



Queer Screen's 24th
**MardiGras
FilmFestival**
FEBRUARY 15 - MARCH 2 2017

MEDIA RELEASE

From Serious to Sexy: Queer Screen's Mardi Gras Film Festival to Showcase the Full Spectrum of Queer Life: 15 February – 2 March 2017

11 January 2017: From James Franco making porn to a sing-a-long with Doris Day, Queer Screen's 24th Mardi Gras Film Festival has something for everyone whether it's an inspiring political documentary, a tear-jerking drama or a sexy romp!

Tickets are now on sale at queerscreen.org.au for the full program which runs from 15 February to 2 March in Event Cinemas George St and other venues. Featuring a world premiere, four international premieres, a massive 31 Australian premieres and **MOONLIGHT**, the winner of the Golden Globe for Best Picture – Drama, the range of films cover important issues like safe schools, marriage equality, economic migration, political asylum, and the struggles of ageing, alongside a lot of fun films celebrating the sequined, sexy and sultry side of queer life.

“Continuing our focus on diversity and aiming to be a truly representative LGBTIQ film festival has been our guiding vision,” explains Festival Director Paul Struthers. “While we still feature this year's best coming-of-age movies, we are screening stories about the young and old in our community and everyone in between. Building on last year's expanded program, we have again increased the proportion of lesbian and transgender content and included more people of colour”.

There is a green hue to this year's Festival as for the first time, both Opening and Closing Nights are Irish films. The Opening night audience will fall in love with award-winning drama **A DATE FOR MAD MARY** which premiered at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. Root for fresh-out-of-prison Mary as she desperately seeks a date for her best friend's wedding. Closing the Festival is **HANDSOME DEVIL**, a comedy about geeky student Ned and his school's reaction to a blossoming friendship with sporty jock Connor. Recently shown at the Toronto International Film Festival, the screening will be followed by a very special party hosted by Irish 'royalty' – the Queen of Ireland, Panti Bliss.

Queer Screen's President Lisa Rose welcomes the Festival's newest sponsors, Major Partner American Express and Sponsors Accenture and Lush Cosmetics. “We couldn't run the Festival without the fantastic support of our sponsors and this year we are thrilled to partner with leading LGBTI allies such as The Star Sydney, American Express, AGL, Event Cinemas George St, Optus, Monash IVF, Accenture, Lush Cosmetics and SBS who alongside our other treasured core Festival and Queer Screen sponsors, will work with us to deliver the biggest and best Mardi Gras Festival yet”.

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Jam packed with famous faces and outstanding performances, audiences will be inspired, moved and tickled pink by an incredible array of films including the following highlights.

All-Star Casts

KING COBRA – A-list cast including James Franco, Christian Slater, Alicia Silverstone, and Molly Ringwald tell the true story of gay porn star Brent Corrigan.

WHEN WE RISE – Written by Dustin Lance Black and directed by Gus van Sant, we show the first episode in a four-part series recounting the history of the LGBTIQ rights movement.

PUSHING DEAD – Starring Danny Glover, this film takes a fresh look at what living with HIV means in the modern day.

THE PASS - Russell Tovey impresses as a closeted soccer player.

Safe Schools/Youth

HANDSOME DEVIL – watch how the school reacts to a blossoming relationship between a geek and a jock in a rugby-obsessed boarding school.

1:54 – a heart-breaking story that will resonate with Australians, Antoine-Oliver Pilon from Xavier Dolan's **MOMMY** stars in this tragic tale about school bullying.

RARA – Follow Sara as she becomes aware of differences between her family and those of her classmates in her teenage years.

COMING OUT - A brave documentary in which a coming out resulting reactions are recorded. Followed by a panel discussion with high-profile YouTubers on the role of the internet in modern coming out.

Older

A MILLION HAPPY NOWS – International Premiere - A bittersweet drama looking at the topic of Alzheimer's with humour and romance.

JONATHAN – Investigating the impact of a late coming out through a father-son relationship.

SEAT IN SHADOW – International Premiere - A fresh look at love and acceptance in an intergenerational friendship set in Scotland.

A PRIESTESS WALKS ALONE – A painfully honest Taiwanese film exploring a lesbian mother's relationship with her daughter and the past.

THE PEARL – Exploring the raw emotional and physical experience of being a middle aged to senior transgender woman.

Sexy

TAEKWONDO – 'Will they, won't they?' drama, with Fernando hosting a summer getaway for his often-naked friends, including a shy teammate from Taekwondo.

HEARTLAND - A young artist, struggling with a recent death, finds escape in a reckless affair with her brother's girlfriend.

BELOW HER MOUTH - Lust, love, and insatiable desire. The sexiest lesbian film of the year is here created by an entirely female crew for an authentic female gaze.

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Equality

THE FREEDOM TO MARRY- A nail biting documentary following the fight for marriage equality in the US.

OUT OF IRAQ – Following the lives of LGBTIQ people living in a warzone, this is at once a love story and a subtle indictment of the refugee processing system.

GIRL ON GIRL – International Premiere - Exploring the fight for recognition of feminine lesbians within the LGBTIQ and straight communities alike.

UPSTAIRS INFERNO - A haunting and powerful documentary about the deadliest single event to affect the gay community in U.S. history.

IRAWADDY MON AMOUR - In a Burmese village, a young gay couple wishes to have a forbidden wedding.

WOMEN AND THE WORD: THE REVIVAL – Documentary about five queer poets and musicians of colour touring bars and living rooms in the US and Canada.

Fun

BEAR CITY 3 - All your favourite bears are back for the campest camping festival there ever was.

SOMETHING LIKE SUMMER – World premiere - Featuring original songs, this is a special coming of age film.

A DATE FOR MAD MARY – Laugh out loud as Mary, fresh out of prison, tries to find a date for her friend's wedding.

BURN BURN BURN - Following the death of their friend, two girls embark on a road trip to spread his ashes.

Australian

BAD GIRL – A dark take on modernity, family and strength with a kick-ass female cast; will good girl Chloe turn bad girl Amy around in this Australian thriller?

TEENAGE KICKS – When 17-year-old Miklós' plans to escape his migrant family are crushed by the death of his brother he is suddenly forced to navigate his guilt and explosive sexuality to find the man he can become.

MY QUEER CAREER – With a 45 per cent increase in entries, My Queer Career finalist numbers have also increased due to the fabulous quality of submissions. The finalists competing for \$12,000 in prize money and support and automatic nomination to the world-renowned Iris Prize are: Jamieson Pearce (ADULT), Summer Deroche (COMING HOME), Brendan McDonall for (THE DAM) and (SPOILERS), Renée Crea (DANCE CARD), Tanuj J. Narula (FIGHT FOR RAINBOW), Laura Dudgeon (HAPPY), Emmett Aldred (PRASIZZLER QUEEN OF THE DESSERT), Emily Dyney (ST ELMO) and Goran Stolevski (YOU DESERVE EVERYTHING).

Retro

CALAMITY JANE – Come dressed as a cowboy or cowgirl and sing-a-long to on-screen lyrics with Doris Day's Calamity Jane in the 1953 queer cult classic.

SHELTER – Tenth anniversary screening of the bestselling DVD of all time in The Bookshop Darlinghurst with director Jonah Markowitz in attendance.

ONE NIGHT AND TWO DAYS – The long-awaited Australian premiere of the 2012 trilogy from director Leesong Hee-il.

THE WEDDING BANQUET – Ang Lee's classic first gay movie.

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Kids

FINDING DORY – The Finding Nemo sequel will charm the whole family as much as its predecessor.

Festival Faves

OVARIAN PSYCHOS – SXSW Film Festival – Join the crew of bicycle-riding women of colour, as they hit the streets of LA to protest violence against women.

TOMCAT – Berlin International Film Festival – Winning the Teddy Award for Best Feature this meditative film explores mental health and the reality of forgiveness.

ARIANNA – Venice Film Festival - A beautifully dreamy story of a unique coming of age.

MOONLIGHT – Toronto International Film Festival – Generating serious Oscar buzz, this might be the best gay movie ever.

SUITED – Sundance Film Festival – Meet bespoke Brooklyn tailors Bindle & Keep who custom-make suits for their transgender clients.

Shorts

This year we are screening a separate transgender shorts session for the first time, as well as gay, lesbian and mixed shorts in addition to the Asia Pacific Queer Film Festival Alliance shorts and My Queer Career finalist screenings.

The Festival Bar will run every night from 6pm to late at Event Cinemas George Street.

Queer Screen's 2017 Mardi Gras Film Festival is supported by The Star, American Express, AGL, Event Cinemas George St, SBS, Optus, Monash IVF, ACON, Accenture, Lush Cosmetics, Screen NSW, and HIF Insurance.

Tickets for all films are on sale now including flexi passes to 5 or 10 films.

Please visit queerscreen.org.au or the Mardi Gras Film Festival app to book or call (02) 9280 1533 to become a Queer Screen member for discounted tickets and priority entry.

-ENDS-

Note to Editors:

- Directors and actors from most films are available for interview
- Festival Director Paul Struthers and Queer Screen President Lisa Rose are available for interview
- Screeners of most films are available for review and imagery is available for publication

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