

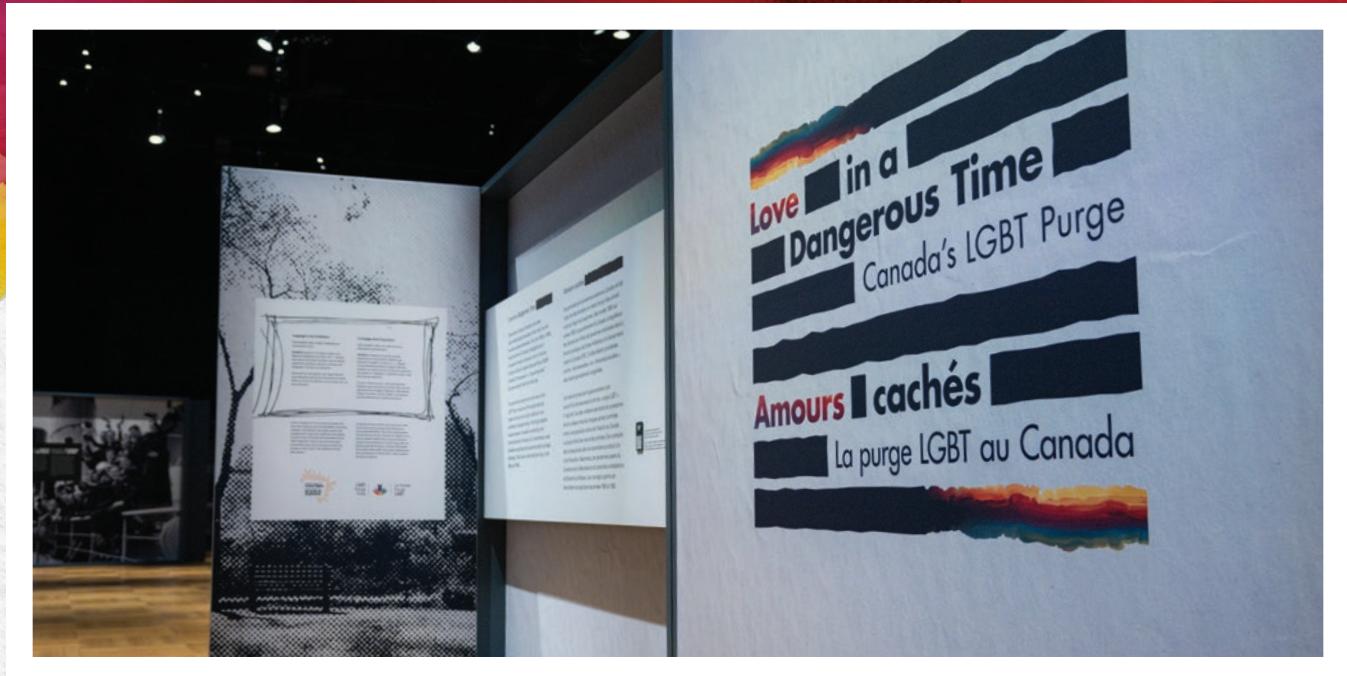
Love [REDACTED] in a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Dangerous Time [REDACTED]

Canada's LGBT Purge



Canada

 #AtCMHR
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During the Cold War, the Canadian government considered homosexuality to be a threat to national security.

From the 1950s to the 1990s, the Government of Canada systematically investigated, harassed and fired 2SLGBTQI+ members of the Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP and federal public service for purported national security reasons during what came to be known as “the LGBT Purge.” It was one of the longest-running, largest-scale violations of human rights in any workplace in Canadian history.

Love in a Dangerous Time: Canada's LGBT Purge is a powerful exhibition about this era, created by the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in partnership with the LGBT Purge Fund, and with input from 2SLGBTQ+ community members, activists, educators, scholars and survivors.

It draws on first-hand accounts to tell the story of how people were targeted based on suspicion of their sexuality, investigated, interrogated, and in many cases, removed from their jobs. The exhibition also explores how 2SLGBTQ+ people resisted this Purge through political activism and successful legal challenges that expanded human rights protections for all Canadians.

While centring Purge survivor narratives, *Love in a Dangerous Time: Canada's LGBT Purge* connects the past with the present, and seeks to generate new conversations about human rights, gender and sexual diversity, and contemporary challenges. The exhibition is designed to educate and inspire Canadians to help create a future in which the rights of 2SLGBTQ+ people are respected.

Space requirements

325–370 square metres (3,500–4,000 square feet)

Exhibition experience

Visitors coming into the exhibition will find themselves in a multi-media experience comprised of a number of zones/areas, made up of images, sound, video, artifacts and more.

Highlights



The Bar

Step into an immersive re-imagining of a vibrant 1960s bar located within the Lord Elgin Hotel in Ottawa, known as a gathering place for the queer community. This engaging space invites visitors to explore the camaraderie and challenges of the era.



The Dark Room

Venture into The Dark Room, an intense immersive experience representing an interrogation chamber. A striking one-way mirror presents moving images on a monitor, designed to evoke a chilling sense of being watched. Accompanying audio clips of survivor oral histories offer insights into the harrowing experiences of those interrogated.



Ask a Question: Meet LGBT Purge Survivors

Visitors have the unique opportunity to engage directly with Purge survivors through a voice user interface (VUI) or a physical controller. This interactive feature makes it possible for visitors to ask questions and receive insightful responses from those who have lived through the Purge.



The Fruit Machine: A Space Opera

Canadian performance art duo Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan created a film installation that reveals the cultural context underpinning the Purge. *The Fruit Machine: A Space Opera* references pop culture of the 1950s and 1960s, when television, advertising and many other cultural expressions presented heterosexuality and binary gender as keys to a normal, good life. The film takes its title from the "Fruit Machine" of the 1960s, which was not a machine at all but a flawed series of tests the Canadian government had a psychologist develop to detect queer individuals "scientifically."



The Regulation of Desire

At the heart of the exhibition is *The Regulation of Desire*, a captivating and immersive film installation by Canadian filmmaker Noam Gonick, made in collaboration with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. This evocative piece portrays fractured bodies in motion, crafting a moving narrative of the Purge experience. The title draws from Gary Kinsman's influential book, *The Regulation of Desire: Queer Histories, Queer Struggles* (1987, revised in 2024).

Exhibition inclusions

The travelling exhibition will include:

- All artifacts. Loan agreements for the artifacts will be the responsibility of the CMHR;
- Images, audio soundscapes, graphics, AV projections, digital interactives and accessibility features;
- IT/AV components. Remote IT/AV support will be provided;
- All physical graphic/environmental components (venues will be required to produce single-use graphics).

Note: Assets used within the exhibition are licensed for exhibition use. Licensing for promotional use may be the responsibility of the venue.

Accessibility

All CMHR exhibitions follow inclusive design standards that facilitate interaction by visitors of all abilities in English and French.

Duration

Twelve-week recommended minimum.

Contemporary Issues Wall

The Contemporary Issues Wall features a large, interactive display that invites visitors to uncover hidden words and icons that showcase the achievements and ongoing struggles of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Without visitor engagement, the messages and symbols fade, highlighting the need for continued action towards a world where everyone is protected by human rights.

Optional services

Exhibition layout design services can be provided by the CMHR for an additional cost.

Rental fee

Please inquire.

Partners

Love in a Dangerous Time: Canada's LGBT Purge is delivered in partnership with the LGBT Purge Fund and presented by RBC.

Contact us

For more information about this exhibition, or to be added to the CMHR's travelling exhibition mailing list, email travellingexhibitions@humanrights.ca.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) uses innovative storytelling to promote thought and conversation about the importance of human rights for all. One of Canada's six national museums, it is located in Winnipeg, Manitoba.