

Liverpool Pride 2017: Why International Love?

Selected by *Liverpool Pride's* audiences, this year's theme is *International Love*. Love is singular and communal, personal and shared. It crosses generations, race, faith, gender, sexual preferences, nationalities, histories and identities. Types of love have been relished and condemned; hidden and displayed in a vast array of ways across the world. From the Ancient Greeks - who believed in between four and eight different kinds of love ([read more](#)) - to the latest Hollywood blockbuster, love presents a constantly shifting and philosophical construct that has influenced religion, cultural identities and international reputations. Think Bollywood, the 'romance languages' or the battle for love between a deity and its flock. Love affects views on arranged marriages, displays of affection and the expectations we place on our role models.



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In England and Wales, it is stated that we decriminalised homosexuality 50 years ago*, yet – [according to the Guardian](#) - hate crime rose in Britain by 42% after Brexit. Thus Michael Causer's death in 2008 and the violence we continue to see towards LGBT+ people at home (see Galop's [The Hate Crime Report 2016](#)) and abroad demonstrates our need to support one another just as much today as ever. 72 countries around the world have yet to legalise homosexuality, let alone find the language, social systems and tolerance to support our increasingly fluid gender and sexual identities.

* *The Sexual Offences Act* (1967) decriminalised "homosexual acts between two men in private" who were 21 years old and above, 10 years after the *Wolfenden Report* stated law could not "equate the sphere of crime with that of sin" and that therefore "there must remain a realm of private that is - in brief - not the law's business" (Wolfenden, 1957). Scotland did not follow until 1980 and Northern Ireland, 1982.

Chechnyan gulags are exterminating gay people, causing untold harm and suffering. As [The Independent](#) broadcast "in 13 countries, being gay or bisexual is punishable by death. These are; Sudan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Mauritania, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Qatar, UAE*" as well as "parts of Nigeria", Somalia, Syria and Iraq. Despite annulling 2013's anti-homosexuality laws, Ugandans still face terrible persecution for acts "against the order of nature" and there are stories - daily - of violence against LGBT+ citizens across the world.

* This has not been corroborated by *Amnesty International*. *Stonewall* cites 10 countries as having laws making homosexuality punishable by death

In response, *Liverpool Pride* will lead a March celebrating *International Love* – honouring all that has come before and all that is yet to be achieved, globally. It will show the world how Liverpool stands tall with our international counterparts by showing our solidarity with LGBT+ communities fighting for equality and tolerance for LGBT+ people around the globe. We will March in unity for equity for all and in support of the 72 countries yet to legalise homosexuality. We March for those living in countries forced to live in fear and shame, irrespective of their laws. We raise their flags in support of change and rainbows for those who aim to help them. We stand firm - and with one another - to show we are unbowed, undeterred and positively celebratory about LGBT+ liberation.