

Transgender activists Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera to be honored in monument

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by Phillip Zonkel

[Transgender](#) activists Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, pioneers in the early days of the LGBTQ rights movement who participated in the [Stonewall Riots](#), will be memorialized in a monument that might be located near the Stonewall Inn in New York City, officials said today.

Marsha P. Johnson

Johnson and Rivera, [drag](#) performers and community leaders in the New York City's Greenwich Village neighborhood during the 1960s and 70s, worked on behalf of [homeless LGBTQ youth](#) and people living with HIV/AIDS.

Johnson and Rivera also were pivotal people in the June 28, 1969, Stonewall Riots, when transgender activists and the LGBTQ community fought back against New York police who, after targeting and abusing patrons, raided the famous gay bar.

The planned monument will be publicly announced today in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the uprising, which was a key moment in the LGBTQ civil rights movement.

Sylvia Rivera

The monument also will help fix a void in a public art. Statues of LGBTQ essential don't exist among the city's monuments, Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl said in a statement.

"For decades, the monuments in our public spaces have told a very limited story about the people, groups, and values that make New York City great," Finkelpearl said. "Today, we take a big step toward addressing this problem. Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera were once-in-a-generation trailblazers who fought against racism, sexism, and transphobia to show us the path toward a stronger, better, fairer, more inclusive society.

"This groundbreaking public artwork in their honor will tell people here and across the world who these inspiring women were and what they did for the city they called home," Finkelpearl said.

Johnson and Rivera also founded STAR House, a housing and support organization for homeless LGBT youth and sex workers.

Monument location

The artwork will be funded as part of \$10 million Mayor Bill de Blasio allocated to create public artwork following the [Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers](#).

The Commission said the city needed to address the lack of diversity and inclusivity of the many communities that have lived in and contributed to New York City.

The monument honoring Johnson and Rivera was recommended by the [She Built NYC committee](#), which was convened to evaluate the public nominations.

The proposed location for the monument is in Ruth Wittenberg Triangle, a short walk from the Stonewall Inn. The location will be finalized after further discussion with the community, the release said.