

THE CENTER

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Activist Art Collective Gran Fury Unveils RIOT Mural at NYC's LGBT Community Center

The mural, created to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, will remain a permanent installation at The Center

Sunday, June 2, 2019 — New York, NY — Gran Fury, the activist art collective that grew out of the AIDS advocacy group ACT UP, will today unveil a mural for permanent installation in New York City's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center ("The Center"). Standing 96" by 96", the mural is a recreation of Gran Fury's 1988 painting *RIOT*. It is a visual protest of the treatment of LGBTQ people that continues today, echoing the rage and urgency that catalyzed the Stonewall Riots and flows through the broader LGBTQ rights movement in the United States.

"The Center is honored to collaborate with Gran Fury to revive such an important work as we recognize the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots," said Glenda Testone, The Center's Executive Director. "*RIOT* calls to mind the battles that the LGBTQ community has fought over the past 50 years, including those it still fights today. Especially as the eyes of the world turn to New York for World Pride, this is a vital reminder that our struggle to secure equity and justice for all within our community is far from over."

"*RIOT* grew out of the AIDS crisis in the late 80's when every gay person in New York felt under attack. Even though antiretroviral therapy that activism pressed for has alleviated the crisis for some people, our battles are not over, even for HIV/AIDS. We salute all those in the LGBTQ community who continue to fight for our rights and equal treatment. Stonewall was a RIOT," says Gran Fury.

RIOT, originally painted in 1988, was a response to the work *AIDS*, part of a series in various media called *IMAGEVIRUS* by Canadian collective General Idea. *AIDS* recalled Robert Indiana's pop art *LOVE*. Gran Fury's *RIOT* response to these earlier works suggested that anger was a necessary response, a catalyst for activism to counter the long-standing oppression of LGBTQ people and neglect by politicians and the medical establishment of the AIDS pandemic.

The 6-foot square work was created for *Vollbild* ('The Full Blown Image') in Berlin, 1988, where it was shown alongside General Idea's *AIDS*. The exhibit, curated by Frank Wagner (1958-2016), was the first show of art about AIDS in Europe. *RIOT* was painted by Gran Fury member Mark Simpson, who died of AIDS in 1996, and was subsequently loaned to The Center after it returned to the United States.

**THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL &
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The *RIOT* mural will be privately unveiled on Sunday, June 2 during The Center's annual "Fashion Centered" event, an evening of cocktails, dinner and conversation to raise awareness and support within the fashion industry for The Center's work.

It will be publicly unveiled Monday, June 3 at 6 p.m. For more information about the unveiling, or to acquire a press pass to attend the public event, contact Helen Buse at hbuse@gaycenter.org.

Additionally, in honor of the Stonewall Riots, Marc Jacobs is releasing an exclusive Pride capsule collection inspired by Gran Fury. The iconic *RIOT* imagery will be featured on t-shirts, baseball caps, canvas totes and condoms. Available at Marc Jacobs' retail stores and Marcjacobs.com, 100% of the proceeds benefits The Center.

About The Center

Established in 1983, New York City's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center empowers people to lead healthy, successful lives. The Center celebrates diversity and advocates for justice and opportunity. Each year, The Center welcomes more than 300,000 visits to our building in the West Village neighborhood of Manhattan from people who engage in our life-changing and life-saving activities. To learn more about our work, please visit gaycenter.org.

About Gran Fury

Named after the Plymouth automobile used as a squad car by the New York City Police Department, Gran Fury grew out of the AIDS activist group ACT UP in 1988. Gran Fury sought to raise public awareness of AIDS and to put pressure on politicians to adequately address the pandemic through medical interventions and social policies to combat discrimination. Their projects, across a wide variety of media—billboards, postcards, video, posters and painting—sparked debate in sites ranging from Federal, State and City government chambers to the FDA to the tabloid newspapers of New York City and as far away as Italy. Bridging the gap between Situationist site-specific art strategies, post-modern appropriation and the Queer activist movement, Gran Fury continues to influence later generations of queer artists. You can find information about Gran Fury, and high resolution digital files of their work, at granfury.org.

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