

# **Progress update: Year 1**

**Outbox Theatre:  
Royal Central School  
of Speech and Drama**

## **Year 1 activity: 8 workshops for LGBTQIA+ youth**

Taking place in LGBTQIA+ youth centres in the following cities: returning to London (10 PAX), Brighton (8), Bristol (10), Manchester (12) as well as making new connections with 3 new partner groups in Sheffield (23), Nottingham (16) and Basingstoke (10) engaging with a total of **89 participants** which exceeds our annual target of 60.

Outbox's drama and expressive workshop activities provided a safe space for participants to explore identity, LGBT history and issues around mental health through performance. Examining this subject matter in this way, fills a gap that exists in provision of this information from schools.

**We build on people's strengths:** Workshops are developed in consultation with the participants to ensure that we are delivering practices in response to their needs and wants. Participants can respond in whatever way they choose and feel most comfortable in, this has resulted in a broad range of expressions across text, movement, clowning and sound.

# 94%

**of participants reported  
feeling more confident after  
the workshop.**

# 96%

**of participants said that they  
would like to take part in  
more of this kind of work.**

**“I felt like I could express myself truly.”**

Anonymous trans person, under 15 years



**“It is rewarding to be in a creative space with no judgement.”**

Anonymous male, 19-24 years



## Year 1 activity:

### 4 TransActing workshops

Hosted by Bush Theatre (18), Leicester LGBT Centre (15), Birmingham Rep (16) and Leeds Playhouse (2) engaging with **51 trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming participants.**

The workshop at the Bush Theatre happened as part of wrap around activity for our theatre piece *And The Rest of Me Floats*, we are using the legacy of a lottery funded show to inspire the young participants.

The transfer of *And The Rest of Me Floats* to London's leading new writing venue resulted in **unexpected outcomes**; 1. that participants could experience work on a mainstream stage that prioritises their experiences, 2. the play was published and participants were able to take away a playtext.

**“It was good to coherently get out emotions and feelings in a way like this.”**

Anonymous, 15-18 years

**“I really enjoyed reading bits of script. It helped me find ways to describe my own experiences.”**

Anonymous trans male, 15-18

**Year 1 activity:**

**Trained 2 additional workshop leaders who are trans so that workshops are trans led**



**“Love that it was led by an LGBT+ person (who knows about T+ issues).”**

Anonymous non-binary person, 15-18 years old

**“Tigger was a brilliant facilitator. I got so much from participating.”**

Anonymous male, 45-54 years

# 89%

of participants reported that  
it was important or  
extremely important to work  
creatively in a  
trans/non-binary space



Above: Southbank Summer School participants in the Blue Room (top) and Purcell Room (bottom).



Above: Southbank Summer School participant  
Right: Sample of writing from a TransActing workshop participant

**I wear shirts and ties  
I cut my hair  
I change my name  
but still I'm not your son**

**I play video games  
I joke with you  
I drink beer  
but still I'm not your brother**

**I shake your hand  
I bind my chest  
I play sport  
but still I'm not your nephew**

**I try my best  
I do all I can  
I tear myself apart  
but will I ever be your boy?**



## Year 1 activity: 1 three-day acting summer school

Hosted by the internationally renowned arts centre Southbank Centre for **25 trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming participants**. The school was led by 2 Outbox workshop leaders, there were 4 visiting professional artists, all of whom are LGBTQIA+, and are leaders in their fields and the space and resources were provided by Southbank Centre for free. The school culminated in a presentation of work created by the participants for family and friends in the Purcell Room.

There was a really high uptake, so high that there were not enough places for the number of people who wanted to take part. Off the back of the success of *And The Rest of Me Floats* and 10 years of participation work, we have a strong presence within the trans community and participants know they are going to engage with high quality workshops.

# 80%

**of participants said it was extremely important for the LGBTQ+ community to share stories.**

**Key goal:**

**Shared and sustainable spaces and places**



## Case Study

### Outbox Summer School, Southbank Centre

Routes into the arts sector are particularly difficult for trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming people. Our work uses the arts and applied theatre as a community building tool. This work contributes to our key goals of early action, shared and sustainable spaces and places, and stronger relationships in the following ways:

**Early action:** Through our community links and partners, we gauge in advance of workshop planning what the participants interests are. We use feedback collected during and after the school to adapt and change future workshops to fit.

**Shared and sustainable spaces and places:** It is unusual to have a space for trans people to have a place to share their stories/experiences and create something artistic. Our presence at Southbank Centre allowed us routes into conversations about the building's accessibility for LGBTQIA+ and particularly trans people.

**Stronger relationships:** Real friendships have come out of the summer school. Participants now go to the theatre/events together. They have self-built a community.

## “It was fun and empowering.”

Anonymous non-binary person, under 15 years



Above: Photos of workshop participants and workshop leaders

## **Year 1 activity:**

### **1 weeks intergenerational workshops**

Through healthy dialogue and conversation and exploration of lived experience, the participants generated work that tells us stories that reflect the history, legacy and future of the community. Made in collaboration with a team of creative design professionals the work was shared publicly at venue partner Battersea Arts Centre for our project partners and past Outbox participants and collaborators.

*GROOVE* will be an intergenerational theatre piece that looks at the dancefloor as a site of protest, belonging, identity and desire. It will use the testimony of LGBTQ+ people, ranging from trans and gender non-conforming youths to elders at the front line of queer rights to explore how dancefloors bring people together. It will celebrate age & experience but dance with youth & new ideas.

As a result of this work we are now talking to the Participation Team at leading UK theatre the Royal Court about how we can both engage with their existing intergenerational audience and introduce them to our audiences.



*GROOVE*: Intergenerational workshops and public sharing at Battersea Arts Centre, 2019.  
Above: Photo of performance



**I feel like my ears are a  
compass majority of the  
time  
not my eyes  
cuz my eyes only capture  
what's in front of them  
but my ears have the  
ability to  
transport me to places I  
aint even been  
my ears send signals to  
my soul  
that ripple and radiate  
into my bloodstream  
pulsate**

*GROOVE*: Intergenerational workshops and public sharing  
at Battersea Arts Centre, 2019.

Above: Sample of writing from artistic participant

Left: Photos of performance

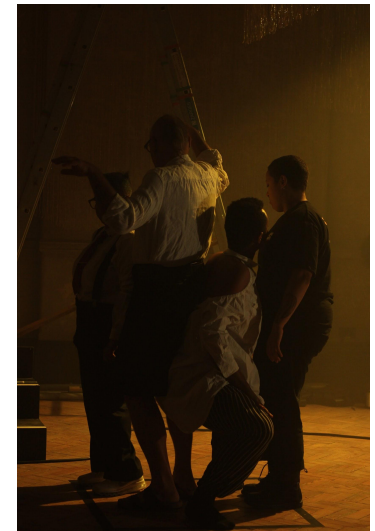
**Pulse,  
beat,  
get sweaty &  
embrace  
the audience**

**in what it means to  
be queer,  
then & now.**

**Sticky & hot,**

**intimate but  
expansive-**

**it feels like a  
dancefloor.**



*GROOVE*: Intergenerational workshops and public sharing  
at Battersea Arts Centre, 2019.

Above: Photos of movement motif



## **Year 1 activity:**

**Met and interviewed 20 LGBTQIA+ womxn and AFAB (assigned female at birth) non-binary people.**

It is recognised through our own work and by our partner Opening Doors that LGBTQIA+ people over 50, particularly womxn (both cisgender and transgender) and AFAB people as well as people of colour are harder to reach. We have used this year to make contact with key partners and put down roots in an ethical and sustained way by attending their singing groups, coffee mornings and then one on one conversations.



## Year 1: Participants and partners

### Who is involved in developing and delivering activity

**6** workshop leaders  
**5** guest workshop leaders  
**1** project manager  
**6** creative collaborators  
**12** venue partners  
**3** community partners:  
Gendered Intelligence, Opening Doors and Proud Trust

There are no volunteers involved in the delivery of activity, everybody has a paid role.

### How many people have benefitted from your project

**140** workshop participants  
**20** summer school participants  
**15** participants in intergenerational project  
**40** audience members  
**20** womxn and AFAB non-binary people



## Year 1: Social media and press



Our work has been featured in print and online in mainstream publications such as The Guardian and Time Out as well as countercultural platforms such as i-D, Another Magazine and LGBTQ+ press.

We ran events and had the support of marketing teams at large arts institutions such as the Bush Theatre (82k Twitter followers) and Southbank Centre (820.9k followers).

★★★★★

**A whole history of community surges electrically through the production's 75 minutes... frankly, just fucking brilliant** - Time Out

★★★★★

**An astonishing theatrical achievement** - Everything Theatre

★★★★★

**A bold and beautifully constructed exploration of gender identity** - The Stage

★★★★★

**Fuelled by a mixture of generosity and pride... a joy for anyone to experience** - The Guardian

- praise for *And The Rest of Me Floats*



## **Year 1:**

### **Challenges, changes, new learning, opportunity for the future**

This has been a productive and fulfilling year for the Outbox project and we are pleased to have exceeded our milestones.

We continue to consult and engage with the LGBTQIA+ community and be led by their ideas. For example, this year we plan to make a film as we have seen that this can have a wider reach than theatre.

We continue to work with our partner AGE UK and recognise that it is harder to reach older womxn and people of colour. We are planning routes into these communities in a joined-up way so that our project reaches those people who need it the most.

**We look forward to another exciting year of Outbox projects and thank Lottery Community Fund for their continued support.**

