



When Existence is Resistance: The History of Trans Activism in NYC

Online Workshop – March 16, 2021

Featured MCNY Sources and Exhibitions

Activist New York, an ongoing MCNY exhibition, traces 400 years of social activism in New York City. This online exhibition includes case studies focusing on civil rights activism for gender equality and sexual identity, from the stories of trans activists to those of the gay liberation movement. Access the full exhibition at activistnewyork.mcny.org

When Existence is Resistance: Trans Activism in New York, 1969-2019

This case study in *Activist New York* examines how trans activists like Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson organized and advocated for civil rights, safety, and empowerment of trans and gender non-conforming New Yorkers.

Learn more, examine photographs and artifacts, and find lesson plans at activistnewyork.mcny.org/exhibition/gender-equality/trans-activism

“Gay is Good”: Civil Rights for Gays and Lesbians, 1969-2011

This archived case study from *Activist New York* traces organizing by gay and lesbian New Yorkers from the 1969 Stonewall Uprising to the fight for marriage equality. It includes information on Sylvia Rivera and STAR, as well as the Gay Activists Alliance and Gay Liberation Front.

Learn about activists, examine photographs and artifacts, and find lesson plans at activistnewyork.mcny.org/exhibition/gender-equality/gay-rights

Selected Resources for LGBTQ+ Affirming Education

Trans Student Educational Resources, transstudent.org

TSER is a youth-led organization dedicated to transforming the educational environment for trans and gender non-conforming students. TSER offers workshops and online resources, as well as scholarship and fellowship programs.

GLSEN, glsen.org

Founded by teachers, GLSEN works to ensure LGBTQ students can learn and grow in supportive and affirming school environments. GLSEN offers resources and activities for educators and students, such as the Gender Triangle Education Guide:

glsen.org/activity/gender-triangle-education-guide.

Welcoming Schools, “Defining LGBTQ Words for Children,” accessed March 11, 2021.

welcomingschools.org/resources/definitions/youth-definitions/

Online Primary and Secondary Sources

Chan, Sewell. "Overlooked: Marsha P. Johnson, 1945-1992," *New York Times*, March 8, 2018. [nytimes.com/interactive/2018/obituaries/overlooked-marsha-p-johnson.html](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/obituaries/overlooked-marsha-p-johnson.html)

Hidden Voices: LGBTQ+ Stories in American History, weteachnyc.org/resources/resource/hidden-voices-lgbtq/

This resource guide published by the NYC Department of Education honors and explores the stories of LGBTQ+ individuals and communities throughout 400 years of American history.

Kasino, Michael. *Pay It No Mind: Marsha P. Johnson*. Documentary, 2012. [youtube.com/watch?v=rjN9W2KstqE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjN9W2KstqE)

Making Gay History: The Podcast, [makinggayhistory.com](https://www.makinggayhistory.com). This podcast, hosted by historian Eric Marcus, brings the hidden history of the LGBTQ civil rights movement to life through the voices of people who lived it.

Season 1, Episode 1: Sylvia Rivera: [makinggayhistory.com/podcast/episode-1-1/](https://www.makinggayhistory.com/podcast/episode-1-1/)

Season 2, Episode 2: Marsha P. Johnson and Randy Wicker: [makinggayhistory.com/podcast/episode-11-johnson-wicker/](https://www.makinggayhistory.com/podcast/episode-11-johnson-wicker/)

NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project: Transy House, nycgbltsites.org/site/transy-house.

This site covers the history of Transy House, a transgender collective and shelter operated by Rusty Mae Moore and Chelsea Goodwin from 1995 to 2008 and inspired by STAR House.

[Outhistory.org](https://outhistory.org) focuses on LGBTQ history as well as the history of gender and sexuality.

Originally created by historian Jonathan Ned Katz, the site is written and maintained by a volunteer staff of public and institutionally based scholars, researchers, editors, and writers.

Sylvia Rivera's Speech "Y' All Better Quiet Down Now," delivered on June 28, 1973 at the Christopher Street Liberation Day Rally, can be found at videoactivism.net/en/yall-better-quiet (Note: Rivera's speech is powerful and troubling, as she explicitly calls out sexual assault against incarcerated trans people, as well as the gay liberation movement's dismissal of the poverty, violence, and discrimination experienced by the trans community.)

Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries: Survival, Revolt, and Queer Antagonist Struggle. New York: Untorelli Press, 2012. untorellipress.noblogs.org/files/2011/12/STAR.pdf

This collection of historical documents, interviews, and analyses of STAR was originally compiled by the activist and artist Tourmaline and contains pamphlets distributed by STAR, as well as interviews with and speeches by Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson.

Recommended Readings for Young People

Bronski, Michael and Richie Chevat. *A Queer History of the United States for Young People*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2019.

Ellison, Joy Michael and Teshika Silver. *Sylvia and Marsha Start a Revolution! The Story of the Trans Women of Color Who Made LGBTQ+ History*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2020.

Prager, Sarah. *Rainbow Revolutionaries: Fifty LGBTQ+ People Who Made History*. New York: Harper Collins, 2020.

Vaid-Menon, Alok. *Beyond the Gender Binary*. New York: Penguin Workshop, 2020.

Recommended Readings for Educators

Erickson-Schroth, Laura, editor. *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resources for the Transgender Community*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Feinberg, Leslie. *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1997.

Mock, Janet. *Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love, & So Much More*. New York: Atria Books, 2014

Sadowski, Michael. *Safe Is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students*. Boston: Harvard Education Press, 2016.

Snorton, C. Riley. *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

Stryker, Susan. *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*, 2nd edition. New York: Seal Press, 2017.

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