

ARTS & CULTURE

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Velvetpark's Official Top 25 Significant Queer Women of 2011

December 30th, 2011 | 2:49 pm



http://velvetparkmedia.com/sites/default/files/imagecache/pic_lightbox/images/promos/Grace_Moon/award-trophies-trophy2-788652_0.jpg

Before the year comes to a close, Velvetpark presents our round up of the Top 25 Significant Queer Women of 2011. Our third annual list was carefully crafted by our editorial team. The primary determinants for consideration has been female-identified or non-gender-binary persons who have made a significant contribution to lesbian/dyke/trans/queer visibility in the areas of arts, culture and activism, or who made a critical impact on our social equality this year. It has become our tradition to choose women who are not celebrated by the mainstream media, or individuals whose actions and accomplishments have been overlooked even within our own communities. In an effort to continue to honor new names from our vast, rich culture, we have refrained from duplicating honorees from our 2009 (<http://velvetparkmedia.com/blogs/velvetparks-official-top-25-most-significant-queer-women-2009>) and 2010 (<http://velvetparkmedia.com/blogs/velvetparks-official-top-25-significant-queer-women-2010>) lists.

As with previous lists, the numerical order is not meant to suggest a ranking system; these women hold equal weight in significance and achievement. We applaud them all!

Before we begin, we would like to take this moment to remember three women who passed away this year but who left indelible marks upon our queer culture and herstory: [Cherly B](http://velvetparkmedia.com/blogs/memori-am-cherly-b-1972%E2%80%93932011) (<http://velvetparkmedia.com/blogs/memori-am-cherly-b-1972%E2%80%93932011>), [Barbara Grier](http://velvetparkmedia.com/blogs/barbara-grier-founder-naiad-press-les-librarian-nerdstar-passes) (<http://velvetparkmedia.com/blogs/barbara-grier-founder-naiad-press-les-librarian-nerdstar-passes>) and [Paula Ettelbrick](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/09/nyregion/paula-l-ettelbrick-legal-expert-in-gay-rights-movement-dies-at-56.html) (<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/09/nyregion/paula-l-ettelbrick-legal-expert-in-gay-rights-movement-dies-at-56.html>).

1. The 99% - Angela Davis, Activist, Scholar, Author



Known for her work in the Communist Party USA, the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Panther Party and women's and prisoner's rights, Angela Davis reclaimed her "rabble-rouser" mantle in 2011. The 99% may not have a specific face, but it's hard not to think of Davis as a kind of figurehead of this leader-less movement. She traveled the country this fall, making various speeches at a handful of OWS encampments, including [Occupy Oakland](http://newsone.com/nation/newsonestaff2/angela-davis-occupy-oakland-protests/) (<http://newsone.com/nation/newsonestaff2/angela-davis-occupy-oakland-protests/>), [Washington Square Park](http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2011/10/angela_davis_visits_owsp.php) (http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2011/10/angela_davis_visits_owsp.php), [Occupy Philly](http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2011/10/angela_davis_visits_owsp.php), and [Occupy Wall Street](http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2011/10/angela_davis_visits_owsp.php). [Echoing "Down with capitalism!" cheers](http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2011/10/angela_davis_visits_owsp.php) (http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2011/10/angela_davis_visits_owsp.php) through the newly popular form of the "human microphone," Davis said the public "should imagine a time when money becomes obsolete," and that, "[i]n the meantime, there is a whole range of issues that can define our radical struggle."

2. Courage Under Fire - Hege Dalen and Toril Hansen, Citizen First Responders



The "Norway Massacre" captivated the world. When gunman Anders Behring Breivik went on a crazed shooting rampage at the end of July, among the first responders were Hege Dalen and her partner Toril Hansen, who, on four separate trips, rescued forty youth from Utoya Island. The mainstream media, fascinated by the gory details of and motivations behind the massacre, remained willfully ignorant of the couple's heroism. As Roz Kaveney of the *Guardian* (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/aug/03/lesbian-couple-norway-utoya-massacre>) duly noted, "[m]ainstream culture does not like the idea of lesbians being people who would put themselves in danger to save teenagers, probably heterosexual teenagers, that they have never met. We are far more used to lesbian couples, in very special issue-driven episodes, being in danger, and having to be rescued themselves." We are inspired by both Dalen and Hansen for their fearlessness and selfless humanity.

3. **Pagan Goddesses - Annie M. Sprinkle and Elizabeth M. Stephens, *Ecosexual Sexecologists***



Seven years ago Annie and Elizabeth set out to create a body of work celebrating their partnership in love, activism, and art. The Project, [Love Art Laboratory](http://loveartlab.org/index.php) (<http://loveartlab.org/index.php>) culminated this year in San Francisco. Love Art Lab was inspired by Linda M. Montano's [14 Years of Living Art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linda_Montano) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linda_Montano), with the intention of turning life into art and art into life. Beginning in 2005 Sprinkle and Stephens created a wedding ceremony, inspired by the the Kundalini Chakra system, pagan rituals, and their own philosophical and aesthetic ideas. With each ensuing year the couple chose a new theme, created a new wedding and selected a new location in North America or Europe. Early on the couple worked though a battle with [breast cancer](http://loveartlab.org/summary.php?year_id=11) (http://loveartlab.org/summary.php?year_id=11) keeping all elements of their relationship on public artistic display. Each year concluded with a gallery show of that year's artistic ephemera. In Sprinkles own words she said one goal was to to switch the metaphor of "Earth as Mother to Earth as Lover."

4. **Oral Herstorian - Tiona M., *Multimedia Artist of Black Social Realism***



Like 443

[8]



(/users/conlite)

I had forgotten about Hege (</blogs/velvetparks-official-top-25-significant-queer-women-2011#comment-67912>)

I had forgotten about Hege and Toril! And such dyke heroes should not be forgotten! Thanks for pulling this list together.

Submitted by [Conlite](/users/conlite) (/users/conlite) on Sun, 2012-01-01 18:55.



(/users/tosha)

saw Pariah this afternoon (</blogs/velvetparks-official-top-25-significant-queer-women-2011#comment-67908>)

it was so good i wanted to stand up and cheer. Moving, real, and real funny too.

Submitted by [Tosha](/users/tosha) (/users/tosha) on Sat, 2011-12-31 00:49.



EDITOR

(/users/marcie-bianco)

got sidetracked the other (</blogs/velvetparks-official-top-25-significant-queer-women-2011#comment-67909>)

got sidetracked the other night but am definitely planning to see it this coming week! everyone's been raving about it! (we'll be running our own review of the film this Monday!)

Submitted by [Marcie Bianco](/users/marcie-bianco) (/users/marcie-bianco) on Sat, 2011-12-31 10:09.



(/users/jess-glenny)

Good list. (</blogs/velvetparks-official-top-25-significant-queer-women-2011#comment-67899>)

I really enjoy this site, but I'd love to see more UK content in general. Do you need a UK correspondent?

Submitted by [Jess Glenny \(/users/jess-glenny\)](#) on Thu, 2011-12-29 14:00.



EDITOR

[\(/users/marcie-bianco\)](#)

[Jess! yes! email me, please? \(/blogs/velvetparks-official-top-25-significant-queer-women-2011#comment-67901\)](#)

Jess! yes! email me, please? let's set this up!

Submitted by [Marcie Bianco \(/users/marcie-bianco\)](#) on Thu, 2011-12-29 15:32.



[\(/users/jess-glenny\)](#)

[Will do later. \(/blogs/velvetparks-official-top-25-significant-queer-women-2011#comment-67905\)](#)

Off to teach now.

Submitted by [Jess Glenny \(/users/jess-glenny\)](#) on Fri, 2011-12-30 06:43.



[\(/users/steph\)](#)

[Okey dokey, glad to see \(/blogs/velvetparks-official-top-25-significant-queer-women-2011#comment-67898\)](#)

Okey dokey, glad to see there's at least one Brit (that I know of) on the list! I have mixed views on Jeantette but her memoir is a work of brilliance and she is a champion of the english language which can only be a good thing.

A belated happy christmas to everyone and here's to 2012! Gonna be a biggie here - not only do we have the Queen's Diamond Jubilee (bring on the double bank holiday) it's also the London Olympics. Me, gf and pooch are running off to France for the whole 2 weeks - it's gonna be hell on earth on the trains and tubes so we'll leave it for the tourists!

Submitted by [Steph \(/users/steph\)](#) on Thu, 2011-12-29 12:57.



EDITOR

[\(/users/marcie-bianco\)](#)

[happy holidays, Steph! \(/blogs/velvetparks-official-top-25-significant-queer-women-2011#comment-67902\)](#)

happy holidays, Steph!

Submitted by [Marcie Bianco \(/users/marcie-bianco\)](#) on Thu, 2011-12-29 15:33.