

MEDIA RELEASE

Check out the First A-Listers at Queer Screen's Mardi Gras Film Festival

Best of the international film circuit to hit Sydney 15 February – 2 March 2017

16 November 2016: Queer Screen's 24th Mardi Gras Film Festival is bringing to Australia not only the most impressive films from the LGBTIQ film circuit, but many award-winners from Berlin, Toronto and other A-list film festivals. Announcing the first 10 'teaser' films today, tickets are now on sale at queerscreen.org.au for the Festival which screens from 15 February to 2 March, 2017.

"By widening our search across the most influential film festivals, as well as the key LGBTIQ festivals, we know we are bringing the very best of the best to Sydney," explains Festival Director Paul Struthers. "Interestingly, we can now do this as more LGBTIQ characters and storylines appear in mainstream movies.

"However, while very welcome, mainstream representations can tend to be somewhat homogenous, which is why LGBTIQ film festivals like ours are so important to hold a mirror up and reflect the incredible diversity of our community – our guiding vision for this year to tell as many queer stories as possible through the most diverse range of characters, stories and genres yet".

One to delight the boys is the Australian premiere of ***The Pass***, starring out actor Russell Tovey (HBO's *Looking*) and Arinze Kene, which opens with two teenage Champion league footballers mucking around the night before their first big international game. Out of nowhere, one kisses the other and this 'pass' impacts the next 10 years of their lives in a world where image is everything.

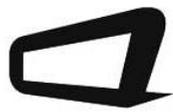
A must see is the super-sexy ***Below Her Mouth***, with its Australian premiere fresh from the Toronto International Film Festival. A ground-breaking erotic lesbian romance written and produced by lesbians and shot with an entirely female crew, the film depicts an unexpected and steamy affair which changes the lives of the central characters forever. It's a frank look at the good, bad and ugly sides of attraction.

Australian thriller ***Bad Girl*** will keep you on the edge of your seat until the final credits. Starring Sara West and Samara Weaving, bad girl Amy is given one last chance by her adoptive parents, who think Amy's friendship with local girl Chloe is a step in the right direction. But when Amy discovers Chloe's secret she finds herself fighting for her life, and for the future of the family she herself tried to destroy.

Political Animals tells the story of four pioneering lesbian politicians and the battles they fought to pass a wide range of anti-discrimination laws. With incredible archive footage and insightful interviews, you will be engrossed by the achievements of these formidable women.

Filipino documentary ***Out Run*** follows the country's first transgender political candidate taking on a homophobic evangelical preacher and fighting for LGBTIQ rights. Culminating on election day, *Out Run* provides a unique look at the challenges LGBTIQ people face as we are more visible in the mainstream and fight for dignity, legitimacy, and acceptance across the globe.

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MardiGras FilmFestival

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Winning a Teddy Award at the Berlin International Film Festival 2016, ***Don't Call Me Son*** is a Brazilian drama about Pierre, a teenager unsure of his gender and sexual identity whose sense of self is complicated when he learns that the woman who raised him stole him shortly after his birth — and he has a whole other birth family, whose expectations of their missing son and brother he may never be able to meet.

Suicide Kale, which has won no less than eight awards this year including the audience awards at NewFest, Outfest, and the Queer North Film Festival is delighting crowds with its low budget, dark comedy. Shot in four days, the film charts new couple Jasmine and Penn struggling through a lunch party after stumbling upon an anonymous suicide note in the home of their hosts.

Nominated for four awards including at the Berlin International Film Festival 2016, the French and German co-production ***Liebmann*** introduces us to gay teacher Antek who moves to the French countryside to start a new life but finds he cannot escape the ghosts of his past.

Also returning to the past is ***Lazy Eye***, an 'ex' love story, about middle-aged graphic designer Dean and the great lost love of his life Alex, who reunite after 15 years for a weekend tryst in the desert.

Looking to change their lives are the subjects of documentary ***Check It***. The first gay and transgender gang in the US, members are now creating their own clothing label to try and break the cycle of poverty and violence, a daunting task. At the heart of the documentary is their bond that is tested every day as they fight to stand up for who they are in a community relentlessly trying to beat them down.

Queer Screen's Mardi Gras Film Festival 2017 is proudly supported by The Star Sydney, AGL Energy, Event Cinemas George Street, Monash IVF, Screen NSW, ACON and the Star Observer.

The full festival program will be launched on 11 January, 2017.

Tickets for the first 10 films are on sale now including flexi passes to 5 or 10 films. Queer Screen members receive discounted tickets and priority entry to movies. To become a member or to book tickets visit queerscreen.org.au to book or call (02) 9280 1533.

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Note to Editors:

- Festival Director Paul Struthers is available for interview
- Directors and actors from most films are available for interview
- Screeners of most films are available for review and all imagery is available for publication

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