



## **BFI launches new LGBT brand with a successful BFI FLARE: London LGBT Film Festival**

BFI Flare welcomed guests from around the globe to launch its new LGBT film brand with BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival (20-30 March 2014). The Festival closed on Sunday 30th March 2014, the day after the momentous historical introduction of gay marriage in the UK, with a gala screening at BFI Southbank of *52 Tuesdays*, in the presence of its director Sophie Hyde at two sold-out screenings. Peccadillo Pictures announced they will release the film in the UK.

The Festival, now in its 28<sup>th</sup> year and previously known as London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, marked the first iteration of the BFI Flare brand which will also encompass regular monthly screenings and events at BFI Southbank and online programming on the BFI Player, the BFI's VOD platform

Over 11 days, the Festival enjoyed high levels of attendance with more than 22,000 people attending over 130 programmes of screenings and events. Prompted by progressive change in the UK, the Festival also welcomed activists and filmmakers for a weekend highlighting work about lives in countries with more oppressive laws for LGBT people; guests travelled from Russia, India, Cameroon, Nigeria and Jamaica for a talk on Human Rights and the role of film in enacting change.

Clare Stewart, BFI Head of Cinemas & Festivals said, "In keeping with our new name, BFI Flare has given us a Festival that illuminated audiences with films from home and abroad, reminding us of the vibrancy and diversity of LGBT films and cultures. The festival also provides a vital space, particularly with our documentary programming, for understanding of LGBT experiences around the world. We are delighted by the audience reaction and look forward to regular BFI Flare events and screenings throughout the year at BFI Southbank."

The Festival opened with the European premiere of Hong Khaou's *Lilting* with the director and cast including Ben Whishaw, Edward Leung, Peter Bowles, Morvern Christie and Naomi Christie all in attendance. Artificial Eye will release the film in the UK this summer. The Accenture Gala was *The Last Match*, a dramatic story of young love set in Havana, Cuba, due for release later this year by TLA.

Over 300 international delegates (press, filmmakers and industry) attended the Festival. Visiting directors included Darren Stein (*G.B.F.*), Anna Margarita Albelo (*Who's Afraid of Vagina Wolf?*), Nejc Gazvoda (*Dual*), Chris Mason Johnson (*Test*), Kate Johnston and Shauna MacDonald (*Tru Love*), Todd Verow and Charles Lum (*Age of Consent*), Stacie Passion (*Concussion*), Stephen Silha (*Big Joy: The Adventures of James Broughton*), Malcolm Ingram (*Continental*), Shaun Kadlec (*Born This Way*), Toby Amies (*The Man Whose Mind Exploded*), and Marta Cunningham (*Valentine Road*).

Visiting actors included Michael Willett (*G.B.F.*) and Guinevere Turner (*Who's Afraid of Vagina Wolf?*) and other special guests included Andrew Logan who introduced *The Alternative Miss World*, archivist and DJ Jeffrey Hinton who opened up his archive, and scriptwriter of *Pride*, Stephen Beresford discussed the process of making this eagerly awaited film. Other special events included a talk by Deep Lez filmmaker Allyson Mitchell in her lesbian feminist haunted house installation, and a performance by self-styled "gender failure" folk singer, Rae Spoon subject of the documentary *My Prairie Home* featured a rare moment of dancing in the aisles of NFT1.; Dr. Rajinder Dudrah gave a talk on Queer Bollywood as part of a Bollywood section. Ron Peck introduced the world premiere of a previously unknown Derek Jarman video experiment *Will You Dance With Me?* (1984) a test for Ron Peck's *Empire State* and actor Philip Williamson attended. Artist filmmaker Tejal Shah introduced a compilation of her films under the title *The Stinging Kiss*. Emma Smart gave a talk on *Caged Lesbians* and Michael Blyth explored gay horror in a lecture titled *Queer Eye for the Dead Guy* plus a screening sidebar.

The bar rocked to visiting DJs on Friday and Saturday nights and the closing night party at Pulse was open to the public where Guilty Pleasures and Dan Beaumont were the main attractions.

BFI's Flare programmes will continue year-round with a monthly showcase at the BFI Southbank and a VOD channel on the BFI Player, the BFI's online platform. BFI Flare in venue includes a 13 May preview of *Concussion*, which is being released by Picturehouse and a 19 June preview screening of *Lilting* ahead of its UK release by Artificial Eye.

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About the BFI

The BFI is the lead organisation 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

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### About Accenture

Accenture has enjoyed a longstanding relationship with the BFI (British Film Institute) and was delighted to extend the connection to become An Official Partner of the BFI for the next three years. Accenture is proud to continue as principal sponsor of BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival and its on-going partnership with the festival demonstrates Accenture's longstanding commitment to supporting diversity. Recognised as an employer of choice for LGBT people, Accenture was named in the top five in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2014 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row; the index is an annual benchmarking exercise that showcases Britain's top employers for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff.

Last year, Accenture Interactive supported the BFI as it worked to define its vision for the future of the BFI National Archive access and respond to the changing needs of the film watching public. The BFI worked with Accenture experts across digital strategy, customer experience and digital video services on how a BFI branded player would be able to robustly serve a growing video-on-demand audience with an evolving catalogue of old and new content, while retaining the BFI's unique curatorial values. Accenture continues to support the BFI and its vision for the future of UK film.

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 281,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world's most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US\$28.6 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2013. Its home page is [www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com)  
<http://www.accenture.com/bfi>

### BFI Flare Sponsors

In 2014 the Festival is delighted to welcome back a number of its most valued and longstanding partners. Accenture joins us for a second year as Principal Sponsor, Renault returns as BFI Flare's valued car partner,

American Airlines also continues as the Festival's official airline and the May Fair Hotel, for a fifth successive year, will be accommodating some of the festival's special guests. We would also like to thank our special screening sponsors the LGBT Interbank Forum for their continued support of the LLGFF and are thrilled to welcome Celebrity Cruises as a new partner for this year. Thanks also go to Konditor & Cook, Topolski, Green and Blacks, Christie, Unique Digital, Skillset and other funding contributors. Finally, thanks goes to our returning Media partners, G3 and Attitude and our Distribution Partner Impact.

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