

Theirs, Yours, Ours

Queer and non-binary perspectives on identity

Wednesday 30 March – Friday 30 September 2022

Mollie Balshaw, Heather Glazzard, Sadé Mica, SHARP

Theirs, Yours, Ours brings together the work of four University of Salford alumni who explore queer and non-binary perspectives through print, photography, painting, and installation.

From the 1990s to today, the artists in this exhibition explore what it means to be represented, celebrate identities that lie beyond traditional gender expectations, and reflect on the shifts in identity that take place over time. Together, they consider: What does it mean to be, and look, 'queer'? How are we limited by society's binary expectations? And in what way does existing beyond them free us?

The catalyst for this exhibition is the recent gift of *Dancing with Elvis* (1999-2021) by SHARP to the permanent collection. The series was made whilst the artist was studying BA Visual Arts and Culture at the University in the late 1990s – at a time when Section 28 legislation was brought into force by Thatcher, prohibiting the 'promotion of homosexuality' and severely limiting LGBTQ+ freedom of expression. SHARP's work reflects on their butch dyke and non-binary identity at a time of censorship across education, the mainstream media, and everyday life.

Heather Glazzard (BA Fashion Image Making and Styling graduate, 2018) similarly counters a lack of representation in their series *LGBT+ Letters* (2018 -2019); citing the 'complete lack of queer visibility' they were met with upon coming out at secondary school. The intimate snapshots and hand-written accounts consider the subject's own experiences of identity, belonging, and community – celebrating the many definitions of what 'queerness' can be.

Sadé Mica's work is rooted in their own identity and experience; exploring the bounds and limitations impressed on them by their environment and surroundings. "My current practice explores my experiences navigating the world as a fat, queer, black person and the nuances that brings in fleshing out an identity that is often met with contempt and confusion..." Mica's prints, made during their studies (BA Fine Art, 2018) and as a Graduate Scholar speak to the flux of queer identity, the shifts and changes over time, and in relation to the spaces around us.

Mollie Balshaw (BA Fine Art, 2019) simultaneously challenges the boundaries of medium, material and meaning. Exploring painting as 'an object, rather than an image' their work explores what it means to portray a non-binary position in painting: "Identifying as non-binary, I find myself stuck in this whirlwind of tropes, questioning where a painter like me fits amongst the history of painting". Similarly, installation *Depression Day Realness* (2021) rejects traditional forms of portraiture and utilises the artist's own clothes to hint at the everyday act of constructing identity - reflecting the expansive, multi-dimensional nature of non-binary experience.

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Theirs, Yours, Ours is part of 'A Modest Show', the collateral programme to British Art Show 9.

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