



PRESS RELEASE

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26th Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival: Change is in the Air, May 31 – June 8

HARTFORD, Conn. – May 6, 2013 – Spring isn't the only thing in the air as Out Film CT prepares for the **26th Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, May 31 to June 8**. Change is also in the air, as the festival introduces **shorter Monday and Tuesday night programming**, an **evening of women's short films**, and **concurrent screenings at multiple venues**. Most screenings will take place at **Cinestudio** on the campus of **Trinity College**, but select weekend films will be screened at **Real Art Ways**, and closing night will take place in **Downtown Hartford**, with simultaneous screenings at **Spotlight Theatres** at Front Street and the **Connecticut Science Center**. The closing night party follows at the Science Center.

"Moving closing night to Downtown Hartford last year was a huge success. People really loved it, so we're planning to build on that success this year with a spectacular finish to the festival at the Connecticut Science Center," said Shane Engstrom, executive director of Connecticut's longest-running film festival.

"We also have a few new things in store this year," Engstrom added. "Based on audience feedback, we know that people are less likely to venture out to the movies on Monday and Tuesday nights, so we're making those programs shorter without an intermission so people can get home earlier. Another change will be dual screenings on the weekends, at **Cinestudio** and **Real Art Ways**, so that people will have additional film choices," Engstrom said.

One of the biggest changes this year is a **program devoted solely to women's short films**. "We've been thinking about having an all-shorts lineup for several years, and there was such a great assortment of women's short films available this year that we decided this would be the perfect time to try this type of programming," said Suzanne Shayer, Out Film CT vice president. "It's a great collection of entertainment that everyone can enjoy, so men and women alike should check it out."

As always, the film festival committee went to great lengths to select films that appeal to a broad spectrum of the LGBT community. "No matter what your age or stage of life, your orientation, your gender or gender identity, you'll find something at the festival to delight you, because the festival committee picked great films that reflect the diversity of our community," Shayer said.

This year's Centerpiece film, presented midway through the festival, is *I am Divine*, a riveting profile of Harris Glenn Milstead, the humble, bullied Baltimore youth who defied the odds to achieve international fame as drag icon and movie star Divine. There will be a reception prior to the film sponsored by Pratt & Whitney.

Many festival mainstays will return, such as opening and closing night parties, and the ever popular silent auction. "People love the silent auction almost as much as the films," Engstrom said. "There are loads of items that can be had at a terrific price, and people just love the competition of bidding. It really adds a lot of excitement to the festival."

Each year the festival includes appearances by directors, producers and actors who answer questions from the audience and visit with festival guests after the program. Engstrom noted that this year there will be more even more special appearances than usual, which will give audiences unprecedented insight into the movie making process.

Out Film CT, which organizes the festival, is a nonprofit cultural organization dedicated to presenting outstanding LGBT cinema and other theatrical events throughout the year, culminating in the nine-day Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. Connecticut's longest-running film festival holds a special place in our state's cultural landscape, bringing the community together to introduce, celebrate and rediscover the ideas and values that make the LGBT community unique. Out Film CT also presents the EROS Film Festival each fall, and in 2013 it launched the First Thursdays Cinema series, with screenings at Cinestudio on the first Thursday of each month. www.outfilmct.org

Here's the lineup of feature films and documentaries for the 26th Connecticut Gay & Lesbian Film Festival:

Friday, May 31, 7:30 p.m., Cinestudio
Opening night party on the Trinity College campus follows the feature presentation

G.B.F.

Dir. Darren Stein, 2013, USA, 94 min

The fight for supremacy between a high school's most popular girls takes an unexpected turn when cute boy Tanner is outed as the school's first openly gay student. The one-liners and comic situations fly as the girls race to bag the newest big trend in fashion accessories: the "Gay Best Friend" (G.B.F.). While all the girls compete for Tanner's attention, he must choose between his skyrocketing popularity and the friends he is leaving behind. Don't miss the memorable and very funny cameos by Megan Mullally (*Will & Grace*) and Natasha Lyonne (*But I'm a Cheerleader*).

Website: www.facebook.com/GBFmovie Trailer: <http://youtu.be/iwavnhCaTpQ>

Saturday, June 1, 3 p.m., Cinestudio
Double Feature Documentary Program

I Am Gay and Muslim

Dir. Chris Belloni, 2012, Netherlands/Morocco, 59 min

This intimate documentary follows a number of young Moroccan gay men in their exploration of their religious and sexual identity. Triggered by the current political situation in which homosexuality and Islam seem irreconcilable, director Chris Belloni spent the major part of 2011 traveling in Morocco to interview gay Muslims. The men portrayed in the film openly share their personal experiences and talk about the ambiguity and secretiveness of the life they feel condemned to live, although some have openly acknowledged their sexual orientation.

Website: <http://iamgayandmuslim.com> Trailer: <http://youtu.be/4iAGd0jJ0do>

Followed by:

Taking a Chance on God

Dir. Brendan Fay, 2011, USA, 54 min

This documentary chronicles the extraordinary life and legacy of 85-year-old John McNeill, gay Catholic priest, founder of the LGBT spiritual movement, and pioneering voice of gay liberation. Refusing to betray his own conscience, McNeill stood up to the man who became Pope Benedict XVI and would not be silenced. The film depicts McNeill's remarkable journey: growing up in Buffalo, escaping death as a prisoner-of-war in Nazi Germany, falling in love with his husband, writing groundbreaking books, coming out on national television, calling for compassion and justice during the AIDS crisis, and celebrating the unique spiritual gifts of LGBT people. Theologians, journalists, activists, and LGBT religious figures, including openly gay Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson, movingly testify to McNeill's influence and importance.

Website: www.takingachanceongod.com Trailer: <http://youtu.be/aeA7iZzk3aM>

Saturday, June 1, 7:30 p.m. - Two programs running simultaneously

Program 1 at Cinestudio

Out In the Dark

Dir. Michael Mayer, 2012, Israel, 96 min, in Hebrew and Arabic with English subtitles

Nimer, a Palestinian college student, dreams of a better life abroad. One fateful night he meets Roy, an Israeli lawyer, at a Tel Aviv gay bar. As their relationship deepens into love, Nimer is confronted with the harsh realities of a Palestinian society that refuses to accept his sexual identity, and an Israeli society that rejects him for his nationality. When Nimer's conservative brother turns to gun smuggling and the Israel authorities try to blackmail him, he must choose between love and the life he thought he wanted. The film portrays a timely and intense drama that builds to a heart-stopping climax.

Website: www.outinthedark.com Trailer: <http://youtu.be/A0p-Jj7Dic0>

Program 2 at Real Art Ways

Bye Bye Blondie

Followed by a Sweet Reception

Dir. Virginie Despentes, 2011, France, 87 min, in French with English subtitles

Gloria and Frances shared an intense, sexual and emotional relationship, which began in a psychiatric hospital, from which they ultimately ran away to experience all the sex, drugs and rock-n-roll offered during the punk rock years. Then life pushed them apart. Fast forward 25 years: Gloria is an erratic recovering alcoholic, alone, homeless and jobless. Frances is a successful and respected TV host, with a gay husband who married her to keep up appearances. What will happen when the two women meet up again by chance after so many years? Will the fire between them reignite or burn them down? This is a film for anybody who has ever wondered about the possibility, or wisdom, of trying to recapture their first love.

Website: www.wildbunch.biz/films/bye_bye_blondie Trailer: <http://youtu.be/xOAbYMG10xM>

Sunday, June 2, 3 p.m., Cinestudio

Raid of the Rainbow Lounge

Dir. Robert Camina, 2012, USA, 103 min

Narrated by television icon and Emmy-nominated actress Meredith Baxter, this documentary film recounts the events surrounding the widely publicized and controversial raid of a Fort Worth, Texas, gay bar in 2009 that ultimately resulted in Fort Worth becoming a leader in LGBT equality. However, that journey to LGBT rights was neither smooth nor without controversies. Witness history unfold as the film documents that journey from the perspective of eyewitnesses, activists and the politicians who helped change the city.

Website: http://caminaentertainment.com/Site/Raid_of_the_Rainbow_Lounge.html

Trailer: <http://youtu.be/cKPVCbe-Z7Q>

Sunday, June 2, 7:30 p.m., Cinestudio

Margarita

Dirs. Dominique Cardona & Laurie Colbert, 2012, Canada, 90 min

This little gem of a film from Canada features a stunning cast, including Nicola Correia Damude (*Degrassi: The Next Generation*) as the title character. When Margarita, an illegal Mexican nanny living in the states, is fired by her uptight employers, she must choose between staying with her commitment-phobic girlfriend whom she adores, and going home to Mexico.

Website: www.margaritathefilm.com

Monday, June 3, 7:30 p.m., Cinestudio

New, shorter Monday evening program!

Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?

Dir. Arvin Chen, 2013, Taiwan, 104 min, in Mandarin with English subtitles

In this madcap and light-hearted comedic romp, introverted optometrist Weichung begins to question his marriage to his wife Feng, when he learns of her desire to have another baby. At his sister's engagement party, Weichung bumps into an old friend, Stephen, a wedding photographer who is also married but is living the high life of a younger, single gay man. When Stephen teases Weichung about his straight-laced lifestyle, it awakens dormant emotions in Weichung, setting him off on a quest for true romance and desire.

Website: www.1production.com.tw/luvmetmr/en Trailer: http://youtu.be/V_FT65tWcHU

Tuesday, June 4, 7:30 p.m., Cinestudio

New, shorter Tuesday evening program!

Women Take Charge (Women's Shorts Program)

For the first time in the Film Festival's history, we bring you a full evening of women's short films from the U.S. and around the world. From the awkward excitement of a first date to the turmoil of a messy breakup, the women's shorts program tells the beautiful, intricate, and even hilarious stories of women as they embark into the world of love, loss, and everything in between.

Wednesday, June 5, 7:30 p.m. – Centerpiece Film, Cinestudio

Centerpiece Reception at 6 p.m. before the film program, sponsored by Pratt & Whitney

I Am Divine

Dir. Jeffrey Schwarz, 2013, USA, 85 min

This riveting and entertaining documentary tells the story of Divine, aka Harris Glenn Milstead, from his humble beginnings as an overweight, teased Baltimore youth to internationally recognized drag superstar through his collaboration with filmmaker John Waters. Spitting in the face of the status quos of body image, gender identity, sexuality, and preconceived notions of beauty, Divine was the ultimate outsider turned underground royalty. With a completely committed in-your-face style, he blurred the line between performer and personality, and revolutionized pop culture.

Website: www.divinemovie.com Trailer: <http://vimeo.com/58273705#>

Thursday, June 6, 7:30 p.m., Cinestudio

Laurence Anyways

Sneak Peek, presented in partnership with the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. Look for additional screenings at the museum, Aug. 8 – 11.

Dir. Xavier Dolan, 2012, Canada, 168 min, in French with English subtitles

Set in 1990s Montreal, this is the story of Laurence, a handsome high school teacher and writer who is madly in love with his girlfriend, Fred, a film producer. Their joyful life is turned upside down when Laurence announces that he is transgender and needs to live life as a woman. Fred vows to support Laurence during her transition, but the couple's new lifestyle clashes with friends, family, and society in general. Told with a visual flair and signature style that bespeaks 23-year-old Dolan's astonishing talent, Laurence is, above all, an epic, 10-year love story that examines a couple's inability to exist without each other. *Winner of the Cannes Film Festival Queer Palm Award and the Best Canadian Feature Film at the Toronto International Film Festival.*

Website: www.laurenceanyways.ca Trailer: <http://youtu.be/1YjIWEky81M>

Friday, June 7 - Two programs

Program 1 - 7:30 p.m., Cinestudio

Soongava: Dance of the Orchids

Dir. Subarna Thapa, 2012, France/Nepal, 85 min, in Nepali and English with English subtitles

Diya hopes to become a professional dancer, encouraged by her best friend Kiran. Although her parents have promised her hand to a stranger, her friendship with Kiran develops into a love affair. Transgressing local morals and tradition, Diya breaks off with her fiancé to live with her girlfriend. But by living openly as lesbians in modern day Kathmandu, the young women expose themselves to real danger.

Website: www.facebook.com/soongava Trailer: http://youtu.be/C5_Ba89H4M

Program 2 - 9 p.m., Real Art Ways

Preceded by GAZE happy hour at 6 p.m.

In The Name Of (W imie...)

Dir. Malgorzata Szumowska, 2012, Poland, 102 min, in Polish with English subtitles

Adam is a Catholic priest who discovered his calling as a servant of God at the relatively late age of 21. He now lives in a village in rural Poland where he works with teenagers with behavioral problems who fight and yell abuse. He declines the advances of a young blonde named Ewa, saying he is already spoken for. However, celibacy is not the only reason for his rejection. Adam knows that he desires men and that his embrace of the priesthood has been a flight from his own sexuality. When he meets Lukasz, the strange and taciturn son of a simple rural family, Adam's self-imposed abstinence becomes a heavy burden. *Winner, 2013 Best Feature Film Teddy Award*

Website: www.filmmovement.com/filmcatalog/index.asp?MerchandiseID=331

Trailer: <http://youtu.be/8w2etMXN61s>

Saturday, June 8, 3 p.m. - Cinestudio

The Rugby Player

Dir. Scott Gracheff, 2013, USA, 90 min

The Rugby Player is a feature-length documentary focusing on the unique bond between a mother and son and how it was ultimately strengthened by tragedy. The film explores the lives of Mark Bingham, one of the passengers on United Flight 93 on 9/11, and his mother, Alice Hoagland, a former United Airlines flight attendant. This film illuminates a personal story of love, loss and what it means to be a hero. Website: www.therugbyplayerfilm.com

Saturday, June 8, 7:30 p.m. – Two programs running simultaneously

Closing Night party follows at the Connecticut Science Center

Program 1: Spotlight Theatres, Front Street

The Go Doc Project

Dir. Cory James Krueckeberg, 2013, USA, 91 min

“Doc,” a recent college grad, has fallen for a Go-Go dancer in New York City and devises a plan to meet the object of his desire by promising to make “Go” the star subject of his fictitious documentary. Exploring the hazy differences between love and lust, the film is a visual treat for the romantic (and voyeur) in each of us.

Website: www.facebook.com/TheGoDocProject

Trailer: www.youtube.com/watch?v=hs6bwT57uVc

Program 2: Connecticut Science Center

Route of Acceptance

Dir. Heather Tobin, 2012, Canada, 114 min

An aspiring writer on the brink of heading off to college, Ryan longs to escape her small-town existence. She begins to imagine where each path might take her, and which woman she will meet on each of her imagined journeys. Director Heather Tobin imagines three very different life-changing scenarios for Ryan that include elements of the classic thriller mixed with romantic comedy.

Website: www.facebook.com/routeofacceptance

Trailer: <http://youtu.be/RCA-sGmotm0>