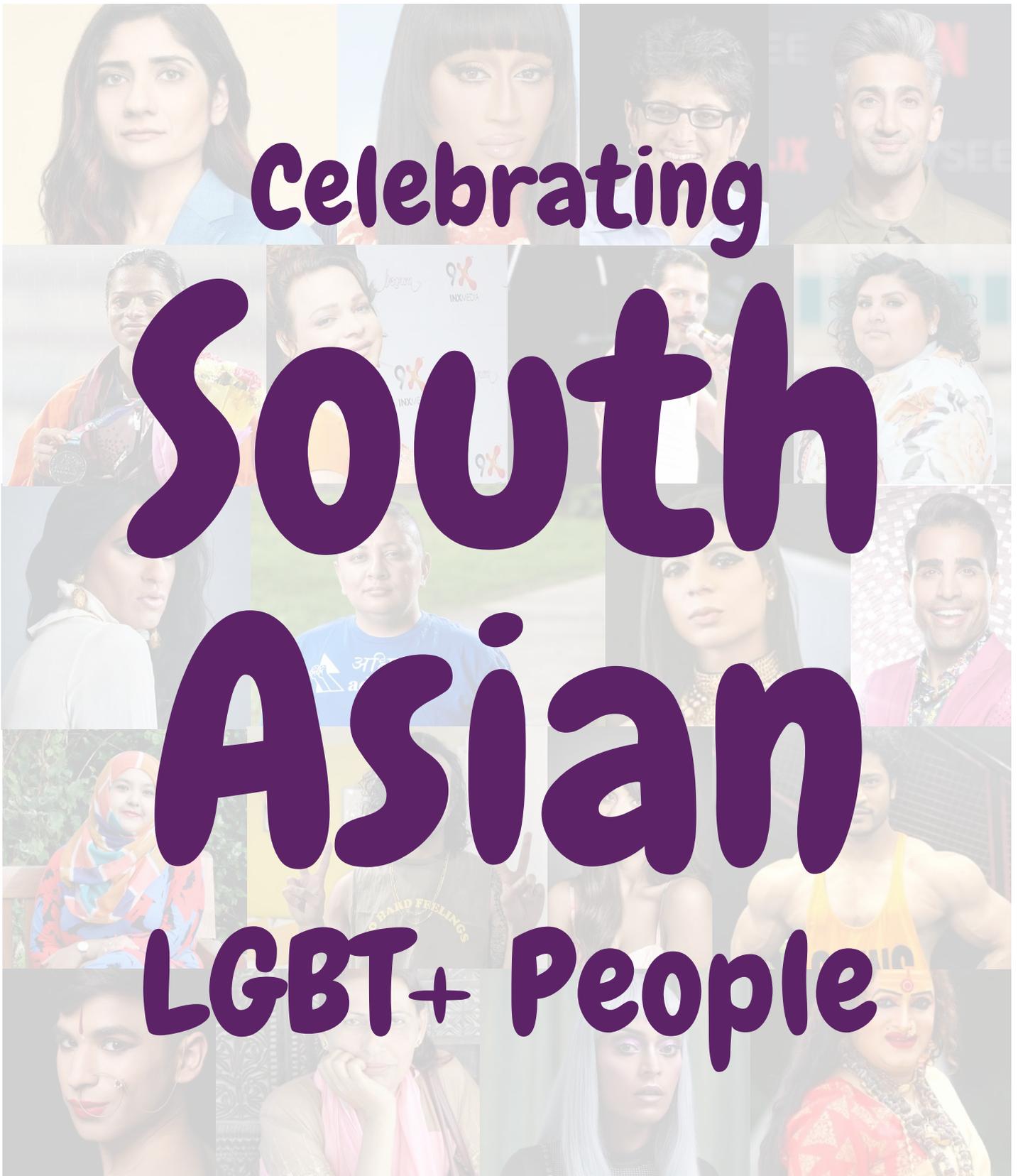


allsorts of Visibility



Celebrating South Asian LGBT+ People



“Gender is not what people look like to other people; it is what we know ourselves to be. No one else should be able to tell you who you are; that’s for you to decide.”

Alok Vaid-Menon, *Beyond the Gender Binary*

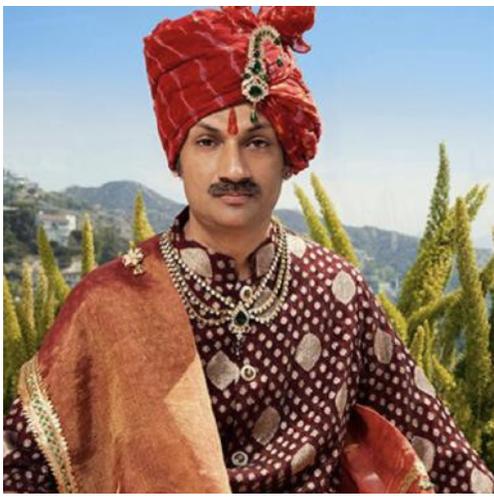
Children & young people often tell us that coming to Allsorts provides opportunities to meet 'others like me'. One of the challenges many of us may face when growing up as LGBT+ is that we are not presented with many or any positive LGBT+ role models in our immediate proximity, or in mainstream culture.

Those of us with intersecting or mixed marginalised identities are often most misrepresented or non-existent in mainstream culture and this is particularly true for LGBT+ people of colour. At Allsorts, we believe it is important to provide all LGBT+ children & young people with LGBT+ role models as a reminder of the endless ways there are to be LGBT+, that you are not alone, and there are people in all walks of life that have had similar experiences, and faced similar challenges to you.

Allsorts of Visibility: Celebrating LGBT+ People of Colour is a series of resources intended to celebrate and showcase LGBT+ people of colour. This edition focuses on **LGBT+ people from South Asia and/or with South Asian heritage**. The resources are by no means an exhaustive list of all LGBT+ people, nor can they ever be. But they are a continual work in progress, and an expanding collection. The people in these resources have been selected by Allsorts staff, young people, volunteers and supporters of the project.

Allsorts does not support every action of every individual within these resources. We believe it is important that it is acknowledged that no one is perfect, and have only withdrawn individuals from the resource under extreme displays of offensive or harmful attitudes and/or actions.

We would like to thank all involved in updating, maintaining and feeding into this project, with special thanks to its creator, Marquita Smith. Thank you.



PRINCE MANVENDRA SINGH GOHIL

Prince & Charity Founder
23 September 1965 - Present

Gohil is an Indian prince who is the son and probable heir of the Maharaja of Rajpipla in Gujarat. He is the first openly gay prince in the world. He runs a charity, the Lakshya Trust, which works with the LGBT community and is dedicated to HIV/AIDS education and prevention.



ALOK

Writer & Public Speaker
1 July 1991 - Present

ALOK is an American internationally acclaimed writer, performer, and public speaker. They are the author of *Femme in Public* (2017), *Beyond the Gender Binary* (2020), and *Your Wound/My Garden* (2021). They are the creator of #DeGenderFashion: a movement to degender fashion and beauty.



RAVEENA

Singer & Songwriter
30 September 1994 - Present

Raveena is an American singer and songwriter whose family immigrated to the USA in the 1980s from India, she has released an EP and full album and is openly bisexual. She directed several of her own music videos where she displayed her Indian heritage and "rich interiority of women of color like herself".



REETA LOI

Activist, Music Artist & Writer
? - Present

Loi is queer British Indian Activist, Music Artist and Writer. She is founder and CEO of Gaysians, the not for profit umbrella brand, which provide positive visibility and a united voice for LGBTQ+ South Asians. She was also instrumental in lobbying for repeal of section 377, legislation that criminalised homosexuality in India.



TASHI SURI

Author
? - Present

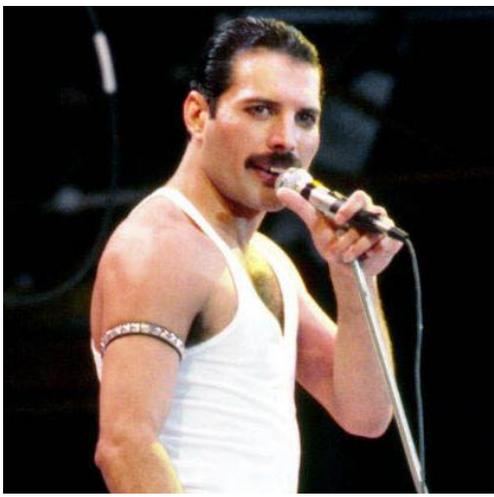
Suri is a queer British Indian award-winning author of *The Books of Ambha* duology (*Empire of Sand* and *Realm of Ash*) and the epic fantasy *The Jasmine Throne*. She is also often on Tiktok, talking about her writing process, coming out and Queer POC representation in fiction.



KAL PENN

Actor & Former White House Staff Member
23 April 1977 - Present

Penn is an American actor and former White House staff member. As an actor he has starred films such as *Harold and Kumar Go To White Castle*, the TV series *House* and *How I Met Your Mother*. 2009, Penn joined the Obama administration as the Principal Associate Editor in the White House Office.



FREDDIE MERCURY

Singer & Songwriter
5 Sept 1946 – 24 Nov 1991

Mercury was a British singer, songwriter and record producer. Born Farrokh Bulsara in Zanzibar to Parsi-Indian parents, he was best known as the lead vocalist of the rock band Queen. He wrote numerous hits for Queen, including "Bohemian Rhapsody", "Somebody to Love", "We Are the Champions", and "Don't Stop Me Now".



JAMEELA JAMIL

Presenter, Activist & Actress
25 February 1986 - Present

Jamil is an English actress, presenter and activist born with congenital hearing loss and labyrinthitis. She was the first solo female presenter of the BBC Radio 1 chart show. She launched Why Not People?, an events and membership company dedicated to hosting live entertainment events accessible to people with disabilities.



RAHEEM MIR

Dancer & Choreographer
? - Present

Mir is a British-Pakistani Punjabi, Dancer, Choreographer & Performer. As a Kathak dancer he is driven to break the barriers of gender identities by embracing the roles traditionally reserved for women. In 2017 he delivered TedTalk: Adorning an identity and exploring gender fluidity through dance.



SHONALI BOSE

Filmmaker & Writer
3 June 1965 - Present

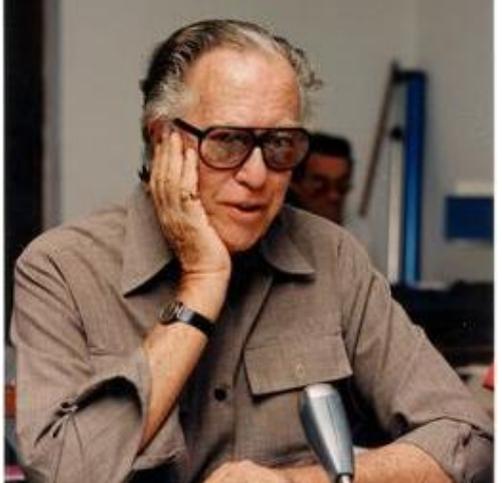
Bose is a Bisexual Indian filmmaker and writer who was born in Calcutta, West Bengal. Her breakthrough first feature film, the 2005 biographical drama Amu, about the anti-sikh riots in Dehli, was based on her own novel of the same name. She has also gained success with her dramas Margarita with a Straw (2015) and The Sky Is Pink (2019).



NERGIS MAVALVALA

Astrophysicist
1968 - Present

Mavalvala identifies as Lesbian and is a Pakistani-American astrophysicist known for her role in the first observation of gravitational waves. As a graduate student at MIT, she conducted her doctoral work under Dr. Rainer Weiss, where Mavalvala developed a prototype laser interferometer for detecting gravitational waves.



GEOFFREY BAWA

Architect
23 July 1919 – 27 May 2003

Bawa is established as Sri Lanka's most prolific and inventive architect, establishing a whole canon of prototypes for buildings in a post-independence context. His body of work includes hotels, houses, schools and universities, factories, offices, numerous public buildings as well as the new Sri Lankan Parliament.



ZOLTÁN MUJAHID

Singer & Music Teacher
8 August 1979 - Present

Mujahid is a Pakistani-Hungarian singer and music teacher. He is most notable for coming in 10th place in the first series of *Megasztár* and participating in *A Dal* 2015.



SONALI DERANIYAGALA

Memoirist & Economist
1964 - Present

Deraniyagala is a Sri Lankan memoirist and economist. Her 2013 memoir, *Wave*, recounts her experiences in the tsunami and the progression of her grief in the ensuing years. It was shortlisted for the 2013 National Book Critics Circle Award (Autobiography).



ARUNDHATI KATJU

Lawyer
August 19, 1982 - Present

Katju is a litigator combining commercial, white collar defense, and public interest practice in India and New York. She litigated the landmark LGBT rights case where Indian Supreme Court struck down Section 377, India's sodomy law.



SHERMAN DE ROSE

LGBT Activist
? - Present

De Rose is a Sri Lankan LGBT activist. He set up *Companions on a Journey*, Sri Lanka's first gay rights group, in 1994. He helped to set up ACCESS (AIDS Coalition for Care, Education and Support Services), becoming its treasurer and convenor in 1997.



LORD WAHEED ALLI

Media Entrepreneur & Politician
16 November 1964 - Present

Alli is a Chief Executive of Silvergate Media and director of Olga Productions. He is a member of the House of Lords in the United Kingdom, and is described as one of only a few openly gay Muslim politicians in the world. He is the founding Chairman of ASOS the UK's largest independent online fashion and beauty retailer. He is also a patron of The Elton John Aids Foundation.



ROSANNA FLAMER-CALDERA

LGBT Rights Activist
16 March 1956 - Present

Flamer-Caldera is a Sri Lankan LGBT rights activist. She became the female Asian representative to ILGA (International Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans And Intersex Association) and later its co-secretary general. She helped to found the Women's Support Group in 1999 and Equal Ground in 2004.



SABRINA JALEES

Comedian Writer & Actress
19 April 1985 - Present

Jalees is a Canadian comedian from Toronto, Ontario with a Swiss mother and a Pakistani father. As an actress, she is known for Harley Quinn (2019) and Powerless (2017). She was a writer for Canada's Got Talent and starred as a main cast member comedy series Carol's Second Act. She has also been a commentator on MuchMusic's Video on Trial, Stars On Trial and LOL!



DUTEE CHAND

Track Athlete
3 February 1996 - Present

Chand is an Indian professional sprinter. She holds the current national champion in the women's 100 metres event. She is the first Indian to win a gold medal in 100m race in a global competition and the third Indian woman to ever qualify for the Women's 100 metres event at the Summer Olympic Games.



MAULIK PANCHOLY

Actor, Author & Activist
18 January 1974 - Present

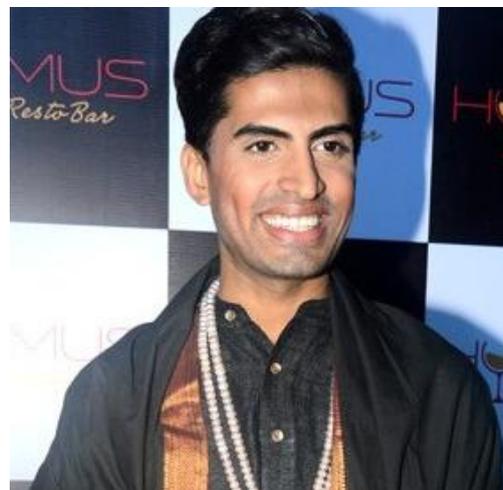
Pancholy is an American award-winning actor, author and activist. He has had roles in 30Rock, The Sopranos, Weeds and Star Trek: Discovery. His debut novel is being adapted for television at HBO Max. In 2014 he was appointed by President Obama to serve on the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.



SHARAN DHALIWAL

Journalist, Writer & Founder
? - Present

Dhaliwal founded and runs the UK's leading South Asian magazine Burnt Roti, which is a platform for young creatives to showcase their talent, find safe spaces and destigmatise topics around mental health and sexuality, amongst others. She is the Director of Middlesex Pride and creator of Oh Queer Cupid, a queer speed dating and comedy night.



SUSHANT DIVGIKA

Model, Singer & Actor
2 July 1990 - Present

Divgika is an Indian model, actor, singer, columnist, psychologist, motivational speaker and drag queen. They were crowned Mr Gay India 2014 and represented India at Mr Gay World 2014. In their drag queen avatar Rani Ko-HE-Nur, created history by becoming the first drag queen in India to participate in a singing reality show Sa Re Ga Ma Pa in 2018.



FAISAL ALAM

LGBT Activist
? - Present

Alam is an American queer-identified Muslim activist of Pakistani descent. At age 19, while trying to reconcile his sexuality with his faith, he organized the first-ever gathering of LGBT Muslims, which led to the founding of Al-Fatiha, an organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex & questioning (LGBTIQ) Muslims, and their allies.



ANWESH SAHOO

Model, Activist & Speaker
4 July 1995 - Present

Sahoo is an Indian artist, blogger, writer, model, actor and a TEDx speaker. He was crowned Mr. Gay World India 2016 and represented India at the Mr. Gay World 2016, making it to the Top 12. He is the first Indian to be honored the Troy Perry Award for compassionate activism.



SAIMA RAZZAQ

Activist & Founder
? - Present

Razzaq is the Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Birmingham Pride and was the first Queer Muslim woman to lead a Pride Parade in the UK. She is an ex-BBC producer who also runs her not-for-profit floating hotel, Boatel Birmingham.



MAWAAN RIZWAN

Actor, Writer & Comedian
18 August 1992 - Present

Rizwan is a Pakistani-born British actor, writer and comedian who began his career as a YouTuber. In 2015 he film the documentary How Gay Is Pakistan? which explores the issues faced by other LGBTQ Muslims living under Islamic law that deems homosexuality illegal.



MOHSIN ZAIDI

Barrister & Author
? - Present

Zaidi is a London-based barrister and author. His first book was the 2020 coming of age memoir A Dutiful Boy about growing up gay in a Muslim household in Britain. It was awarded the 2021 Lambda Literary Award for gay memoir/biography. He is now a barrister at 6 King's Bench Walk and a trustee of Stonewall.



UROOJ ARSHADA

LGBT Activist & Youth Advocate
1975 - Present

Arshad was born in Pakistan and is now based in the USA. She is the Director, International LGBTQ Youth Health and Rights at Advocates for Youth. She is the co-founder of the Muslim Alliance for Sexual and Gender Diversity (MASGD), which addresses the intersectional impact of islamophobia, homophobia, and transphobia.



PABITRA BENJAMIN

Executive Director & Activist
? - Present

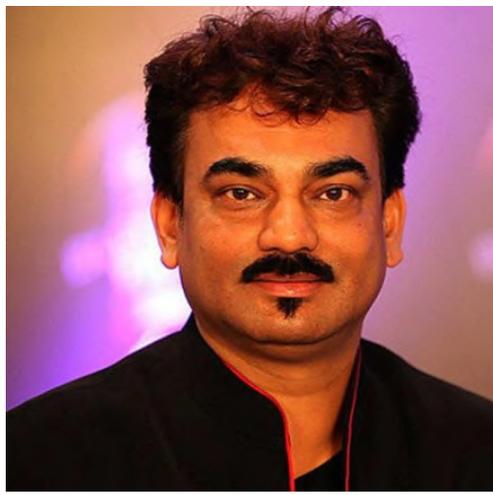
Benjamin identifies as queer and immigrated to the US from Nepal as a child. She is Executive Director of Adhikaar, a New York-based nonprofit organising Nepali-speaking community to promote human rights and social justice. She has supported Amnesty International USA as their field director and interim campaign manager for gun violence and criminal justice.



BINDIYA RANA

Trans Rights Activist
? - Present

Rana is a Pakistani transgender activist. She is a member of the Khwaja Sara community and the founder and president of Gender Interactive Alliance headquartered in Pakistan. Rana ran for a seat in the provincial assembly in Karachi but lost the election. Rana is a petitioner in the Sindh High Court of Pakistan for trans rights.



WENDELL RODRICKS

Fashion Designer & Author
28 May 1960 – 12 February 2020

Rodicks was an Indian fashion designer and author. He was an activist for social causes, the environment, and gay rights. In 2014, the Government of India conferred upon him its fourth-highest civilian award, the Padma Shri. He was also the Patron of the KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival.



XULHAZ MANNAN

Magazine Founder & Activist
12 October 1976 – 25 April 2016

Mannan was an employee of the United States embassy in Dhaka and the founder of Bangladesh's first and only LGBT-themed magazine Roopbaan. He had worked in the human rights sector especially for the LGBT community in Bangladesh.



MARVIA MALIK

Newsreader
1997 - Present

Malik is a Pakistani transgender newsreader and media figure. She became the first openly transgender newsreader to appear on Pakistani television when she made her debut in 2018. She is planning to advocate property rights for trans persons in Pakistan. She is also demanding reservation for trans persons in employment and in Parliament.



SAMRA HABIB

Editor & Photographer
? - Present

Habib is a queer Muslim, Pakistani Canadian who is the founder, editor and photographer of Just Me and Allah: a Queer Muslim Photo Project, the national bestselling author of We Have Always Been Here and a writer with bylines in the New York Times, the Guardian, the Advocate, the Globe and Mail and other leading publications.



DR RANJ SINGH

Doctor & TV Presenter
26 June 1979 - Present

Singh a British doctor, television presenter, author and columnist. He has been a celebrity dancer on Strictly Come Dancing, and co-creator and presenter the CBeebies show Get Well Soon from 2012 to 2015. He also appears on ITV This Morning, as a resident doctor, as well as co-hosting ITV Save Money: Good Health.



VASU PRIMLANI

Comedian & Environmentalist
? - Present

Primlani is an Indian stand-up comedian and environmentalist. She received the 2015 Nari Shakti Puraskar from the Government of India for her work. Primlani founded the non-profit Thimmakka's Resources for Environmental Education in the United States.



LUCKY ROY SINGH

Drag Queen, Activist & Author
? - Present

Singh is a Non-binary person of Punjabi heritage born in Manchester England. They are a Drag Queen, Award Winning Activist, Public Speaker, Charity Ambassador, Actor, Model Campaigner and Author. Their book is a memoir diary called "Take A Walk In My Big Indian Heels".



SAURABH KIRPAL

Lawyer & Author
? - Present

Kirpal has been practising at the Supreme Court for more than two decades. He was also on the counsel for the celebrated case that led to the landmark reading down of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code in 2018, thus decriminalising gay sex. He has written an anthology titled "Sex and the Supreme Court: How the Law is Upholding the Dignity of the Indian Citizen".



LILLY SINGH

Comedian & Talk Show Host
26 September 1988 - Present

Singh is a Canadian comedian, former talk show host, and YouTuber who formerly appeared under the pseudonym Superwoman. In 2016, Singh released her first film, a documentary chronicling her world tour, entitled A Trip to Unicorn Island. In 2017, she released her first book, How to Be a Bawse: A Guide to Conquering Life.



SHYAM SELVADURAI

Novelist
12 February 1965 - Present

Selvadurai is a Sri Lankan Canadian novelist. He is most noted for his 1994 novel Funny Boy, which won the Books in Canada First Novel Award and the Lambda Literary Award for Gay Fiction. He also published a young adult novel, Swimming in the Monsoon Sea, in 2005 which won a Lambda Literary Award.



KRISHNA OMKAR

Lawyer, Founder & Trustee
? - Present

Omkar is a British lawyer who co-convened the 2019 UN consultation on LGBTQI+ rights in Berlin, and advised in the successful 2018 appeal to decriminalize same sex relations in India. He is the founder of Return on Equity, is a trustee of the UK charity Paintings in Hospitals as well as U.S. non-profits Athlete Ally and ORAM: Organization for Refugee, Asylum and Migration.



APURVA ASRANI

Film Maker

21 March 1978 - Present

Asrani is an award winning filmmaker based in Goa, India. He has written the human rights drama Aligarh (2016), the courtroom drama Criminal Justice: Behind Closed Doors (2020), has co-written and edited the film Shahid (2013), edited the popular gangster film Satya (1998) as well as the webseries Made in Heaven (2019).



FAWZIA MIRZA

Wrtier & Director

? - Present

Fawzia is a queer, South Asian Muslim writer and director. She is known for her works such as the web series Kam Kardashian, Brown Girl Problems and the film Signature Move. Her one-woman show Me, My Mom and Sharmila explores growing up queer and South Asian.



AISHA MUGHAL

Trans Rights Expert

? - Present

Mughal works in Ministry of Human Rights, Pakistan as a transgender rights expert and UNDP Expert Consultant. She has been working for transgender rights in Pakistan since 2015. It was the very first time in history that a transgender person has represented any country for a reporting procedure of an official UN treaty review.



SHIVA RAICHANDANI

Performance Artist

26 October 1993 -Present

Raichandani is a multidisciplinary non-binary performance artist whose works harness the power of storytelling to create inclusive spaces for positive gender-diverse representation in media. Currently, they are producing a short narrative film called 'Queer Parivaar' which based on an interfaith queer south Asian romance.



SUKI SANDHU

CEO, Founder & Trustee

? - Present

Sandhu is CEO and Founder of INvolve and Audeliss. He has worked in executive search for nearly ten years and is one of the UK's leading specialists who is committed to helping businesses find diverse talent. He established Audeliss, a boutique executive search company in 2011. He is also a Stonewall Ambassador.



MENAKA GURUSWAMY

Lawyer

27 November 1974 - Present

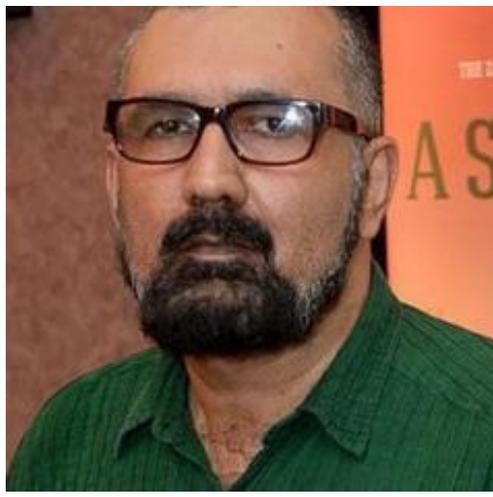
Guruswamy is a Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court of India. She was the B.R. Ambedkar Research Scholar and Lecturer at Columbia Law School, New York from 2017 to 2019. She is known for her significant role in many landmark cases before the Supreme Court, including the Section 377 case, to decriminalise gay sex.



SONALEE RASHATWAR

Social Worker & Sex Therapist
? - Present

Rashatwar is an American award-winning clinical social worker, sex therapist, adjunct lecturer, and grassroots organizer. They are a superfat queer bisexual non-binary therapist and co-owner of Radical Therapy Centre, specialised in treating sexual trauma, diet trauma, racial or immigrant trauma, and South Asian family abuse, while offering fat positive sexual healthcare.



PARVEZ SHARMA

Filmmaker & Author
? - Present

Sharma is a New York-based Indian filmmaker, author, and journalist. He received the 2009 GLAAD Media Award A Jihad for Love, which the world's first film documenting the lives of gay and lesbian Muslims. He is also known for the film A Sinner in Mecca, and his 2017 book A Sinner in Mecca: A Gay Muslim's Hajj of Defiance.



ASIFA LAHORE

Drag Queen
? - Present

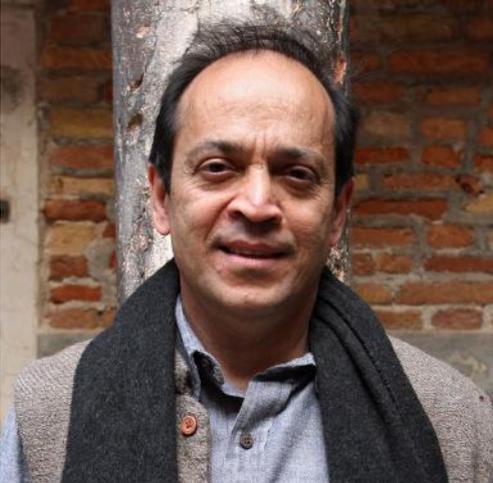
Lahore is Britain's first out Muslim drag queen, pushing the boundaries of what it means to be LGBT, South Asian and Muslim. Lahore came into the national spotlight in 2014 when she was censored by the Birmingham Central Mosque from discussing Islam and Homosexuality on BBC Free Speech.



TAN FRANCE

Fashion Designer & TV Personality
20 April 1983 - Present

France is a British-American fashion designer, TV personality and author. He is one of the first openly gay South Asian men on a major show and on western television as the fashion expert for the Netflix series Queer Eye, host of the web series Dressing Funny and co-host of Next In Fashion. His memoir, Naturally Tan, was released in June 2019.



VIKRAM SETH

Novelist & Poet
20 June 1952 - Present

Seth is an Indian novelist and poet. He has received several awards and his collections of poetry such as Mappings and Beastly Tales are notable contributions to the Indian English language poetry canon. In 2006, he became a leader of the campaign against Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, a law against homosexuality.



ARADHIYA KHAN

Activist & Social Worker
1998 - Present

Khan is a Pakistani transgender activist and social worker who works for the transgender community and economically-marginalised. She works for the non-profit 'Akhuwat' as Project Coordinator of Akhuwat Khawajasira Program. She works with educational institutions to introduce gender-based conversations.



SABAH CHOUDREY

Activist, Speaker & Educator

? - Present

Choudrey is a reluctant activist who co-founded Trans Pride Brighton, UK. They have worked with queer, trans and non-binary youth since 2014 and formed networks for BAME LGBTQ Youth Workers and Youth across the UK. They spoke about being 'Brown, Trans, Muslim and Proud' at TEDxBrixton and published 'Inclusivity: Supporting Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) Trans People'.



IFTI NASIM

Poet

1946 – 22 July 2011

Nasim was a gay Pakistani American poet. He moved to the USA to escape persecution for his sexual orientation. He established Sangat, an organization to support LGBT south-Asian youths. He published *Narman*, a poetry collection that was the first open expression of homosexual themes in the Urdu language.



ALI SALEEM

TV Host, Actor &

Impressionist

? - Present

Saleem is a Pakistani television host, actor, scriptwriter and impressionist best known by his alter-ego Begum Nawazish Ali. He became a contestant in *Bigg Boss 4* in 2010. He broke into the mainstream audiences through his impersonations of late prime minister Benazir Bhutto.



URVASHI VAID

Activist, Lawyer & Writer

8 October 1958 - Present

Vaid is an American LGBT rights activist, lawyer and writer. An expert in gender and sexuality law, she is a consultant in attaining specific goals of social justice. She is the author of *Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation* (1995) and *Irresistible Revolution: Confronting Race, Class and the Assumptions of LGBT Politics* (2012).



SUNIL BABU PANT

LGBT Activist & Politician

? - Present

Pant is a former LGBT activist and politician. He was the first openly gay national-level legislator in Asia. He hosted a television talk show on LGBT rights called *Pahichaan* for two years. He also established Nepal's first gay travel agency, *Pink Mountain*. In 2011 he conducted the first public gay marriage ceremony in Nepal. Since 2021, he has become a Buddhist monk and is known as *Bhikshu Kashyap*.



IRSHAD MANJI

Educator & Journalist

1968 - Present

Manji is a Ugandan-born Canadian educator former journalist and TV presenter. She is the author of *The Trouble with Islam Today* (2004) and *Allah, Liberty and Love* (2011). She also produced a PBS documentary in the America at a Crossroads series, titled *Faith Without Fear*, which was nominated for an Emmy Award in 2008.



GHALIB SHIRAZ DHALLA

Author-Filmmaker

? - Present

Dhalla is an author-filmmaker born in Kenya. He adapted his debut novel, *Ode to Lata* (2002) into the motion picture *The Ode* which premiered at Outfest. He is the co-founder of Satrang, a support group for the South Asian LGBTQ community in Southern California, and the South Asian Program at APAIT which provides free community health education, testing and support to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS.



ADIBA JAIGIRDAR

Author

? - Present

Critically-acclaimed and bestselling author of *The Henna Wars* and *Hani & Ishu's Guide to Fake Dating*. A Bangladeshi/Irish writer who identifies as Queer and writes for queer poc youth to feel seen and presented.



PRIYANKA

Drag Queen

28 May 1991 - Present

Priyanka also known as Mark Suknanan, was the first winner of *Ru Pauls Drag Race Canada* and is a Canadian television personality and drag queen. Priyanka is openly gay and of Indo-Guyanese descent.



ANDY LALWANI

Comedian & Host

17 October 1995 - Present

Lalwani is of Indian heritage and a comedian. He is the host of the YouTube web series "What's Trending?" Lalwani started his own YouTube channel while in college as he was working through his own sexuality. He found himself on YouTube with LGBTQ+ stars that sounded like but none that looked like him.



ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO JR

Visual & Performance Artist

1 August 1990 - Present

Bhutto Jr alias Faluda Islam, is a Pakistani visual and performance artist who currently lives in San Francisco, USA. He is a member of the prominent political Bhutto family, and is the grandson of former President and Prime Minister of Pakistan, and his namesake, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.



ANJALI LAMA

Model & Activist

?- Present

Lama is a transgender model from Nepal. She is the first transgender model of Nepal and the first to walk in Lakme Fashion week. She is also the first Nepali to walk in Cannes Film Festival and is soon to make her Hollywood debut. She is an activist for an LGBT rights group called Blue Diamond Society.



SHABNAM MAUSI

Politician
? - Present

Mausi is the first transgender Indian to be elected to public office (MLA). She was an elected member of the Madhya Pradesh State Legislative Assembly from 1998 to 2003. She inspired many transgender people in India to take up politics and participate in 'mainstream activities' in India, giving up their traditional roles as dancers, prostitutes, and beggars.



GOPI SHANKAR MADURAI

Equal Rights Activist
13 April 1991 - Present

Madurai is an Indian equal rights and Indigenous rights activist. Shankar was one of the youngest, and the first openly intersex and genderqueer, candidates to contest in 2016 Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly election. Shankar is also the founder of Srishti Madurai Student Volunteer Collective.



LAXMI NARAYAN TRIPATHI

Trans Rights Activist & Actress
? - Present

Tripathi is a transgender/Hijra rights activist, Bollywood actress, Bharatanatyam dancer, choreographer and motivational speaker in Mumbai, India. She is the first transgender person to represent Asia Pacific in the UN in 2008. Laxmi starred in an award-winning documentary in 2005, *Between the Lines: India's Third Gender*.



ARYAN PASHA

Lawyer & Bodybuilder
5 December 1991 - Present

Pasha is an Indian lawyer and bodybuilder. In 2017 he competed and came second in *Musclemania India*, making him the first trans man to compete in a bodybuilder competition in India.



AJAY PABIAL

Artist, Managing Director & Cultural Strategist
? - Present

Ajay is an award-winning artist who is actively working across public, private and third sectors to support underrepresented young Londoners access into the creative sector by delivering and designing programmes, as well as consulting businesses to embed diversity and inclusion is at the core of its activities.



ALEXANDRA D'SA

Actress & Entrepreneur
? - Present

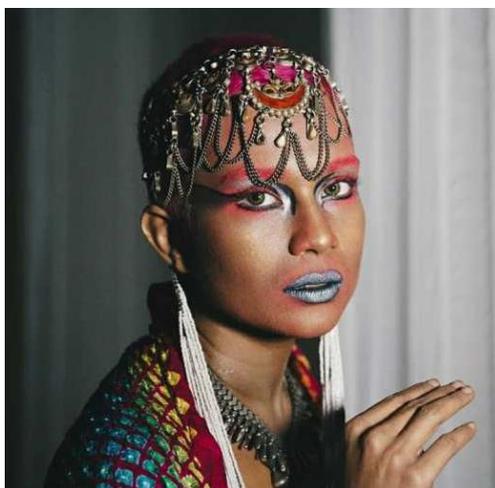
Alex is a lesbian, South Asian actress and entrepreneur. As an actress her credits include *Clink* (Channel 5) *The Bay* (ITV), and *Eastenders* (BBC). She is cofounder of *SHADES*, a platform for South Asian creatives in the UK, and *House of Pride*. The main aim of *House of Pride* is to build LGBT+ lifestyle spaces around the world to celebrate queer excellence and to help the community grow personally, professionally, and creatively.



BIANCA MAIELI

DJ
? - Present

Maieli is a Colombian-Indian producer and DJ, born and raised in Los Angeles. She has been a professional DJ for nine years, and has studied Anthropology, focusing on queer women in South-Asian communities. The host of the radio show Mimosas & Samosas, Bianca incorporates various genres and creates the perfect dance floor music to get the party going.



DURGA GAWDE

Artist, Activist & Drag King
? - Present

Durga is an artist, activist, educator, and drag king. A passionate performance artist, they run the 'Durga Gawde Studio' and believe in sharing their creative action with the world through educational programs based on the idea of learning through making.



DR. S CHELVAN

Barrister
1974/75 - Present

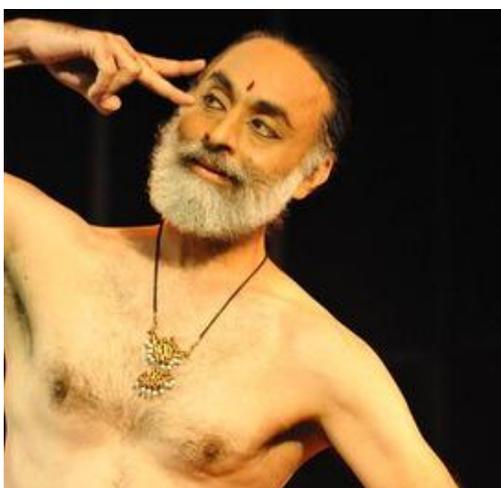
Chelvan was born in Sri Lanka and grew up in Worthing, Sussex. He is a Barrister at No5 Barristers' Chambers in London. He specifically works in the field of LGBTQ+ rights, immigration, and refugee law. Particularly with respect to asylum claims and protecting human rights claims based on sexual identity, gender identity, or expression ('SOGIE'). He is also the International Rights Officer for UK Black Pride.



NAAZ JOSHI

Beauty Queen & Activists
31 December 1984 - Present

Joshi is India's first transgender international beauty queen and model. She is also a trans rights activist and a motivational speaker. She won Miss World Diversity beauty pageant three times in a row. She is India's first transgender cover model and is the world's first trans woman to win international beauty pageant with cisgender women.



NAVTEJ JOHAR

Dancer-Choreographer & Activist
8 August 1959 - Present

Johar is a Bharatanatyam dancer-choreographer, a yoga practitioner, a scholar, and a social activist. He is among the few male dancers of classical form in India and first Sikh to have taken to the art form. 2016, Johar and five others, all members of the LGBT community themselves, filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court of India challenging Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.



RUTH VANITA

Academic, Activists & Author
? - Present

Vanita is an Indian academic, activist and author who specialises in British and Indian literary history with a focus on gender and sexuality studies. She also teaches and writes on Hindu philosophy. Her major publications include 'Love's Rite: Same-Sex Marriage in India and the West' and 'Gender, Sex and the City: Urdu Rekhti Poetry in India 1780-1870'.



ANICK SONI

Intersex Human Rights Activist
1995 - Present

Soni is a British Asian intersex human rights activist, creative consultant and researcher, and Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He is co-founder of an intersex charity in the UK named InterconnectedUK (iCONUK). He participated in his first event by and for intersex people in 2018, at an Oll Europe conference in Copenhagen. He is also Communications Officer for UK Black Pride.



VIVEK SHRAYA

Artist, Founder & Director
5 February 1981 - Present

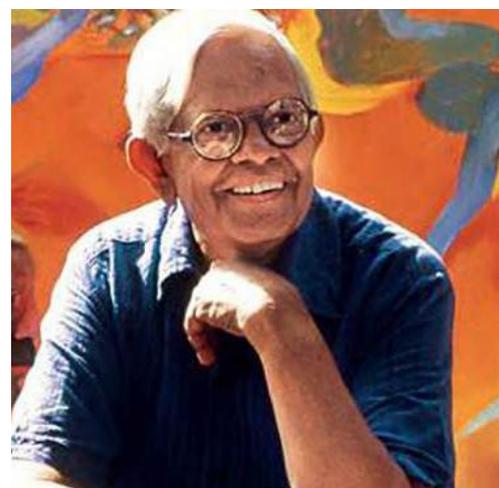
Shraya is an artist whose body of work crosses the boundaries of music, literature, visual art, theatre, and film. She is also the founder of the award-winning publishing imprint VS. Books, which supports emerging BIPOC writers. She is director on the board of The Tegan and Sara Foundation, which fights for health, economic justice and representation for LGBTQ women.



DJ RITU

DJ, Radio Presenter & Producer
? - Present

DJ Ritu, is the voice behind the UK's definitive global music show, A World in London. Her 33 year career includes two decades at the BBC, co-founding cult label Outcaste Records, and touring in over 35 countries as a band-leader and solo artist. A musical chameleon, Ritu's eclectic repertoire encompasses Pop, soul, disco, as well as 'world' genres, making her a firm favourite at prime venues & festivals.



BHUPEN KHAKHAR

Artist
10 March 1934 - 8 August 2003

Khakhar was a self-trained artist, and started his career as a painter relatively late in his life. His works were figurative in nature, concerned with the human body and its identity. An openly gay artist, the problem of gender definitions and gender identity were major themes of his work. His paintings often contained references to Indian mythology and mythological themes.



ANJU MADHOK

Singer, Songwriter & Producer
? - Present

Anju is a queer, nonbinary South Asian American singer/songwriter/producer of homemade music. Their music explores love, home, diaspora, identity, and imagination. They create to heal and process their own reality with the hope that their listeners, especially listeners of color, will find solace in their sound.



RAHEMUR RAHMAN

Fashion Designer
? - Present

Rahman is a Bangladeshi, London-born designer. His fashion brand Rahemur Rahman is redefining what it means for fashion to be "made in Bangladesh". Using design, print and weave it aims to reinterpret and retell stories of South Asian identities.



POULOMI DESAI

Artist, Curator & Activist

1965 - Present

Desai is a British photographer, multi-media artist, curator and an activist community worker. Originally inspired by a street theatre background, her works are performative, textual, image based, and acoustic. She co-founded the first South Asian LGBTIQ campaigning organisation, Shakti, in 1987 and also co-founded the first HIV / AIDs charity in India, the Naz Foundation International in 1991.



NICK VIRK

Filmmaker, Producer & Writer

? - Present

Virk is a filmmaker, producer and writer who grew up in a Punjabi household in the West Midlands. They have directed the short film, Temple, about the queer South Asian experience. They sit on the advisory board for the UK Asian Film Festival and have previously acted as trustee for Mosaic LGBT+ Young Persons Trust and as chair for Museum Detox.



FABLIHA ANBAR

Editor In Chief

? - Present

Anbar is a writer based in New York City and is the Editor in Chief of online publication Sorjo Magazine. Fabliha is also the co-founder of the South Asian Queer + Trans Collective, a community that amplifies the voices of the South Asian and Indo- Caribbean lgbtq+ diaspora.



DJ USHKA

DJ

? - Present

Thanu Yakupitiyage alias DJ Ushka is a Sri Lanka-born, Thailand-raised and Brooklyn-based deejay, and the co-host and co-producer of the podcast Bad Brown Aunties. Thanu has performed across US, Mexico and Canada for years, and has been a staple in NYC's queer nightlife, having run the iBomba parties for six years.



RIYAD VINCI WADIA

Filmmaker

19 Sept 1967 – 30 Nov 2003

Wadia was an Indian independent filmmaker from Bombay, known for his short film, BOMgAY (1996), possibly the very first gay themed movie from India. Wadia is also known for his award-winning documentary on Nadia, Fearless: The Hunterwali Story (1993), which was written about in Time magazine and made a name for Riyad at the very outset of his brief but impactful career.



SUNIL GUPTA

Photographer

? - Present

Gupta is a photographer who has spent almost 50 years making work to illustrate the progress of gay liberation and injustices faced by gay men all around the world. In 1986, he devised an exhibition in The Photographer's Gallery in London showing the lives of gay men in Delhi, his hometown. 1988, he created another exhibition titled Pretended Family Relationships which showed ordinary gay couples at home.



AKKAI PADMASHALI

Activist & Motivational Speaker
? - Present

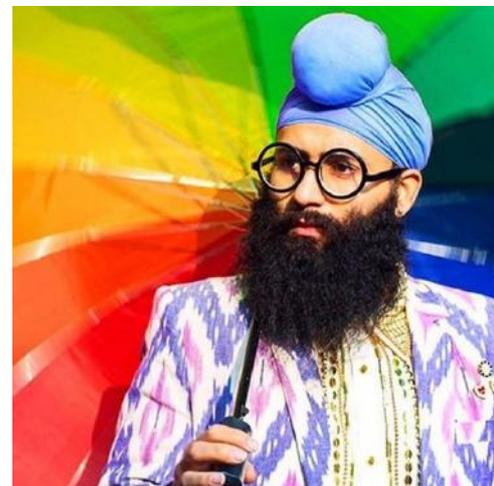
Padmashali is an Indian transgender activist, motivational speaker, and singer. For her work in activism she has received the Rajyotsava Prashasti, the second highest civilian honor of the state of Karnataka, and an honorary doctorate from the Indian Virtual University for Peace and Education. She is also the first transgender person in Karnataka to register their marriage.



BHUMIKA SHRESTHA

Activist & Actress
11 January 1988 - Present

Shrestha is a Nepalese third gender activist and an actress from Kathmandu, Nepal. Shrestha is working in Blue Diamond Society which is the institution working in various aspects for third gender people, including lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex.



PARAM SAHIB

Designer & Stylist
9 May 1989 - Present

Param Sahib is the designer and founder of his youthful and eponymous clothing line. He is also a stylist known for his eclectic style and exceptional knowledge of pairing bright & bold colours. As a designer and individual, he believed in the power of communication that colours hold.



S J SINDU

Novelist
17 November 1987 - Present

Sindu is a genderqueer Sri Lankan American novelist and short story writer. Sindu's first novel, Marriage of a Thousand Lies, was released by Soho Press in June 2017, won the Publishing Triangle Edmund White Award for Debut Fiction, and was named an American Library Association Stonewall Honor Book.



LEO KALYAN

Artist & Activist
? - Present

London based Kalyan is a British Pakistani independent artist walking the line between art & activism, Leo was one of the first South-Asian musicians in the world to publicly come out as gay, and is fast becoming one of the most unique & important musical voices in Britain today.



PASTOR ESTHER BHARATHI

Pastor
? - Present

Bharathi is India's first transgender pastor from the Evangelical Church of India (ECI) branch in Chengalpattu, India. While travelling in India & abroad, she not only preaches but also raises awareness on trans issues.

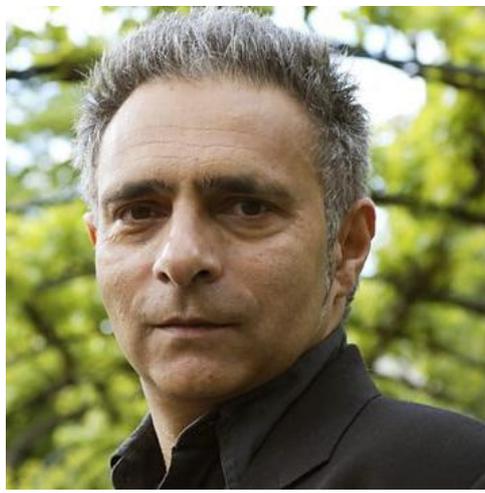


AMESH WIJSEKERA

Fashion Designer

? - Present

London born and based, Sri Lankan designer Amesh Wijsekera is a graduate of the Academy of design Sri Lanka. First discovered at the Mercedes Benz fashion runways in Colombo he was selected to showcase at the prestigious international catwalk competition at Graduate fashion week 2016 judged by Italian vogue where he was chosen as the winner.



HANIF KUREISHI

Playwright & Novelist

5 December 1954 - Present

Kureishi is a bisexual British playwright, screenwriter, filmmaker and novelist of South Asian and English descent. In 2008, The Times included Kureishi in its list of The 50 greatest British writers since 1945. His written work includes The Buddha of Suburbia.



NINA CHAUBAL

Activist & Co-Founder

1992 - Present

Chaubal is the co-founder and former Director of Operations at Trans Lifeline, the first transgender suicide hotline to exist in the United States and Canada. In 2019, Chaubal was the subject of the first episode of America in Transition, a documentary about transgender people of color.



SAGAREE JAIN

Poet, Writer & Researcher

? - Present

Jain is a American poet, writer, and researcher. She grew up in the Silicon Valley and studied History at the University of California at Berkeley. She is the co-creator of the Turmeric Project, which spotlights queer South Asian art, and she currently works as a gardner.



DEEPAK BHARGAVA

Immigration Reform Advocate

1968 - Present

Bhargava is an immigration reform advocate and until 2018 was the executive director of the nonprofit Center for Community Change in Washington, D.C. a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop the power and capacity of low-income people, especially low-income people of colour. He was born in Bangalore, India and his family emigrated to the New York City.



NAOMI KANAKIA

Novelist & Blogger

? - Present

Kanakia is an American transgender novelist of Indian descent. She the ages of 18 she has been writing and submitting stories, most of these have been science fiction and fantasy short stories. Her novels include Enter Title Here and We Are Totally Normal.



JAVID SYED

Director & Community Leader
? - Present

Syed is the director of the American Jewish World Service's Sexual Health and Rights department. He helped found the Audre Lorde Project, a center for community organizing for queer people of color in New York, and served as a leader both the South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association of New York and the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.



HITEN NOONWAL

Performance Artist
? - Present

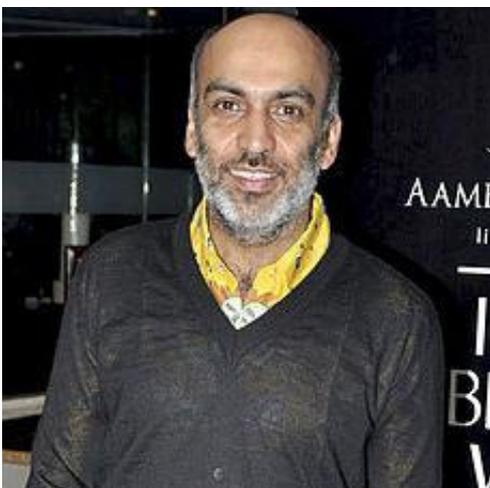
Noonwal is a gender fluid Indian performance artist, design educator, cosplayer, and fashion designer known for their avant-garde style. They specialise in oriental belly dance and has performed more than 800 dance shows across the world. They have also conducted design and gender sensitisation workshops.



PADMINI PRAKASH

News Anchor
? - Present

Prakash is an Indian trans woman who is a news anchor, actor and transgender rights activist. She made history by becoming the first Indian trans person to be a news anchor in the Tamil channel Lotus News Channel on 15 August 2014.



MANISH ARORA

Fashion Designer
? - Present

Arora is an Indian fashion designer based in New Delhi. In 1997 Manish launched his own label "Manish Arora" and started retailing in India. Three years later, he participated in the first-ever India Fashion Week held in New Delhi and represented India at the Hong Kong Fashion Week. Arora launched his second label sportswear-styled line, "Fish Fry", in 2001.



MA FAIZA

DJ
? - Present

Born in Tanzania and raised in the UK, Ma Faiza is now living in India, and has been a DJ for over twenty years. Her sound involves ethnic-infused uplifting and high energy electronic music, ranging from tech House to psychedelic trance. Also a multi-instrumentalist, Ma Faiza firmly believes that the music chose her.



JAYANTHI KURU-UTUMPALA

Adventurer

3 September 1979 - Present

Kuru-Utumpala is a Sri Lankan adventurer, professional rock climber, motivational speaker, and LGBT and women's rights activist. She is the first person from Sri Lanka to summit Mount Everest which she achieved on 21 May 2016. Kuru-Utumpala is an advocate for women's rights in Sri Lanka and has spent most of her adult life researching gender studies and women's rights.



FARHAT RAHMAN

Filmmaker
? - Present

Raised in Bangladesh, Farhat is a transgender and queer Muslim filmmaker based in The Bronx. Their work largely grapples with issues affecting queer, non-binary and people of color identities, particularly on how loss and trauma can inspire a desire for reparation.



NISHA RAO

Lawyer & Trans Advocate
? - Present

Rao is a Pakistani transgender lawyer, advocate and activist. In 2020, she became the first transgender law graduate in Pakistan. Rao aims to fight for the equity and justice of trans people in light of the rampant violence against their community. In her attempt to do so, Nisha has pledged to take up all transgender cases on a pro-bono/free of cost basis.



SUNITI NAMJOSHI

Poet & Fabulist
1941 - Present

Namjoshi is a poet and a fabulist. She grew up in India, worked in Canada and at present lives in the southwest of England. Her work is playful, inventive and often challenges prejudices such as racism, sexism, and homophobia. She has written many collections of fables and poetry, several novels, and more than a dozen children's books.



BEVIS BAWA

Landscaper

26 April 1909 – 18 September 1992

Bawa was a Ceylonese (Sri Lankan) planter, soldier and a landscaper. He was also one of the most renowned landscape architects in Sri Lanka and served as the Aide-de-camp to four Governors of Ceylon.



DEVDU TT PATTANA I K

Mythologist, Speaker & Author
? - Present

Pattanaik is an Indian mythologist, speaker, illustrator and author, known for his writing on Hindu sacred lore, legends, folklore, fables and parables. His work focuses on the areas of religion, mythology, and management. He has written books on the relevance of sacred stories, symbols and rituals in modern times; his more popular books include Myth = Mithya: A Handbook of Hindu Mythology.



RADHI KA PIRAMAL

Corporate Leader
? - Present

Piramal is the Vice Chairperson of VIP Industries (India's largest luggage manufacturing company) since 2010. Previously, she has served as Executive Director and as Managing director of the company.

She is a graduate from Oxford University has an MBA from Harvard Business School. She is one of the few openly homosexual Indian corporate leaders.



VARDAAN ARORA

Recording Artist & Actor
22 April 1992 - Present

Arora is an Indian recording artist, songwriter, and actor based in New York. His introduction to the pop music scene happened with his debut single, "Feel Good Song", in 2016. As an actor, has appeared in Netflix's psychological thriller Gypsy and film Wrong Turn. He has also been open about his struggles with obsessive-compulsive disorder in order to gather more awareness.



SHAMIM SARIF

Writer & Director
24 September 1969 - Present

Writer and director Shamim Sarif is a British multi-award-winning novelist, screenwriter and director for film and TV with a focus on stories aligned with feminism, social impact and humanism. She has long been an advocate for the rights of women and the LGBTQ+ community. Her films include I Can't Think Straight and The World Unseen.



RITU DALMIA

Celebrity Chef & Restaurateur
1973 - Present

Dalmia is an Indian celebrity chef and restaurateur. She is the chef and co-owner of the popular Italian restaurant Diva in Delhi. She started hosting TV cookery show, "Italian Khana" and published her first cookbook by the same name in 2009. She is a lesbian and is a prominent LGBT rights activist.



PABLO GANGULI

Entrepreneur, Artist & Director
23 November 1983

Ganguli is an entrepreneur, artist, producer, director and impresario and founder of the organisation Libertum. He has created and directed several international festivals, movements and summits of arts, literature, media, film, fashion and culture, through his organisation Liberatum; which promotes environmental, human rights, freedom of speech and other important issues.



GAURI SAWANT

Activist & NGO Founder
? - Present

Sawant is a transgender activist from Mumbai, India. Gauri founded the Sakhi Char Chowghi Trust in 2000. The NGO promotes safe sex and provides counselling to transgender people. In 2014, she became the first transgender person to file a petition in the Supreme Court of India for adoption rights of transgender people.



DR PRAGATI SINGH

Doctor & Activist
? - Present

Singh is an Indian doctor, public health official, and activist. She is known for her work in the Indian asexual community and research on the topic. She featured on the BBC's 2019 list of 100 inspiring and influential women from around the world. She founded the self/non funded group 'Indian Aces' on Facebook and hosts meet ups under the name Platonicity.

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