



Queer love is in the air and QSFF24 is feeling flirty

11th Queer Screen Film Fest
28 August – 08 September 2024

24 July 2024: Queer Screen Film Fest is coming to lure us out of hibernation and warm our hearts with 35 fresh films, representing every continent in the world*. Tickets for our 11th Queer Screen Film Fest are available now at queerscreen.org.au for 28 August to 1 September in Sydney and for our popular on-demand program, which streams nationally from 2 to 8 September.

With Spring just around the corner and the zing of LGBTIQ+ love in the air, this Festival is decidedly flirty. “We’re bookending the festival with two fabulously fun and romantic films, on opening and closing nights,” Festival Director Lisa Rose reveals. “And we’re continuing that theme with the one incredible documentary feature.

Queer love, in its many forms, flows through every film in the program.”

Setting the sizzling tone on opening night is Marco Berger’s new feature THE ASTRONAUT LOVERS, which follows two men – one gay, the other swaggering and seemingly straight – who connect in Buenos Aires one steamy summer.

Also bringing the palpable chemistry, yet without any dialogue whatsoever, is closing night film GONDOLA, about two young, female cable-car conductors who find ingenious ways to communicate their burgeoning feelings, every time they pass by in the sky. A highly original ode to queer joy.

Love is laid bare in FRAGMENTS OF A LIFE LOVED, as filmmaker Chloé Barreau revisits past loves, and lovers. This captivating film won Outstanding Documentary Feature at Frameline last month and was lauded for its unique approach to storytelling.

A film about first love seems only fitting and CLOSE TO YOU, featuring Elliot Page in his first film role since transitioning, is QSFF’s first ever narrative centrepiece. Page’s character Sam, visiting family after delaying a trip home for a long time, runs into high school crush Katherine, along the way.

As well as Elliot Page, festival goers can expect to see familiar faces aplenty – including Evan Rachel Wood, Lukas Gage, and Australia’s own Keiynan Lonsdale – in a stellar line-up of films.

Festival director Lisa Rose said the strength of the program this year is a reflection of how LGBTIQ+ films are now front and centre on the international festival circuit. Several of the QSFF24 titles premiered at major festivals including Cannes, Berlinale, Venice, SXSW and Toronto.

“Queer films and filmmakers are taking up their rightful space on what is a very competitive and commercial global stage,” she said. “The fact Queer Screen has been invited to the Marché du Film for two years running is also a reflection of the significance of LGBTIQ+ storytelling.”

2024 Queer Screen [Goes to Cannes](#) selection STRANGE CREATURES has its World Premiere during the Festival and [2024 Queer Screen Completion Fund recipient](#) VIDEOLAND has its Australian Premiere, following its win in the Comedy Series Competition at the prestigious 2024 Series Mania Festival in Lille, France in March.

STRANGE CREATURES filmmaker Henry Boffin will be in attendance for a Q&A on his touching comedy-drama film, which sees two feuding brothers set out on a road trip – in a hearse – to scatter their ashes at the old family home in remote Narrabri.

Writer-director of VIDEOLAND Jessica Smith and producer Scarlett Koehne will also be guests of the Festival, together with lead actor Emmanuelle Mattana, who plays hapless video store clerk Hailey. Serving 1990s nostalgia at every turn, the series sees Hailey watching every Sapphic film ever made in a bid to research ‘how to be a lesbian’. When she develops a crush on a customer, it’s time to put her research to the test.

“I’m excited about Australia being so well-represented in the program this year,” said Rose, herself a hapless video store clerk in the 1990s. “Please don’t miss our two Australian films!”

Festival highlights:

In ALL SHALL BE WELL, a lesbian relationship is left devastated when her partner of 30 years dies, and the acceptance she thought they had earned fades as legal and financial matters enter the frame. Filmmaker Ray Yeung received the 2024 Teddy Award at Berlinale 2024 and Frameline’s Audience Award for Narrative for this restrained yet powerful film.

Also exploring long-term love is TURTLES, a poignant comedy-drama about an older gay couple – one of whom is withdrawing, and the other is going all-out to bring him back. A must-see gem that offers a refreshing and authentic story of queer love and self-discovery.

A similar push and pull dynamic unfolds in BABY, as an 18-year-old man, just released from youth detention and forced to get by on the streets of São Paulo, is taken under the wing of an older, handsome sex worker. Romance and business clash in this fiery, colourful, and empathetic tale, which doubles as a surprisingly tender ode to queer found family.

We are pleased to welcome BACKSPOT to the fray of queer cheerleading canon. When Riley (Devery Jacobs) is given the opportunity to join an elite cheerleading squad, new pressures from a demanding head coach (Evan Rachel Wood) and Riley’s own pursuit of perfection cause her world to spiral. A compelling drama, character-driven with plenty of queers and cheers.

Shorts and Special Events:

No festival is complete without our beloved shorts programs and this year we have hybrid screenings (in cinema and streaming on demand) of our popular Gay Shorts, Sapphic Shorts and Trans & Gender Diverse Shorts packages.

We're marking Wear It Purple Day (on the following day, 31 August, so Wear It Purple Again) with a special screening of BIG BOYS, in which teenaged Jamie starts to develop some complicated feelings towards his cousin's new boyfriend during a camping trip. Awkward. As a journey of self-discovery should be. This heartfelt crowd-pleaser is free to see for those under 26, and just \$10 for everyone else.

We've upped the ante on Queer Screen Pitch Off, where six Australian filmmakers pitch their film proposals to a panel of expert assessors, competing for funding to produce their short film. This is the 7th Pitch Off, and the prize pool has doubled to \$20,000, with a \$10,000 prize for the winning pitch. Additionally, eligible female and gender-diverse practitioners can vie for a best screenwriter prize and a professional development grant, each worth \$5,000, following a generous contribution from Screen Australia's Gender Matters Taskforce.

Online and Encore Screenings:

The online component of QSFF24 features AMERICAN PARENT, BIG BOYS, GONDOLA, THE JUDGMENT, TURTLES and the shorts packages as well as exclusive reprises of two past festival favourites, SNAPSHOTS and TWILIGHT'S KISS.

QSFF screens at Events George Street, Sydney from Wednesday 28 August to Sunday 1 September. The online program is available on demand, nationally, from 2 to 8 September.

Tickets for all films are on sale now including festival passes. Visit queerscreen.org.au, download our app, or call (02) 9280 1533 to book. Become a Queer Screen member for discounted tickets and priority entry.

*Except Antarctica, which is not known for its filmmaking.

-ENDS

Note to Editors:

- Directors and actors from most films, along with Festival Director Lisa Rose and Queer Screen Co-Chairs Angela Ruchin and Abs Osseiran are available for interview.
- Screeners of most films are available for review on request.
- Images are [available here](#).

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