Hudson views the evolution of “Looking for Tiger Lily” from a solo show into a full-length play as a mirror of his own journey.

“I think of these as two distinct performances,” Hudson says. “The

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