

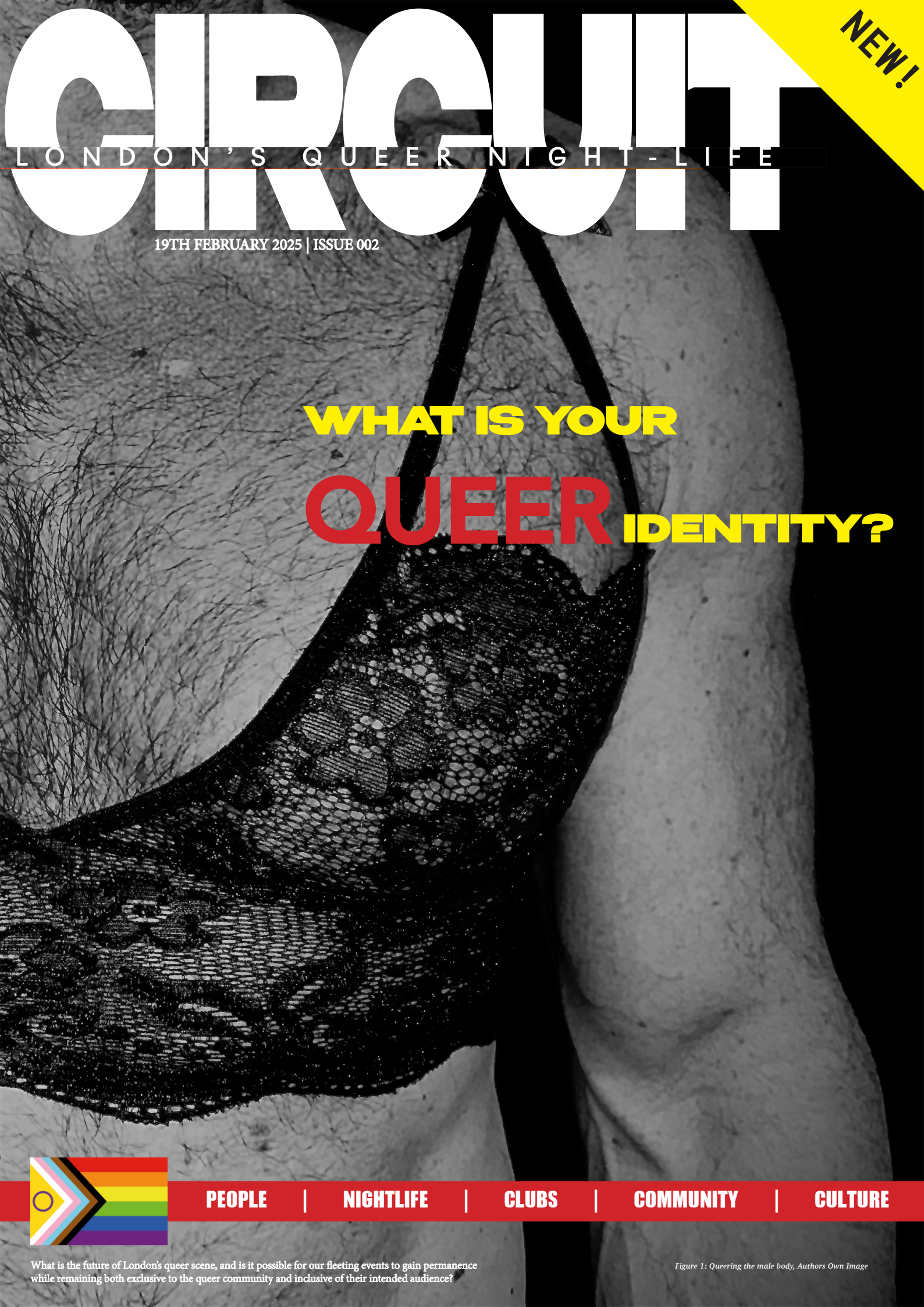
# CIRCUIT

LONDON'S QUEER NIGHT-LIFE

19TH FEBRUARY 2025 | ISSUE 002

NEW!

## WHAT IS YOUR QUEER IDENTITY?



PEOPLE | NIGHTLIFE | CLUBS | COMMUNITY | CULTURE

What is the future of London's queer scene, and is it possible for our fleeting events to gain permanence while remaining both exclusive to the queer community and inclusive of their intended audience?

Figure 1: Queering the male body, Authors Own Image

**ADMIRERS** - FOR SOMEONE TO APPRECIATE SOMEONE'S BEAUTY

**AGENDER** - SOMEONE WHO DOES NOT IDENTIFY WITH ANY GENDER

**BISEXUAL** - SOMEONE IS ATTRACTED TO BOTH MALE AND FEMALE

**BEARS** - AN OLDER GAY MALE WITH A LARGE BUILD AND LOTS OF HAIR

**CHASERS** - AN OUTSIDER THAT IS USUALLY ATTRACTED TO PEOPLE IN A COMMUNITY

**CHEMSEX** - THE ACT OF TAKING hardcore DRUGS WHEN HAVING SEX

**CHUBS** - A GAY MALE THAT IS OF A LARGE BUILD

**CIS** - SOMEONE THAT IDENTIFIES WITH THE GENDER THEY ASSIGNED AT BIRTH

**COMMERCIALISATION** -

THE IDEA OF TAKING SOMETHING AND TURNING IT INTO SOMETHING ELSE TO GAIN A PROFIT

**CUBS** - A GAY MAN WHOM RESEMBLES A BEAR, HOWEVER, YOUNGER

**DADDY** - AN OLDER GAY MALE TYPICALLY INVOLVED WITH YOUNGER MEN

**DARKROOM** - A SPACE WHERE SEX IS ENCOURAGED

**ELECTROWERKZ** - A WAREHOUSE / NIGHTCLUB IN ANGEL

**FEM** - SHORT FOR FEMININE - ANYONE WHO MAINTAINS CHARACTERISTICS OF TRADITIONAL FEMININE STEREOTYPES

**FLINTA** - AN ACRONYM STANDING FOR - FEMALE, LESBIAN NON-BINARY TRANSGENDER AND ASEXUAL

**GAY** - SOMEONE WHOM IS SEXUALLY ATTRACTED TO PEOPLE OF THE SAME SEX

**GRINDER** - A GAY DATING / HOOK-UP APPLICATION

**HEAVEN** - A LGBTQIA+ CLUB IN THE CENTRE OF LONDON (EMBANKMENT)

**HUNKS** - GAY MEN WITH A MUSCULAR PHYSIQUE

**H&H** - STANDS FOR HIGH AND HORNY - ASSOCIATED WITH CHEMSEX

**INTERSEX** - SOMEONE WHO HAS SEXUAL ANATOMY DOESN'T FIT EXCLUSIVELY TO MALE OR FEMALE

**MASC** - SHORT FOR MASCULINE - ANYONE WHO MAINTAINS CHARACTERISTICS OF TRADITIONAL MASCULINE STEREOTYPES

**MUSCLE BEARS** - A HAIRY OLDER MAN WITH A MUSCULAR PHYSIQUE

**POC** - AN ACRONYM STANDING FOR - PEOPLE OF COLOUR

**QUEER** - USED TO BE A DEROGATORY TERM FOR PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES AS STRAIGHT. NOW RECLAIMED

**RAVE** - A CELEBRATION OF ALTERNATIVE MUSIC

**RIBA** - AN ACRONYM STANDING FOR - ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS

**RUKUS** - A QUEER POC EXHIBITION IN SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON

**STRAIGHT** - SOMEONE WHO IDENTIFIES WITH THE BINARY TERM OF HETEROSEXUALITY

**TEMPORALITY** - SOMETHING WHICH HAS A LIMITED TIME OF EXISTENCE

**THE SCENE** - A COMBINATION OF QUEER PEOPLE AND SOCIAL SPACE BOTH PARTICULARLY IN NIGHTLIFE

**TOXICITY** - SOMETHING THAT DOES NOT HELP AND HAS A NEGATIVE IMPACT WHICH WILL GET WORSE IF IGNORED

**TRANS MEN (FTM)** - THE CHANGE OF GENDER FROM FEMALE TO MALE

**TRANS WOMEN (MTF)** - THE CHANGE OF GENDER FROM MALE TO FEMALE

**TWINKS** - YOUNG GAY MALE WITH A SMALL PHYSIQUE

## The Fluidity of Queerness: My Evolving Understanding

For me queerness is fluid, throughout my 3 years of identifying as queer it has morphed into various different forms, of which, some have applied to me and others have not. When I first came to London my thoughts on being queer, upon reflection, were very surface level. I thought queerness was walking through the streets with a rainbow coloured flag, I thought it was just a derogatory term for the gays and the rest of the lgbtqia community.



Figure 2: Childhood, Authors Own Image

# “ What does Queer mean ? ”

## Finding My True Self: A Journey To London’s Queer Scene

For many, being queer is something they are born with, but that was certainly not the case for me. I grew up in a small village, playing rugby with my friends. I never once considered the possibility of being gay, bi, or queer. It simply wasn’t something I had been exposed to in a positive light. Upon reflection, I realise I must have been suppressing my thoughts and feelings, trying to convince myself that I was straight by kissing girls in front of my friends. It wasn’t until my undergraduate years that I began exploring my sexuality, coming out to a few people and being more open. At the time, I identified as bisexu-

al, but I knew deep down it was just a way for me to distance myself from the truth (thinking that by identifying as bi, I could somehow lessen the judgment or discomfort others might have toward my sexuality).

It wasn’t until after I graduated that I finally started being myself and letting go of the fear. This shift came when I was introduced to one of my queer flatmates. It was with him that I felt I could truly be my authentic self, marking a new chapter in my life. We started exploring London’s queer scene from scratch, beginning with my first visit to a gay bar in 2021. Now,

I’ve come to know nearly all the gay bars and clubs in the city, and over time, I’ve built a wonderful group of friends. Together, we continue to grow, explore, and navigate the ever-expanding queer scene. For the first time, I felt like I was part of something bigger than myself, an evolving community / culture where everyone is free to be exactly who they were, without fear or shame.

*“Queerness is a journey, not a destination. It’s about growth, discovery, and embracing every version of yourself along the way.”*

*Kaylem Alavi - 2025*



Figure 3: In the club, Authors Own Image

# TOP 5 QUEER

## EVENTS IN LONDON!

Disclaimer: All events are different and some may be more suited to others

### 1) FEELIT, Omera (22:30pm - 5:00am) House, Disco and Pop music £15 - £20

Every Friday at the Omeara venue near London Bridge, this 'queer super-party' certainly lives up to its name. The crowd is genuinely diverse, though it's noticeable that women are underrepresented. Many people love dressing up, while others prefer to strip down as the night goes on, especially in the sweaty main room. The main space blasts energetic house music, while two other rooms feature a more relaxed atmosphere with disco and pop tunes. This old theatre has been Beautifully urated by London Jodie Harsh and the Little Gay Brother team. Feel It brings Berlin-inspired vibes and thrills to south London.



Figure 4: Feelit, Authors Own Image

## GOING OUT

### 4) ROAST, Electrowerkz (22:00pm - 6:00am) House and Pop music £23

Every other Saturday exclusively at Electrowerkz, Roast is a night for the party animals who like to express themselves. This can be in many of their 5 rooms or even in their very large darkroom. This can be done in as much or as little clothing as you would like. Controversially Roast does not allow women into the event. Instead it is advertised towards bears, cubs, chubs, chasers, muscle bears, trans men, muscle men, and admirers.



Figure 5: Feelit, Authors Own Image

### 2) RIPOSTE, Electrowerkz

(9:00pm - 6:00am)  
**Techno, House, Electro, Drum & Bass, Avant-garde & Industrial Sounds**

£11.50 - £30

Titling itself as London's 'Queer Art Rave' Riposte is an event that is open to the entirety of the LGBTQIA+ community. With 20 DJ's playing throughout their nights the event looks to promote small, up and coming queer artists. This includes performers, immersive installations, market stalls and art displays with the opportunity to make money throughout the event night. These are all done via an open call that takes place before the event. Riposte, unlike many other events, like to change the theme of every event night, with previous events titled 'Fight Club', 'Witchcraft', and the next ones - 'Iconic Duos' on the 14th March and 'Join The Cult' on 7th June!

### 3) UNFOLD, Fold (11:00am - 20:00pm) Techno, House, Electro, and experimental sounds £10 - £30

Unfold is a queer day-rave held at FOLD London. It is a warehouse club in East London that focuses on underground electronic music like techno and house, offering a space for both emerging and established artists. With a strong sound system, visual art, and high-energy atmosphere, Unfold has a very welcoming environment for all. It's focus on inclusivity and quality music makes it a stand-out event in London's nightlife scene, especially for those seeking a community-oriented, non-commercial rave experience. Despite it not being branded as 'queer.' The inclusivity of the rave, the music there and the people that attend, are all very queer in itself, hence why it has made it on to the list.

### 5) Dalston Superstore, Dalston (4:00pm - 4:00am) Disco, Techno, House, Electro and Hip hop £0 - £20

This offers a vibrant space that blends a café, bar, and nightclub. Famous for its inclusive, electric atmosphere, it's a popular spot for queer nightlife, art, and culture. The venue hosts a range of events, from drag shows and live performances to late-night parties. Dalston Superstore has built a reputation for being a welcoming, creative hub for all of the queer community, with its laid-back daytime vibe evolving into an energetic, colourful nightlife scene. Despite its smaller size, it's an iconic part of London's alternative party scene, bringing together people from all walks of life for a fun and free-spirited time.



Figure 6: Dalston Superstore, by Dalston Superstore

# ELECTROWERKZ

The Islington Club (known as Electrowerkz), has a rich history within London's squatting community. Founder Mayuan Mak, who became involved in the local nightlife as a teenager in the 1980s, DJed at the Kit Kat nightclub before founding the event Slimelight while squatting at a church in Kilburn. Slimelight, now the world's longest-running dark scene club, has become famous for its bold performances.



Figure 7: The Bar, by Electrowerkz

Electrowerkz is a large queer venue, featuring 8 rooms with a total maximum capacity of 1,500 people. This expansive space offers incredible versatility for event organisers. For example, smaller events can choose to hire fewer rooms, tailoring the space to fit the expected crowd size. The venue's flexible door configurations and adaptable layouts allow the shell of the building to be transformed into a variety of completely different event spaces, ensuring a unique experience for every event.

Located just a two-minute walk from Angel Underground Station (Northern Line, with Night Tube services available on weekends), Electrowerkz is easily accessible from most parts of the city. Several bus routes also operate 24 hours a day, with a stops just 100 yards from the venue. Its proximity to public transport options makes it convenient for both locals and first-time visitors. The venue's location, combined with its impressive size and versatile space, has made it a favourite among London's queer culture, community and beyond, drawing a diverse crowd to experience the atmosphere it provides.<sup>1</sup>

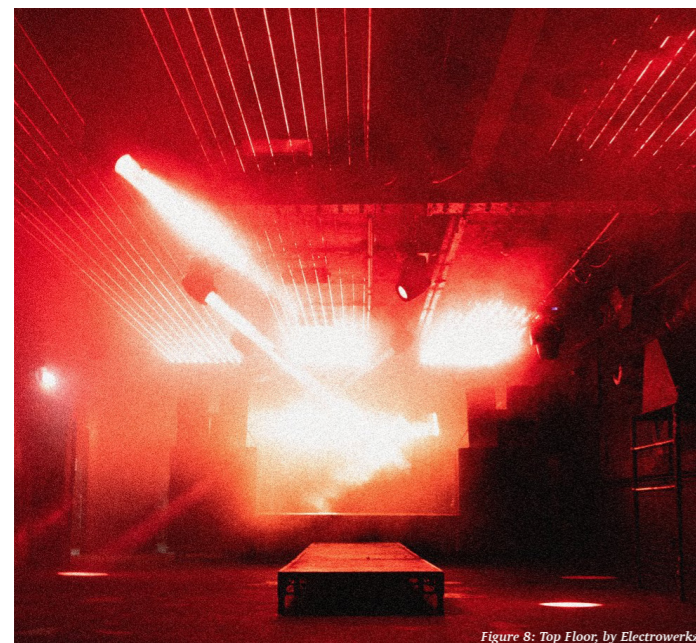


Figure 8: Top Floor, by Electrowerkz

With its central location and flexibility, Electrowerkz has become a vital hub for London's vibrant queer community, hosting a wide array of exciting events and gatherings.

7 Torrens Street, London, EC1V 1NQ



Figure 9: The Cage, by Electrowerkz

## Upcoming Queer Events at Electrowerkz:

**ROAST** – Sat, February 22

**HUNTER** – Fri, February 21

**GRIP** – Sun, March 2

**BASH** – Sat, April 19

**RIPOSTE** – Fri, June 7



Figure 10: Courtyard, by Electrowerkz



# Queer Voices: London's Nightlife

This survey was conducted among a diverse group of individuals who engage with queer nightlife in London. It aims to explore the significance of the queer scene, understand why it is essential, and identify the changes that are needed to improve it.

**PLEASE NOTE: Answers have been summarised**

## 1. What do you enjoy most about queer nightlife?<sub>2</sub>

Respondents consistently highlighted the sense of **community, diversity, and acceptance** in queer nightlife as key aspects of their experiences. Many emphasised the importance of **self-expression, originality** (outfits and music) and the ability to **escape daily life**. Socialising with friends and meeting open-minded people were also frequently mentioned. Overall, queer spaces were valued for providing a **safe, inclusive environment** where individuals can be themselves.

## 5. Are there any spaces or events that you think are especially inclusive and creative? What makes them work?<sub>3</sub>

Respondents mentioned several events and venues they found **creative and inclusive**. **Riposte London** and **Queer House Party** were particularly highlighted for their unique, evolving event formats, with **QHP** noted for being the most innovative. **2CP** was seen as somewhat creative but

less inclusive. Some respondents appreciated the **atmosphere** in venues like industrial-style raves that surprise with their interior design, creating a welcoming vibe. **Activity events** like quizzes in pubs and clubs were also mentioned for encouraging interaction and mixing new people.

## 9. How do you feel about alcohol and drugs in the nightlife scene? Do they affect the culture?<sub>4</sub>

Many respondents noted that drugs (particularly in after-parties) are deeply **integrated into the scene** and often seen as a **normalised part** of the experience. The **pressure** to partake, especially in commonly drug-friendly environments with specific **music genres**, was mentioned. While some individuals don't personally have a problem with the use, others pointed out concerns about the **safety and control issues**, especially in sexual spaces like dark rooms. Though drugs contribute to feelings of liberation and inclusivity, there's an **awareness** of their potential dangers and adverse effects on the overall nightlife experience.

## 10. What do you think of labels like "twinks," "bears," "daddies," etc in the queer scene? Why?<sub>5</sub>

There are mixed feelings about labels within the queer community. Some see them as **unnecessary and damaging, reinforcing stereotypes** and limiting individuals based on assumptions about their appearance. Others believe labels can be helpful in **identifying niches or connecting like-minded people** for events. The idea that these labels are more common in the cis gay male scene and less so in queer women's spaces was also noted. While some **don't mind labels** in casual settings, there's a strong sentiment that they should be self-identified and not imposed on others.

**Scan here to have your say!**



Figure 28: PEOPLE, Digital drawing by Author



Figure 29: In The Club, Photograph by Author

## 12. Why is it that certain subgroups (like lesbians, people of colour and trans people) are not getting as much recognition and space in queer nightlife?<sub>6</sub>

While subgroups like transgender people and lesbians are welcome at main events, they often **lack dedicated spaces**. Cis white gay men are seen as dominating, sometimes due to their cultural capital and market appeal. Though more subgroups are **creating their own spaces**, the industry tends to prioritise groups with larger followings, like gay men, due to commercial interests. Historical figures like **Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson** highlight how marginalised groups have shaped the LGBTQIA+ movement but still don't get enough recognition.

## 13. What changes would make queer nightlife in London more inclusive and safe?<sub>7</sub>

Suggestions include venues ex-

PLICITLY promoting their acceptance of diverse communities. There's need for **FLINTA-only spaces** and hiring **more queer staff** for security and support roles. Some believe a **focus on diverse music and safer spaces** can improve the experience, while others advocate for **collaborations with grassroots groups** to uplift marginalised communities. A stronger emphasis on **inclusivity** in venue terms and conditions is also suggested.

## 15. Should all people who aren't queer be allowed to enter these events? If so, how could this be done?<sub>8</sub>

Opinions on heterosexual people at queer events vary. Some feel queer people should have **priority**, especially in crowded spaces, while others believe straight people **should be allowed**, as long as they respect the space. Ticketing systems or **electronic IDs** could help manage access. Concerns about safety, especially in areas like toilets, are common. Overall, there's a balance between **inclusivity** and

maintaining **safe spaces** for queer individuals.

## 17. What's the most important thing about queer nightlife that should never change?<sub>9</sub>

People appreciate the **variety** of clubs and bars in queer nightlife, as well as the freedom to express themselves without judgment. The scene is often seen as **fun, inclusive, and willing to evolve**. There's also a strong desire for spaces where individuals can **celebrate their sexuality openly**, and some emphasise the **importance of documenting** the experience, rejecting clubs that don't allow photos.

## 18. What do you think people outside the queer community often misunderstand about queer nightlife?<sub>10</sub>

Queer nightlife is seen by some as **over-sexualised** or **drug-fueled**, but others think it is viewed as a **sacred space for self-expression**. While it's often **misunderstood**, it offers a chance to embrace freedom and challenge traditional norms, despite some stigma.

## 20. Why do you think queer nightlife matters beyond just the parties?<sub>11</sub>

Queer nightlife is seen as a **space for self-expression, connection, and community**. It provides a safe place for people to **relax without judgment** and offers a **sense of belonging**, especially for those who feel marginalised. It's valued for its **improvisation, boundary-pushing nature**, and ability to **connect people** from diverse backgrounds. More than just partying, it's about normalising queerness and helping people to feel accepted and integrated.



Photos by Kaylem Alavi  
**OUT & ABOUT**  
Join us on Nights Out to Londons  
Famous Queer Events!  
ROAST, RIPOSTE, FEELIT, BEYOND, DALSTON SUPERSTORE, ELECTROWERKZ, FIRE



Figure 29: by Author



Figure 30: by Author



Figure 31: by Author



Figure 32: by Author



Figure 33: by Author



Figure 34: by Author

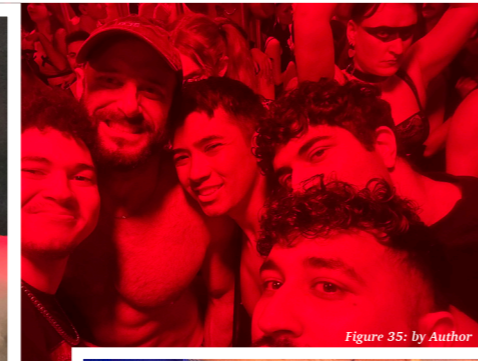


Figure 35: by Author



Figure 37: by Author



Figure 36: by Author



Figure 38: by Author

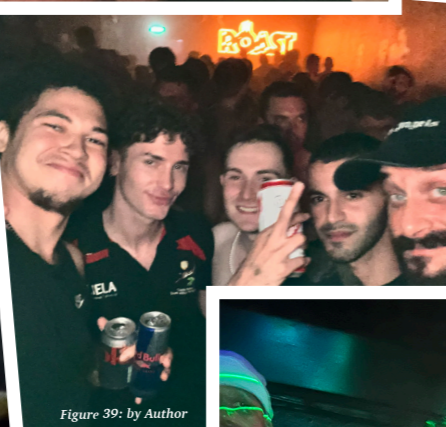


Figure 39: by Author



Figure 40: by Author



Figure 41: by Author



Figure 42: by Author



Figure 43: by Author



Figure 44: by Author



Figure 45: by Author



Figure 46: by Author



Figure 47: by Author

# CONFESSI0N

**CONFESSI0N** was an innovative intervention featured at January's Witchcraft-themed Riposte event. It invited attendees to reflect on the current state of queer nightlife in London. Visitors were encouraged to share their personal experiences of queer events in the city by writing them on wristbands provided at the event. They were then added to a tapestry that hung from the ceiling, this was a dynamic display that featured various event nights and spaces to spark conversation and provoke thought among the crowd.

The comments and numbers are from the installation. They have been curated into posters to raise awareness of the people's experiences in the scene. Below them are further examinations of the meaning behind them



Figure 48: Image by Riposte, Confession Poster by Author

## #61

It can definitely be frustrating to navigate London's queer scene, especially when finding events. It's like a hidden treasure hunt. But at the same time, there's something powerful about the way these spaces remain protected. This offers a sense of belonging and safety for those who might not always feel welcomed elsewhere. It's a tough balance, though how do we ensure that more people can access these spaces while still preserving the sense of security that makes them so valuable? It's something we'll need to keep discussing as the scene evolves.



Figure 49: Image by Riposte, Confession Poster by Author

## #55

The need for more FLINTA and POC spaces is crucial. These spaces are needed to provide these marginalised communities within the queer scene. However, it's not just about creating these spaces, it's about ensuring they receive the funding and recognition they deserve. Often, these communities face a lack of resources and support, which makes it harder for these spaces to thrive. We need to truly invest in the people and spaces that will help amplify the voices of those who are often overlooked.



Figure 50: Image by Riposte, Installation by Author, Maya Zara and Daniel Mc Carthy



Figure 50: Image by Riposte

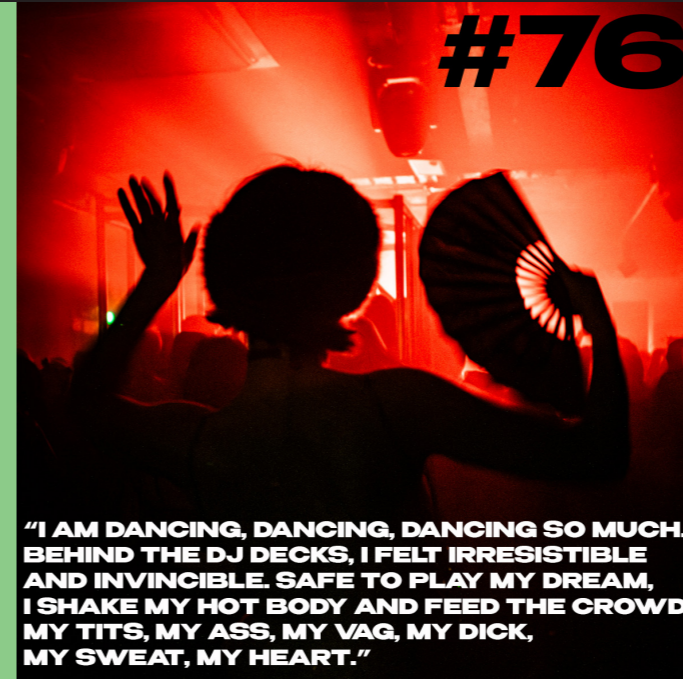


Figure 51: Image by Riposte, Confession Poster by Author

**#76**

Queer nightlife allows us to embrace our bodies and desires without fear, creating spaces where we can be unapologetically ourselves and feel truly alive in all of our forms in a safe environment, around like-minded people.



Figure 52: Image by Riposte, Confession Poster by Author

**#63**

Queerness is not just an identity, but a space where we can finally feel at home in our own skin. It's where we can ignore the expectations of society and embrace our true selves, free from the pressures to conform.



Figure 53: Image by Riposte, Confession Poster by Author

**#24**

The focus on cis gay men in many queer spaces often leaves out a wide range of identities within the community. There's a real need for more inclusive spaces that embrace the full diversity of queer experiences (e.g. FLINTA & POC spaces).



Figure 54: Image by Riposte, Confession Poster by Author

**#7**

Embracing certain aspects of your sexuality may help some people let go of shame and explore their desires. It can be an act of personal liberation. What's most important is that you're in control and embracing your authenticity without judgment.

# WHY

# WE

# NEED

# FLINTA

# SPACES

FLINTA stands for Female, Lesbian, Intersex, Non-binary, Transgender, and Agender individuals. These people as mentioned before, are often overlooked in the queer industry. They can be hindered by the very visible gay male community which is displayed in Manuel Castells' *The City* and the grassroots where he says *"Men have sought to dominate, and one expression of this domination has been spatial. (...) Women have rarely had these territorial aspiration: their world attaches more importance to rela-*

*tionships and their networks are ones of solidarity and affection."*<sup>12</sup> This is evident in the scarcity of events and the lack of venues specifically catering to them in London. Unfortunately, this situation is also due to the lack of recognition that FLINTA people receive in the current climate - A lot of people don't even know what it stands for! It's disheartening that this is still a reality, even in today's modern society. While progress has certainly been made, we are far from achieving true inclusivity and equality.

**"Flinta, always ! Women, always ! The idea that queer = gay man creates a lot of barriers in QUEER nightlife."**<sup>13</sup>

To create a more inclusive community, it's important to ensure that all identities within the queer spectrum are acknowledged, valued and listened to.

Some FLINTA groups have gained more recognition than others, helping to raise awareness of their experiences within the queer community. However, this recognition is still limited, and many face barriers to access and support.

**"I think a lot of flinta groups do face more barriers in queer nightlife, I think some have managed to really carve out a space for themselves however, trans women have really taken hold of queer nightlife in london and overcome some of the barriers they may have faced and definitely have a lot of authority now which is nice. however, trans men, lesbians, feel more absent, and I do think there is a demand from those groups so there is likely some kind of barrier"**

14

# MAKING A RUKUS!

The making a rukus exhibition was on display 1st October 2024 – 19th January 2025 at Somerset House in London.

And yes it caused a rukus!

The organisation was founded by Topher Campbell, with a mission to showcase the creativity, activism, and artistic contributions from the 1970s, alongside archival materials that support the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities worldwide. This ongoing project serves as a vital series of political and artistic interventions for the Black LGBTQIA+ community.<sup>15</sup>

The exhibition features a diverse selection of films, alongside a rich collection of archived newspapers, posters, and memorabilia. These items highlight the history of discrimination and stigma faced by the LGBT-QIA+ community, with a particular focus on experiences of Black LGBTQIA+ individuals.



Figure 55: Digital Drawing by Author

## Black Queer Histories Through Love and Resistance



The fabric is suspended from the ceiling of the exhibition, designed to symbolise the lasting impact and legacy of creating a disruption.

Figure 56: Making a Rukus Tapestry, Photographed by Author

# ROAST

London's foremost men-only fortnightly club night



Figure 57: Digital Drawing by Author

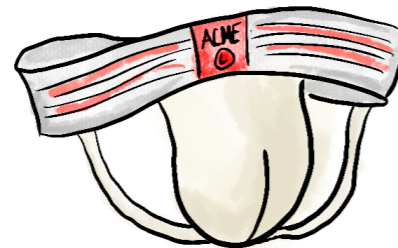


Figure 58: Digital Drawing by Author



Figure 59: Digital Drawing by Author



Figure 60: Digital Drawing by Author

**ROAST** is held at in Angel's Electrowerkz every fortnight. It advertises itself as London's Blesfest club night and is targeted towards bears, cubs, chubs, chasers, muscle bears, trans men, muscle men, and admirers (See glossary pg 2-3 for meanings of each).

When going to **ROAST** you can expect 10 DJ's, 4

large dance floors, one large atrium, and a large play room / dark room.



Figure 61: Flag to symbolise the Bear community

Co-founder, Lerone Clarke-Oliver tells **VICE** - "We wanted to create a space centring men that perhaps felt sidelined into mainstream queer

culture. We wanted to celebrate black and brown bodies, as well as beary big-bodied guys, and hairy men." <sup>16</sup>

The demographic ranges from people in their late 20s - to much older daddies with almost everyone having lots of hair, beards, tattoos. All of which, vary in height, size and colour.




Figure 62: ROAST Clubnight, photographed by Author

# COMMERCIALISATION OF GAY CULTURE

## Has the scene become more commercialised?


With big brands and corporations leveraging LGBTQIA+ pride for marketing purposes (e.g. rainbow capitalism) How do people within the community feel about this? Is there a backlash against corporate-sponsored pride events or pride-related merchandise?



**Queer Space and the City**  
Campkin discusses how queer spaces (whether bars, clubs, or even neighbourhoods) are produced within the city. He argues that queer spaces are not simply physical places but are also filled with social, cultural, and political meanings that change over time.

Campkin's work explores how London's gay scene has developed and how certain locations (like Soho, Vauxhall, Shoreditch, etc.) have become important hubs for queer life. This is especially relevant when discussing how queer spaces are contested by gentrification, commercialisation, and evolving cultural norms.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 63: Digital Drawing by Author



**SOHO**  
G-A-Y, Village, Comptons, The Duke of Wellington, Rupert St and The Admiral Duncan  
Figure 64: Soho Digital Drawing by Author

**VAUXHALL**  
The Royal Vauxhall Tavern, The Eagle, Union, and Fire,  
Figure 65: Vauxhall Digital Drawing by Author

**SHOREDITCH**  
The Cliff, MA1 The Bunker  
Figure 66: Shoreditch Digital Drawing by Author

## THE STRUGGLE FOR INCLUSIVITY IN LONDON'S CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Many contemporary articles explore how gentrification has affected LGBTQIA+ spaces in London.

“The commercial gay bar and pub sector boomed in the 1990s. Some continue to thrive. Some were bought by corporate breweries that turned them into straight venues. Others were hit by the recession. Now the soaring London property market makes many sites vulnerable to commercial and residential redevelopment when leases end.”<sup>18</sup> *The Guardian*

This helps to draw the public's attention to the discussion of ongoing challenges faced by queer venues, particularly regarding gentrification and the rise of expensive, more exclusive spaces.

### LONDON'S QUEER NIGHTLIFE FACES A PARADOX:

As venues become more commercialised, rising rents and gentrification force them to move or close. With real estate costs increasing in areas popular with the LGBTQIA+ community, many venues struggle to remain inclusive, often catering to wealthier, more exclusive crowds. This shift limits accessibility and weakens the cultural and political significance of these spaces, highlighting the ongoing challenges of maintaining queer spaces in a forever changing urban landscape.

### 'Mainstream Acceptance'

As society becomes more accepting of LGBTQIA+ people (especially in major cities like London) Do the traditional gay spaces still have relevance? Are some people feeling like they don't need a dedicated 'gay scene' anymore?

### 'WE ARE QUEER FRIENDLY'

While it's good to see that mainstream bars are becoming more inclusive and queer-friendly, this shift is starting to have unintended consequences for both LGBTQIA+ customers and venues. Many bars now use the label "queer-friendly" in their online presence, but this can be misleading. A simple search for "gay bar" on Google often shows a list of LGBTQIA+ spots in London, but not always. When you zoom in, you may find pubs and bars that aren't exactly what you had in mind. For tourists looking for a true LGBTQIA+ experience, this can lead to confusion, as they arrive expecting a queer-friendly space only to discover it's just an ordinary venue.



Figure 67: Digital Drawing by Author

# LGBTQ+ STRESSORS AND CHALLENGES

Unfortunately research proves that members of the LGBTQIA+ community are more likely to suffer from mental health issues than heterosexual people. This could be due to a whole list of reasons but everyone is different. Here are some of the common issues, what they mean and how they are faced by the community.

**Internalised Homophobia and/ or Transphobia** - Some queer people may begin to believe negative things about themselves because of society's prejudice, leading to sadness and low

self-esteem.  
**Discrimination and Stigma** - Queer people often face unfair treatment and prejudice, which can make them feel isolated and cause mental health problems.

**Minority Stress** - Constant stress from discrimination and the fear of being treated unfairly can affect the mental health of queer people.

**Rejection and Lack of Support** - When family or friends reject queer individuals, it can lead to loneliness and mental health struggles.

**Barriers to Accessing Care** - Queer people may have trouble find-

ing mental health services that understand their needs, which can leave their problems untreated.

**Historical Trauma** - The queer community has faced violence and mistreatment in the past, which can still affect their mental health today.

**Social Media and Representation** - The pressure to fit into certain images of queerness online and offline can cause stress and hurt mental health.

**Social Exclusion** - Being left out of family or community groups can make queer people feel alone and lead to mental health issues. <sup>19</sup>

## Challenges Around Mental Health and Well-being in the community:

The gay scene can sometimes bring together people facing similar struggles, but there's also a lot of pressure to fit in and live up to certain expectations of what it means to be part of the community. Mental health challenges that are more prominent in the gay scene in London prove to be issues like loneliness, substance abuse and body image. However, substance abuse is also common among individuals in the queer nightlife scene, besides Heaven. People may feel pressured to partake with substances in order to 'fit in' or to 'be on the same level as everyone else.' Statistics have found that LGBTQIA+ adults are twice as likely to take drugs than heterosexual adults. These statistics highlight the need for increased awareness and support for LGBTQ+ individuals facing substance use challenges.

## Safe spaces:

To try to combat these issues, London, specifically London queer establishments (Cafe's, Pubs, Bars and Saunas) almost always have leaflets and flyers offering help and support for those who may need it. Physical spaces and social media presence are vital when it comes to improving the mental health of our LGBTQIA+ people in London. This is how we can encourage health and support to everyone in today's society.

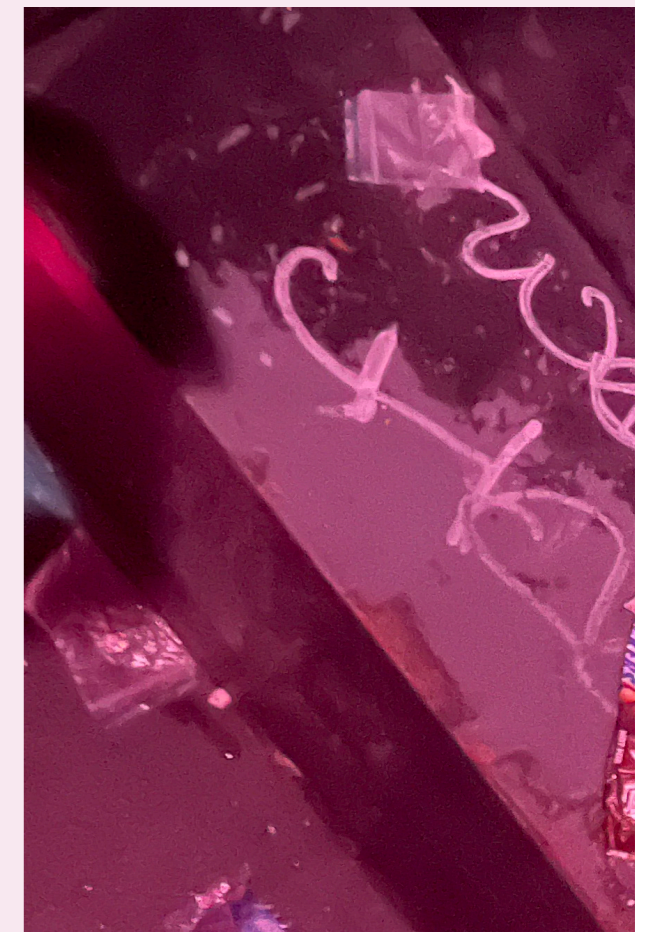


Figure 68: Drugs in the Bathrooms. Photograph by Author

Evidence of typical substance usage in the toilets at an undisclosed queer event in London.

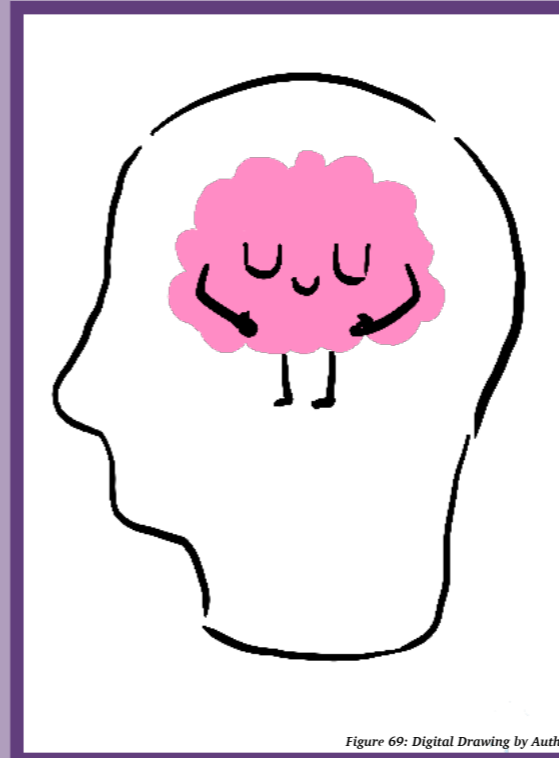


Figure 69: Digital Drawing by Author

**ARE YOU SUFFERING WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND / OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE?**

If so, please call 0300 123 6600 or visit: <https://www.talktofrank.com/get-help/find-support-near-you> <sup>20</sup>

Fire nightclub made headlines among the gay scene recently after allegedly having its sex license revoked or voluntarily removing it themselves. The news became the talk of the town when it rumours first started spreading in January 2023, following an alleged rape. This unfortunate incident was supposedly linked to substance abuse that occurred that night. A source whom also took part in the survey and wish to remain anonymous, said people were embracing the sex-positive atmosphere encouraged within the venue. Apparently one individual blacked out while in the middle of a sexual act, which led to the closure of the venue

and a potential hearing with the council. Unfortunately, although shocking, this is not surprising within the LGBTQIA+ community. Some people in these sex-positive environments engage in chemsex. While this is a small group of people, the consequences can be severe.

Many times, it seems people overlook the alarming risks of using these drugs. There could be various reasons for this, but some people report doing it to fit in or because everyone else is doing it, so they choose to ignore the risks. Others may be offered substances during a night out and might not even

be aware of the possible side effects and outcomes.

“One time, while walking up to the top floor at Electrowerkz, the doors to the darkroom flew open. Three security guards were shouting, ‘Move out of the way!’ while holding onto a man who seemed to be attached to another. Upon a second glance, one appeared to be reaching for the other’s nipple – almost like a baby, while the other was stumbling around trying to get away. My friends and I were very confused and scared by the whole situation, and didn’t know what to do, say, or think after they all charged downstairs.” – *Kaylem Alavi*

Below shows current sex-positive places in London:

**EVENTS/ NIGHT-CLUBS:**  
HARDON TROUGH  
RIPOSTE  
BEEF MINCE  
ROAST  
HUNTER

JOYRIDE  
RECON  
ROIT  
BIZARRE  
THE UNDERGROUND CLUB  
BLUF  
GRIP  
THE EAGLE LONDON

LEATHER CRUISE  
MANY MORE.....  
**CRUISE BARS:**  
VAULT - 139  
TED'S PLACE  
MAI: THE BUNKER  
LORD CLYDE

**SAUNAS:**  
SWEATBOX  
PLEASURE DROME  
COVENT GARDEN HEALTH SPA  
SAILORS  
THE LOCKER ROOM



Figure 70: Condoms in the Bathrooms. Photograph by Author



Figure 71: Darkroom Sign. Photograph by Author

**ARE YOU SUFFERING WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND / OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE?**

If so, please call 0300 123 6600 or visit: <https://www.talktofrank.com/get-help/find-support-near-you>

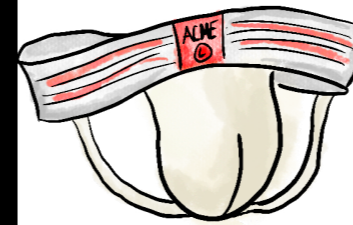


Figure 72: Digital Drawing by Author

**What are dark-rooms?**

Dark rooms are an interesting topic when it comes to nightclubs. In short, they are spaces that encourage sexual liberation and are usually found in gay venues such as saunas, bars, and clubs. While it can be seen as fun and games for some, there are serious risks of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. For anyone partaking in these spaces, it is strongly recommended that you take PrEP (Pre-exposure Prophylaxis) beforehand and use the condoms and lube typically provided

at the entrance of the room. You should always take an STI test before and after going to a dark room! This is for your safety and the safety of others.

Do you need PrEP or testing? PrEP is now free and can be obtained through the NHS.

Testing is also free and can be done via appointment or by ordering a home kit online.

For more information, please visit: <https://doitlondon.org/>



Figure 73: Digital Drawing by Author



Figure 74: Digital Drawing by Author

**What is Chemsex?**

Chemsex refers to engaging in sexual activities with one or more people while using sex-enhancing drugs. These drugs typically include GHB, mephedrone, methamphetamine, and heroin.

While recreational drug use is common within the LGBTQIA+ community, these particular drugs are more frequently used by gay men as they offer prolonged, intensified performances and enhancement to the sexual experience.

GHB (commonly known as G): Can cause seizures, loss of consciousness, and respiratory arrest. Accidental overdose is a serious risk, especially because the drug is available in both liquid and powder forms.

Mephedrone (Meph): Can cause hallucinations, insomnia, inflammation, heart palpitations, and anxiety. It can also be psychologically addictive. The long-term effects of mephedrone are not well understood due to a lack of research.

Methamphetamine (Crystal Meth): The physical and mental distress of using and withdrawing from crystal meth can include heart problems, paranoia, aggression, and even suicidal thoughts.

Although these substances may appeal to some people, it is important to stress that they are LETHAL and their use is strongly discouraged!

The toxicity of social media and dating apps want to send you a message

Dating apps - such as Grindr and Tinder, can be a useful tool for many in the LGBTQ+ community, especially for those without access to queer spaces or are feeling isolated. They offer a chance to connect with others who share similar interests and experiences.

03:34

On the other hand, they can be toxic in several ways. They often focus on superficial traits like looks, leading to body shaming and discrimination. This comes with phrases like 'no fats or femmes' which are commonly used. This can make people feel rejected or invalidated. There's also the issue of 'ghosting & blocking' where someone suddenly stops responding, making interactions feel impersonal and hurtful.

03:47

The pressure to fit certain looks for validation can be emotionally draining, and hookup culture often overshadows those looking for deeper connections on the apps. While dating apps can help people connect, they also create environments where respect and meaningful connections are sometimes lost.

03:49

Ultimately, people want the best of both worlds however, it's about balancing online and in-person connections to ensure the app experience meets one's needs and values without a negative impact on an individual.

03:53

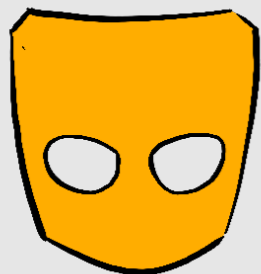


Figure 75: Digital Drawing by Author



Figure 76: Digital Drawing by Author



Figure 77: Digital Drawing by Author



Figure 78: Grindr messages from Buzz Feed

Sent 16:18



Figure 79: Nights out, By Author

In Queer Premises Ben Campkin reflects on ways queer spaces and identities change over time. He critiques the 'linear progression' often associated with LGBT-QIA+ rights. This suggests that queer futures are not always bound to a straight path of "progress". This is important when thinking about shifts in the gay scene. It seems as though the most of the younger generations are more integrated into mainstream culture, while only some of which (and most of the older generations), seek out alternative spaces. Ben Campkin's analy-

sis of queer temporality might help frame the future of the gay scene in London and its ongoing evolution. A lot of current venues have had to close because of the decrease in popularity. This has led to the rise in events having to hop between venues as they cannot afford to open their own nightclub.



Figure 80: Riposte Installation, Photograph by Author

A large part of the LGBT-QIA+ community today, is now scattered all over London. To combat the rising rent most of these safe spaces have now become mobile/ fleeting events, meaning there is now not many permanent spaces for queer people in today's society. This is looked at both in a positive and negative light. Fortunately, it allows for these events to stay around and avoid the potential increasing rent for spaces. Unfortunately, it means that they are subject to the limitations and restrictions the venue owner/s choose to put in place.<sup>25</sup>



Figure 81: Riposte Advertisement, Poster by Riposte Instagram

This seems to be the case with the queer art rave - Riposte. Eden (the founder of Riposte) commented "As you might have noticed even tho we do sell out events, we only always get Friday nights, almost never Saturdays and that's because bar revenue is always low, so venues don't love us as it's only the money they want."<sup>26</sup>

Riposte gives queer artists, photographers, curators and performers a platform to showcase their work to others. It gives a like-minded community the chance to engage with one another. Hence, why the rave is more of a chance to socialise, love and dance rather than an excuse to drink copious amounts of alcohol. This is confirmed via some of the feedback gathered from the survey (on pg. 12 - 13)<sup>27</sup> - see quote below.

This shows how hard it can be for even existing events/ nights to get the nights they want. This alone highlights the struggles that will come about for the existing, and up and coming events trying to make a name for themselves.

"Events like Riposte are very inclusive. And places like The Yard as a venue etc. What makes them work is there emphasis on inclusivity from the get go. Their warnings to those who may disrupt the peace are very good." - Quote from survey<sup>28</sup>

# QUEERING VENUES

## Bringing queerness to spaces



Figure 82: Feelit GOGO Dancer, Photograph by Author

Typical queer clubbing venues, such as Electrowerkz, are often just a shell with minimalistic designs, typically consisting of just the basic features like a stage and lighting. The focus is not on branding or aesthetic identity within the venue, it's the spaces that host variety of events that cater to diverse crowds. This is not reflected in the physical characteristics as they don't inherently make it queer, it's the atmosphere, the people, and the energy they bring that define its queerness. The way the space is 'dressed' or transformed, is just like how we express our identities through our clothing and appearance, This is what truly 'queers' the venue. The act of queering a space is about injecting it with an essence of community, freedom, self-expression and liberation, making it a place where people can flourish.



Figure 83: Feelit DJ booth, Photograph by Author

# WHAT HAPPENED TO HEAVEN!?

Heaven nightclub, one of London's most iconic LGBTQ+ venues, has hosted celebrities like Lady Gaga and Adele over the years. However, on November 1st, 2024, the club faced a major issue when a security guard (someone you trust to keep you safe) was charged with rape near the venue. Westminster City Council responded by suspending Heaven's license for up to 28 days, which shocked the LGBTQ+ community. Heaven has always been a place of acceptance and freedom, and this incident raised concerns about the security that should protect the club's goers that visit.

Despite this, the club, has reopened with supposedly stricter regulations and a different security team. However, the owner of the venue says the club is still facing rising costs, safety concerns, and other

challenges that are making the club's future uncertain.

This situation is part of a larger issue facing LGBTQ+ venues in London. With rent prices increasing and more regulations being imposed, many queer spaces are struggling to survive. Venues like G-A-Y are being sold, and areas like Soho are becoming more commercialised, leading many to fear that the queer identity of these spaces is slowly disappearing.

Heaven highlights how fragile LGBTQ+ spaces are in today's rapidly changing world. As these venues fight to remain open, it's more important than ever to protect places that offer safety, support, and a sense of belonging to the LGBTQ+ community.<sup>29</sup>

The Camden News

Journal discusses the recent advertisement for the sale of the G-A-Y venue has shocked the scene.<sup>30</sup>

**'Heaven is more of a tourist attraction at this point...'**

**Nowadays, Heaven is perceived in a new light by many people in the LGBTQIA+ community. It is considered so commercialised and mainstream that a lot of the people who attend aren't necessarily LGBTQIA+. This has upset and affected many, with some saying that it has taken away from what Heaven used to be - a nightclub where everyone could feel safe among like-minded individuals.**



Figure 84: Jeremy Joseph (owner of Heaven & G-A-Y) Photograph from his Instagram

# HEAVEN

Figure 85: Heaven Nightclub Logo, from Visit Gay London

**G-A-Y (Heaven's partnered venue) has had concerns raised by Jeremy Joseph, were discussed in a recent section of the Camden News Journal, he mentioned how Soho is losing reputation as "the LGBT capital"<sup>31</sup> and its "queer identity."<sup>32</sup> Joseph mentions facing challenges from a strict licensing regime, the police, and The Soho Society.**

# THE SLOW DEATH OF SOHO

For years, Soho has been known as the gay capital of London's West End, with its roots going back to the 16th century. Today, it remains home to some of London's queer establishments, renowned for its thriving nightlife, arts, and social spaces that cater to the LGBTQIA+ community. Soho became a symbol of acceptance and self-expression, with iconic venues evolving such as G-A-Y and world famous theatres drawing huge crowds from all over the world. In its early days, Soho played

a significant role in providing visibility to the queer community and served as the birthplace of London's vibrant queer scene we know today. However, as its popularity grew, so did the commercialisation of the area. With the rise of an abundance of restaurants and the influx of heterosexual visitors who now see it as a cool and trendy spot, the original character of Soho started to change. This shift has been unfolding over the past 10 to 20 years and continues today. "Today

Gayborhoods are increasingly under threat as urban developers displace the founders of the spaces"<sup>33,1</sup> This shows that this is a reoccurring factor everywhere that clearly need to be addressed. A major factor contributing to this transformation is the lack of support and funding for queer establishments. One of the main challenges these venues face is the inability to afford the rising rent costs in London, which threatens their survival. Another is the lack of long-term security in lease agreements.

**"Full of straight couples sharing small plates"<sup>33,2</sup> @howlworldwide**

**"When I have been to gay clubs in general around Soho, they seem to cater to everyone, when in GAY bar/club there is many transgender people, gay, lesbian etc. There even seems to be a growing amount of straight people that enjoy going."<sup>34</sup> - Quote from survey**

**"Soho? Barely clinging on."<sup>35</sup> @howlworldwide**

**"Soho was the dream. Then Capitalism happened"<sup>36</sup> @howlworldwide**



Figure 86: Soho Digital Drawing by Author

Queer cafes, LGBTQIA+ bars, and social clubs in Soho started out as safe spaces where people could gather and feel supported. These venues were important places for the community to come together and be themselves. But over time, much of that has been taken away. Many of these places have either been torn down or turned into trendy, expensive spots that cater to a wider crowd as mentioned in the *Lgbt+ Night Time Spaces*, *Urban Pamphleteer* "We have all seen the closure of gay pubs caused by changing financial conditions under neo-liberal capitalism; the flipping of buildings for profit and jerry-built gentrification."<sup>37</sup> As a result, what used to be welcoming and supportive spaces for the queer community, has now become more about superficial, passing interactions, losing their original purpose as places of true connection and support. This shift has recently become especially noticeable in London's Soho.

# RIP

Astoria Ghetto	The Shim Sham Club (1936)	The Crown and Two Chairmen
First Out (Cafe)	G-A-Y Late (2023)	White Horse
Candy Bar	The Green	Arts & Battledress
The Shadow Lounge	Carnation	La Douce
Man Bar	Raymond Revuebar	The Dog and Trumpet
The Green	Club Louise	Apollo
Carnation	pink pound	Stallions
Molly Moggs	French House	The King's Arms
Madame Jojo's (2019)	York Minster	The Edge
Barcode	Marquis of Granby	Ghetto
Candy Bar	Chez Victor The	Lo-Profile
Caravan Club (1934)	Ham Bone	Green Carnation <sup>38</sup>
	Sam's Café	Vespa Lounge
	Swiss Hotel	
	First out	

# LGBTQIA+ History Month: Student Exhibition in the RIBA Library

The Royal Institute of British Architects, in partnership with Gem Barton, chair of the Queer Educators in Architecture Network (QuEAN), and the Architecture LGBT+ Academic Champions Network, is excited to present submissions from RIBA Student Members that explore activism and social change through an architectural perspective, with a particular focus on

the LGBTQ+ community. Some of the exhibits focus on the theme of queer nightlife in London, and they're definitely worth a visit!

- Georgie Grantham – Radical Reuse: **Reimagining the Joiners Arms**

- Josh Chambers, Lilly Andrews, Georgia Bills and Hiran Mohebi: **The Royal Vauxhall Tavern**

- Kaylem Alavi: **London's Contemporary Queer Nightlife**

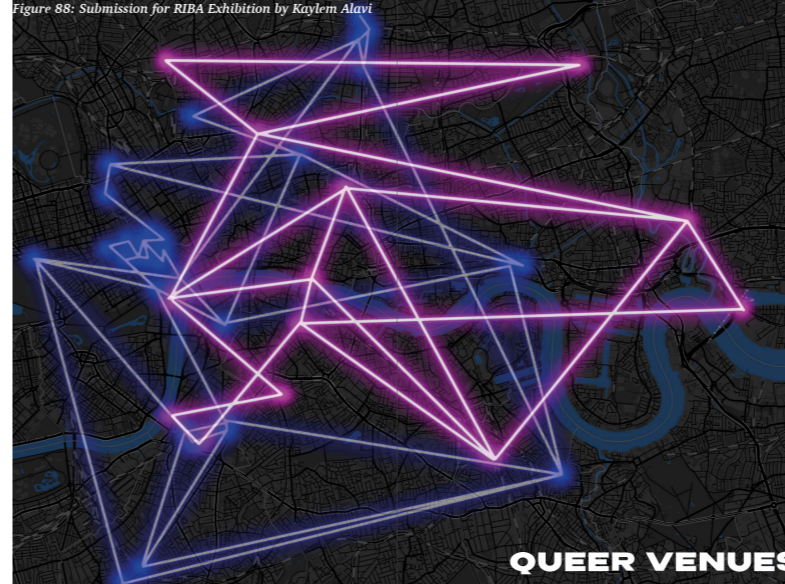
Open Monday to Thursday, 11am to 5pm (Tuesday, 12pm to 7pm)

18 February to 10 April 2025

RIBA Library - 66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD <sup>39</sup>



Figure 87: LGBTQ+ History Month 2025 student exhibition in the RIBA Library



"I AM DANCING, DANCING, DANCING SO MUCH. BEHIND THE DJ DECKS, I FELT IRRESISTIBLE AND INVINCIBLE. SAFE TO PLAY MY DREAM, I SHAKE MY HOT BODY AND FEED THE CROWD MY TITS, MY ASS, MY VAG, MY DICK, MY SWEAT, MY HEART."

"MY QUEERNESS FEELS LIKE HOME"

SOMETIME THIS YEAR  
SOMEWHERE IN LONDON  
EARLY TILL LATE

QUEER  
RAVE

IF FOUND, PLEASE DO NOT SHARE

Figure 89: Queer Rave poster, by Author

### Creating Spaces for All: A New Approach to Queer Inclusivity

"I have explored numerous queer spaces across London, examining them from various perspectives, both zooming in on details and stepping back for a broader view. In addition, I've engaged in conversations from individuals within the community, seeking to understand what changes are necessary to improve these spaces and make them more welcoming for everyone. Through this process, I've come to realise that creating a single space or event that is fully inclusive for all is almost impossible. There isn't a one-size-fits-all solution for every group, individual, or aspect

of the LGBTQIA+ community. However, there are key adjustments that can make events more inclusive and accessible, ensuring they're open for a wider range of people to enjoy. By fostering a culture of continuous dialogue and adaptation, we can move closer to a space where everyone feels seen and valued."

*"Inclusion is a continuous journey, and every step towards understanding brings us closer to a community where all are welcome."*

Kaylem Alavi - February 2025

HOW DO WE  
MAKE OUR  
EVENTS  
BETTER?



Figure 90: Photograph of the Club - Colour factory, by Author



Figure 91: Photograph of Feelit, by Author

"I believe there should be more promotion through platforms like Instagram, particularly in areas with established queer spaces. However, to strike a balance between attendance numbers and ensuring the event remains true to its intended demographic, a long-term subscription fee for regular club-goers could be introduced. This would allow events to be more tailored to the audience they're aimed at, as those most invested in the event are also more likely to financially support it. Additionally, this could include the option for attendees to bring one a friend from outside of the community, with the understanding that their ticket price would be significantly higher than the usual entry fee."

"There should also be a separate entrance for those who are not 'out,' as the long and exposed queues for events can be particularly daunting for individuals within the 'down-low' community. For many, these events represent a rare opportunity to connect with like-minded people, but the fear of being recognised or spotted can deter them from attending. By providing a discreet entrance, we can offer a safer, more inclusive environment for those who may not yet feel comfortable publicly expressing their identity." Kaylem Alavi - February 2025

# THE FUTURE WE WANT IN QUEER NIGHTLIFE

\*To determine this, information has been used from the questions we asked the public (shown in the QR code on pg 12)\* Quotations are to remain anonymous to protect the identity of those who have taken part.

“The venues could publish they are more accepting towards different parts of the community allowing people to be seen.”<sup>40</sup>

“more equitable.”<sup>41</sup>

“To be who you are without having to explain yourself.”<sup>43</sup>

“more inclusive and diverse.”<sup>44</sup>

“Dress up, kiki and document everything. I hate no photo clubs, queer nightlife should be documented!”<sup>45</sup>

“welfare teams, specific bouncers for queer spaces.”<sup>42</sup>

“I’d like it to keep going the way it’s going currently in terms of expressive spaces, creative outfits, fun events etc. I’d also like to see more events that are evening rather than raves, perhaps more queer dining or queer live music etc, perhaps as I get older.”<sup>46</sup>

## PROPOSITION:

QUEER NIGHTLIFE IN LONDON, WHILE VAST, REQUIRES BOTH **CHANGE AND PROTECTION**. TO ADDRESS THIS, WE NEED SPACES THAT FOSTER **CONNECTION AND UNITY**, WHERE WE CAN SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER IN A THRIVING, COLLECTIVE ENVIRONMENT. IT’S CRUCIAL TO **ELIMINATE THE QUEER HIERARCHY** THAT MANY ARE CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING, AND THIS CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE **PARTICIPATION AND COMPLIANCE OF EVERYONE IN THE COMMUNITY**.

WHAT IS NEEDED IS A **VENUE THAT CAN FUNCTION AS A BLANK CANVAS, A SHELL OF AN EXISTING SPACE WE CAN DRESS, WHERE THE QUEERNESS CAN BE CARRIED THROUGH THE PEOPLE THE EVENTS ATTRACT**. THIS SPACE WILL BE INCLUSIVE OF QUEER INDIVIDUALS OF ALL **SIZES, SHAPES, COLOURS, SEXUALITIES, AND GENDERS**. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE **CLUB EVOLUTION TACTICS, AS OUTLINED ON PAGES 44-45, WILL MAKE THIS POSSIBLE, ENSURING A TRULY INCLUSIVE, TRANSFORMATIVE AND DOCUMENTED SPACE FOR THE COMMUNITY**.

Figure 92: Photograph of Feelit, by Author

# Underground Revelations

## The Rise and Fall of the Club Kid Scene

### The 1990s: The Deadliest Decade

"The 1990s: The Deadliest Decade episode Death of an Angel" explores the rise and tragic fall of the Club Kid scene in New York City. The documentary highlights the eccentric and rebellious culture of the Club Kids, known for their flamboyant style and outrageous parties. The group became famous for their wild nightlife and creative expressions, but as drugs and violence began to take hold, tensions within the scene grew.

The investigation into a shocking disappearance reveals dark truths, with Michael Alig, a key figure in the Club Kid community, and his associates implicated in the crime. A death marks a turning point for the scene, which begins to unravel as the darker side of the movement comes to light. The documentary reflects on how the combination of fame, drugs, and violence led to the collapse of the Club Kid phenomenon and left a lasting impact on the cultural landscape. Watch here to find out more.... <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8h8mn5>

### Andre Melendez

Andre Melendez, (Originally a pier kid due to his colombian heritage) known for his huge, eye-catching wings, became a well-known figure in the Club Kid scene. His wings were a big part of his unique style at the wild, unconventional parties he attended and curated at places all over the city e.g. Limelight club etc.

### Promotions - having a party in the underground tube

One of the most famous events he threw was an underground party on the New York City subway in the early 1990s. This party showed exactly what the Club Kids were all about, breaking the rules and turning normal places into crazy, unexpected experiences. The idea was to take the energy of New York's queer club scene and bring it into an unusual setting on the subway.

The subway party was a way of rejecting traditional nightlife. The Club Kids were famous for their outrageous outfits, and this party was no different. People wore extravagant costumes, turning the subway cars into a moving party. They made an everyday subway ride into something unforgettable and fun, showing how the Club Kids loved to turn regular places into places for creativity and fun.

These underground parties were part of what the Club Kids loved to do (create larger than-life, unpredictable events.) While the subway party was one of the most talked-about, it wasn't the only one. The Club Kids often chose unusual spots for their parties, pushing the limits of nightlife. They became cultural icons for turning the ordinary into something extraordinary in New York's underground scene.<sup>47</sup>

FLAMBOYANCE / CREATIVITY / REBELLIANANCE / ICON



Figure 94: Photograph of Andre Melendez, from Wikipedia.

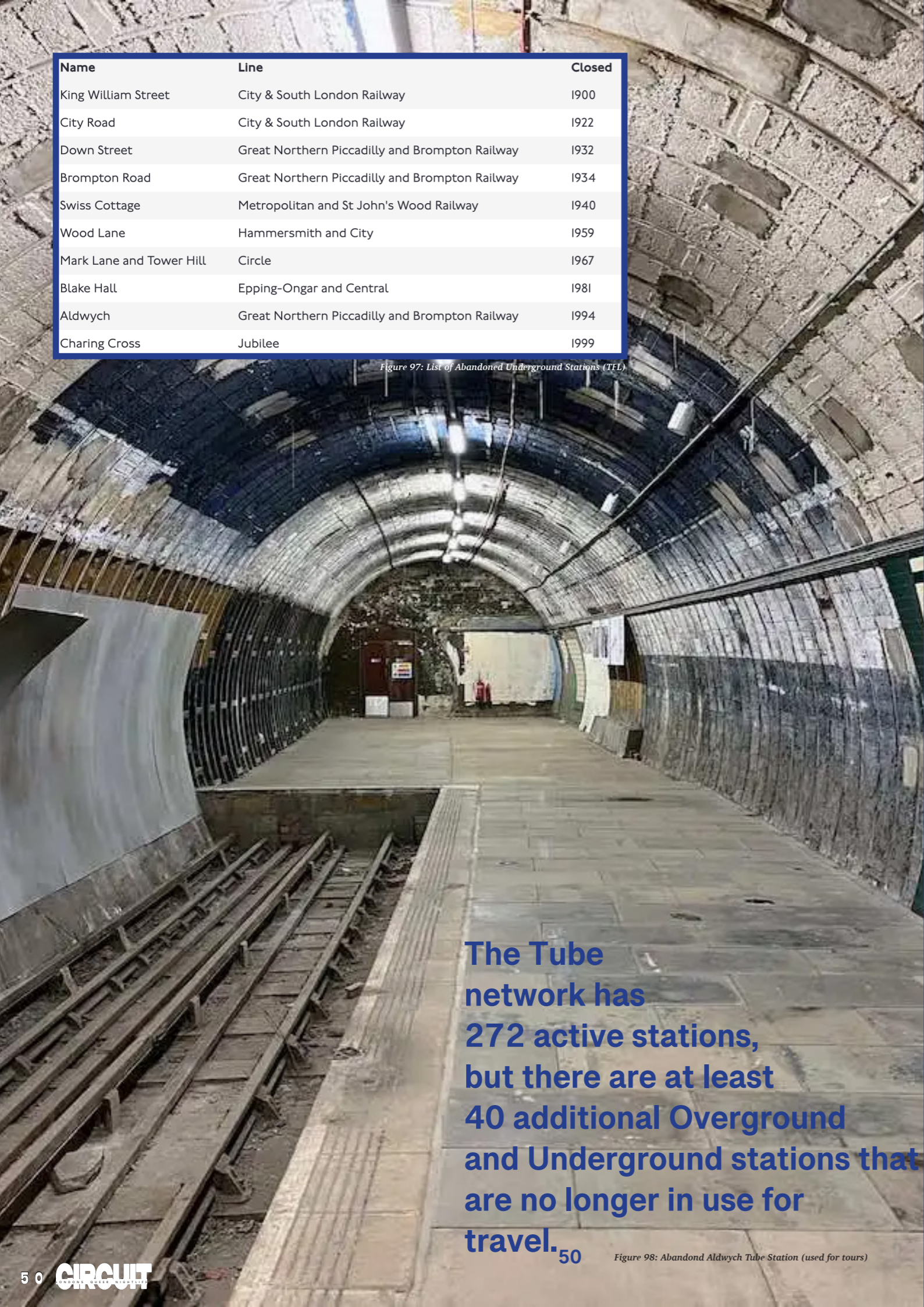
Andre Melendez



Figure 93: Screenshot of frame from The 1990s: The Deadliest Decade (2019), Death of an Angel.

Name	Line	Closed
King William Street	City & South London Railway	1900
City Road	City & South London Railway	1922
Down Street	Great Northern Piccadilly and Brompton Railway	1932
Brompton Road	Great Northern Piccadilly and Brompton Railway	1934
Swiss Cottage	Metropolitan and St John's Wood Railway	1940
Wood Lane	Hammersmith and City	1959
Mark Lane and Tower Hill	Circle	1967
Blake Hall	Epping-Ongar and Central	1981
Aldwych	Great Northern Piccadilly and Brompton Railway	1994
Charing Cross	Jubilee	1999

Figure 97: List of Abandoned Underground Stations (TFL)



The Tube network has 272 active stations, but there are at least 40 additional Overground and Underground stations that are no longer in use for travel.<sup>50</sup>

Figure 98: Abandoned Aldwych Tube Station (used for tours)

# STATIONS FOR OUR NIGHTLIFE?

Although some have been re-purposed to restaurants and tourist attractions where they will host tours, some of these stations are still not in use today:

**Aldwych Station** - This station closed in 1994 and has been left abandoned since. It's occasionally opened for tours or used for filming, but it's no longer in use.

**Down Street Station** - Closed in 1932, Down Street has remained abandoned ever since. During World War II, it was used as a secret underground headquarters, but it is now closed to the public.

**British Museum Station** - Closed in 1933, this station was never reopened and is still abandoned.

**King William Street Station** - This station closed in 1900 and is now abandoned. It was located below what is now Bank station.

**Euston Station** - After a redevelopment of Euston station in the 1960s, the old platforms were abandoned.

**York Road Station** - There are currently no plans to re-open York Road station, which was closed in 1932.<sup>48</sup>

These stations were closed due to low passenger numbers and re-routing, but they could now be re-purposed as unique spaces for fleeting queer celebrations. Since they are located underground, they wouldn't disturb any nearby residents, making them an ideal venue for such events.

The long platforms could be utilised into corridors, with people facing a DJ at the end, similar to venues like Printworks and Electrowerkz. The platforms might need to be levelled, and toilets installed between them, but this setup could help channel the sound throughout the space, ensuring everyone has a great experience.

While getting approval and funding for this idea might be challenging, it makes sense as a way to keep queer spaces hidden for security purposes. However, extensive advertising would be necessary to ensure the queer community knows about these venues and they remain accessible to everyone.<sup>49</sup>



Figure 95: The Abandoned Aldwych Tube Station

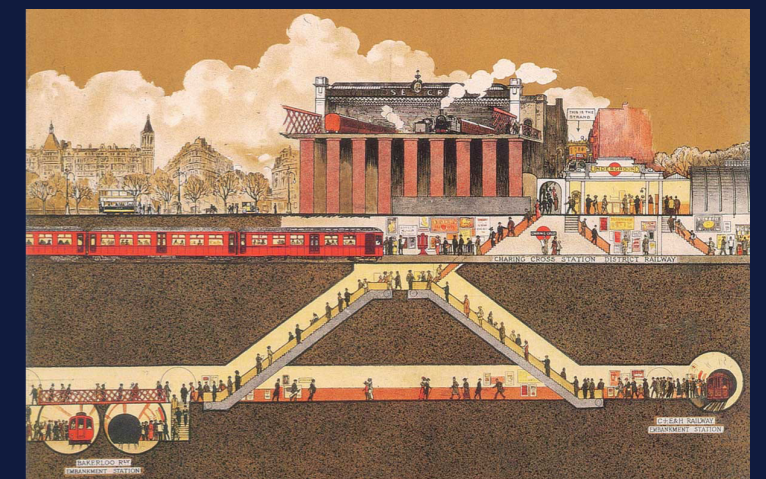


Figure 96: Section Through Charing Cross



Figure 99: Collage of the potential to club in abandoned tube stations. Produced by Author

**FIGURES:**

Figure 7: The Bar, by Electrowerkz - <https://www.electrowerkz.co.uk> (accessed 27th February 2025)

Figure 8: Top Floor, by Electrowerkz - <https://www.electrowerkz.co.uk/topfloor> (accessed 27th February 2025)

Figure 9 & 10: The Cage & Courtyard - <https://www.electrowerkz.co.uk/venue-hire> (accessed 27th February 2025)

Figure 11: Unfold Advertisement, by fold Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/fold.ldn/?hl=en> (accessed 27th February 2025)

Figure 12 & 13: Feelit Advertisement, by feelitparty Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/feelitparty/?hl=en> (accessed 27th February 2025)

Figure 14: ROAST Advertisement, by roast.london.roast Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/roast.london.roast/?hl=en> (accessed 27th February 2025)

Figure 15: GRIP Advertisement, by grip.x.x.x Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/grip.x.x.x/?hl=en> (accessed 27th February 2025)

Figure 16: Dalston Superstore Advertisement, by dsuperstore Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/dsuperstore/?hl=en> (accessed 27th February 2025)

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Figure 26: INFERNO Advertisement, by inferno\_lon-

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Figure 61: Flag to symbolise the Bear community - <https://heckinunicorn.com/blogs/heckin-unicorn-blog/what-is-the-bear-brotherhood-pride-flag-and-what-does-it-mean> (accessed 27th February 2025)

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**PEOPLE**

**NIGHTLIFE**

**CLUBS**

**COMMUNITY**

**CULTURE**

*Figure 100: Photograph Produced by Author*