

Creative events of the LGBTQ+ History Month: An SPA funded project

In this post, Jonathan MacBride offers a review of creative events that he along with colleagues Jaime Prada and Katie Nicoll Baines organised during the LGBTQ+ History Month, these were supported by the Student-Staff Partnership fund. This post belongs to the Hot Topic series: Student Partnership Agreement 2023-24.

The original article appeared here: <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/student-staff-partnership-fund-report/>

Edinburgh University Students' Association's (EUSA) queer societies, including the LGBT+ Liberation Campaign, organised a variety of creative events in February for LGBTQ+ History Month. These were supported by The University of Edinburgh's Staff Pride Network and attended by a wide range of students and staff, with funding from the Student-Staff Partnership Fund.

Photography Workshop (Fri 10 Feb): The Photography Workshop was led by Colin McGuire and Evie Siddal, who taught different techniques to capture intimate moments of queer joy while also discovering how to photograph queer bodies and give subjects the confidence to get the perfect shot! Themes included queer intimacy, gender dysphoria, body positivity, body neutrality, self-expression and sexuality.

Sculpture Workshop (Fri 17 Feb): This Sculpture Workshop was led by Ames Truscott, who guided different exercises to use one's own queerness to create clay sculptures, learn about

queer bodies and explore the creative process! Themes included gender dysphoria, body positivity, body neutrality, self-expression and sexuality.

Life Drawing Workshop (Fri 24 Feb): This Life Drawing Workshop was led by Ryn Wheatley and assisted by models Evie Siddal and August Dawn, who taught different techniques to draw queer bodies and explore one's own creative process. Themes included queer intimacy, gender dysphoria, body positivity, body neutrality, self-expression and sexuality.

Celebrating Queer Joy Exhibition (Mon 27th – Tues 28th Feb): This exhibition was organised as part of the LGBTQ+ History Month programme by the LGBTQ+ Liberation Campaign and the Staff Pride Network. This collection showcased pieces from staff and students to amplify queer joy in all its forms. We reflected on matters such as friendship, family, intimacy and gender euphoria while also discovering queer local talent.

LGBT+ Liberation Officer Jaime Prada sourced workshop leaders, curated the exhibition, materials and found the venues. Staff Pride Network volunteers collaborated to source venues for the exhibition and found this particularly difficult for such a large scale event and limited suitable exhibition spaces.

Many people tried new methods including myself at the Sculpture Workshop. A snake and Stonehenge arch were two of my many uncomplicated creations, of which the arch stands proudly in my house. Its three bits of clay stuck together but I'm proud. There were incredibly detailed pieces created by those with much greater skills than I! The closing exhibition was inspirational and highlighted the diverse media used by LGBT+ creators, including glass, photography, digital art and clay compositions.

Jaime has moved on from the University but the legacy of this joint project and its funding live on in the pieces created by student and staff participants and their new-found skills. The

experience led to Jaime and I collaborating on an LGBTQ+ youth art exhibition as part of Pride Edinburgh 2023, viewed by thousands of Pride-goers. The art exhibition for Pride Edinburgh 2024 will build on this success. The Staff Pride Network has increased experience in hosting a new type of event. Jaime now works as the EDI Manager at the British Museum.

JONATHAN MACBRIDE



Jonathan is passionate about the importance of EDI in every aspect of life. He is a squash competitor, qualified squash coach and referee. He has two decades of LGBTQ+ activism, Staff Pride Network Social & Events Officer and founding Co-Chair, World OutGames Squash Gold Medallist x 2. He is also the Pride Edinburgh Community Engagement Director, Edinburgh Curveballs Chair, Scottish Squash Diversity & Inclusion External Working Group member, husband to a husband. At The University of Edinburgh he serves as the Informatics Graduate School Administrative Assistant by supporting PGR students through their early research career.