

What Is Another Queer Christmas?

Christmas 2013: theatre-maker Bethan Marlow and Mess Up The Mess presented a show-stopping production with 100 members of Swansea's LGBTQI+ community.

Ten years on. The environment and culture of Swansea has changed tremendously. But its queer history is being erased.

Another Queer Christmas will connect the queer communities of Swansea in 2 years of creative activity, exploring and learning from each others' individual and collective journeys and histories. Bringing together professional artists, queer creatives and the LGBTQI+ community, through writing, performance, visual arts and music, this inter-generational project will establish creative and inclusive spaces where queer Swansea can celebrate itself and its stories, all coming together in a Creative Explosion of events in Christmas 2024. Another Queer Christmas will create a legacy of lasting connections amongst individuals and organisations, establishing a network of queer creative activity long after the project ends.

Our Shared Objectives

- Reduce loneliness and poor mental health amongst LGBTQI+ people by establishing creative inclusive spaces for them to gain confidence to be their authentic selves.
- Create a queer safe space for all LGBTQI+ people, including those for whom the 'scene' is a barrier, being inclusive of disabled people, Welsh speakers, people from a global majority background, recognising their particular needs and insights.
- Increase understanding of queer people, countering hate crime by bringing a creative queer experience to life across the City, claiming a space for queer voices in the story of Swansea's communities.
- Build resilience of grassroots LGBTQI+ organisations, increasing their membership and interconnections.

- Leave behind a longterm legacy of queer creative activity sustained by an active network of individuals and organisations

Timeline

The project follows 5 phases:

Oct - Dec 2023:

- Grassroots engagement with community
- Run 25 multi-artform taster workshops across Swansea
- Shape next phase through listening to participants' voices

Jan - June 2024:

- Deliver programme: 6 workshops x 5 artforms
- Co-create themes, stories and ideas for exhibitions, performances and Creative Explosions

July - Aug 2024:

- Intensive 3 day workshops in each of 5 artforms
- Finalise Creative Explosion ideas with participants
- Write scripts, make artworks

Sept - Dec 2024:

- 12 workshops in each of 5 artforms
- Finalise scripts, complete artworks and rehearse
- 3 days of Creative Explosions: exhibitions, flashmobs, performances driven by participants' ideas

Jan - Sep 2025 - The Legacy:

Legacy is considered from the outset, but this final phase allows for reflection,

evaluation and focused development work with individuals and organisations which could result in:

- kickstarting new queer artistic groups and activities building on connections created by the project and establishing networks
- supporting groups to be more resilient with development support from Community Producer and project partners
- Disseminating learning

The Partners

- Bethan Marlow (Lead Artist)
- Cerian Wilshere-Davies (Lead Artist)
- Swansea Pride
- PYNK
- Arts and Heritage Team, Swansea Bay University Health Board
- Urban Foundry
- Mess Up The Mess Theatre Company (host organisation, producing)