



## LGBTQ PROGRAMMING & ADVOCACY AT THE BETSY-SOUTH BEACH

**LGBTQ Poets' work included on The Betsy's Poetry Rail** – a piece of public art, located on our property, that includes the work of 12 poets that shaped Miami Culture – this is a permanent installation made of water-cut steel. [See attached image.](#) **Included LGBT Poets include: Langston Hughes, Carlos Pintado, Richard Blanco, and Julie Marie Wade.**

**Miami's FIRST TransArt Festival (Founder of this project)** One of the nation's first festivals honoring the serious work of transgender artists creating in all genres: literature, music and dance with partners Unity Coalition and TransMiami. TRANSART brings together a collection of talents, individuals & artistic genres to create awareness, nurture aspiring artists and enlighten the general population about the many layers of the Transgender community for the first time in Miami's rich cultural history. [TransArt continues under the direction of Unity Coalition and Pridelines, with support from The Betsy.](#)

**PRIDE POETS LIGHT THE NIGHT** - The Betsy was proud to honor the legacy of those lost in the PULSE massacre by featuring LGBTQ Inaugural Poet, Richard Blanco reading his work *One Pulse, One Poem* at The Betsy's Poetry Rail, in partnership with Miami Beach Pride, with more than 100 community members participating. [See attached image.](#)

**Celebrate Orgullo- Hispanic Pride - In partnership with Unity Coalition - (Betsy is ongoing Partner and has been Host Hotel)** – Various program components have included Noches de Jazz (LGBT Jazz nights at Betsy), the Miami debut of Gay Face – a photography exhibition that reveals innate alliances between gay & straight culture, Orgullo writers in residence with salons and readings, and an offsite Writer's Tent at a Festival hosted by The Betsy's Writers Room. [The Betsy partnered with Celebrate Orgullo during Hispanic Heritage Month \(October\) for several years.](#)

**Supporter of Aqua Foundation for Women - (Corporate Program Underwriter)** Underwrote their first annual fundraising dinner in Bbar at The Betsy, and was a corporate sponsor of TransCon @ Barry University for several years. [The Betsy invited Aqua Foundation to hold a TRANSTALK with Poet Joy Ladin \(Professor, Yeshiva University\), and welcomed a diverse community to hear her amazing story – and experience her poetry as well.](#)

**Reading Queer - Host Hotel (that supported launch of this project with Knight Foundation)** "QUEER DEPOT 101: Creativity & Queerness" was the inaugural Salon intended to spark a conversation about the intersection of creativity and queerness. The project continues both at Betsy and at other venues around the community – underscoring Betsy's commitment to being a catalyst for the creation of new programs that embrace the artistic pursuits, interests, and output of too often marginalized communities. [The Betsy is honored to continue to sponsor the pacesetting work of Reading Queer.](#)

**SAGE – Host Hotel – National Board Meeting and Annual Fundraiser.** The Betsy hosted and underwrote portions of this national organization's annual gathering, [for two years running](#), sharing a mission to empower, protect, and advocate for aging members of the LGBT community, Nationwide.

**Awards – Jonathan Plutzik, BETSY Chairman, awarded the Community Visionary Award from Unity Coalition (2015)**  
**Deborah Briggs – Betsy VP for Philanthropy awarded the Ally Award from Aqua Foundation for Women (2016)**

### Community References

Robin Schwartz, Founder, Aqua Foundation & Development Director, Equity Florida – [rjs100@gmail.com](mailto:rjs100@gmail.com)

Herb Sosa, Founder and Director – Unity Coalition – [herbsosa@yahoo.com](mailto:herbsosa@yahoo.com)

## Frequently Asked Questions about The Betsy's commitment to LGBT causes.

1. How do you train your guest-facing employees to understand the needs of LGBTQ guests?

*The beauty of a Betsy experience is that visitors across all demographics are seamlessly welcomed through the doors, many times without feeling a need to overtly identify beyond their label as 'global traveler'. However, through progressive training programs administered through our Human Resources program, our staff is trained – at all levels to be sensitive to the needs and interests of the LGBTQ community.*

2. Do you specifically market to LGBTQ travelers?

Miami Beach is a diverse destination where the LGBT community is well respected and we are proud to be a local leader in this space. We work closely with the Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, the Hub (Gay Visitors Center), and Unity Coalition as a place that is especially embracing to LGBTQ visitors.

3. Can you talk about any LGBTQ marketing initiatives over the past few years that you think were particularly successful or well received?

*As a matter of policy, we make a point never to use photographs that might inadvertently marginalize audiences. For example, you'll seldom find hetero couples in our ads, or see the expected bikini clad woman in a pool shot. Reason is that we want our clients to see themselves in the images of our spaces – to imagine themselves fitting just perfectly into the shot. Our message is that you are what we're looking for. You are our perfect guest.*

4. With same-sex marriage being legal in all 50 states, there's been an expectation that the honeymoon market among this segment of travelers might really take off. What have you seen? Has your property responded to the opportunity? What about your competitors ... are they focusing on this potential at all?

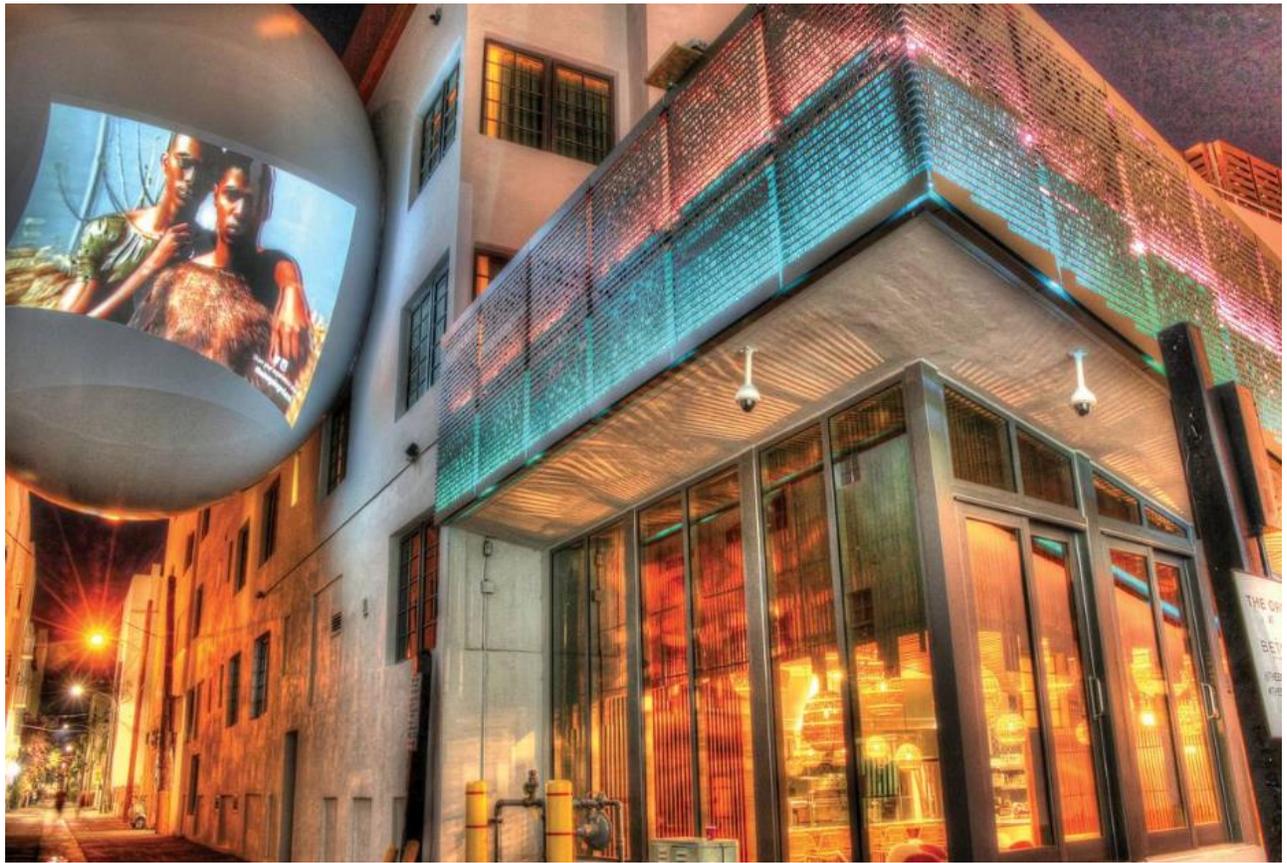
We have indeed hosted commitment ceremonies prior to marriage laws being passed, and recently have hosted more traditional wedding events, and we are eager to spread the word that The Betsy is the perfect place for LGBTQ couples to celebrate their anticipated lives together. Love is love.

5. What mistakes do you think other hotels or tourism companies make when marketing to LGBTQ travelers?

We are authentic in our embrace to LGBTQ travelers, and admire colleagues in the field also working hard to 'do the right thing'. We also believe there is room in hospitality for many approaches to developing an LGBTQ base of clientele. Travelers will choose what resonates best for them.

6. What LGBTQ initiatives are you most proud of?

- The Betsy has a unique **artist in residence program**, that has welcomed more than 1000 thought leaders to our property. Since opening the room we have honored the work of LGBTQ writers in intentional ways. Reading Queer, Aqua Foundation, Keshet, Human Rights Watch, SAVE, and Equity Florida are partners. See our list of alumni visitors @ [thebetsywritersroom.com](http://thebetsywritersroom.com)
- **TransArt** will continue, and though now administered through our community partner, Unity Coalition, we provide in-kind support for event and trans-identified artists affiliated with the Festival.
- We are also the fiscal conduit – through The Betsy Community Fund @ The Miami Foundation for **My Trans Health** – a 'kick-started' important initiative that ensures access to credentialed doctors for the trans community.
- April is always **Miami Beach Pride**, and its National Poetry Month! We'll revisit the voices of gay poets, with a special focus on Langston Hughes, Carlos Pintado, Richard Blanco, and Julie Marie Wade – all powerful LGBT poetic voices! And we will welcome performer, Teraj, and Media Influencer, Barry Hoy, in residence for the week.
- The Betsy currently has an exhibition of the work of **LGBTQ photographer Andy Sweet** in our Lobby Salon. Sweet was born and raised in South Beach, and through his photography captured the lives of Holocaust survivors who retired to the area and who lived out their colorful lives in jubilant celebration.



**Pride Poets Light the Night – at The Betsy Hotel**



**Image taken at The Betsy Hotel during Miami Beach Pride**