



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Magic Time!—
Art & Ephemera of the Caffé Cino***

Co-curated by Greg Ellis and Magie Dominic

August 15 – September 28, 2019

Opening reception:
Thursday, August 15, 2019
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Organized by Ward 5B and Caffé Cino alumnus Magie Dominic, “Magic Time!—Art & Ephemera of the Caffé Cino” coincides with the theatre’s designation as an historic site by the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission in June 2019.

In 1958 at the age of 26, Joe Cino opened a coffeehouse at 31 Cornelia Street in Greenwich Village. Soon Cino started to allow the production of small, avant-garde theatre productions in the venue. Caffé Cino would serve as one of the earliest safe spaces for gay artists to perform their plays, songs, and poetry, despite the illegality of depicting homosexuality on the stage at the time. By paying off both the local organized crime racket as well as the NYPD, Joe Cino was able to create a radical environment where the New York underground took root. As the Theatre of the Ridiculous founder, John Vaccaro, stated: “The Caffé Cino is the beginning! This is it! The major things done in New York were done there, and nowhere else. I don’t give a shit what anybody else says. They’re lying.”

Operating until 1968, Caffé Cino has been widely acknowledged as the birthplace of Off-Off Broadway Theatre, along with the formation of American Queer Theatre. The Caffé Cino was the cradle of gay culture, informing future generations with its fiercely independent spirit. (Known for many, many productions, The Cino was also the place where Bernadette Peters performed “Dames at Sea,” one of her very first theatre ventures.)

ClampArt’s exhibition will feature artwork of collagist and memoirist Magie Dominic, in addition to works by Kenny Burgess—the artist and designer of the original Caffé Cino posters. Both were a part of the Caffé Cino and are represented in The Fales Library & Special Collections at New York University and in The New York Library for the Performing Arts Archives at Lincoln Center. The exhibition will also feature an extensive collection of ephemera from the Caffé Cino itself.

Ward 5B is an archival and curatorial service specializing in late 20th-century urban ephemera and art, with a focus on punk aesthetic, radical spaces, performance art, drag, experimental theatre, camp, queercore, and guerrilla/street art projects.

For more information and images please contact Brian Paul Clamp, Director, or see www.clampart.com.

