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## Steve Conti Collection of Sascha Brastoff Photographs

### Collection number: Consult repository

ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives  
Los Angeles, California

Processed by:

Michael P. Palmer

Date Completed:

October 1, 2006

Encoded by:

Michael P. Palmer

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Processing this collection has been funded by a generous grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.



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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Steve Conti collection of Sascha Brastoff Photographs

**Dates:** ca. 1940-ca. 1965

**Collection number:** Coll2006-008

**Collector:** Conti, Steve

**Collection Size:** 15 photographs.

**Repository:** ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

Los Angeles, California 90007

**Abstract:** 15 photographs of artist and designer Sascha Brastoff, primarily in drag, from circa 1940 to circa 1965.

**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English

### Access

The collection is open to researchers. There are no access restrictions.

### Publication Rights

Researchers wishing to publish materials must obtain permission in writing from ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives as the physical owner. Researchers must also obtain clearance from the holder(s) of any copyrights in the materials. Note that ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives can grant copyright clearance only for those materials for which we hold the copyright. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain copyright clearance for all other materials directly from the copyright holder(s).

### Preferred Citation

Sheet #, Steve Conti Collection of Sascha Brastoff Photographs, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

### Acquisition Information

Gift of Steve Conti, February 2004.

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## Processing Information

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## Sascha Brastoff

Sascha Brastoff, potter, metal sculptor, and jewelry designer, was born Samuel Brostofsky in Cleveland, Ohio, on October 23, 1918. He attended Glenville High School in Cleveland, and took drama classes under the future Hollywood producer Ross Hunter. At age 17, he began studying dance with Edward Caton, and later danced for several seasons with the Cleveland Ballet. Impressed with his artistic abilities, his art teachers formed a small private scholarship to enable him to attend the Western Reserve University School of Art in Cleveland. In 1940, Brastoff moved to New York where he designed window displays for Macy's and joined the Clay Club, where in 1941 he held a one-man show of his terra cotta "whimsies". In 1942, he joined the U.S. Army Air Force, where he designed costumes and scenery for Special Services events to entertain the troops; he also appeared on stage, and became well known for his comic interpretation of Carmen Miranda. In 1944, Brastoff moved to California, where he signed a seven-year contract with 20th Century Fox as a designer and entertainer. In 1947, he opened his first ceramic plant in Los Angeles, selling hand-painted earthenware. In 1952, with backing from Winthrop Rockefeller, Brastoff opened a new factory in Los Angeles. It was destroyed by fire six months later, and in 1953, Brastoff opened a new 35,000-square foot factory and showroom that eventually employed more than 100 people. In 1960, the business began to decline, and in 1962 Brastoff suffered a nervous collapse and left the company, which continued to sell wares under his name until it finally closed in 1973. After several years away from business, Brastoff returned in 1966 with a one-man show of metal sculpture at the Dalzell Hatfield Galleries in Los Angeles. He thereafter designed and produced lines for ceramic, jewelry, and decorative arts companies. As his health declined after 1985, he increasingly curtailed his artistic activities. He died after a long battle with prostate cancer on February 4, 1993.

Sources:

Conti, Steve; Bethany, A. DeWayne; Seay, Bill. *Collector's Encyclopedia of Sascha Brastoff*. Paducah, KY: Collector Books, c1995.

*Sascha Brastoff-Wisconsin Pottery Association*. 1998. <http://www.wisconsinpottery.org/brastoff/brastoff.htm> , accessed on September 30, 2006.

## Steve Conti (donor)

Steve Conti is the co-author, together with A DeWayne Bethany and Bill Seay, of *Collector's Encyclopedia of Sascha Brastoff* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, c1995).

## Scope and Content of Collection

The collection consists of one photograph of Sascha Brastoff in the costume of the title role in *Afternoon of a Faun*, which he danced for the Cleveland Ballet, circa 1940; one photograph taken at a costume party, circa 1950; three photographs of Brastoff in drag, possibly as Audrey Hepburn, circa 1955; nine photographs, labeled "A" through "K" ("A", "B", and "I" are missing), of Brastoff in drag, with processing dates December 1963-March 1964; and one Polaroid photograph of Brastoff in drag, circa 1965.

## Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Brastoff, Sascha, 1918-1993.

Brastoff, Sascha, 1918-1993

Conti, Steve

Gay Artists--United States

Photographs

Sheet 1      **Sascha Brastoff in costume for *Afternoon of a Faun* ca. 1940**

**Physical Description:** 1 photograph

Sheet 2      **Sascha Brastoff with two young men in Polynesian attire at costume party ca. 1950**

**Physical Description:** 1 photograph

Sheet 3-4 **Sascha Brastoff in drag, possibly as Audrey Hepburn ca. 1955**

**Physical Description:** 3 photographs

Sheet 5-7 **Sascha Brastoff in drag December 1963-February 1964**

**Physical Description:** 9 photographs

Sheet 8 **Sascha Brastoff in drag outdoors decorating pot ca. 1965**

**Physical Description:** 1 photograph