



BFI FLARE: LONDON LGBT FILM FESTIVAL 2017
16th – 26th March 2017

31ST EDITION FULL PROGRAMME ANNOUNCED



Signature Move (dir. Jennifer Reeder) Closing Night, BFI Flare

**Opening with the World Premiere of AGAINST THE LAW, Closing with International
Premiere of SIGNATURE MOVE**

Embargoed until 19:30, Wednesday 15th February 2017, London.

BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival unveiled its 31st edition's full programme tonight. As announced last week, BFI Flare opens on the 16th March with the World Premiere of Fergus O'Brien's BBC Production **Against the Law** at BFI Southbank. The Festival closes with the International Premiere of Jennifer Reeder's **Signature Move** at BFI Southbank. One of the most significant and long standing film events in the world's LGBT calendar, BFI Flare will present over 50 features, more than 100 shorts and a wide range of special events, guest appearances, discussions, workshops, club nights and much more. Tickets go on sale via bfi.org.uk/flare to BFI Patrons, Champions and Members from Monday 20 Feb and General Public on Monday 27 February.

Tricia Tuttle, BFI Deputy Head of Festivals said *"If last year's 30th Anniversary of the Festival was time for reflection on just how far we've come, many world events in the 12 months since have reminded us just how vital this event still is. And what a programme we have to offer this year – it's vibrant, politically engaged, playful, stirring – and with a number of World, International and European Premieres on offer, BFI Flare is absolutely the place to see the best new LGBT cinema first."*

The Centrepiece Screening of the 2017 Festival is the European Premiere of **Torrey Pines**, a psychedelic stop-motion animation about a child grappling with gender identity and a schizophrenic mother. The film will be accompanied by a live score from director Clyde Petersen's Queercore band, **Your Heart Breaks**. The year's Special Presentations are both World Premieres: the new UK web series, **Different for Girls**, a smart, sassy, sexy multi-layered lesbian drama, directed by award-winning Festival alumni Campbell X and **After Louie** in which Alan Cumming plays a New York artist whose life is turned upside down by an encounter with a much younger man.

2017 sees the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Sexual Offences Act which decriminalised private homosexual acts in England and Wales. The Festival marks this anniversary in a number of ways:

- **Fifty Years of Queer History through the Moving Image and Beyond** a unique afternoon of illustrated talks, screenings and storytelling with a wide range of historians, archivists and individuals who lived through the period.
- The aforementioned **Against the Law** is the profoundly moving true story of Peter Wildeblood and the events that led to the creation of the Wolfenden Committee on sexual law reform.
- BFI Flare will host the World Premiere of the politically charged **Pride?** (dir. Ashley Joiner), a provocative and intelligent documentary which details the history of the Pride celebrations.
- As previously announced, the BFI is also marking the 50th anniversary with a new season of screenings and events in July and August. **Gross Indecency** will explore the pioneering – and sometimes problematic – depictions of LGBT life in British film and TV in the 50s, 60s and 70s.

In a global climate which sees many LGBT people struggle for basic human rights, BFI Flare also presents a selection of films and events which explore LGBT culture around the world. Highlights:

- **Out of Iraq** (dirs. Eva Orner and Chris McKim) is an outstanding documentary about the forbidden relationship of two Iraqi young soldiers at the height of the Iraq war.
- **The Pearl of Africa** (dir. Jonny von Wallström) follows the story of Cleopatra Kambugu, the first out transgender woman in Uganda.
- Sridhar Ranganathan, the Director of Kashish Mumbai International Queer Film Festival will attend BFI Flare and take part in an event exploring LGBT film and television culture in India, as part of UK/India 2017.
- LGBT film gets an international spotlight with the welcome return of **fiveFilms4freedom**, programmed in partnership with the British Council, which sees five LGBT short films from BFI Flare available online for free throughout the festival. Last year's films were seen in more than 130 countries worldwide.

The Festival continues to develop new LGBT filmmaking talent with a third year of its Mentorship programme, working alongside BFI NETWORK and BAFTA:

- **BFI NETWORK@FLARE Mentorships in partnership with BAFTA** offers emerging lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender-identified filmmakers the opportunity to develop industry knowledge, professional connections, and a deeper understanding

of the landscape for LGBT film. The program is structured around a professional relationship with a senior figure from the industry and engagement in a year of BFI Flare and BFI London Film Festival screenings, and a wide range of filmmaker-focused and social events and talks. Applications are open **until 19 February**.

BFI FLARE: LONDON LGBT FILM FESTIVAL, 2017 FULL PROGRAMME

From 16-26th March at BFI Southbank, the Festival will showcase the best in contemporary global LGBT features and short films, talks, events and archive screenings.

The Festival opens with the World Premiere of **Against the Law** (directed by Fergus O'Brien and starring Daniel Mays, Mark Gatiss and Charlie Creed-Miles), a sensitive adaptation of Peter Wildeblood's bestselling memoir, telling the story of his affair with a handsome serviceman and the subsequent court case which led to his imprisonment.

The Festival's Closing Gala on Sunday 26th March is **Signature Move**, directed by BFI London Film Festival alumni Jennifer Reeder. The comedy drama stars Pakistani-Canadian actress, Fawzia Mirza, Bollywood star Shabana Azmi and Mexican-American Sari Sanchez, and is a cross-cultural romance about a lesbian living in Chicago with her recently widowed mother.

Special Presentations include Clyde Petersen's return to the festival for the third time with a captivating semi-autobiographical animated musical **Torrey Pines**, which will feature a live score on the night. Alan Cumming gives a stand-out performance as a troubled survivor of the AIDS epidemic in Vincent Gagliostro's passionate and inspirational **After Louie**. BFI Flare also screens the World Premiere of **Different for Girls** (dir. Campbell X), a sassy, sexy lesbian web series set in West London, starring Rachel Shelley (*The L Word*) and Guinevere Turner (*American Psycho*, *Go Fish*).

The Festival is further divided into sections: HEARTS, BODIES and MINDS. Highlights in the programme include:

HEARTS includes films about love, romance and friendship. **Handsome Devil**, directed by John Butler and starring Andrew Scott, is a witty Irish charmer which charts the unlikely friendship between an isolated gay teen and his hunky rugby playing roommate. Maura Anderson's elegant and assured debut **Heartland** is a powerful examination of love and loss and tells the tale of Lauren, who is forced to return to live in rural Oklahoma following the death of her girlfriend. **Dear Dad** (dir. Tanuj Bhramar) is an India-set bittersweet father and son road movie. André Techine's powerful and affecting **Being 17** is the story two young boys in their last year of high school, co-written by Celine Sciamma (*Tomboy*, *Girlhood*). The pain and heartache of young love is laid bare in Monja Art's hugely accomplished second feature **Seventeen**.

BODIES features stories of sex, identity and transformation. The diverse selection of films includes the Interbank LGBT Forum Special Screening of Nathan Adloff's winning gay teen movie **Miles**. Park Chan Wook's ravishing **The Handmaiden**, inspired by Sarah Waters' *Fingersmith*, sees a woman hired as a handmaiden to a Japanese heiress, secretly involved in a plot to defraud her. Marcelo Caetano's **Body Electric** follows a handsome young man

enjoying casual encounters in contemporary Brazil. Created by an entirely female crew, **Below Her Mouth** (dir. April Mullen) is a no holds-barred depiction of what happens in the first few days of two women falling in love. Dante Alencastre's documentary **Raising Zoey** follows a strong family who demonstrate how open mindedness and love can pave the way for a joyful transition for their 13-year-old Zoey. In **FTWTF: Female to What the Fuck** (dirs. Katharina Lampert, Cordula Thym), several trans-identified people openly discuss the intricacies of transitioning. Timothy Greenfield Sanders returns to BFI Flare with **The Trans List**, in which some of the world's most prominent transpeople, including Caitlin Jenner and Laverne Cox, tell their stories.

MINDS features reflections on art, politics and community. Morgan White chronicles the world's most recognisable pair of shoes with **The Slippers**, a documentary about Dorothy's iconic ruby footwear in *The Wizard of Oz*, which features appearances from the late Debbie Reynolds and Carrie Fisher. **Waiting for B** (dir. Paulo Cesar Toldeo) is a kitschy, light-hearted and thoroughly camp portrayal of pop culture, mega fandom and the adoration of Beyoncé. Mark Kenneth Woods' **Two Soft Things, Two Hard Things** sensitively observes the complexities of LGBT life in Canada's remote Arctic Inuit population. **Last Man Standing** (dir. Erin Brethauer) is a beautifully made documentary charting the life of eight long-term survivors who live with AIDS. Led by Laverne Cox, Jaqueline Gares' **Free Cece** documents the case of Cece McDonald, a transwoman imprisoned in a male facility.

BFI Flare also includes a wide range of events, talks and debates.

SEXIT: What the Fuck is Happening with UK Porn Laws? debates the recent anti-porn laws which disproportionately target queer businesses, performers and portrayals of alternative sexualities. This event will question this new wave of censorship with a panel of filmmakers, organisers and activists on the front line of the debate.

Zorian Clayton, in his first year as a BFI Flare programmer, will present **A Romp Through Classic-Camp** a lecture exploring the arch queer aesthetic in cinema that has been enjoyed from the margins to the mainstream. This will be complemented by screenings of camp classics; **Mommie Dearest**, **Barbarella**, a sing-a-long **Gentlemen Prefer Blondes** and an exclusive presentation of **Can't Stop the Music** at the BFI IMAX.

Celebrated out lesbian film and TV director **Jamie Babbit**, returns to the Festival to discuss a body of work celebrating strong female-focused stories. More than 15 years after her glorious and defiant teen romance *But I'm a Cheerleader*, Babbit continues to bring a delightfully queer eye to features like *The Quiet*, *Itty Bitty Titty Committee* and *Addicted to Fresno* and TV works including *United States of Tara*, *The L Word*, *Girls* and *Looking*.

Surprising Ancestors: Cinema's Forgotten Queers sees Brian Robinson uncover hidden queer gems from cinema's silent era. This illustrated lecture will feature a complete screening of **What's the World Coming To?** (dir. Richard Wallace, 1926), a newly restored Hal Roach comedy set 100 years in the future where butch women rule the world and effeminate men stay at home and read fashion magazines.

With **Queering Love: Queering Hormones** BFI Flare screens a collection of artists' films which examine love through the filters of biomedical science, culture and politics. These films were funded by Wellcome Trust, delivered by BFI and no.w.here, in collaboration with King's College London.

In **The Queer Frontier: LGBT web series and beyond** Emma Smart steps us through the best LGBT work online, revealing just how much of a game-changer the internet has been for creating more varied representation and better accessibility in LGBT media.

BFI Flare joins forces with interactive theatre company Clay & Diamonds for **Orlando: The Queer Element**, an education event which uses Sally Potter's film and Virginia Woolf's text to allow audiences to step inside a world that breaks apart traditional boundaries between science and art and explore notions of gender and sex from the Elizabethans through to 2017.

Following the thrills and spills of the BFI Flare Film Quiz last year, Michael Blyth leads the challenge again, inviting you to put your queer knowledge to the test with the **Big Gay Film Quiz**

We see the return of the hugely popular **BFI Flare Club Nights** (Fri 17, Sat 18, Thur 23, Fri 24, Sat 25) at Benugo Lounge and Riverfront with our favourite DJ's including: Pink Glove, Club Kali, Maricumbia! Sadie Lee and Jonathan Kemp, BBZ and Unskinny Bop for the BFI Flare Closing Night Party.

For further details about Press and Industry accreditation and the full programme see www.bfi.org.uk/flare

BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival is programmed by Jay Bernard, Michael Blyth, Zorian Clayton, Brian Robinson and Emma Smart, led by Tricia Tuttle, Deputy Head of Festivals and Clare Stewart, BFI Head of Festivals.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival is the UK's longest running LGBT film event. It began in 1986 as Gay's Own Pictures. By its 3rd edition it was tagged the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and since then has grown to become the largest LGBT film event in the UK, and its most anticipated. The Festival changed its name to BFI Flare in 2014 to reflect the increasing

diversity of its films, filmmakers and audience. The festival is programmed by Jay Bernard, Michael Blyth, Zorian Clayton, Brian Robinson and Emma Smart, led by Deputy Head of Festivals, Tricia Tuttle and Head of Festivals, Clare Stewart.

BFI Flare Sponsors

In 2017 the Festival is delighted to welcome back a number of its most valued and longstanding partners. The May Fair Hotel returns for an eighth successive year to accommodate the Festival's special guests, and Renault are back as our valued car partner, ensuring those special guests get to where they need to be. We would also like to thank our returning Special Screening sponsors, the Interbank LGBT Forum for their continued support of the Festival. Similarly, our sincere thanks go out to our in-kind partners Fever-Tree, Konditor & Cook and Pink Pepper Gin. Lastly, but by no means least, thanks to our other Funding Contributors, Venue Partners and Community Partners.

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

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FLARE
LONDON LGBT FILM FESTIVAL



16-26 MARCH 2017

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