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STONEWALL: as seen through the lens of Dark Tourism/Difficult Heritage

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A LOOK AT STONEWALL

a respected queer tourist
site/memorial

contextualizing stonewall
-socio-political
treatment of queer
lives

-lavender scare

-turbulent political
atmosphere during
a time of mass
upset at the
government (civil
rights movement,
Vietnam war, beat
poets, etc.)



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HOWARD LEARY, POLICE COMMISSIONER



What happened at Stonewall?

- the first night of the riots
- Stonewall veteran accounts

A long history of police violence

the inn, used as a tourist spot, a place now recognized for its queer history and significance

remembered today as a queer safe space

still holds value within the community, now owned by two queer individuals

can be seen today overtly showing pride and solidarity with the queer community

Post-Stonewall Significance



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The queer liberation front

- New organizations with bigger numbers

- Continual dismissal of trans issues

The first pride march

(2016) President Obama making stonewall a national monument

- Queer history/stonewall still not being taught in schools



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Stonewall Monument – Christopher Park

George Segal Instillation

- Majorly contested within current queer movement/community

- Whitewashing/ciswashing Stonewall

- MOTHA and re-negotiation efforts

- Anonymous activism through vandalism

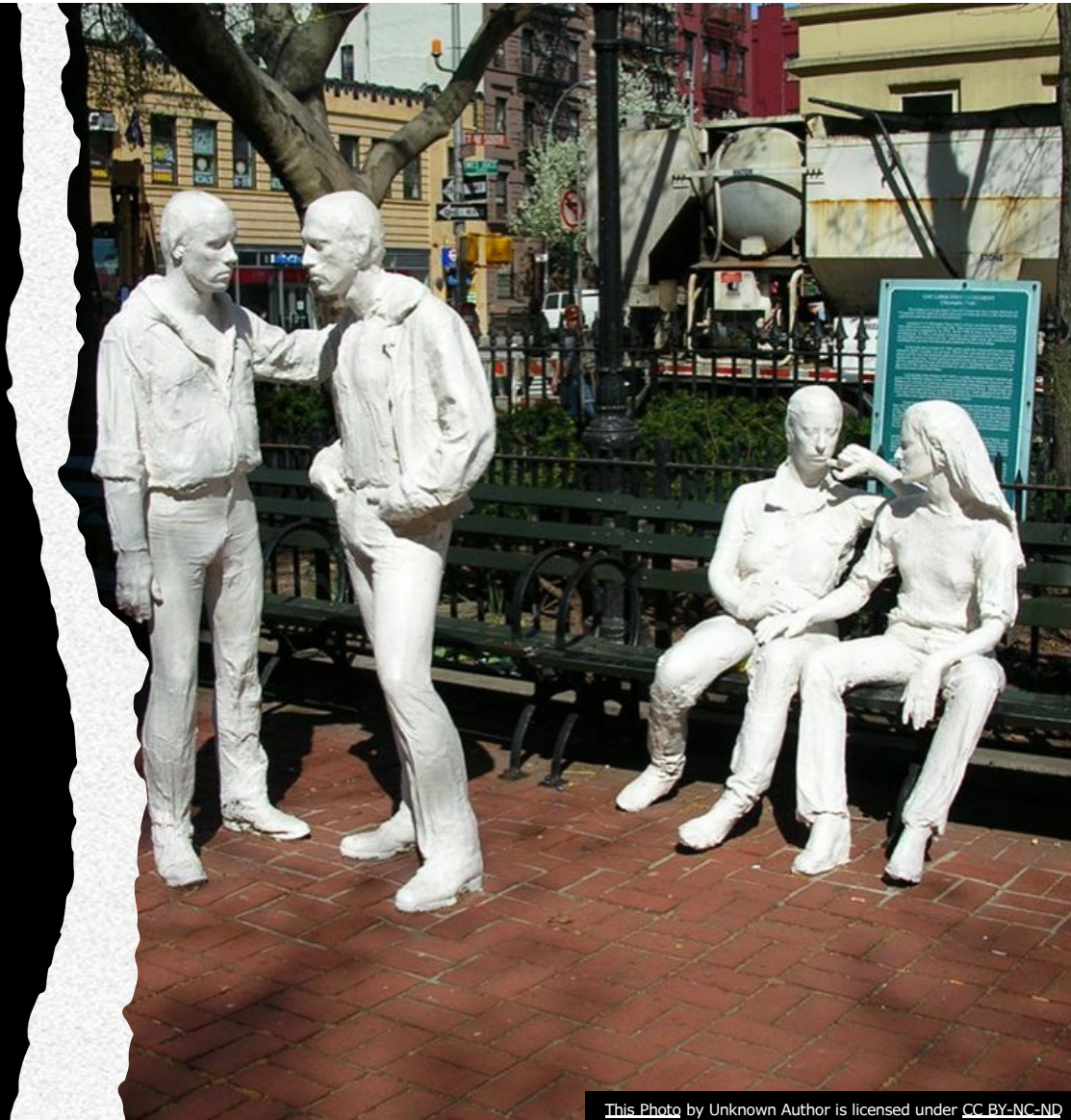
Contextualizing Christopher Park

- history of 'housing' homeless queer youth

- Now national park territory, keeping the area 'respectable'
 - historical queer safe space being transformed into tourist destination

Erasure and the damage done by celebrating a false narrative of peace

- Dismisses current struggles and violence against queer people today



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Stonewall Today

The Inn holding a vigil for those injured (53) and killed (49) in the Pulse Nightclub shooting

- Thousands pay respect

- Pulse nightclub memorial in Orlando set on fire on the 1 yr anniversary

- Moral panic and rise in anti-queer and anti-trans legislation

The effort to reclaim pride

- Corporate pride, exploitation, and pride marches becoming parades controlled by armed police (ensuring no riots)

Juxtaposition between the two parts of Stonewall Monument

- It says something that the Inn is queer owned and still plays an active role in the community (non-profits, vigils) where the park is now federally owned (provide tours and maintain statues that have become symbols of erasure)

Concluding Thoughts

Stonewall as a symbol of dissent

- Presented to the world as a marker for the beginning of queer liberation in the U.S.

The place wouldn't be what it is without the people, the community

- Not just a physical space but a representation of queer people fighting back

- Why its so important to have accurate representation, to stay true to the queer struggle

- It holds historical significance, but more than that, it holds power

- Serves as a reminder that queer people will not be silenced or beaten down

Daily reminder that Stonewall was a riot!

- (commonly said in the community, especially during pride month)

- Time does not ensure progress, active involvement in change does



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