



RPC

LGBT+ HISTORY YOUR GUIDE

ADVISORY | DISPUTES | REGULATORY | TRANSACTIONS

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a person's face, focusing on the eye and cheek area. The person has dark skin and short, dark hair. The image is partially cut off on the left side.

LGBT+ history guide

LGBT+ History Month is an opportunity to learn about the history of lesbian, gay, bi and trans rights and to reflect on the progress that has been made from the denials of human rights that were not so long ago in the UK and that still continue in many countries around the world.

It is also a chance to respect the work and bravery of the LGBT+ generations that have come before us, to acknowledge where we are and to look forward in continuing to fight for the humanity and safety of future LGBT+ generations.

This LGBT+ history month, RPC RAIN brings you our top recommendations for great LGBT+ content to watch, read, listen to and follow, with a focus on content that centres and celebrates queer people of colour and trans people.

We are living in historic times. In 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement and protests around the world as well as the rise of transphobia, particularly in the UK, have highlighted the significant discrimination, difficulties and violence that these parts of our community continue to face.

We have also included wider LGBT+ content, but you will find our content focusing on queer people of colour and trans people highlighted in **pink**.



Films

- **Stories of Our Lives** – a brave project by the Nairobi-based Nest Collective which tells the personal stories of LGBTQ+ people in Kenya.
- **Law of Desire** – a typically melodramatic dark comedy from director Pedro Almodóvar about passion and desire. Almodóvar has consistently cast trans characters and actors in his films and this film sees a trans actress cast in a cis role and a cis actress playing a trans female character.
- **Moonlight** – a beautiful and heartwrenching story of a black gay man growing up in a poor neighbourhood of Miami, presented as three stages in his life played by three different actors and portraying the protagonist's struggles with his identity and self.
- **Boys Don't Cry** – a romantic tragedy set in a Nebraska trailer park, based on the tragic true story of trans man Brandon Teena. A groundbreaking film for its time that contributed to Brandon's trans identity being recognised including when Hilary Swank (who portrayed Brandon) affirmed this by consistently referring to Brandon with he/him pronouns.
- **Bessie** – the story of legendary blues performer Bessie Smith, who rose to fame during the 1920s and 1930s. Bessie's struggles as a black female bisexual performer saw her clash with patriarchy and racism. Queen Latifah is excellent in her portrayal of a courageous star unwilling to compromise her integrity.
- **The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert** – a drag act go on tour in the Australian provinces and encounter adventures and more. Flamboyant, warm and funny whilst being a real portrayal of complex relationships.
- **To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar** – three drag queens embark on a formative road trip from New York to Hollywood. Starring Wesley Snipes and Patrick Swayze, along with cameos from established drag performers like RuPaul, Joey Arias and Lady Bunny.
- **Kinky Boots Musical** (available to stream online) – a movie that doesn't quite reach Sex & the City heights of shoe obsession, it's an inspiring story about how important fashion is in helping feminine people express themselves.
- **Happiest Season** – this is a fun, heartwarming Christmas film that centres a lesbian couple with a wonderful speech from Dan Levy about the very personal nature of the process of coming out.
- **Dating Amber** – set in Ireland in the 1990s, this is a bittersweet but uplifting coming of age story about gay classmates that fake a straight relationship.
- **Pride** – a story set in the 1980s of gay activists who chose to support union miners in Thatcher's Britain.
- **Boys In The Band** – a remake of a 1970's play about a group of gay men getting together for a birthday party & getting more than they bargained for...
- **I am Michael** – a film based on the true story of Michael Glatze, a gay activist who rejected his homosexuality to become an anti-gay pastor.
- **Fin de siglo (End of the Century)** – a film about two men who meet in Barcelona and, after spending a day together, realise that they had already met twenty years ago.

Podcasts

- **Homo Sapiens podcast**, Alan Cumming & Chris Sweeney, episode 71 – a touching and open interview with Sex and the City star Cynthia Nixon about her experience of parenting her trans son.
- **Simply Equality podcast**, Sarah Stephenson-Hunter – an open, honest and on occasions humorous exploration of the lived realities of disabled and LGBTQ+ people.
- **Getting Curious podcast**, Jonathan Van Ness, episode 198 – an episode addressing the puberty blockers decision handed down in the UK in December 2020 and asking Lui Asquith, director at Mermaids, how we can raise the bar on trans rights. History in our times.
- **You're Wrong About podcast**, Michael Hobbes & Sarah Marshall, episode re-release on 4 June 2020, the Stonewall Riot – this well-researched deep dive podcast addresses how a turning point in the gay rights movement became an immediate controversy, a lasting inspiration and a never-ending debate.
- **Whisper to a Roar** – a history project produced by [Opening Doors London](#), which focuses on activism of women in the community – lesbian, bi and trans women. RPC RAIN are hoping to work with Opening Doors London in the future.

Instagram

Munroe Bergdorf ([@munroebergdorf](#))
 Kenny Ethan Jones ([@kennyethanjones](#))
 Alok Vaid-Menon ([@alokvmenon](#))
 Phyll Opoku-Gyimah ([@ladyphyll](#))
 Where Love is Illegal ([@whereloveisillegal](#))
 Mermaids ([@mermaidsgender](#))
 UK Black Pride ([@ukblackpride](#))
 Gendered Intelligence ([@genderedintelligence](#))
 #blacktranslivesmatter
 #transrightsarehumanrights

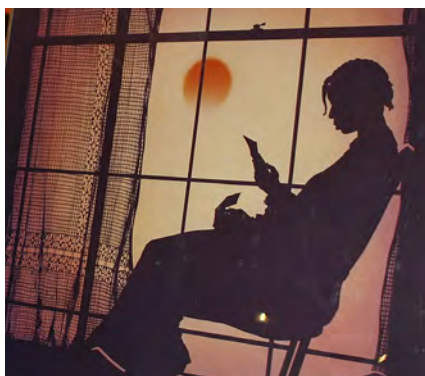
Documentaries

- **The death and life of Marsha P Johnson** – this documentary explores the heroic life and tragic death of an often-forgotten but accomplished and inspirational leader of the gay rights movement.
- **Disclosure** – a history of Hollywood's problematic transgender stereotypes explored in this eye-opening documentary.
- **Paris is Burning** – in this classic documentary about the voguing culture in New York City, the real-life stars pirouette past racism and homophobia.
- **I Am Not Your Negro** – this documentary is based on the unfinished biographical book by James Baldwin, close adviser to Martin Luther King and one of the few openly gay figures in the civil rights movement.
- **Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin** – this documentary tells the story of an openly & unashamedly gay man at a time when progressive activists of all colours were reflexively homophobic.
- **Jamie: Drag Queen at 16** – this documentary follows a 16-year-old drag queen and was the inspiration for musical & film Everybody's Talking About Jamie.
- **Circus of Books** – a woman's documentary on the gay pornography and adult goods shop her parents ran for three decades brims with remembrances by those who frequented it.
- **A Secret Love** – a tender documentary exploring the partnership between two women who lived, in public and to kin, as dear friends for six decades.
- **Pretend it's a City** – Humourist Fran Lebowitz, sits down with Martin Scorsese, to talk all things New York. "Nothing is better for a city than a dense population of angry homosexuals!"



Books

- **Life as a Unicorn: A Journey from Shame to Pride and Everything in Between**, Amrou Al-Kadhi – a heart-breaking & hilarious memoir about the non-binary author's fight to be true to themselves.
- **Trans Like Me**, CN Lester – a personal & culture driven exploration of the pressing questions faced by the trans community today.
- **The Color Purple**, Alice Walker – a novel that presents the plight of a voiceless and disenfranchised African-American bisexual woman in the South before the civil rights movement.
- **Black on both sides: a racial history of trans identity**, C Riley Snorton – the story of Christine Jorgensen, America's first prominent transgender woman, which narrates trans embodiment in the post-war era.
- **Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the politics of visibility**, edited by Reina Gossett, Eric A Stanley and Johanna Burton – a book of essays, conversations and dossiers surrounding themes of beauty, performativity, activism and police brutality.
- **Beyond the Gender Binary**, Alok Vaid-Menon – Vaid-Menon is a gender non-conforming writer & performance artist. Their creative challenge to the gender binary has been celebrated around the world.
- **Pride: The Story of the LGBTQ Equality Movement**, Matthew Todd – a beautiful coffee table book looking at LGBTQ culture and history featuring The Stonewall Riots, the first London Pride, Aids epidemic and same sex marriage. This book is a unique celebration of LGBTQ culture facing the community, and a testament to the equal rights that have been won for many.
- **Straight Jacket**, Matthew Todd – this book looks beneath the shiny façade of contemporary gay culture and questions if gay men are as happy as they could be – and if not, why not?
- **A lesbian history of Britain: Love and sex between women since 1500**, Rebecca Jennings – this book explores cultural representations of and changing attitudes towards, female same-sex desire in Britain.
- **The Mayor of Castro Street: The life and times of Harvey Milk**, Randy Shilts – this book is account of the life and times of Harvey Milk, whose life ended in cold-blooded assassination reflected by the emergence of the LGBTQ community as political power in 1970s America.
- **The Argonauts**, Maggie Nelson – this book is a radical approach to gender, queer theory & domestic bliss in a triumphant love story.



TV shows

- **Pose** – described by critics as a theatrical sugar rush, this series claims the largest cast of black trans actors in TV history. It focuses on the voguing ball culture of 1980s New York and is an equally glorious and heartbreaking celebration of life.
- **Feel Good** – this series follows the struggles of Canadian comedian Mae in dealing with crippling addiction and a new intense romantic relationship. Achingly painful, sweet and funny, the show cuts to the core of complex feelings about sexuality and gender that weave their way through modern relationships.
- **It's a Sin** – following a group of mainly gay friends in London at the height of the AIDS epidemic, this is a masterpiece of hedonistic joy, pain and shame. I can't put it better than Caitlin Moran who said that director Russell T Davies "does the lifeiness of life, and the deathiness of death, better than anyone."
- **The Bisexual** – the show explores the judgement that often still attaches to bisexuality and how difficult it is to come out as bisexual in the gay community, whilst exploring how anxiety and shame can manifest as cynicism and detachment.
- **Hannah Gadsby – Nanette** – Hannah Gadsby is an Australian comedian, and Nanette reflects social commentary, passionate speeches punctuated with comedy and an emotive narrative.
- **Hannah Gadsby – Douglas** – a follow up to Nanette, with a swaggering comedy set that blazes with well-earned confidence and a good needling of the patriarchy.
- **I May Destroy You** – a chaotic, beautiful, uncomfortable and enthralling series exploring sex, consent, identity and trauma through the prism of the millennial experience. A work of art.
- **Euphoria** – an American adaptation of an Israeli show, this is a glossy dark teen comedy following the troubled life of 17-year-old Rue, a drug addict fresh from rehab with no plans to stay clean, and her high school friends, all dealing with their own secrets and traumas.
- **Brooklyn 99** – a joyful and hilarious US sitcom set in a New York police precinct with a team of diverse and loyal detectives led by an eccentric commanding officer. The many laughs are punctuated by heartwarming and progressive moments.
- **Schitt's Creek** – this follows the wealthy Rose family's steep fall from wealth and grace when they are forced to live in a backwater town that the father Johnny Rose once bought as a joke. This show starts a little slow but has some of the best character development I have ever seen, with the slow start making the later payoff all the sweeter.
- **Brothers & Sisters** – a deft portrayal of the ups and downs of marital and family relationships.
- **Modern Family** – a perceptive and charming mockumentary-style sitcom chronicling the unusual kinship of the extended Pritchett clan.



