

How FLINTA* communities are reshaping the electronic music scene

“We are passionate about creating a more accessible and all-encompassing environment in the electronic music scene, which is the main reason we wanted to create a FLINTA* focused community,” says Emilie Lerang-Rosnes, who co-founded club promoter [Cathar_sis](#) in a hope for more inclusivity in a male-dominated industry.

In 2022, women and non-binary artists represented 28% of electronic music festival lineups, 5% of dance songs in the charts and only 1% of radio, as researched in the Progressing Gender Representation in UK Dance Music Report, created by [The Jaguar Foundation](#) (TJF).

Cathar_sis is one of London’s vibrant FLINTA* focused initiatives that have recently emerged to showcase more gender-diverse voices and challenge the patriarchal systems in the music genre – and the industry as a whole.

What is FLINTA*?

FLINTA* stands for female, lesbian, inter, non-binary, transgender and agender people. It originates from Germany as an attempt to create feminist safe spaces, especially for people who do not fall under the category “woman” but still feel oppressed or restricted by the patriarchal system.

In the 1970s and 80s, house dance music originated [from queer Black and Brown](#) communities in US cities like New York and Chicago as escapism from a world saturated with racism and homophobia. Today, when looking at top global DJs and festival lineups in the UK, white men overshadow the modern electronic scene. Those not a part of this category experience a multitude of challenges which prevent them from emerging into these spaces.

Emilie co-founded Cathar_sis with Marion Le Morvan. Together they organise affordable club nights and give platforms to up-and-coming DJs with an intersectional focus on inclusivity and art. Emilie says although they use the term FLINTA* for their social media and events, they want to ensure people are aware of their values more than labels.



Marion (left) and Emilie (right) at an energetic Cathar_sis event. Pics: Alice Orio

“We’re not exclusive to any group of people. We want people to come to our events and be a part of our community to respect our values, so we always make sure we weigh on that part rather than who you identify as,” Emilie continues.

There was a lot of back and forth on the best term to use when choosing the word for their target audience. They decided on FLINTA* as it encapsulates the groups of people they want to give visibility to. Emilie says it is a “new discourse and has a lot of political discussion around it.”

Safe spaces

Safety is another value of FLINTA* spaces, as research by [BMC Public Health](#) shows almost 70% of women have experienced sexual violence on a night out. Marion is a DJ herself, so her added perspective allows them to ensure the events are safe for performers as well as audiences. To maintain safety, they work with locations that share similar morals. Marion, a hard groove DJ from Switzerland, says she has experienced men not taking her seriously whilst she’s performing.

“Sometimes men touch you while you’re playing. And in terms of social space, guys tend to push everyone and sometimes are even topless,” she continues. This is why they want to ensure Cathar_sis attendees feel comfortable at the events and have a good time.

Emilie and Marion were both interested in music and live events from a young age. Through their experience attending electronic music gigs, they realised these spaces did not connect with what they identified as and made them feel underrepresented. Emilie says the electronica industry is male-dominated both in the audience and the lineups, which alludes to the same TJF research: 72% of artists performing at electronic music festivals in 2022 were male.

During their experience in these scenes, they realised there was a lot of work to be done to create an accessible, inclusive and safe environment. Inside a Cathar_sis club night, the atmosphere, music and people embody every sense of its name. Pulsating lighting, disco balls and positive energy fill the dance floor, bodies intertwining and grooving to the eclectic beats. They also incorporate emerging artist’s and photographers’ work at their events.

“We need more of these spaces where people can just connect and create together,” Emilie adds.



This event consisted of painting workshops, open decks and lots of dancing. Pics: Alice Orio.

Limitations of FLINTA*

Acronyms and initialisms are often used to categorise marginalised people. Widely known examples include LGBTQ+ and [BAME](#), but at times are contentious. BAME is no longer used as it excludes other ethnic minority groups and fails to recognise individual identities by grouping people into

generic categories. However, it is important to recognise these terms can be seen as one step in the right direction.

FLINTA* is less mainstream but is not short of polarising opinions on the internet. Similarly, some disagree with categorising groups of people together that face unique, complex oppressions. Cathar_sis confronts and discusses this when organising their events.

Emilie says: “When using the term FLINTA* it is always so important to us to remember these are different marginalised groups that face very different forms of discrimination. So, we can't think a cis woman is going to have the same experience as trans women or trans men, who are amongst the most discriminated groups when talking about gender.”

Particular qualms lie with the trans community, who discuss the modern term on Reddit's Non-Binary forum under [a post titled](#): ‘I have a problem with the term FLINTA’. Replies include users stating it's invalidating to masculine-presenting transgender men and others don't feel welcomed in these spaces, even though they appear to be inclusive. One transmasculine person with the username @Environmental-Ad9969 posted a comment with 113 upvotes saying: “I feel so uncomfortable in those spaces. It's just ‘woman and woman light’. It feels so invalidating to be included. Never going to any FLINTA events again.” A user under @mandarine_one agrees: “It feels like they want to be as inclusive as possible but exclude a lot of people.”

Like everything in the world, people will have different opinions so it is important to understand all sides especially when discussing inclusivity. Moving forward, FLINTA* focused events and communities will attempt to cater for all groups under each letter and beyond, as well as recognising everyone has individual concerns. It is also vital to understand it's not necessarily cis men who should be removed from the music industry and electronica. It is the sexism, misogyny and patriarchal systems that need to go. Duly, FLINTA* initiatives are opening their communities for all to enjoy music in a safe, inclusive and accessible space.