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## The Year in Queer Art: Stonewall at 50 to the Future in Present Tense

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Alvin Baltrop, *Marsha P. Johnson*, n.d. (1975–86).  
COURTESY BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS

What does Stonewall mean to you? It can be a fraught question, with as many answers as people who might contemplate it. At the beginning of 2019, the year that marked the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, that very question was posed in New York at a panel surrounding the New Museum show “Consciousness Razing: The Stonewall Re-memorialization Project,” for which Chris E. Vargas asked other artists to propose new monuments to the event that many consider the flashpoint that kicked off Gay Liberation.

What struck me most that day was the response of Devin N. Morris, which was something to the effect of “not much.” Morris was not dismissing the importance of Stonewall so much as saying that the way history had been told until very recently had centered on the white, cis gay men who had co-opted the movement at the expense of people of color, including Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, Miss Major Griffin-Gracy, and Stormè DeLarverie.

The question lingered with me all year as I visited various queer-related exhibitions and performances, thinking and re-thinking exactly what Stonewall meant to me—a queer Chicana arts journalist—all these 50 years later. For the anniversary, New York had on offer numerous exhibitions that marked the occasion and some of those appear on this list. But some of the most affecting work I saw this year wasn’t necessarily tied to Stonewall, at least directly. Below, a look at the best of 2019.



Installation view of “Art After Stonewall, 1969–1989,” 2019, at the Grey Art Gallery, New York.  
NICK PAPANANIAS/COURTESY GREY ART GALLERY

### **3. “Art After Stonewall, 1969–1989” at Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art and Grey Art Gallery**

This exhibition, which looked to chart the ways in which Stonewall caused a rupture in contemporary society with far reaches, proved historic. Co-curated by Jonathan Weinberg, Tyler Cann, and Drew Sayer, it brought together many important works by generations of artists (both queer and straight-identified) including Martin Wong, Judith F. Baca, Lyle Ashton Harris, Greer Lankton, Vaginal Davis, Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt, Nayland Blake, Harmony Hammond, Jimmy DeSana, and Robert Gober, as well as less-recognized but equally important figures like Michela Griffo, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Leonard Fink, Marion Pinto, Geoffrey Hendricks, and Kay Tobin Lahusen. While there were of course still *more* artists who should have been included (Asco and Cyclona, for example), this show offered the first big step in acknowledging how important Stonewall is to the history—of art and society as a whole—of the United States.