

Gender Visionaries



Shabnam Mausi Bano

is the first *hijra*, or transgender Indian, to be elected to public office. Hijras have always lived on the fringes of Indian society. There are estimated to be between half a million and 1.2 million hijras in India. Hijras were granted voting rights in 1994. Shabnam was born into a Brahmin (high-caste) family and was abandoned because she was intersex. She made a living from acting, singing and dancing. In 1999 she ran for the State Legislative Elections and won. Her political agenda included fighting corruption, unemployment, poverty, discrimination of hijras and raising awareness on HIV/AIDS. She was an elected member of the Madhya Pradesh State Legislative Assembly from 1998 to 2003. In 2005, a feature film was made about her life entitled, *Shabnam Mausi*.



Leslie Feinberg

is a Jewish transgender activist, speaker and author. Feinberg is a high-ranking member of the Workers World Party (WWP) and a managing editor of *Workers World Newspaper*, the official publication of the WWP. The WWP was founded in 1959 and is a Marxist political organization that supports the struggles of all oppressed people. They support anti-imperialist agendas internationally, as well as affirmative action, anti-Iraqi invasion efforts and various initiatives that advance the livelihood of working class people on the national level. Merging hir working class and transgender identities, Feinberg has also published several works that relate to these themes, including *Stone Butch Blues*, *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman*, *Drag King Dreams* and *Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue*. Ze is known as first coining the term "gender warriors." Feinberg continues to write, speak and dedicate hir time to activism along with hir life partner, poet and activist Minnie Bruce Pratt.



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Dr. Marisa Richmond

is the first African American transgender person to be an elected delegate to the Democratic National Convention from any state. Dr. Richmond is President of the Tennessee Transgender Political Coalition (TTPC), serves on the Board of the National Center for Transgender Equality and on the Sexual Violence Prevention Planning Committee of the Tennessee Department of Health. TTPC is an organization designed to educate and advocate on behalf of transgender related legislation at the federal, state and local levels. TTPC members actively lobby Tennessee congressional representatives and members of the Tennessee General Assembly on behalf of all LGBT persons. Since President Obama's inauguration, one of TTPC's goals is to work to ensure the emergence of a fully inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act.



Sylvia Rivera

(July 2, 1951- February 19, 2002) was a Puerto Rican American transgender activist. Most commonly known as one of the inciters of the monumental Stonewall Riots in New York City, she was also a founding member of both the Gay Liberation Front and later the Gay Activists Alliance also in New York City. Along with her friend, Marsha Johnson, an African American trans woman activist, she also helped found STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries), a group dedicated to helping homeless trans youth. In addition to being one of the first trans youth shelters, STAR was also one of the first political organizations for transgender rights in the world. Eventually STAR chapters were established in Chicago and California as well. In its three year existence, STAR became allies with the Young Lords Party, an organization of revolutionary Puerto Rican Youth in New York City. Today the Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP) is named in her honor. SRLP is a nonprofit organization that engages in policy work and provides trainings and free legal services for transgender, intersex and gender nonconforming, low-income people of color.

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Lucas Silveira

is the openly transgender lead singer of Toronto's alternative-rock band, The Cliks. He was born in Canada to a Portuguese-Canadian family. Silveira is the first out transgender artist to be signed to a high-profile label, Tommy Boy's gay-friendly imprint, Silver Label. Lucas was just recently able to become a full-time musician; however, he has been singing and playing music since a very young age. Rather than feeling tokenized by the media as one of the only out trans people in the music industry, Lucas welcomes the opportunity to share his story and to engage people in dialogue about various experiences with gender. The Cliks are currently on tour for the Spring and Summer of 2009.



Max Wolf Valerio

is a transman and an American Indian(Blackfoot)/Latino, Sephardic Jewish poet, performer and writer. Max's work has been recognized by poets such as Adrienne Rich and Allen Ginsberg and has appeared in acclaimed collections such as *This Bridge Called My Back*. He is influenced by diverse spiritualities, from Afro-Caribbean to American Indian philosophies, and has an ongoing interest in feminism. Max's book, *The Testosterone Files: My Hormonal and Social Transformation from Female to Male*, highlights Valerio's honesty regarding gender, identity and self-perception. Max currently works full time as a computer software salesman.