



Artist Callout Brief:

Queer Heritage South & Phoenix Arts Space Commission:
Desire in the Archive



Queer Heritage South is a digital community archiving project, celebrating and promoting the rich cultural life of LGBTQIA+ people in Brighton & Hove.

Queer
Heritage
South

As a project we believe that heritage helps us feel a greater sense of connection to the places we live in. And understand what has informed the current context

In 2027 we will be launching a series of exhibitions across the city, to explore the 60th anniversary of partial decriminalization of homosexuality.

Phoenix Art Space is a dynamic arts organisation located in the centre of Brighton which was established as a charity in 1995. With more than a hundred subsidised artists' studios, an accessible programme of high-quality exhibitions and an extensive programme of classes and workshops we are a place to make, learn and talk about contemporary art.

PHOENIX
AT 30
INSPIRING SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH ART

We are embedded in our local community and in our city, but we also have an international outlook. We believe that inclusive artistic and creative opportunities should be available for everyone and that our different communities should be embedded in everything we do.

Overview

To mark the 60th anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in the UK. Queer Heritage South (QHS) and Phoenix Art Space (PAS) would like to meet an artist or collective that is interested in using the QHS archive as a starting point to creating an exhibition of new work for the Main Gallery at PAS curated by Laurence Hill in summer 2027.

This is a funded opportunity.

Desire in the Archive

The 1967 partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in the UK, meant that two consenting men over the age of 21 could have sexual intercourse in a private space. Outside of these restrictions, other expressions of desire placed gay men at risk of increasing scrutiny, criminal conviction and vulnerability to blackmail. As Michel Foucault wrote “visibility is a trap”.

This history, whilst relating to a specific part of the LGBTQIA+ community, resonates more widely. Over the past six decades, queer communities have frequently navigated the tension between expressing their desires openly and the cultural, social and political pressures that necessitate maintaining 'secret' or 'double' lives.

Far from being relegated to history, our communities are still navigating desire in private and public space with the continued dominance of online platforms as a place to commune, cruise, seduce, appear and disappear. The grey area between private desires and public selves continues to be a place of tension for our communities.

Where can we find our queer desires in the archive? Is it visible, invisible or or hiding in plain sight? Can it be found in photos of sweaty nights-out, oral history accounts of erotic encounters, a piece of clothing that unlocks the authentic expression of your identity.

We are looking for an artist or collective with an interdisciplinary practice to respond to the QHS digital collection and the PAS curatorial theme for 2027 (see below) alongside conducting their own research process to find and liberate desire from the archives and reanimate it for an exhibition.

The curatorial theme for 2027 at Phoenix Art Space starts from the concept of the doppelganger and applies that to different areas of contemporary life. For LGBTQIA+ communities this might encompass secret personal lives vs public personas, the closet, the need to code switch, the online vs the offline self and so on.



What we're looking for...

We welcome applications from artists or collectives at any stage of their career with a track record in engaging with projects over a period of time and developing new work. The selection panel will be looking for artists meeting the following essential criteria.

Interdisciplinary practice

- We are looking for artist(s) with an interdisciplinary approach to their practice.

Interest in engaging with archives/collections

- We are looking for a demonstrable interest/experience of working with and reanimating archival material or using museum/gallery collections as a starting point for new work.

Experience of working at scale

- The Main Gallery at PAS is a large space and the selected artist(s) should have experience/interest in working at scale.

Collaborative

- The project will require collaboration with project partners, the QHS and PAS teams, and archivists. You should have a track record of working in collaboration.



What we're looking for (continued)...

Opportunities to engage and contribute

- In addition to meetings with relevant team members at QHS and PAS, there will be a number of opportunities for the selected artist(s) to engage and contribute to the project, which will include
- Developing aspects of a public engagement programme to run alongside the exhibition
- Contributing new work to the QHS archive as below
- Contributing to digital outputs (podcasts and documentary film)
- Support for the publication of research

Queer Heritage South is developing a new LGBTQIA+ digital archive for Brighton & Hove. At present the archive holds 600 items, and the collection is growing through call-outs, community outreach, and work we are doing across the city. The focus of the archive includes, but is not limited to, "Pride, Protest and Activism", "Nightlife, Art and Culture", "Queer spaces and places", "Queer homes and families" "Community, care and support", "Making history, making memory", "HIV/AIDS".

How to apply

- Send a maximum 1 page proposal or a 2 min video/audio - including a short artist bio and addressing how you meet the criteria as detailed above to roni@marlboroughproductions.org.uk.
- Links to previous work.
- Deadline for proposal submission **Thursday June 18th**.

Fee

Artist fee = £10,000

Production fee = £5,000

Selection process

We will shortlist 8 proposals and ask that the idea be prepared for an exploratory conversation with a panel. Each project involved will receive an honorarium of £100 for this.



