

ALMS BERLIN 2019

"We are family, and this is our family reunion."

So it began, the 2019 ALMS LGBTQ Queering Memory Conference in Berlin. When I arrived at the opening event I immediately met friends and colleagues from Bergen, Budapest, London, Sussex, Philadelphia. Over the following days I met and connected with new colleagues from as far apart as Tunisia and Australia. This is what is so wonderful about the ALMS conferences – how they gather together so many people doing amazing work recording, preserving and sharing queer history. This is my family. This is my tribe.

One of the highlights for me was the Community Archives caucus. It was overflowing, much bigger than any of us had envisaged. Stimulating conversations, ideas, suggestions, connections and the promise of a network to be set up connecting us across the globe.

The conference was not without controversy. From the opening session there was an acknowledgment that, while it appeared that we came from all over the world, the participants were predominantly white and western. Questions were raised about whose queer memories are being prioritised and why. We were encouraged to explore the impact of colonialism and postcolonial structures on our work. A number of papers prompted heated discussions about the importance of acknowledging the political contexts in which we do our work and that the work that we do is political. It prompted me to keep singing the Skunk Anansie song *Yes It's Political!*

These debates, the amazing papers, stimulating conversations and queer connections gave me motivation and inspiration to continue my work with the Cork LGBT Archive. I was delighted to have the opportunity to present a paper on my work and to see people engage with the Cork LGBT Archive Exhibition which was on display for the conference. I am grateful for the bursary that helped enable me to participate and for the warm welcome for me and my family at ALMS. I am already looking forward to the next one!

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