

Despite its status the UK's first building-based [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender \(LGBT\)](#) arts organisation, the Drill Hall Arts Centre in London is largely absent from theatre and performance scholarship. It was the venue's legacy as a significant home of LGBT performance between 1981 and 2012 that prompted me to seek to redress the absence of critical work on the site and document its unique contribution to the UK's theatre landscape.¹ However, the limited traces that remain of the Drill Hall indicate an uneasy relationship with its identification as an LGBT theatre. Most notably, Julie Parker, the Drill Hall's first and only Artistic Director has repeatedly challenged this legacy:

if you go back and look at all of our productions ... you say we did gay work predominantly, but we didn't. It was part of the programme, a substantial part, but actually, the range of work that we were doing meant there was a cross-referencing, a cross-fertilisation. [...] We weren't a gay venue. We never set out to be that. We set out to be a venue that could put on work that might define itself that way.(459)

As a queer performance historian, I seek to make visible marginalised performance and its sites Parker's articulation of the Drill Hall is in tension with the limited historicization of the venue thus far and presents an interesting provocation for the ways in which we document and discuss theatre sites with partial and contradictory histories. This disconnect, between the theatre's historic identity and key stakeholders' perspectives is the starting point for my redressing of the Drill Hall's absence in theatre histories more broadly – exploring where such a disconnect comes from and what narratives might have been occluded. Throughout the Drill Hall's history, the venue persistently refused to be defined, what then does this mean for a project that seeks to document the venue's significance in the UK performance landscape?

¹ Throughout this article I use LGBT, rather than LGBTQ+, as this is reflective of the language used by the theatre, its funders and in scholarship thus far. My use of 'queer' in this article attends to its anti-assimilationist position and critique of identity.

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More broadly, how should venues be documented when there is a central tension around their identity?

In this article I outline how the Drill Hall's enduring association with LGBT performance has persisted subsequently inscribing a cultural understanding of the site as an LGBT institution. Drawing on the reflections of the venue's only Artistic Director Julie Parker and internal review documents I illuminate why such labeling of the theatre is insufficient, namely in occluding its other distinct aspects and by flattening out debates surrounding what the venue 'was' that persisted throughout its existence. Given this central tension, I suggest that the Drill Hall is better understood as a queer institution, in order to more fully capture its broad practices, continued support of LGBT arts and refusal to be defined. In so doing, I expand understandings of this partially documented site and illuminate the need to critically consider how venues get documented, particularly to avoid creating and affirming an institutional identity that may be reductive.

Remaining Traces

Built in 1882 and located on Chenies Street, off Tottenham Court Road, in central London the Drill Hall's name derives from its original purpose as a drill hall for the Bloomsbury Rifles. By 1975, Action Space, a collective who produced site-specific work, managed the building (then named Action Space Drill Hall) and using it as a location to create 'artscape' (Parker and Croft). While on tour in 1977 the company gave use of the venue to Gay Sweatshop actor Nancy Duiguid for a production which eventually developed into the Women's Festival, which she co-organised with Kate Crutchley and Julie Parker that same year. Parker then joined the Action Space collective,

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working as a programmer for three years. In 1980 Action Space fragmented due to ‘tensions [that] mounted under the pressure of developing this new space with little funding’ and nine members of the company including Parker remained at the building (Jackson). Following the receipt of funding from the Greater London Council (GLC) for refurbishment works the building reopened as the Drill Hall Arts Centre in 1981. This renovation provided; one theatre with a seating capacity of 180 -260, three workshop/rehearsal rooms, two photography dark rooms, a bar (that could double as a performance space seating 70) and a vegetarian restaurant. By 1984 the building also contained multiple office spaces that housed theatre companies, a dance company and two graphic designers. The venue was initially open 6 days a week for 46 weeks of the year. In addition to its theatre programme 20 public workshops were held per week and free creche facilities were offered on Friday and Saturday evenings (‘Archive Artistic Policy’). In 1984, the group registered themselves as a charity named Central London Arts Ltd and Parker served as Artistic Director and Chief Executive until the venue’s closure in 2012 (Ibid).

The Drill Hall is emblematic of the kinds of absences that can be encountered when seeking to excavate histories of a theatrical institution: the venue has closed, there is limited discussion of it in scholarship, and the archival material is sparse. After the Drill Halls closure, the theatre archive was donated to the London Metropolitan Archives in July 2015.² The collection privileges performance ephemera predominantly headshots, posters, reviews, and promotional images. While these offer insight into the numerous theatre companies who

² The archive is listed under the theatre’s charity registration Central Arts Ltd.

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performed at the theatre, the workings of the Drill Hall itself are largely absent from the collection.

As a remedy to these omissions within the venues own archive, attending to the Drill Hall's encounters with larger cultural institutions offers an avenue for capturing the theatre's organisational practice. Throughout its 31-year history the theatre was supported by three large funding bodies: the GLC, Camden Council, and Arts Council England (ACE), each of whom have substantial archives of their own. Unfortunately to date Camden Council has been unable to locate any documentation relating to the Drill Hall beyond five payments made in 2011 and there are no documents on or about the theatre in the GLC archives. The ACE's archive has been more fruitful, in 2015 I received copies of the only 7 documents relating to the Drill Hall which included an appraisal report and several Grants for the Arts Assessment Reports from 2003 – 2007. However, during my most recent communications with ACE, to obtain any further documents that may have been discovered, I was advised that due to the implementation of a new system 'we only hold a general record of the grants. The related documents, such as the application form itself, were not uploaded to the system and this information is therefore not held' ('FOI Request').³ The Drill Hall, then, is therefore occluded from the archives and records of all three of its most significant external stakeholders; each of whom would have collected a substantial body of correspondence and documentation on the venue that articulated its central artistic agendas, working practices, and organisational cultures.

Sticky Labels

³ This includes the copies of documents I received in 2015.

References to the Drill Hall are most likely to be found in the margins of theatre scholarship as the location of a number significant lesbian and gay productions including Jackie Kay's *Chiaroscuro* (1984), Neil Bartlett's *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* (1990), Boolips and Split Britches' *Belle Reprieve* (1991) Afro Pomo Homos *Dark Fruit* (1992) and *Fierce Love* (1993).⁴ It is also footnoted in Jane Milling's *Modern British Playwriting: The 1980's* as 'the first building-based performance space committed to gay and lesbian theatre' an accolade that marks it as distinct within the UK's theatre landscape. The implication that the Drill Hall was a key venue for lesbian performance specifically is further affirmed by the listing of the venue in three encyclopaedic entries on 'lesbian theatre', in all of which the Drill Hall is likened to the WOW Café in New York as a space particularly or exclusively concerned with lesbian performance (Freeman, Tait, JD). Even in this area of theatre studies, with the exception of Sandra Freeman's *Putting Your Daughters on Stage*, in which she documents the theatres' lesbian work between 1970-1995, there has been no sustained critical consideration of the venue. Finally, Jill Dolan gives a paragraph in *Theatre & Sexuality* over to the Drill Hall, to acknowledge its significance as 'the premiere LGBT venue in London' (26). Such fleeting but persistent citing of the building as a lesbian, gay, or LGBT site of performance has served to entrench the theatre's association with specific types of performance and genres of identity based work. This has been further compounded by the public discourse surrounding the venue in its final years.

⁴ Examples of scholarship on these performances includes Lynette Goddard, *Staging Black Feminisms: Identity, Politics, Performance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Jill Dolan, *Theatre & Sexuality* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Richard Boon and Jane Plastow, *Theatre and Empowerment: Community Drama on the World Stage* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); Samuele Grassi, *Looking Through Gender: Post 1980 British and Irish Drama* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011).

The most comprehensively documented aspect of the venue is its closure. In December 2007, as part of what has been described as the ‘bloodiest [funding] cull in half a century’, the Drill Hall lost 100% of its ACE funding when it was removed from the regularly funded organisations portfolio. In response, the Drill Hall mounted an (ultimately unsuccessful) appeal against the ACE decision, which resulted in a wealth of media publicity including features in *Time Out London*, the *Londonist*, and *Pink News*. This publicity and the ‘Save the Drill Hall’ campaign all focused on the venue’s key role in LGBT history and activism, such as how ‘it initiated, hosted and was central to the Arts Lobby against Section 28 campaign, which went on to become the successful and respected LGBT campaigning organisation Stonewall’ (Babajee). Such importance was placed on the venue’s LGBT credentials that its value to the arts sector was addressed in parliament when MP Simon Hughes tabled a motion that called on ACE to revoke their decision. Hughes argued that the Drill Hall is

a beacon for lesbian and gay performance work and arts activities [...] it is a unique national asset and provides a vital resource to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community as well as giving a voice to lesbian and gay arts in London and good value for the investment of public money. (‘Early Day Motion 699’)

In response to the press and in defence of the ACE decision to remove the Drill Hall’s funding, Moira Sinclair (then interim director of ACE’s London branch) made a public statement asserting ‘[o]f course there’s no anti-LGBT agenda. [...] This is not about the nature of the work, it’s about the financial viability of the organisation’ (Smith). The Drill Hall endured despite the 2007 subsidy cut thanks to annual funding from London Councils (an organisation that promotes the interests of

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London) and continuing support from Camden Council.⁵ On 29 December 2011, Parker and Mavis Seaman (General Manger of the Drill Hall) announced that the Drill Hall had been sold to Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) and would be renamed RADA Studios offering the explanation that ‘we quite simply can’t continue with the annual financial burden of maintaining our building and paying bills at the expense of working with artists. So, after careful thought and with a huge amount of sadness we are leaving’ (Parker and Seaman). On the 3 January 2012, Central London Arts Ltd vacated the building.

Sara Ahmed has outlined how signs and emotions can become ‘sticky’ through repeated use. She argues that stickiness is ‘an effect of the histories of contact’ which can become obscured (90). Using language as an example Ahmed highlights how when “a word is used in a certain way, again and again, then that ‘use’ *becomes* intrinsic” (92, emphasis in original). This can be seen with the repeated articulation of the Drill Hall as an LGBT theatre in public campaigns and references in scholarship which have enacted a similar process on the venue. Theatrical sites are regularly catalogued by confining them to established frames of understanding institutions and their built environment. Such frames for documenting theatrical sites have been: their listed status or unique architectural style (e.g. The Globe, The Barbican, Frank Matcham Theatres); their national cultural importance or civic significance (e.g. National Theatre of Great Britain or The Belgrade Theatre Coventry); their attachment to broader artistic movements (e.g. The Royal Court and its relationship to angry young men plays and in-yer-face theatre); or their location in commercially successful and globally recognised theatre districts

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(e.g. London's West End). This approach not only ensures that theatre sites are documented in broader performance histories, but it also works to establish the institutional identity of a venue, entrenching cultural understandings of what a particular theatre 'is' and 'does'. In the case of the Drill Hall, its identity has been shaped by its contribution to LGBT theatre ecologies. The use of the label LGBT itself is not inappropriate but it has become the site's definitive characteristic. The theatre has become laden with such repetitive cultural associations, that they have stuck. Importantly, this is compounded by the limited critical attention given to the venue and the partial traces that remain of its practice.

To begin to address the Drill Hall's contested categorisation and offer an alternative understanding of the venue, I turn to its citation in the margins of policy and funding arts documents including the materials I have from ACE prior to their exclusion from the body's database. Such an approach accounts for how the Drill Hall self-identified, illuminates a deeper understanding of Parker's position, and traces the ways in which funding bodies might try to fix venues identity, audiences, and agendas.

Another identity: An Exemplary Arts Centre

The foundational aims of the Drill Hall were to,

give space and a voice to artists who came from the gay and lesbian, women's, black, and disabled communities; to house new opera and music theatre; to provide a resource to the arts community with rehearsal rooms and meeting space; and to house and run a wide-ranging classes and courses programme that worked outside of any formal structure. ('Appraisal Report', 8)

These inclusive aims speak to the company's collective origins, characterizing the Drill Hall as a space for everyone. Parker attributes the Drill Hall's association with gay and lesbian theatre to

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the venue's early years, which 'established the presence very strongly of lesbian, gay and queer theatre [...] between 1977-80 [as] a lot of those companies were coming here to work in the little space downstairs' ('Interview with Julie Parker'). Parker thus clearly acknowledges the significance of LGBT work to the venue's programming but is resistant to this being the only legacy of the theatre. Notably in 2006 when the Drill Hall's artistic policy was made publicly available online, 'lesbian, gay and queer work' was listed as a core interest of the Drill Hall but not exclusively so ('About Us'). Although I am primarily focusing on operational documents as a means of expanding understandings of the Drill Hall's institutional identity, the theatre's production file archive of 359 performances evidences a consistently varied programme that included comedy; live music (particularly jazz and opera); experimental performance (Robert Paclitti, the inaugural LIFT festival); youth and community performance; identity-led and activist work including feminist (Women's Theatre Group, Monstrous Regiment, Charabanc Theatre) black (Talawa and The Black Theatre Cooperative), disabled (Graeae), lesbian, gay and queer theatre (Split Britches, Siren, Claire Dowie, Boolips, Tim Miller).

Alongside productions, a 1986 application to Camden Council's Women's committee articulates that Monday evenings at the Drill Hall were devoted to women-only activities which included a bar night and 'workshops on self-defence, acrobatics, photography, dance, dance aerobics and trapeze'(np). Space was provided for meetings for different organisations within the womens' movement such as The Greenham Women and the miners wives support campaign (Ibid).⁶ Activities were not merely directed to women, but they also aimed at

⁶ In the UK, the Greenham Common Women and Women Against Pit Closures were two of the most significant women led activist movements of the latter part of the 20th century. The Greenham Common Women established a series of anti-nuclear protest camps at RAF Greenham Common after a group marched from Cardiff to the

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involving wider audiences in workshops, later documents from the late 1990s/early 2000s show a continuation of programming workshops and courses under headings of craft, dance, voice, photography, fitness alongside free creche facilities on Monday evenings, Friday and Saturday ('Application to Camden Council'). These non-product orientated arts programmes have not been as consistently captured in the archive but continue to be mentioned in funding documents as I will address below. Parker claims this area of programming 'was [a] much more organic area of the work [...] it wasn't necessarily so led by the politics of the theatre' ('Interview with Julie Parker'). This observation points to how the activities offered did not tend to be in dialogue with varied performance productions but rather provided opportunities for anyone who patronised the centre to engage with a diverse range of art forms.

A key aspect of the theatre's identity that has not been critically acknowledged yet offers a productive lens for understanding its investment in hosting a range of arts practices, is its status as an arts centre. Attending to this arts centre moniker exposes another narrative about the venue, one that points to a different ideological attachment that allows for Parker's resistance to the 'gay venue' label to be reconciled with the theatre's cultural significance. Emerging in the 1940s as a practical solution to housing the arts and as means by which to distribute access to culture across the UK, Arts Centres were defined by the Arts Council of Great Britain as: 'a building under the roof of which activities in more than one art-form took place and people of different interests and backgrounds came into social contact with one

military based in 1981 to challenge plans to house American missiles on UK soil. The camp was active for 19 years. Women Against Pit Closures were established in 1984 and were central to the resistance to the anti-union tactics of Margret Thatcher's Conservative government. Initially emerging from the miners strikes, Women Against Pit Closures raised money, attended pickets, and addressed rallies for a range of union action across the 1980s and 1990s. The Drill Hall's support of these groups is indicative of their political engagement.

another' (Lane, ix). While this pragmatic definition persisted for decades, the work that Arts Centres housed and *who* it was for came under continual review. John Lane has suggested that the Arts Centre movement in the UK can be categorised into three distinct phases; post-war idealism, 1960's revolt (which evolved shifting from a middle-class focus to attending to the 'culturally under-privileged') and the 1970's explosion, connoting an expansion of arts centres across the UK and increasing community involvement (ix). Robert Hutchison and Susan Forrester note in their survey of the sector, the first of its kind, that by the 1980s Arts Centres in London were 'opening at a faster pace than in the rest of the country' (11). This development was significantly indebted to the GLC, whose aforementioned refurbishment of the Drill Hall supported architectural changes to the site, which coupled with the broad range of activities occurring within the building affirmed its status as an arts centre.

The GL had a significant role in shaping much of the work programmed within London's art centres, given its core financial support of several arts centres across the capital. Clare Higney, a member of the Arts Council of Great Britain Combined Arts Sub-Committee, noted that during this period in London

'the focus' of centres activities has shifted from art form to consumer. Instead of describing the art form for example 'fringe' theatre, 'abstract film', centres are tending to describe their target groups for example 'women's photography', 'black theatre', [...] This marks a change in the role of centres' (128).

Hutchison and Forrester suggest that this move from form to demographic can be understood in relation to the GLC's interest in targeting specific social groups which subsequently 'reflected and reinforced a wider mood among many arts centres that practical steps were needed to translate the phrase 'arts for all' from being an easy slogan into being a reality'(11). While London art

centres programming approaches can be seen to have been inflected by its funders, the disbanding of the GLC by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in 1986, produced a funding gap. This was a move that deepened relations and intensified their reliance on other financial supporters of arts centres namely local authorities and Arts Council England.

Following the dissolution of the GLC, ACE increasingly considered how arts centres could be sustained but also how the sites might become value adding for the funder itself. Of note is the 1993 ACE symposium *A Tall Order* which was held at the Drill Hall and discussed the future of arts centres in London. The summary report documents a refusal by the participating industry stakeholders to firmly define an arts centre, beyond that of a building that houses multidisciplinary arts, arguing that drawing further parameters would be unproductive. Notably, the Drill Hall was held up as a strong example of an arts centre which has marked itself as unique, '[i]n response to unmet need identified by the gay community, the Drill Hall has developed as a space for artists to perform work linked with a political minority. Whilst its geographical location and funding is defined by the borough, its community of interest is wider' (12). The Drill Hall's attention to the LGBT community becomes an important aspect of its remit for ACE and identifies it as a sector leading organisation. More generally, this discussion on the future of London arts centres places an increasing emphasis on offering a specialisation beyond targeting residents of a particular borough even when receiving funding from local authorities (such as the Drill Hall's support from Camden Council). There is then somewhat of a contradiction in the refusal of those across the sector and ACE to offer a fixed definition of 'the arts centre' while, concurrently pushing each individual centre to specifically articulate what they are offering. Although this debate is focused on arts

centres, it is notable that the Drill Hall's association with LGBT arts is prioritised even in this forum where its arts centre status should be most pertinent.

When ACE began to produce its own strategies and policy agendas for the arts in 1997, the body was simultaneously attempting to firm up its own understanding of the functions of arts centres through commissioned research. Joy MacKeith's report, 'The Art of Flexibility: Art Centres in the 1990s', provided the most extensive survey of the sector in a decade and advocated for their potential as multidisciplinary arts sites. Although still avoiding a stringent definition, MacKeith asserted the need for differentiation between the urban and the rural arts centre as being very distinct sites of possibility. Specifically, reaffirming the need for urban arts centres to additionally 'fill a particular niche in arts provision which crosses different art forms' (56). In 2006 the funding body undertook a sector wide review of English arts centres and their function. The subsequent published recommendations included a firm definition of the arts centre as a space which 'creates different entry points for the public to different art forms and genres', 'has a creative relationship with artists' and 'has a social dimension and at least one space dedicated to social interaction' (15). This is the first time ACE asserted a closed definition of the arts centre and these characteristics subsequently became criteria against which arts centres were required to map their practice. Concurrently, the funder acknowledged that this rigid definition might require organisations to proactively manage this shift by removing or adding 'arts centre' to their name in order to strategically navigate how they might access funding, either from ACE or local authorities. Recognising the Drill Hall's status as an arts centre attends to its programming of a broad range of arts practices and its significance as part of a wider cultural movement that sought to make

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multidisciplinary arts accessible. Markedly as the definition arts centre does becomes more restrictive, similar ideas emerge in the ACE's appraisal reports of the Drill Hall, in particular the need for an identifiable niche and a strong push by the body for the venue to articulate their unique identity.

A Queer Reading

Following the submission of a troubling budget forecast the Drill Hall's artistically expansive and 'organic' programming came under scrutiny when ACE undertook an appraisal review of the organisation in 2004. ACE alongside representatives from Camden Council sought to address what they viewed as the organisation's likely insolvency (Grant for the Arts – Full Assessment Report, 3). While issues including 'a lack of formal development planning', 'a lack of planned marketing approach' or suitable evaluation system were a significant part of the organisation's appraisal, a central contention for ACE was ideological. ('Appraisal Report', 16). The appraisal meeting documentation shows two key areas of programming intervention the ACE sought to make: the introduction of a more specialised LGBT artistic focus (for which content and artists' self-identification are cast as defining parameters) and the specific targeting of an LGBT audience. Further, the ACE recommended that 'the Drill Hall should clearly articulate what it sees as its 'niche' – its unique selling point – if it is to compete effectively in London' ('Appraisal Report', 5). Pragmatically they requested that the theatre 'review the rationale for each of its strands of work and update its core mission statement and programming policies, clearly articulating what the core work is and the principles which drive its implementation' in addition to demanding that Arts Council subsidy was no longer used to support courses and classes from 2006/7' (5). The report

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shows a clear desire to push the Drill Hall towards the funding bodies understanding of what an LGBT theatre should be programming.

It is noted in the appraisal that the Drill Hall 'did not primarily target the gay community as audience members' and 'does not try to lead on pre-determined gay issues or push artists into exploring particular elements of gay culture. It reacts to artists' needs and creativity rather than actively commissioning specific work' (1). Throughout her tenure, Parker's direction was artist focused, rather than product driven. In interviews, she articulates her desire to foster artistic work that companies wanted to make rather than asking them to fulfill a predetermined series of criteria for the space. As producing house Parker programming was driven by questions including: 'has it got artistic vision? Has it got the kind of production values we want? Is it going to be delivered in the most extraordinary way? If the answer was yes to all of those things, or if you couldn't define what the work was, the odds were it would go into the programme'(Ibid). Such an approach gives scope to do more than programme LGBT identified artists to make work directly responding to 'community issues'. More broadly, their resistance to being labelled an LGBT venue was bound up with their rejection of a model which required them to create work in response to a funder set agenda. Overall, the report records a strong dissatisfaction from the Drill Hall staff with the push to limit their scope to a wholly and identifiably lesbian, gay and queer focus.

Reflecting more specifically on the remit of the venue Parker asserted that 'we do lesbian and gay and queer theatre, we do work that sits within that aesthetic, but we are also more than

that. We respond to work that is other that is part of what we do' ('Interview with Julie Parker').⁷ Here, and in earlier citations, Parker speaks to the theatre's LGBT programming but significantly she persistently does so alongside an undefined 'other'. This refusal to be specific about these 'other' strands of practice, and indeed the desire to programme work 'you couldn't define', can be understood as a queer approach to arts curation. The venue is literally queer in its resistance to categorisation throughout its existence and following its closure, any attempt to historicise the work of the Drill Hall should recognise this. Indeed, it is as important for histories of the venue to document the staff team's resistance to being defined as an LGBT site as it is to recognise the venue's important contribution to LGBT culture or role in the UK arts centres movement. What if then, we hold the Drill Hall's refusal to be labelled as its defining feature and central to its institutional identity?

Daniel Marshall, Kevin P. Murphy, and Zeb Tortorici have argued that 'queer things cannot have straight histories' and as my discussion above illustrates the Drill Hall is not straight forward (1). The current positioning of the venue as an LGBT institution, as a consequence of sticky repeated citation, infers a fixed identity and straightens out the ways in which the Drill Hall continued to resist being categorised, potentially to its downfall. Turning to the footnotes and margins evidences where and when this repetition and citation has occurred, by whom,

⁷ In 2006 the Drill Hall used the term 'queer' in one of their new artistic aims which was to '[s]upport and encourage lesbian, gay and queer artists'. It's important to note that queer was persistently evoked as an identity category by the venue publically. ~~In 2006 the Drill Hall used the term 'queer' in one of their new artistic aims which was to '[s]upport and encourage lesbian, gay and queer artists'. It's important to note that queer was persistently evoked as an identity category by the venue publically.~~

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and the latent power dynamics that have made claims particularly tacky. Attending to the arts centre aspect of the Drill Hall reconfigures what the venue was, illuminates complexities that dominant understandings of the venue do not immediately connote, and illustrates how its LGBT association became further entrenched. However, in trying to capture and expand its history there is a risk of enacting a similar process of affixing a label on the venue but exchanging one identity for another (an LGBT theatre for an arts centre). In line with Marshall, Murphy, and Tortorici I advocate for an approach that recognises the Drill Hall as a queer site, and consequently any attempt to historicise the venue should be conscious of ‘the precarious ways in which the archival is mobilized to generate knowledge’ and acknowledge that ‘knowing is unsteady’ when working with such histories (9). This positioning allows for a more holistic understanding of the Drill Hall that simultaneously accounts for its significant contribution to the cultural landscape and its refusal to be categorised.

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