

**“1000 Years of Kings, Queens and In-betweens: Researching and Interpreting LGBT+ Histories at Historic Royal Palaces”  
Speech Abstract**

Keynote Speaker: Matthew Storey

Researching, interpreting, representing and including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer (LGBT+) histories, identities and people is necessary and vitally important for museums and heritage sites. There is a pressing social need, with LGBT+ people experiencing prejudice in society. These histories and identities are often excluded from historical narratives. Evidence suggests that work to represent LGBT+ histories and identities can positively change attitudes both for LGBT+ people and other visitors. The museums and heritage sector in the UK has made huge progress in this area, and Historic Royal Palaces has lead with innovative and sector-leading work. This has included creating a staff working group, temporary displays, live programming, and academic research and partnerships. Despite this success, work in this area is often a highly personal endeavour for many of the staff involved, who are often themselves part of the LGBT+ community.

This keynote outlines best practice for the museums and heritage sector to research, interpret and represent LGBT+ histories, identities and people. This includes terminology, approaches to the historiography of the subject, and the challenges of researching queer lives in the past. Social understandings of sexuality have changed over time, and evidence can be hard to interpret or has been forcibly obscured by dominant social forces.

Work in this area is constantly changing and adapting, and new approaches, understandings and best practice will need to evolve. LGBT+ identities and experiences are not monolithic, and we need to understand the great variety of queer experience and expectations, both past and present.