



# V. L. Cox

(1962-)

Painter and mixed media artist V. L. Cox was born in Shreveport, Louisiana, and moved to Arkadelphia, Arkansas, during her childhood. When she was ten, her grandmother enrolled her in a children's summer art program at Henderson State University. She graduated from

Henderson with a degree in computer graphics in 1991. After college, she started doing marketing and advertising in Dallas, Texas, as well as set design and construction for the Dallas Opera, Dallas Ballet, and Studios of Los Colinas before relocating to Memphis, Tennessee.

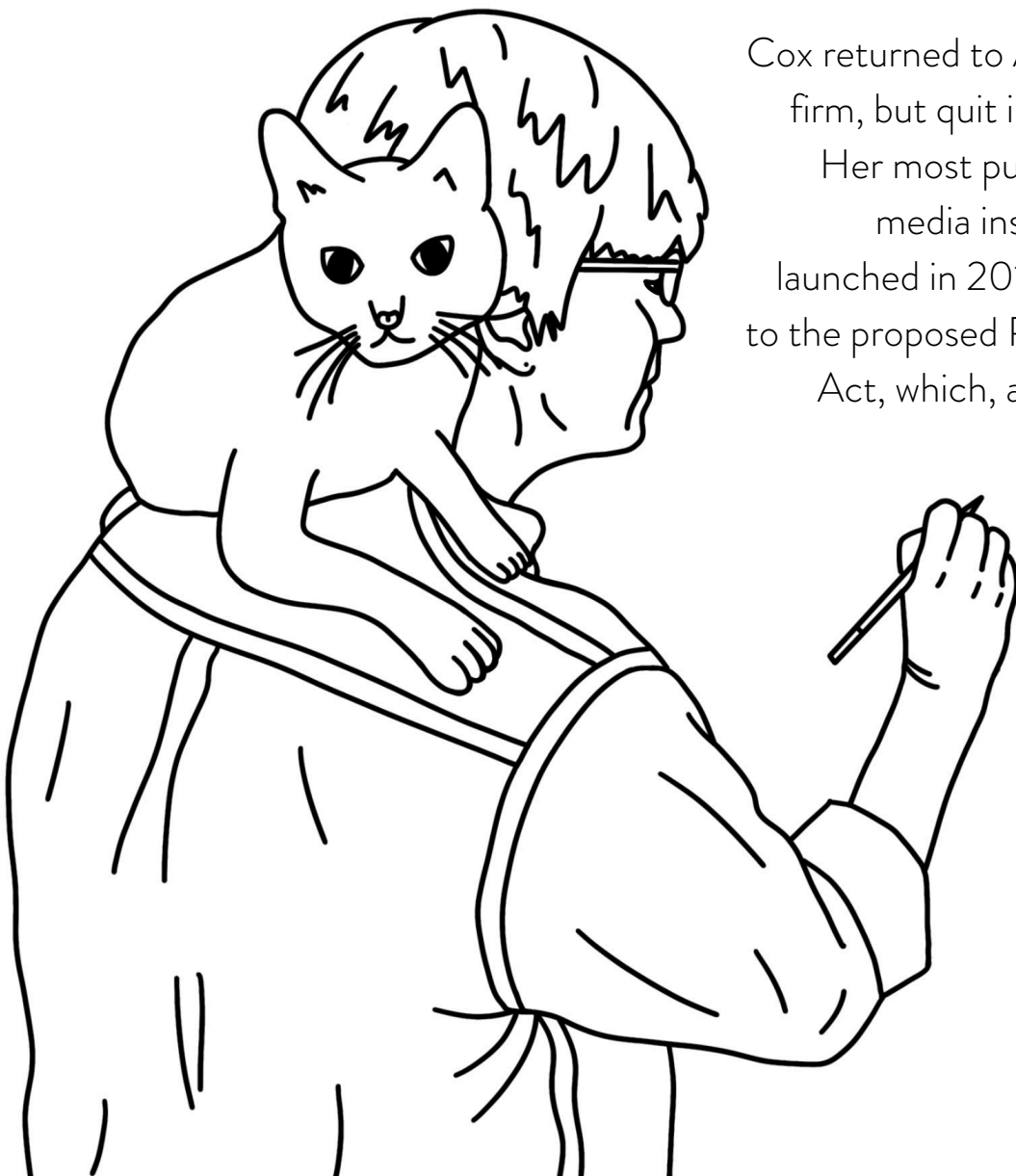
During this time, Cox also pursued her own art, including designing and painting the theme and background for the National Civil Rights Humanities Awards.

Cox returned to Arkansas for a job with another firm, but quit in 1997 to devote herself to art.

Her most publicized work has been a mixed media installation titled *End Hate*, which launched in 2015. The project was in response to the proposed Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which, as originally written, would have

allowed discrimination against members of the LGBTQ+ community in Arkansas on the basis of religious beliefs.

The artwork was displayed twice on the steps of the Arkansas State Capitol and then at the base of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC. Later, it was exhibited at the Rosa Parks Museum in Montgomery, Alabama.





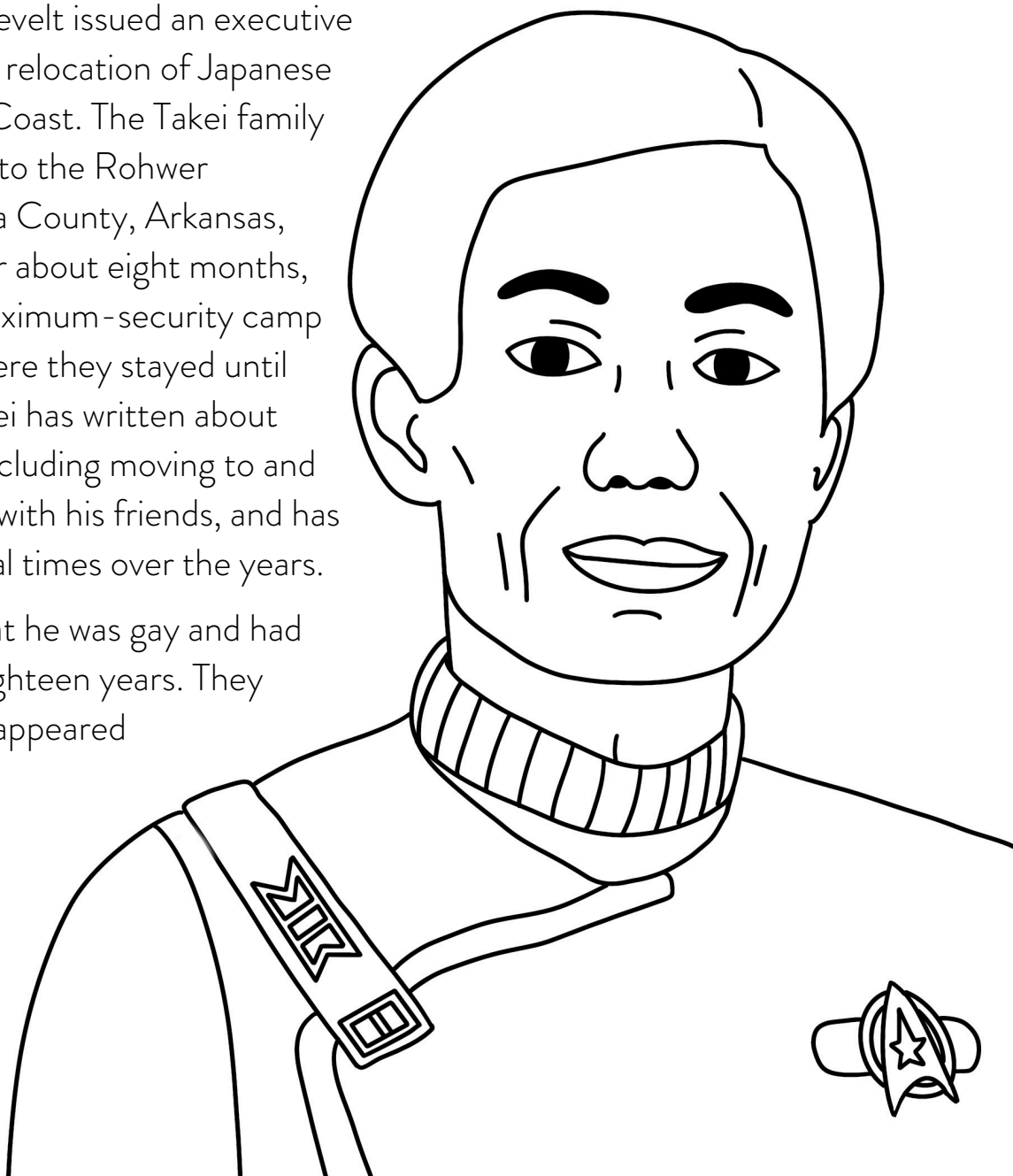
# George Takei

(1937-)

Actor and author George Takei gained international fame as Lieutenant Sulu in the original *Star Trek* TV series and six movies. When he was a child, he and his family were held in the War Relocation Authority Camp at Rohwer, Arkansas.

Takei's father immigrated to the United States from Japan at age thirteen and his mother was a native U.S. citizen who was educated in Japan. In 1942, after the outbreak of World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order that led to the forced relocation of Japanese Americans from the West Coast. The Takei family was moved from California to the Rohwer Relocation Center in Desha County, Arkansas, in 1942. They lived there for about eight months, then were moved to the maximum-security camp at Tule Lake, California, where they stayed until being released in 1946. Takei has written about his memories of Rohwer, including moving to and from the camp and playing with his friends, and has returned to Arkansas several times over the years.

In 2005, he announced that he was gay and had been with his partner for eighteen years. They were married in 2008 and appeared as the first gay couple on *The Newlywed Game*. An outspoken proponent of LGBTQ+ rights, Takei received the Equality Award from the Human Rights Campaign in 2007.





# Miss Major

(1940s?-)

Major Griffin-Gracy, or Miss Major as she is commonly known, is a transgender African American community organizer who has been an activist in groundbreaking LGBTQ+ movements since the 1960s.

She was present for the infamous raid at the Stonewall Inn in New York City in 1969 and is one of the few remaining survivors. In the 1990s, she moved to the San Francisco Bay Area and worked with multiple HIV/AIDS organizations, including the City of Refuge and the Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center. In 2003, Miss Major joined the Transgender Gender Variant & Intersex Justice Project, the only organization in the United States dedicated to assisting transgender people in prisons. She served as executive director from 2009 to 2015.

After attending a screening of *MAJOR!*, the 2015 documentary about her life, in Little Rock, she decided to move to the city, saying that she enjoyed the openness of the city and wanted to support trans Black women in Arkansas. She maintains the operations of House of GG, also known as the Griffin-Gracy Educational and Historical Center, which seeks to create safe, transformative spaces for transgender women of color.

Image modeled after photo  
by Quinn Dombrowski

