

# Local business owner raises money for Gaza with art exhibitions and drag

Local drag queen Mystika Glamour (Oskar Kirk Hansen) is using her monthly show on Wednesday to raise money for ongoing medical aid in Palestine.

Each month Mystika Glamour's KOOK show (@kook.edi) takes place at Paradise Palms on Lothian Street.

This coming week on Wednesday 5 February, Mystika has decided to use the monthly show to raise funds for Medical Aid for Palestine (MAP).

The show starts at 10pm, with a suggested donation of £10 (cash or card accepted).

Mystika explained to The Edinburgh Reporter that she finds it important to show solidarity with Palestine and continue to support the much-needed charities, which are all still in need of funds for ongoing medical emergencies.

This medical care continues to be paramount to those in Gaza, despite the recently announced ceasefire.

Despite the pause in conflict, [according to Al Jazeera](#), Israeli attacks have destroyed more than 95 percent of the al-Shifa Medical Complex, the largest medical facility in the Gaza Strip.

As of 28 January, the UN's humanitarian body the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OHCA) reported that more than 376,000 Palestinians displaced by the war had been able to return to their places of origin in northern Gaza.

However, despite the "fragile ceasefire" that "continues to hold", Al Jazeera reports that there is still a strong need for humanitarian efforts.

MAP is one of many humanitarian efforts, with the UK-based charity working in collaboration with Palestinian communities to provide vital medical aid in emergencies as well as to supporting the development of long-term health services.

Mystika says that, as a part of the queer community, she believes it to be important to "reject pink-washing, AKA the use of supposed queer allyship to justify the death and mistreatment of Palestinians" .

Along with Mystika's own performance, the show will also feature resident drag king Daddy Delight, and showcase some new faces to the Edinburgh drag scene: newcomer performers Demi Urge, Ella Menope, Chuckie Orlagh, and Emasculated.

"There will also be a raffle with prizes to raise further funds [for Gaza], and music until 1am from resident DJ Zak From Bolton," Mystika said.

## **Charitable actions don't stop there**

The charitable nature of Oskar Kirk Hansen doesn't stop there. Along with being Mystika Glamour and using the drag scene platform to raise money for charities, Hansen also co-owns a café in Viewforth that showcases local Edinburgh art in its downstairs basement.

Kafe Kweer opened in September 2020, a few months after Hansen had seen a Facebook post about a small shop in the Brunstfield

neighbourhood looking for people to take it over and “turn it into something cute”.

“I shared the post, and pretty much as a joke I said, “wouldn’t it be fun if we had a queer café?” not expecting *me* to be the person who did that,” Hansen laughed.

“Then my friend Zach commented on the post and said, “I just saw that too. Should we do it?””.

Then, suddenly, they were doing it.

In 2025, Kafe Kweer exists as a café-local grocer-art gallery hybrid, open Thursday to Monday 8.30am to 5pm.

But back in July 2020 when Hansen first saw the post, the two co-owners weren’t sure what they would make the space into.

“The thing is, most queer spaces are nightclubs and bars and things like that, so [the scene] is sort of mostly centred around alcohol,” Hansen says.

It made sense to open a sober space to fill that gap.

“[Then] we got so many messages from people saying, ‘this is exactly what we want’,” Hansen tells me, remembering messages from parents that said “we have a 16 year old lesbian daughter who’s just come out”, or “I’m an older queer person who doesn’t want to go to loud clubs anymore”.

“There were just so many messages and so much validation, so Zac and I thought ‘okay, right, this isn’t just some crazy project’.

“This is something that people actually want.”

Since this all happened in 2020, Scotland was still in the middle of its COVID restrictions.

By September 2020 when the cafe officially opened its doors, there were still “half restrictions” in place, Hansen says,

remembering the social distancing stickers they had to place on the floor and the mask requirements for both staff and customers.

Opening a cafe is no easy feat, with Hansen recognising that most small businesses close down within their first year of operations.

Add COVID to that mix, and the Kafe Kweer team needed to think about what they could do: both legally within the restrictions, and to keep the business afloat.

While the original intention had been to host events like the business does in 2025 (including life drawing lessons, drumming, karaoke and board game nights) these options weren't viable back in 2020.

Instead, one of the ideas that *did* fit the confines of the restrictions was transforming the "cute and cozy" downstairs basement space with its low ceilings and white walls into a gallery for exhibitions.

The idea was to have different people showing off their work every month, whether it was established local artists or art students at college who had never sold a piece before.

Now, after four years of a steady stream of exhibitions, Hansen and the Kafe Kweer team of four decided it was time to do something different – and that's where the retrospective, year-long showcase idea was born, starting February 1.

All artists who have previously exhibited at Kafe Kweer have been invited back to have their artwork on display for the entire 12 months, with almost 20 local artists spending January bringing their art work into the shop.

It's a way for the café to continue in their main goal of giving back to the local queer community, but also to celebrate their own achievement of five years in business.



Kafe Kweer

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JUNE EVENTS  
MAY 15th - 16th  
11th June - 10th exhibition opens  
17th June - 10th to 12th June 10-12pm  
18th & 19th - Saturday Chatterbox  
21st June - Live Story (Inclusivity)  
24th June - Drag Showcase  
25th June - Kwanzaa (Kwanzaa)  
25th June - Kwanzaa (Kwanzaa)  
30th June - Kwanzaa (Kwanzaa)  
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NO TORIES



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PIGEONS KNOW THAT I  
LOVE THEM



