



MEDIA RELEASE

## Explore the Queer Frontier with Mardi Gras Film Festival

*Queer Screen's 29th Mardi Gras Film Festival: In the Cinema & On-Demand Australia Wide  
17 February–3 March 2022*

**19 January 2022:** Queer Screen's 29th Mardi Gras Film Festival (Festival) invites audiences on a mission to the Queer Frontier, to meet emerging and established filmmakers and explore new stories, styles and genres together – online, in the cinema, or both. Tickets are on sale now at [queerscreen.org.au](http://queerscreen.org.au).

Running from 17 February to 3 March, the Festival includes screenings at Event Cinemas in George Street and special 'one night only' sessions at the Hayden Orpheum, Cremorne and Event Cinemas in Parramatta and Hurstville. The Festival will then tour to the Blue Mountains on 11–13 March and Canberra on 18–21 March.

Those who prefer not to attend physical events can stream from the comfort and safety of their own home. "We understand there is on-going uncertainty in the community regarding the Omicron outbreak in Sydney and are delivering a hybrid festival to ensure the program is as accessible as possible and adheres to our COVID-19 safety plan," explains Festival Director, Lisa Rose.

"This means LGBTIQ+ communities in Sydney can choose to attend in the cinema or online, and regional and interstate friends of the Festival can join our expedition to the Queer Frontier from wherever they are in Australia. More than half of the Festival's world-class program is available to stream, On Demand."

The Festival remains a stalwart for the best and freshest LGBTIQ+ storytelling from around the world, delivering 119 films in total, including 32 narrative features, 15 documentaries, 4 episodics, a retrospective and 9 programs of shorts – from 37 different countries.

Rose says the Queer Frontier is where LGBTIQ+ communities are keeping the good fight going. This year we pay particular attention to the inspiring First Nations individuals and activists from around the world whose fight to carve out space for themselves helped us all.

"The Festival's two program strands, **Focus on First Nations** and **Rebels With a Cause**, honour stories of queer strength and resilience, be they factual or fictional. They shine a light on people with the resolve to survive and thrive in all possible circumstances."

### FOCUS ON FIRST NATIONS

Our opening night film, *WILDHOOD*, is a captivating story set in Canada's Atlantic Provinces. When two-spirit youth, Link, runs away from his abusive white father in search of his

mother, he meets Pasmay, a pow wow dancer, and together they journey towards community, identity, and love.

The genre-defying documentary PURE GRIT is both a thrilling tale of extreme sport, and an intimate love story. It chronicles three years in the astonishing life of Sharmaine, a Native American bareback horse racer.

FINLANDIA is a magical realist drama set in rural Mexico, where a group of muxes – the indigenous Zapotec peoples “third gender” – band together to create exquisite traditional dresses while they heal from their individual battles.

Rounding off the Focus on First Nations, we return to Canada for our episodic centrepiece, QUERENCIA, about two Indigenous queer women who find one another and connect in a big city. It’s a romantic coming-of-age, the likes of which we rarely see on screen.

### REBELS WITH A CAUSE

Rebels With a Cause kicks off with a powerful documentary, DENISE HO: BECOMING THE SONG, about the Canadian-born, Hong Kong-based pop singer and pro-democracy human rights activist who was arrested in late December 2021 for sedition.

SEYRAN ATEŞ: SEX, REVOLUTION AND ISLAM documents a female imam’s fight for the modernisation of Islam from her mosque in Berlin, where there is no gender segregation.

The unrelenting and unapologetic Australian-born activist, Peter Tatchell, who has achieved and endured so much, is expertly profiled in HATING PETER TACHELL.

Just as definitive is KEITH HARING: STREET ART BOY, featuring previously unheard interviews with the artist, his friends and collaborators.

NO STRAIGHT LINES: THE RISE OF QUEER COMICS charts the hitherto hidden history of LGBTIQ+ creators (including Alison Bechdel) whose work was revolutionary in an industry dominated by white, straight, cisgender men.

REBEL DYKES tells the story of a radical community of lesbians in 1980s post-punk London. They lived as squatters, partied at BDSM nightclubs, organised anti-Thatcher rallies and took action to change the world around them.

### CLOSING NIGHT

Cinematic celebrations of African-American gay men such as the one depicted in closing night film, B-BOY BLUES, are also rare. An adaptation of the 1994 novel by James Earl Hardy, about a journalist who falls for a courier, this one is enchanting from start to finish.

### LOCAL COLOUR

ROMP, a hilarious episodic about three housemates looking for love, is having its World Premiere at the Festival. It was shot in Newtown, with guest appearances by Gretel Killeen

and Matthew Mitcham. Oxford Street's Naked Barber appears in MANSCAPING, a documentary about the queering up of the traditional barbershop experience. It is one of 51 Australian Premieres. We are also screening 18 Australian short films.

"Supporting Australian LGBTIQ+ filmmakers and Australian LGBTIQ+ stories is a key priority for Queer Screen and we are delighted to be screening more than twenty films with links to our communities," says Queer Screen Co-Chair Cheryl Kavanagh.

A number of filmmakers will be on hand to introduce their work throughout the Festival. The recipients of the eighth Queer Screen Completion Fund will also be announced. ROMP was a beneficiary in 2019.

### AWARD WINNERS

A DISTANT PLACE (L.A. Outfest, Grand Jury Award for Outstanding International Narrative Feature, 2021) – Korean drama about love, family and acceptance which hints of a modern Brokeback Mountain.

GREAT FREEDOM (Cannes Film Festival, Un Certain Regard Jury Prize, 2021) – in post-war Germany, Hans, imprisoned for being gay, slowly bonds with his cellmate Viktor, a convicted murderer.

MA BELLE, MY BEAUTY (Sundance Film Festival, Next Audience Award, 2021) – a polyamorous relationship rekindles when its three members reunite in the South of France.

THE DIVIDE (Cannes Film Festival, Queer Palm Award, 2021) – a feuding lesbian couple are forced to wait hours in the ER of a Paris hospital. By director Catherine Corsini (MGFF16 Opening Night film SUMMERTIME).

### YOU'LL BE TALKING ABOUT

**Sexy and sex positive:** BLISS (GLÜCK) is an insight into the lives of sex workers in Berlin and, at its heart, a love story. In BOY CULTURE, an episodic follow-up to the 2006 film of the same name, the lead's return to hustling is boosted when he gets schooled in social media.

**Obsessive and compulsive:** THE NOVICE is a gripping ride with a queer student who takes up rowing to fit in and is consumed by becoming the best. THE PERFECT DAVID is a chilling tale of an obsessive teenage bodybuilder.

**Hollywood, old and new:** BOULEVARD! A HOLLYWOOD STORY is a slick Jeffrey Schwarz (TAB HUNTER CONFIDENTIAL, QSFF15) documentary recalling the time when Gloria Swanson recruited two young songwriters to shack up in a Hollywood mansion and write a musical version of SUNSET BOULEVARD.

THE SIXTH REEL is a classic screwball comedy, with an all-star cast including Margaret Cho, Julie Halston and Tim Daly, while JUMP, DARLING is late screen legend Cloris Leachman's final film role. She plays a grandmother whose grandson is a drag queen.

## SPECIAL EVENTS and COMMUNITY SCREENINGS

BOUND was the Festival's opening night film 25 years ago. We pay tribute with a special screening and invite everyone to come dressed as a leather-clad butch or sultry femme fatale. There will be prizes for the best outfits. Arrive early for REBEL DYKES.

MY QUEER CAREER is Australia's richest queer short film prize and eight magnificent entrants – including animations, coming-of-age tales, comedy, documentaries and more – are in the running for over \$16,000 worth of cash and support.

Five community screenings with \$10 tickets are being held around Sydney, including THE FIRST GIRL I LOVED in Hurstville, KAPANA and IFE, two African films in Parramatta, and HETERO, followed by a panel discussion featuring young filmmakers, in the city.

The Festival's partnership with AGL continues this year. "We are thrilled with our ongoing association with AGL, which is a proud sponsor of Australia's LGBTQ+ community," says Queer Screen Co-Chair Abs Osseiran. "Support from our [partners](#) is vital to the success of the festival and without it we would not be able to produce one of the world's most highly regarded queer film festivals each year."

Christine Corbett, Chief Customer Officer, AGL, adds: "We are committed to supporting our LGBTQ+ staff and sponsoring iconic cultural events that celebrate diversity and are delighted once again to support the Queer Screen Mardi Gras Film Festival. This partnership reflects our deep commitment to building an inclusive and supportive workplace through our employee driven network, AGL Shine. It is through this network and partnership that we continue to drive a workplace culture that is free from prejudice and discrimination; a place where all employees feel they are supported in being themselves and achieving their full potential."

Queer Screen's 29th Mardi Gras Film Festival would like to thank all its sponsors including IVFAustralia, ACON and Create NSW.

Tickets for all films and Festival Passes are on sale now. Please visit [queerscreen.org.au](http://queerscreen.org.au) or the Queer Screen Mardi Gras Film Festival app, or call (02) 9280 1533 to book. Become a Queer Screen member for discounted tickets and priority entry.

-ENDS-

Note to Editors:

- Directors and actors from most films, along with Festival Director Lisa Rose and Queer Screen Co-Chairs Cheryl Kavanagh and Abs Osseiran are available for interview
- Screeners of most films and images are available for review on request
- Queer Screen's [COVID-19 safety plan](#) is available on our website.

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