

WELCOME

2024 Melbourne Queer Film Festival

Melbourne Queer Film Festival acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands upon which we live, work and learn, and pays respect to elders past and present. We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' spirit, imagination and rich history of storytelling that is an inspiration to all Australians.

DAVID MARTIN HARRIS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Queers of Australia, if there was ever a year to leap with joyous abandon into the magical waters of the Melbourne Queer Film Festival — to bask in the symphonic, kaleidoscopic splendour of the LGBTQIA+ experience — it is surely this fabulous, fantastical season of 2024. A cornucopia of cinematic and musical delights awaits you, curated with an artistry that both sings to the soul and tickles the intellect. This grand fête is the product of countless brilliant minds and hands, working in perfect concert, like some marvellous rainbow orchestra or, perhaps more accurately, a well-oversized punk band.

Every year, I am struck anew by a truth that remains as steadfast as it is heartwarming: it takes a community to get the glorious monolith that is MQFF off the ground. To our delightful, dedicated staff — Cerise Howard, Bree Davis, Nathan Boadle, Steven Trosti, and Alice Fairweather — I offer boundless thanks for their passion, their energy, and their dazzling intelligence in shaping this year's festival. A special tip of the hat to our esteemed Board of Directors, captained with grace by Co-Presidents Gail Veal and David Micallef, whose guidance and wisdom steer this queer cinematic ship so splendidly. And how could we forget the legions of volunteers, the program panellists, the behind-the-scenes wizards — you are the true heartbeat of MQFF, the soul that keeps the magic alive.

Our mission, as ever, is to change lives through the experience of shared stories — to bring the best of world queer culture to Victoria while nurturing the rise of new Australian voices. This festival serves as both a beacon for international queer cinema and an incubator for homegrown talent, a celebration of our diversity and a catalyst for fresh, vibrant expression.

Of course, this magnificent spectacle would not be possible without the unwavering support of our cherished partners — the City of Melbourne, the Victorian Government, and the City of Stonnington — all of whom champion the very essence of what this festival stands for. To our sponsors, who believe fervently in the power of queer stories and the life-affirming joy they bring, and to our Sweetheart Donors, whose generosity ensures the doors of MQFF remain open to all — you have our deepest gratitude.

This festival is the glorious culmination of the work of thousands of filmmakers and artists, both local and international, carefully crafted to offer the LGBTQIA+ community spaces of joy, connection, and contemplation. These are spaces that are as essential as they are deserved, where we can reflect, celebrate, and be moved.

So, my dear friends, grab your popcorn, settle into your seats, and prepare to be dazzled. I'll see you at the cinema!

CERISE HOWARD
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Hello, Melbourne! I'm feelin' mighty real – how 'bout you?

Inspired by prolific author (and festival guest!) Darryl W. Bullock's book *David Bowie Made Me Gay: 100 Years of LGBT Music*, the theme for the 2024 MQFF is "Formative Sound and Vision".

Yes, we queers have long been hooked to the silver screen, coveting representations and reflections of ourselves, sometimes even only coming out through frisson-filled encounters with kindred spirits on screens big and small.

How apt, this theme, here in Melbourne – after all, the very first music video aired by MTV, The Buggles' "Video Killed the Radio Star", was directed by a gay Melburnian, Russell Mulcahy!

Rock 'n' roll was a revolution initiated by queer folk – notably, by queer people of colour. Everybody now, sing it loud 'n' proud: "Tutti frutti, good booty..." And how better to speak – nay, sing – to that truth than by opening with *Any Other Way: The Jackie Shane Story* – a gorgeous celebration of one of the greatest soul music artistes of the 20th century – never mind that you may never have seen or heard of her before now!

And that's just the opening act of this year's bumper festival, full-to-brimming with films right-on-theme (brand spankin' and classic queer musicals! Music docos! Docos that are also musicals! And an unutterably charming, dialogue-free Centrepiece selection, *Gondola*, which is as ingenious a conjunction of sound with vision as you could conjure up) – all served with the smorgasbord that we're famous for: a world-class spread of the greatest new queer cinema from every which where.

Outside of our cinemas, relish a fierce selection of queer bangers and legendary clips on a video jukebox in the Festival Lounge – and be sure to get on the mic yourselves for karaoke! This year there's also an expanded Industry Day offering to filmmaking up-and-comers and, in an MQFF first: a symposium, "My Formative Queers".

Atop my gratitude to my tireless MQFF colleagues and selection panellists supreme, shout-outs are warranted for these fine folk for getting in cahoots with us this year: The Melbourne Cinémathèque; RMIT academics Patrick Kelly and Stayci Taylor; Industry Day impresari Timothy Despina Marshall, Steph Parsons and Vee Shi; the MQFF house band (Sarah Ward, Bec Matthews, Sofia Chapman, Juvi and... *just who was that on bass?*) for BRINGING IT at the Program Launch, and to the Cinemaniacs Film Collective, with whom we're staging a tribute to their late, great spearhead, Lee Gambin, with a screening of *Can't Stop the Music*.

Alright – it's time we rock 'n' rolled. See you at the festival!

KEYSTONE EVENTS

OPENING NIGHT | MELBOURNE PREMIERE

Any Other Way: The Jackie Shane Story

(2024)

DIR. MICHAEL MABBOTT, LUCAS ROSENBERG-LEE

99 MIN | CAN | U15+

Chances are you've never heard of singer Jackie Shane, a rising star in 1950s Nashville who became a sensation in '60s Toronto, with a huge hit single in *Any Other Way* ("Tell her that I'm happy / Tell her that I'm gay / Tell her I wouldn't have it / Any other way"). However, Shane was to disappear mysteriously from public view for nigh-on 40 years. From the producers of the Emmy Award-winning *Hip-Hop Evolution* (2016) and Executive Producer Elliot Page comes this stirring, Frameline "Out in the Silence Award"-winning documentary which shares the extraordinary story of a pioneering Black trans performer of exceptional talent and stage presence, who in no way hid her queerness and refused to be anyone but her authentic self.

Sandra Caldwell – who recently shared her own remarkable, previously invisible trans herstory in *Disclosure* (2020) — and Makayla Couture give testimony to Shane's inspirational significance and, beneath beautiful, painterly rotoscoping, embody her too, as we hear from Shane herself in never-before-heard phone conversations. We're also treated to live recordings which leave no doubt that Jackie Shane was one of the greatest soul performers of the 20th century — *period*.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI THUR 14 NOV, 6.30pm

ACMI THUR 14 NOV, 9.15pm

CENTREPIECE PRESENTATION | MELBOURNE PREMIERE

Gondola

(2023)

DIR. VEIT HELMER

82 MIN | GER, GEO | U15+

Chances are you've never heard of singer Jackie Shane, a rising star in 1950s Nashville who became a sensation in '60s Toronto, with a huge hit single in *Any Other Way* ("Tell her that I'm happy / Tell her that I'm gay / Tell her I wouldn't have it / Any other way"). However, Shane was to disappear mysteriously from public view for nigh-on 40 years. From the producers of the Emmy Award-winning *Hip-Hop Evolution* (2016) and Executive Producer Elliot Page comes this stirring, Frameline "Out in the Silence Award"-winning documentary which shares the extraordinary story of a pioneering

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SESSION TIMES

ACMI THUR 14 NOV, 6.30PM

ACMI THUR 14 NOV, 9.15PM

CLOSING NIGHT | AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

Duino

(2024)

DIR. JUAN PABLO DI PACE, ANDRÉS P. ESTRADA

108 MIN | USA, ARG, ITA | U18+

Hunky Argentinian actor Juan Pablo Di Pace (MQFF 2023 highlight *The Mattachine Family* plus the so-camp-it’s-practically-gay movie musical *Mamma Mia!*) stars in this deeply affecting, semi-autobiographical film that also marks his directorial feature debut, alongside co-writer/director Andrés Pepe Estrada.

Di Pace plays Matías, a filmmaker yearning for the unrequited love of Alexander (Oscar Morgan), the blazingly beautiful teen he fell head over heels for many years ago while studying at an international school on Italy’s luscious Adriatic Coast. Hoping to recapture Alexander’s spirit in his movies, Matías’ sunlit memories take us back to the past, with remarkable newcomer Santiago Madrussan memorably depicting him as a younger man.

Can the secrets of the past unlock love in this dreamy dalliance that won a bunch of awards at Turin’s queer-focused Lovers Film Festival?

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SUN 24 NOV, 6.30PM

AUSTRALIAN SHORTS & AWARDS

VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITES BY RATING

FILMS ONLINE AT MQFF.COM.AU OR ON THE APP.

97 MIN | U18+

Join us to celebrate the brightest and best Australian queer filmmakers. MQFF's Australian Shorts & Awards highlight the richness of storytelling and the breadth of original talent working in Australia today.

MQFF are proud to present this selection of short films. Following the screening, we will announce the winners of our jury awards.

The winner of the City of Melbourne Award for Best Australian Short will also qualify as MQFF's official selection for the Iris Prize — the largest prize for queer short films worldwide.

featuring

Ballad (DIR: Roe Bonnici)

Bi Bi Baby (DIR: Betheny A'Vard)

Bulldog (DIR: Tom Lawrence-Doyle)

Dames & Sea Smoke (DIR: Aditya Karatagi)

Die Bully Die (DIR: Nathan Lacey & Nick Lacey)

Ghosted (DIR: Danni Fenech)

Hold Still (DIR: Emily Dynes)

Outpicker (DIR: Le Luo)

Pleasure (DIR: Jasper Caverly)

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SAT 23 NOV, 6.00PM

FEATURE FILMS

A HOUSE IS NOT A DISCO

(2024)

DIR. BRIAN J. SMITH

90 MIN | USA | U15+

Sense8 actor Brian J. Smith's documentary is a celebration of the Fire Island Pines community. Set within the iconic queer beach town 50 miles from NYC, *A House Is Not a Disco* presents a kaleidoscope of intimate stories shared by locals and newcomers who reflect on the island's rich history and its role as a "homo-normative" haven for self-expression and liberation. From epic party highs through to the height of the AIDS crisis, Fire Island is a community bonded by joy, sadness, freedom, experience and connection.

session times

THE CAPITOL SAT 16 NOV, 6.15PM

PALACE CINEMA COMO FRI 22 NOV, 6.30PM

A PORTRAIT OF LOVE

(2024)

DIR. MOLLY REYNOLDS

90 MIN | AUS | M

When Archibald Prize-winning artist Craig Ruddy was cruelly taken too soon due to complications from COVID-19, his long-term partner, actor Roberto Meza Mont (*Candy*), was devastated. Surrounded by Ruddy's viscerally tactile portraits — including Cathy Freeman, Warwick Thornton, Bruce Pascoe and David Gulpilil — in their Byron Bay hinterlands home, he was a lost soul looking for some way to commemorate their love. Filmmaker friend Molly Reynolds (*My Name is Gulpilil*) hit upon crafting this moving tribute using only Mont's smartphone footage and his poetic elegy as narratorial connective tissue.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SUN 17 NOV, 6.15PM

ALL SHALL BE WELL

(2024)

DIR. RAY YEUNG

95 MIN | HK, CHN | U15+

All too often, goodwill evaporates when someone dies without leaving clear instructions for their last wishes. For queer couples who choose not to marry, or are forbidden to do so, the risk of relatives swooping in and brushing them aside is even greater. So it is in *Suk Suk* director

Ray Yeung's latest emotional rollercoaster. Once again working with Hong Kong actress Patra Au Ga-man, alongside Maggie Li Lin-lin, they depict sixty-something couple Angie and Pat. But when tragedy strikes quietly, family drama erupts over the prime real estate home they share. Drawing on all-too-familiar truths, this beautifully judged portrait of resilience and resistance is both feminist, reminiscent of *A Fantastic Woman's* mission, and proudly anti-ageist too. Picking up the Teddy Award for Best Feature Film at the Berlinale (with Program Director Cerise Howard on the jury) and the Audience Award at Frameline, it's a winner.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SAT 16 NOV, 9.00PM

ACMI MON 18 NOV, 8.30PM

BABY

(2024)

DIR. MARCELO CAETANO

106 MIN | BRA, FRA, NLD | R18+

When Wellington (João Pedro Mariano) gets out of two years' juvenile detention to discover his no-good parents have skipped town, the São Paulo teenager refuses to collapse. Falling in with old mates, a chance encounter with forty-something Ronaldo (Ricardo Teodoro) outside a porn cinema leads to a surreal relationship somewhere between lover, father and sex work business partner. Reborn as Baby, a reclaimed insult, he soon thrives in the role in this deeply humanistic new movie from *Body Electric* director Marcelo Caetano in which a found family, including Ronaldo's ex Priscilla (Ana Flavia Cavalcanti) and her girlfriend (Bruna Linzmeyer), recalibrates what it means to belong. Nominated for the Queer Palm at the Cannes Film Festival, far from Ken Loach-like miserabilism, it radiates optimism set to a sparkling pop score.

content advice:

Please see the accessibility page on the MQFF website.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SUN 17 NOV, 6.15PM

THE CAPITOL WED 20 NOV, 8.45PM

BACKSPOT

(2023)

DIR. D. W. WATERSON

93 MIN | CAN | U15+

After hearing that esteemed high school cheer squad Thunder Hawks have spots opening, mid-level ranked Riley (Devery Jacobs) and her girlfriend Amanda (Kudakwashe Rutendo) apply, making the elite team. The perfectionism dictated by coach Eileen (Evan Rachel Wood) impact the newcomers and Riley's interior world begins to crumble like a cheer squad pyramid gone wrong. The days of blanket forts and queer bliss for Riley and Amanda are tested by the rigours of gruelling practice and dopamine highs. With a high energy soundtrack by Casey MQ along with amusing singalongs from *Legally Blonde: The Musical*, *Backspot* backflips the formulaic cheerful cheerleader tropes of *Bring It On*, landing a blistering, compulsive narrative by non-binary, first time feature helmer and electronic music producer, D. W. Waterson. Jacobs (Waterson's partner in life) also acts as one of the producers, alongside Elliot Page. Anchored, literally, by Jacobs' driven performance as the squad's titular character, *Backspot* will cartwheel into your heart with a physicality and rawness rare in queer sport cinema.

session times

ACMI TUE 19 NOV, 6.15PM

CINEMA NOVA SUN 24 NOV, 1.15PM

BALDIGA – UNLOCKED HEART

(2024)

DIR. MARKUS STEIN

92 MIN | GER | U18+

Coming to West Berlin in 1979, Jürgen Baldiga (1959 — 1993) eked out a living as a cook and rent boy while cultivating an arts practice that, come an HIV-positive diagnosis in 1984, exploded into a frenzied, Dionysian documentation of the Berlin(s) of the '80s and early '90s. In this scintillating documentary, diary readings are accompanied by interviews with friends and intimates, archival footage, re-enactments and hundreds of Baldiga's indelible photographs, making for a wholly transportive trip to the Berlins of yesteryear and a celebration of an abbreviated life lived with gusto.

content advice:

This film contains flashing images. See page 5 or the Accessibility page on the MQFF website.

SESSION TIMES

THE CAPITOL FRI 15 NOV, 6.15PM

BLUE

(1993)

DIR. DEREK JARMAN

79 MIN | UK, JPN | U15+

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MELBOURNE CINÉMATHÈQUE.

Dedicated to his partner Keith Collins "and all true lovers", Jarman's last feature is a singularly poetic and affecting account of living and dying with AIDS. Famously, in acknowledgment of, and in meditation upon, his failing eyesight, the image consists wholly, unflinchingly, of a hue as close to "International Klein Blue" as could be captured on film. John Quentin, Nigel Terry, Tilda Swinton and Jarman himself read excerpts from the director's hospital diaries and recite his poetry, atop an immersive soundscape created by Simon Fisher Turner, amongst others.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI WED 20 NOV, 9.15PM

CAN'T STOP THE MUSIC

(1980)

DIR. NANCY WALKER

124 MIN | USA | PG

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CINEMANIACS.

By the summer of 1979, there were loud proclamations that disco was dead, with thousands turning up to a Disco Demolition Night protest, burning vinyl and chanting “Disco Sucks”. The various kink-attired lads of the Village People did not get the memo, releasing their *Y.M.C.A.*—powered big screen adventure *Can’t Stop the Music* the very next year. We reckon they had the last laugh, with this denim hot pants and cropped T-shirt-sporting ripple-of-muscular-male-bodies musical — directed by *Girl Crazy* star Nancy Walker — the gloriously bonkers result.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI TUE 19 NOV, 8.45PM

CARNAGE FOR CHRISTMAS

(2024)

DIR. ALICE MAIO MACKAY

70 MIN | AUS | U15+

Australian filmmaker and extraordinary trans woman Alice Maio Mackay is an unstopably anarchic punk powerhouse, pumping fiercely queer horror movies out at a rate that would make even the late, great Rainer Werner Fassbinder look a little lazy tbh. She had a double bill in last year’s MQFF program – *Satranic Panic* and *T-Blockers* – and has another wild ride ready for us in *Carnage for Christmas*, edited by none other than Vera Drew (*The People’s Joker*). Hallmark could never, as true-crime podcaster Lola (Jeremy Moineau) returns to her country town for the first time since transitioning only to Miss Marple that shit when a sick Santa-costumed serial killer lets loose on the local LGBTQIA+ community. Only the murderer picked the wrong folks to mess with, in a sass-packed slasher where the final girl and her gang fight back like it’s brat summer.

CONTENT ADVICE:

This film contains flashing images.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI WED 20 NOV, 6.15PM

CINEMA NOVA SUN 24 NOV, 3.15PM

CITY OF LOST SOULS

(1983)

DIR. ROSA VON PRAUNHEIM

94 MIN | FRG | U15+

This riotous, intersectional queer New Wave musical is centred around a squalid Berlin burger joint and the ragtag group of multiracial Americans, of a range of gender identities and sexual persuasions, who work there. Rosa von Praunheim's underground classic is equal parts Paul Morrissey-Andy Warhol, John Waters and *Rocky Horror*, with lashings of satirical Cold War intrigue, searing political commentary and regular demolitions of the fourth wall. Punk rock icon Jayne County (also to be seen and heard in *Jubilee*) and legendary drag performer Angie Stardust lead the cast.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI FRI 15 NOV, 9.00PM

CLOSE TO YOU

(2023)

DIR. DOMINIC SAVAGE

100 MIN | CAN | U15+

Close to You is a heartfelt exploration of identity and belonging, following Sam, a trans man who returns to his hometown for his father's birthday after years of distance. Confronting family dynamics, lost love and the emotional impact of his transition, the film goes beyond personal transformation, redefining the meaning of love and acceptance. Written and directed by Dominic Savage and starring Elliot Page in his first leading role as a trans man, *Close to You* draws from Page's lived experience. As Sam reconnects with his family and an old flame, the film tenderly examines the complexities of coming home and embracing one's true self. With themes of resilience, hope and understanding, *Close to You* courageously captures the unending journey of self-acceptance and love.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI (SENSORY—FRIENDLY SCREENING) SUN 17 NOV, 3.45PM

CINEMA NOVA THUR 21 NOV, 8.30PM

CROSSING

(2024)

DIR. LEVAN AKIN

105 MIN | SWE, DNK, TUR, FRA, GEO | U18+

Cat lovers, assemble! Our feline friends are delightfully distracting co-stars in this luminous Istanbul-set voyage of discovery from *And Then We Danced* director Levan Akin. Georgian stalwart Mzia Arabuli stars as Lia, a grieving older woman who sets off

for the continents-spanning city in the hopes of reuniting with her estranged trans niece, with barely any leads. Grudgingly accepting the support of goofy younger lad Achi (newcomer Lucas Kankava), they eventually team up with staunch trans woman and community lawyer Evrim (Deniz Dumanli), in a mesmerising Teddy Jury Award-winning adventure.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SAT 16 NOV, 8.45PM

CINEMA NOVA THUR 21 NOV, 6.15PM

DALTON'S DREAM

(2023)

DIR. KIM LONGINOTTO, FRANKY MURRAY BROWN

91 MIN | UK | U18+

“Fame puts you there where things are hollow ... it’s just the flame that burns your change to keep you insane”, Bowie sang on *Young Americans*’ second single. Countless stars have relayed their love/hate relationship with the music industry and celebrity game. Pansexual Jamaican-born Dalton Harris had a front-row seat, winning the UK *X Factor* in 2018, and struggling to come to terms with childhood abuse and the homophobic pushback his triumph unleashed. Remaining hopeful despite his trials, *Dalton’s Dream* is the gift of a passionate, tenacious young man.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SAT 16 NOV, 6.30PM

DEMONS AT DAWN

(2024)

DIR. JULIÁN HERNÁNDEZ

136 MIN | MEX | U18+

It’s almost 20 years since Julián Hernández threw open the doors of queer Mexican cinema with *Broken Sky* (2006), and he delivers flawless and fluid bodies, oozing with sexiness once again with *Demons at Dawn*. Dance student Orlando doesn’t want for admirers and sexual conquests, so the realisation that he’s falling for straight-ish nursing student Marco sparks a growing fear of love itself. With the eye of regular DoP Alejandro Cantú, their romance is exquisitely visually constructed, elevating the clichés of gay love to a swirling, obsessive, passionate dance.

SESSION TIMES

THE CAPITOL SUN 24 NOV, 1.15PM

DESIRE LINES

(2024)

DIR. JULES ROSSKAM

81 MIN | USA | U18+

The cinematic form is no more bound by a binary than gender, as autoethnographic artist, academic and filmmaker Jules Roskam (*Transparent*) adeptly underlines with his exhilaratingly sexy and smart hybrid docufiction film *Desire Lines*. The fictional component centres on Iranian-American transman Ahmad (Aden Hakimi) and follows his tentative exploration of transmasculine history via a meet-cute with younger transman Kieran (Theo Germaine) in Chicago's LGBTQI+ archive. But when the pandemic crashes the party, closing the city's bathhouses with echoes of the HIV/AIDS crisis, a time slip of sorts opens a documentary door to real-life heroes, in new interviews and archival footage including author and activist Lou Sullivan, the pioneering transmasculine hero.

SESSION TIMES

CINEMA NOVA SAT 16 NOV, 1.15PM (OC)

DOPPELGÄNGERS³

(2024)

DIR. NELLY BEN HAYOUN-STÉPANIAN

73 MIN | USA, UK | U15+

Powerhouse polymath Dr Nelly Ben Hayoun-Stépanian is the SETI Institute's Designer of Experiences. In her latest film, her goal is to "imagine diasporic and queer ecofeminist futures"... in space! She embarks with two lookalikes, representing divergent aspects of her heritage, upon an expedition to the Astroland Interplanetary Agency's Mars simulation in Spain, to explore whether the colonisation of space can be... decolonised, while a dizzying array of experts help us imagine an outer space future free from traumas encountered on Earth. With music from Pussy Riot and Colin Self!

content advice: This film contains flashing images.

SESSION TIMES

THE CAPITOL SUN 24 NOV, 4.00PM

EAT THE NIGHT

(2024)

DIR. CAROLINE POGGI, JONATHAN VINEL

106 MIN | FRA | U18+

Dynamic French duo Caroline Poggi and Jonathan Vinel return to the dystopian themes of 2018's *Jessica Forever* as drug dealer Pablo (Théo Cholbi) and his younger sister Apolline (Lila Gueneau) throw themselves into a fantastical online game, "Darknoon". Thrown back into the real, Pablo's saved from a scary situation by the handsome Night (Erwan Kepoa Falé). Igniting incendiary passions, the lads can't keep their hands off one another, while Apolline's left alone in the game. All awhile, war rumbles with rival dealers, in this blistering Cannes Queer Palm nominated thriller.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SUN 17 NOV, 8.45PM

THE CAPITOL THUR 21 NOV, 6.00PM

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

(2024)

DIR. CLAIRE BURGER

105 MIN | FRA, GER, BEL | U15+

Set in those heady teenage days when our collective hearts are a mess of brave and bewildering new ideas and the overwhelming thrum of emerging sexuality, 17-year-old Fanny (on-the-up French actor Lilith Grasmug) is lost at sea. Or, more specifically, on an ad hoc foreign exchange with the family of her German pen-friend Lena (Josefa Heinsius). Only the welcome isn't exactly friendly, at first, for a young woman who's already feeling isolated thanks to relentless bullying at school. But things get complicated quickly when nascent longings emerge between the pair, who also throw themselves into activist awakenings. All the while, Lena's on-the-edge divorcée mum (*Tár* star Nina Hoss) bristles as she opens another bottle in a host family that's kind of all over the place. Claire Burger's profoundly generous third feature was nominated for both the Golden Bear and the Teddy Best Feature Award at the Berlinale. With Chiara Mastroianni.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SUN 24 NOV, 4.00PM

FRAGMENTS OF A LIFE LOVED

(2023)

DIR. CHLOÉ BARREAU

95 MIN | ITA | U15+

Three decades of videos, photographs and letters are patchworked to piece together French filmmaker Chloé Barreau's love life in one of the most achingly honest of 'tell-alls' imaginable. Her ex-lovers — and there are many — speak openly on camera about their falling for, being in love and falling out of love with Barreau. As one old flame says, "It's like landing in a new country and saying, 'Wow, it's beautiful. Has this been here all the time?'" Love her or not, Barreau's story will reel you in hook, line and sinker.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI MON 18 NOV, 6.00PM

PALACE CINEMA COMO FRI 22 NOV, 9.00PM

GAY CHORUS DEEP SOUTH

(2019)

DIR. DAVID CHARLES RODRIGUES

92 MIN | USA | U15+

In *S/He Is Still Her/E* director David Charles Rodrigues' gorgeous documentary, we follow the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus — many of whom banded together during the HIV/AIDS crisis — as they go on tour through the southern states least likely to support LGBTQIA+ rights. Tim Seelig, a former Texan who felt driven out of town by his sexuality, tenderly guides the group through rocky times in the aftermath of Trump's 2016 election win, revealing the film to be as much about journeys of personal healing as about changing hearts and minds.

SESSION TIMES

THE CAPITOL SAT 23 NOV, 3.45PM

HEART OF THE MAN

(2024)

DIR. David Cook

84 min | aus | m

SESSION PROUDLY SPONSORED BY PRIDE FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA.

Queer Australian First Nations filmmaking is rare, so this directorial debut, featuring a predominantly LGBTQIA+ and Aboriginal cast, is cause for celebration. Chris Wundurra (Parker Little) is pushed by his father, Sammy (writer-director David Cook), to train for the national boxing title he didn't himself attain, a failure connected to tragic events that robbed Chris of his mother and Sammy his wife. Sammy encounters resistance, however, when Chris starts to question his sexuality and finds himself more oriented towards treading the boards than boxing.

SESSION TIMES

PALACE CINEMA COMO FRI 15 NOV, 6.15PM

HIGH TIDE

(2024)

DIR. Marco Calvani

101 min | usa | u15+

Dashingly handsome and multi-talented Italian playwright, director and actor Marco Calvani casts his real-life lover, Brazilian star Marco Pigossi (*Gen V*), as the lead in his debut directorial feature. Lourenço is running out of time on his visa but doesn't want to go home, having fallen in love with the sea-spray-misted charms of Provincetown, the fishing enclave and artists' haven that has long harboured gay men seeking the quieter life. With his recent ex not returning his calls, he's a lost soul who finds solace in the melancholy poetry of Oswald de Andrade and begins to fall for visiting New Yorker Maurice (James Bland). Deep waters run through this luminous SXSW-debuting movie that also features Mya Taylor, the breakout star from Sean Baker's *Tangerine*, Todd Flaherty of *Chrissy Judy* fame and none other than *Love is Strange* and *Spider-Man* star Marisa Tomei.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SAT 16 NOV, 3.45PM

I AM WHAT I AM

(2022)

DIR. SHINYA TAMADA

104 MIN | JPN | U15+

In Shinya Tamada's quietly touching new feature, call-centre employee and former cellist Kasumi (Tôko Miura, star of Ryusuke Hamaguchi's *Drive My Car*) struggles to fit in with her peers and the norms of mainstream Japanese societal expectations as she grapples with her asexual identity. Her mother, concerned by Kasumi's lack of interest in marriage, takes her to a matchmaking service, which sets off a journey of self-actualisation. This gentle film deals not only with culturally specific issues of queer identity but is also universal in its themes of belonging and alienation.

SESSION TIMES

CINEMA NOVA SUN 17 NOV, 5.30PM

IN THE ROOM WHERE HE WAITS

(2024)

DIR. TIMOTHY DESPINA MARSHALL

84 MIN | AUS | MA15+

Star of stage and screen Daniel Monks (*Pulse*, MQFF 2017) embraced the horror genre with maniacal glee thanks to a memorably mean supporting role in queer Instagram-influenced slasher *Sissy*. But the spotlight's squarely on his towering talent in Timothy Despina Marshall's goosebump-inducingly spooky debut feature. Set during lockdowns, this psychological chiller casts Monks as Tobi, an Aussie actor cast in a US production of Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*. But when the death of his estranged father summons him home for the funeral, he's plagued by a disturbing presence while languishing in hotel quarantine.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI MON 18 NOV, 6.00PM

JUBILEE

(1978)

DIR. DEREK JARMAN

106 MIN | UK | M

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MELBOURNE CINÉMATHÈQUE.

In this film, satirically named for the 25th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, crime, revolution and disorder are cast against a stiflingly conservative nation. Derek Jarman's portrait of a crumbling monarchy includes vivid images of London's grand icons alongside rubble-strewn areas of the city, markers of the Blitz over three decades earlier. Influenced by the aesthetics and anti-establishment stance of punk, this messy, thrilling satire is the movement's perfect incarnation and includes appearances and music by Siouxsie and the Banshees, the Slits, Jayne County, Toyah Wilcox, Adam Ant and Brian Eno.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI WED 20 NOV, 7.00PM

KUCH SAPNEY APNE

(2024)

DIR. SRIDHAR RANGAYAN, SAAGAR GUPTA

120 min | ind | u15+

Co-writer/director duo Sridhar Rangayan and Saagar Gupta return for the follow up to their 2018 award-winning hit *Evening Shadows* with this big-hearted international melodrama showcasing contemporary Indian filmmaking. Kartik (Satvik Bhatia) and Aman (Arpit Chaudhary) are in a closeted relationship unbeknownst to their respective families. When Kartik moves overseas to study, he has a fling with an amorous local, Stefan (Theodor Wickenbergh), which sends shockwaves through their relationship. Tackling themes of love, family, bigotry and acceptance knows no borders — *Kuch Sapney Apne* is big on drama, big on songs and, most of all, big on heart.

SESSION TIMES

PALACE CINEMA COMO FRI 22 NOV, 6.15PM

LADY LIKE

(2024)

DIR. LUKE WILLIS

88 MIN | UK, USA | U15+

The many-headed behemoth that is *RuPaul's Drag Race* has launched a thousand careers (slight exaggeration) but thrown just as many folks overboard. British-born, US-based Lady Camden — AKA Rex Wheeler — a veteran of season 14, is one of the survivors. This intimate debut documentary by director Luke Willis follows his journey from the Royal Ballet in London to embracing drag, getting drafted, then dealing with the hullabaloo that followed his time on the show, and a profoundly personal tragedy. But above all it's a curtain-pull back on what it truly takes to become an indomitable performer.

content advice: This film contains flashing images.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SAT 17 NOV, 4.00PM

CINEMA NOVA SUN 24 NOV, 1.00PM

LESVIA

(2024)

DIR. TZELI HADJIDIMITRIOU

77 MIN | GRC | U15+

The Greek island of Lesbos gifted its name to the international term for women who love women, going all the way back to its famous daughter, Sappho, who penned countless poems to them. Flash forward a few thousand years, and it remains a cultural outpost for the free of spirit, as this beautifully drawn, lyrical documentary by local filmmaker and photographer Tzeli Hadjidimitriou outlines. Featuring a wealth of talking heads, it details how lesbians from every corner of the globe have flocked to Lesbos since the '70s, transforming it in their wake, even if some of the locals were less than impressed.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SAT 16 NOV, 6.15PM

CINEMA NOVA SAT 23 NOV, 1.00PM

LIFE IS NOT A COMPETITION, BUT I'M WINNING

(2023)

DIR. JULIA FUHR MANN

79 MIN | GER | U15+

Julia Fuhr Mann's experimental essay on the "marginalised bodies" of sport, in this case track, compels the viewer to pay attention to these bodies in motion and to look back with them on the fraught history of gender in athletics. As Mann's queer athletes move from stadiums like the 'original' at Athens to the controversial 1936 Berlin Olympic Stadium, the hidden histories of "divergent and ambiguous bodies" are revealed. The time travelling queer athletes are inserted into archival footage, reclaiming sporting heroes who'd as good as been erased — a timely message after the incidents of gender-diverse phobia at this year's Summer Olympics. Gender-positive and affirming, Mann's cinematic discourse looks to an inclusive future for competitive athletics.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SAT 23 NOV, 9.00PM

LINDA PERRY: LET IT DIE HERE

(2024)

DIR. DON HARDY

93 MIN | USA | U15+

Even had Linda Perry only given us *What's Up?* — the anthemic megahit she wrote and belted out when fronting one album-wonder 4 Non Blondes — her dykon status would still have been assured. But add to that her work as writer and producer of Pink's *Get the Party Started* and Christina Aguilera's *Beautiful*, and her work with Dolly Parton on the *Dumplin'* soundtrack, and... well, now *we're* only just getting started. Don Hardy's gripping documentary grants us unprecedentedly candid access to its perpetually frazzled subject during a particularly taxing time for her, illuminating the many

challenges she has faced in her life and career, notwithstanding all of the triumphs. Brandi Carlile joins Christina and Dolly, and Perry's ex-wife, actor Sara Gilbert (Darlene in *Roseanne and The Conners*) among the talking heads in this superb, animation-enhanced tribute to a legendary singer-songwriter-producer who keeps on producing hits for select others, the more she explores what she should be creating for herself.

SESSION TIMES

THE CAPITOL SUN 17 NOV, 6.15PM

LITTLE RICHARD: I AM EVERYTHING

(2023)

DIR. LISA CORTÉS

102 MIN | USA | M

From The Beatles to Bowie to Billy Porter, a grand cavalcade of stars credits the indelible starlight shimmer of Little Richard for helping pave the way for them to shine. A galaxy-brained talent with a startling voice and the smooth moves to match his pizzazz-filled piano playing, the musician born in Macon, Georgia, did not doubt his innate talents. "Y'all ain't never gave me no Grammy ... I am the architect of rock 'n' roll", he archly declared while presenting at the 1988 ceremony. Everyone from the Pope of Trash, John Waters, to Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger bows down in Lisa Cortés' illuminating, toe-tapping documentary. Acknowledging just how far ahead of his time the mercurial, often contradictory Richard Wayne Penniman was, it shows how he twinkled far too bright for a music industry unsure what to make of his magnificent queerness, in every sense of the word, though that too was in flux. This fabulous filmic tribute is long overdue.

SESSION TIMES

CINEMA NOVA SUN 17 NOV, 3.30PM

MARCELLO MIO

(2024)

DIR. CHRISTOPHE HONORÉ

121 MIN | FRA, ITA | U15+

Prepare to enter the multiverse of French and Italian cinema as some of these nations' brightest stars play alter-images in this metatextual musing from *Sorry Angel* director Christophe Honoré. Led by mother and daughter duo Chiara Mastroianni and the legendary Catherine Deneuve, the latter gives some dubious advice to the former on auditioning for actor-turned-director Nicole Garcia (*From the Land of the Moon*). When the try-out goes awry, Chiara's wiggled out by a note to play it more like her late, great

father, *La Dolce Vita* lead Marcello Mastroianni. Taking it to heart, Chiara borrows a suit from her ex-husband Benjamin Biolay, losing herself in the role of a lifetime. Uncannily adopting Marcello's mannerisms, an encounter with a soldier (*Fleabag*'s Hugh Skinner, one of the few performers not playing a version of themselves) goes to fascinating places in this genderqueer musing on what it takes to step out of the shadows of those who made us.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI TUE 19 NOV, 6.00PM

PALACE CINEMA COMO FRI 22 NOV, 9.00PM

MISERICORDIA

(2024)

DIR. ALAIN GUIRAUDIE

103 MIN | FRA | U18+

Misericordia sees *Stranger by the Lake* writer/director Alain Guiraudie return to form, casting Félix Kysyl as Jérémie who returns to the village of his youth to pay his respects to the baker who once employed him, and with whom he was perhaps in love. Sometime best friend Vincent (Jean-Baptiste Durand) isn't so pleased to see him, acting standoffish when Jérémie asks to stay with his grieving mother (the magnificent Catherine Frot) and shows no signs of leaving. All the while, the village's various men begin to jostle for the outsider's attention in an unnervingly erotic tale that leads to skullduggery.

SESSION TIMES

THE CAPITOL THUR 21 NOV, 8.30PM

ACMI SAT 23 NOV, 9.00PM

NANEKAWÂSIS

(2024)

DIR. CONOR MCNALLY

80 MIN | CAN | U15+

Enduring the Sixties Scoop and intergenerational trauma suffered by their mother from the residential school system, First Nations and Two-Spirit Canadian artist George Littlechild shares their story as a survivor. George's art is a way they "try to bring joy to the planet" despite the challenges and struggles of the Indigenous experience under colonial systems. Documenting through photograph and video archives of their experiences in a world that was often dismissive of Two-

Spirit identity, George perseveres for recognition that queers have always existed. This debut documentary is an insight into the artist's process, whose quiet defiance expresses the need for a queer Indigenous futurity.

SESSION TIMES

CINEMA NOVA SAT 16 NOV, 3.15PM

CINEMA NOVA SAT 23 NOV, 3.15PM

NATIONAL ANTHEM

(2023)

DIR. Luke Gilford

99 min | usa | u18+

SESSION PROUDLY SPONSORED BY UNITED AIRLINES.

Twenty-one year old Dylan (the excellent Charlie Plummer from *Lean on Pete*) lives an isolated life of routine in rural New Mexico, working odd construction jobs to help support his little brother and a somewhat absent mother. He accepts a gig working at House of Splendor, a queer ranch a little further out than normal. There he meets the luminous Sky (Eve Lindley) and a diverse group of queer folk who provide him with the space and freedom to explore parts of himself he hasn't yet found. Premiering at SXSW 2023, the gorgeous debut feature film from photographer Luke Gilford — think *Them's Love Lies Bleeding* photo series with Kristen Stewart and Katy O'Brian — expertly pairs himself with one-to-watch cinematographer Katelin Arizmendi to sprinkle no small amount of queer joy upon the rural Southwest, boosted by a swooning soundtrack featuring Perfume Genius and Devotchka's Nick Urata.

SESSION TIMES

THE CAPITOL SUN 17 NOV, 8.45PM

POWER ALLEY

(2023)

DIR. LILLAH HALLA

99 MIN | BRA, FRA, URY | U18+

Menarca filmmaker Lillah Halla returned to the Cannes Film Festival with this electro dance music-driven story about a promising young volleyball player facing down the patriarchy in São Paulo. Sofia (Ayomi Domenica Dias) is on the cusp of making it big, with the Youth Volleyball Contest on the horizon. Things are going well with girlfriend and fellow teammate Bel (Loro Bardot), too, when she discovers that she's pregnant in a conservative country where women do not have the choice of a legal abortion.

Everything spirals from there in this bracing drama that was nominated for Cannes' Queer Palm, and won the FIPRESCI Parallel Sections Award.

SESSION TIMES

PALACE CINEMA COMO WED 20 NOV, 9.00PM

ACMI SAT 23 NOV, 6.30PM

QUEENS OF DRAMA

(2024)

DIR. ALEXIS LANGLOIS

115 MIN | FRA, BEL | U15+

French music video director Alexis Langlois makes his feature film debut with *Queens of Drama*, a hyperkinetic musical comedy set during the timeless 2000s with a cutesy and camp pop star plot. Follow the hottest new fresh pop diva in the French music world, Mimi Madamour (Louiza Aura) as her reality TV rise to fame places strain upon her hectic and heated relationship with punk idol Billie Kolher (Gio Ventura). The music world may appear to be all glitz and glam, but for these two musicians (and one obsessive fan, played by singer and YouTuber Bilal Hassani), it's a rollercoaster ride, and frequently a full-blown psychodrama! With performances from *Drag Race Belgium* season 1's Drag Couenne, Thomas Poitevin, Alma Jodorowsky and Asia Argento, this Cannes Critics' Week selection is one you won't want to miss.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI FRI 15 NOV, 6.30PM

ACMI TUE 19 NOV, 3.00PM

QUEERAMA

(2017)

DIR. DAISY ASQUITH

70 MIN | UK | U15+

Created from a deep dive into the British Film Institute Archive, this engrossing, moving essay film charts a century of incredible change in British queer life. Film, TV, documentary and newsreel footage is mined to illuminate the relationships, desires, fears and activism of queer folk from 1919 onwards. *Queerama* features landmark moments from films such as *Victim*, *The Killing of Sister George*, *Caravaggio* and *Young Soul Rebels* (also screening this year), yoked to a dynamic soundtrack including Hercules & Love Affair, Goldfrapp and John Grant (with a Sinéad O'Connor cameo).

SESSION TIMES

CINEMA NOVA SUN 17 NOV, 1.15PM

REAS

(2024)

DIR. LOLA ARIAS

82 MIN | ARG, GER, CHE | U15+

One of the most magical movies to berth at this year's Berlinale — where it was nominated for the Teddy Documentary award — Lola Arias' form-fracturing marvel is magnificently queer in every way imaginable.

This shimmering chameleon of a multicoloured docu-musical features former prisoners depicting not only versions of themselves, but also their jailers. Skipping gaily between the real and imagined, it happily breaks the fourth wall and pulls back the curtain to cheekily include bloopers, script-in-hand. Set in an artfully crumbling, shuttered prison in

Buenos Aires that evokes their prolonged captivity in Caseros Prison, a remnant of the rolling military dictatorships of the '60s, it's a surreally neon-hued stage on which this delightfully diverse array of cis women and trans people come together in a fabulous fever dream set to a disco beat replete with smooth Ballroom moves. Emancipation has rarely felt this astoundingly empowering.

SESSION TIMES

PALACE CINEMA COMO WED 20 NOV, 6.15PM

THE CAPITOL SAT 23 NOV, 6.15PM

RIVIERE

(2023)

DIR. HUGUES HARICHE

105 MIN | CHE, FRA | U15+

Manon (Flavie Delangle), 17, has hitchhiked out of Switzerland to the French town of Belfort in search of her estranged dad. The hunt leads her to an ice rink and a chance encounter with a group of teens where she is admitted to play ice hockey, with the guys. Staying at her stepmother's, Manon is hopeful her father will return and in the meantime plays hockey and hangs out with Karine (Sarah Bramms), a figure skater who struggles with addiction. The two get closer and find the few happy moments are with one another. With absent or missing parents, *Rivière* joins the cinema of generational, teen resilience in this moving, queer coming-of-age story.

SESSION TIMES

PALACE CINEMA COMO SAT 16 NOV, 8.45PM

SCARECROW IN A GARDEN OF CUCUMBERS

(1972)

DIR. ROBERT J. KAPLAN

82 MIN | USA | U18+

Rivalling *City of Lost Souls* for the mantle of campiest, most unhinged musical in this year's festival, *Scarecrow in a Garden of Cucumbers* was restored by the Academy Film Archive in 2022 after scarcely being seen since premiering 50 years prior. Presumed lost for much of that time, it now rates as one of the greatest queer film rediscoveries in many a long year. How on Earth did something so brilliantly, ceaselessly bonkers as this, and so much fun to watch with a crowd, ever retreat into obscurity?

In one of the earliest lead roles granted to a trans performer, Warhol Superstar Holly Woodlawn (seen in Paul Morrissey's *Trash* and *Women in Revolt!*) puts in a riotous turn as small-town girl Eve Harrington, who quickly finds life in New York City circa 1972 sure ain't like being in Kansas anymore. And how! Across a series of loopy, cartoonish, gag-filled episodes and madcap musical numbers — *that's* how.

Woodlawn's ferocious fellow Warhol Superstar Tally Brown chews no small amount of scenery as Mary Poppins, and the mayhem is only enhanced by voice cameos from none other than Bette Midler and Lily Tomlin!

SESSION TIMES

ACMI THURS 21 NOV, 8.30PM

SINGLE, OUT: SEASON 3 (EPISODES 1–4)

(2024)

DIR. LEE GALEA

72 MIN | AUS | U15+

In the highly anticipated penultimate season of *Single, Out*, Adam (Will Hutchins) returns, navigating the complexities of life, art and relationships. Season 3 follows Adam as he continues his journey of self-discovery set in motion by a life-changing sexual experience. With humour and heart, Adam and his friends stumble through the highs and lows of life, capturing the challenges of staying true to oneself.

Originally written by Lee Galea during Melbourne's first lockdown, *Single, Out: Season 3* dives deeper into character development, blossoming friendships and romances, with

new faces and unexpected twists, making this season a heartfelt exploration of queer life.

SESSION TIMES

CINEMA NOVA SUN 24 NOV, 3.30PM

STRANGE CREATURES

(2024)

DIR. HENRY BOFFIN

87 MIN | AUS | U15+

Nate (*Metro Sexual* star Riley Nottingham) is a proud pansexual man who used to be close with his big brother Ged (*Wellmania*'s Johnny Carr), but the siblings haven't spoken in years. Summoned to suburban Melbourne to celebrate their mum's birthday, she promptly dies overnight and they're forced to work things out on a road trip back to the remote northern NSW town where they grew up, so they can scatter her ashes. Good job Nate's boyfriend Blake (Declan Clifford) is a funeral director who can lend them a hearse.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SAT 16 NOV, 4.00PM

TEACHES OF PEACHES

(2024)

DIR. PHILIPP FUSSENEGGER, JUDY LANDKAMMER

102 MIN | GER | U15+

This Teddy Award-winning documentary portrait follows genderqueer Canadian electro-punk performance artist and producer Peaches on her barnstorming "Teaches of Peaches Anniversary Tour" in 2022. Expertly splicing together exhilarating footage from that tour with rawer footage taken from Peaches' breakthrough years two decades prior, it'll come as no surprise to learn that co-director Judy Landkammer was not only this hyperkinetic film's editor, but Bruce LaBruce's on *The Visitor* as well.

Now well into middle-age, Peaches' career has long been abundant in joyously queer, sex-positive musical provocation and in the cultivation of chosen family. This massively entertaining, insightful film demonstrates that the patriarchy-demolishing Merrill Nisker still has plenty to teach us all, as interviews with friends and collaborators Leslie Feist, Chilly Gonzales, Garbage's Shirley Manson and Peaches' partner Black Cracker all attest. And lucky us – we're treated to plenty of eye-popping, behind-the-scenes

backstage action too. You came to see a rock show? You'll get it – and much more besides!

SESSION TIMES

THE CAPITOL FRI 22 NOV, 6.15PM

THE ASTRONAUT LOVERS

(2024)

DIR. MARCO BERGER

116 MIN | ARG, ESP | U15+

SESSION PROUDLY SPONSORED BY HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS.

Teddy Award-winning director Marco Berger (*Horseplay*, MQFF 2022) returns to the queer film festival circuit to continue his focus on masculinity and lust between men with his latest feature, *The Astronaut Lovers*. Pedro (Javier Orán) travels to the Argentinian coast to spend time with old friends, including recently single Maxi (Lautaro Bettoni). While Maxi is vehemently straight, he is fascinated by Pedro's queerness — and there surely is quite some chemistry between them. This playfulness between the two men soon shifts as Maxi sets out to make his ex-girlfriend jealous. Can Pedro keep track of what's real between Maxi and him, and what's just a bit of fun — is theirs a romance, a bromance or faux-mance?

Be sure not just to catch *The Astronaut Lovers*, but also a provocative new Marco Berger short, *The Exchange*, in our "Out There" shorts package!

SESSION TIMES

ACMI FRI 15 NOV, 8.45PM

THE CAPITOL WED 20 NOV, 6.00PM

THE BEAUTIFUL SUMMER

(2023)

DIR. LAURA LUCHETTI

111 MIN | ITA | U15+

If the sun has felt like it's been a long time coming lately, warm your weary bones with director Laura Luchetti's effervescently loose adaptation of the proud (and persecuted) antifascist author Cesare Pavese's novel of the same name. Set in Turin in 1938, with the spectre of war not far off, it follows country girl Ginia (excellent newcomer Yile Yara Vianello) as she lands in the big city and, sharing an apartment with her big brother Severino (*Nudes* actor Nicolas Maupas), scores a gig as a seamstress at a fashion

house. But life's turned upside-down the moment she first spies the vibrant Amelia (Deva Cassel, daughter of Monica Bellucci and Vincent Cassel), following her into a bohemian world of artists where anything and anyone is fair game, in this audience favourite from the Locarno Film Festival.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI FRI 22 NOV, 8.45PM

THE LIFE OF SEAN DELEAR

(2024)

DIR. MARKUS ZIZENBACHER

82 MIN | AUT | U18+

Formerly fronting L.A. post-punk band Glue, multidisciplinary queer Black artist Sean DeLear (sounds like "chandelier") packed a helluva lot into a mere 52 years of life. Upon their passing from cancer in 2017, who better to pay tribute to their life's sprawling, polymath, gender-fluid magnificence than Viennese filmmaker Markus Zizenbacher, whom "Seandy" entrusted with their archive?

A companion piece to DeLear's posthumously published, unfiltered, highly explicit teenage diaries, *I Could Not Believe It*, Zizenbacher's film has a frantic punk energy, collaging materials galore from DeLear's handheld video diaries and featuring interviews with fashion designer Rick Owens, actor and Bongwater founding member, Ann Magnuson, and Seandy's former housemate, cult actor Susan Tyrrell (an Oscar nominee for 1972's *Fat City*). While DeLear is sadly no longer with us, we can still learn from their example — this film delivers an object lesson in living life large, with multi-
intersectional, punk rock aplomb!

SESSION TIMES

CINEMA NOVA SAT 23 NOV, 1.15PM

THE QUEEN OF MY DREAMS

(2023)

DIR. FAWZIA MIRZA

97 MIN | CAN | U15+

The Queen of My Dreams is a vibrant exploration of identity, love and cultural connection infused with the lively spirit of a Bollywood musical. This semi-autobiographical film from debut writer-director Fawzia Mirza follows Azra, a queer Muslim graduate student living in Canada in 1999 with her non-Muslim girlfriend, Miriam. When family tragedy hits,

Azra must return to her motherland of Pakistan where she's confronted with childhood memories and the friction of growing up with a conservative mother — but perhaps they're not so different, after all. Through the dual performances of Amrit Kaur, the narrative weaves between 1969 Karachi and 1999 Toronto, revealing the intricate bonds between mothers and daughters desperately seeking to define their own identity and decide their own path.

session times

ACMI SUN 17 NOV, 9.00PM

CINEMA NOVA SAT 23 NOV, 3.30PM

THE SUMMER WITH CARMEN

(2023)

DIR. ZACHARIAS MAVROEIDIS

106 MIN | GRC | U18+

While enjoying a slow, hot oceanside day on the edge of a cliff near a queer spot in Athens, two thirty-something besties recall the events of a previous summer with a dog named Carmen. They brainstorm a script that aspiring filmmaker Nikitas has promised to turn in imminently. The endearing Demosthenes offers to help but as they knuckle out the details, a funny, sexy, kind-hearted feat ensues. Zacharias Mavroeidis' charmingly meta comedy is lovingly shot on location with a fantastically cute pooch performance, and the two charming leads, Yorgos Tsiantoulas and Andreas Lampropoulos, are wholly convincing as long-time mates.

SESSION TIMES

THE CAPITOL SAT 16 NOV, 8.45PM

ACMI FRI 22 NOV, 6.15PM

THE VISITOR

Arguably Canadian cinema's most anarchic *agent provocateur*, *The Misandrists* director Bruce LaBruce has been blasting his punk art porn visions into the universe's most chaotically-inclined cinemas (or grubby VHS players) since the '80s. Sometimes they don't make it: *L.A. Zombie* was struck from the 2010 Melbourne International Film Festival by overzealous censors. Thankfully, his latest eye-popper snuck in the backdoor unassailed. A sacrilegious exhumation of the still-warm corpse of fellow queer button-pushing pioneer Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968), this new crotch twist shifts the engorged drama from Italy to contemporary London, where Bishop Black's eponymous Visitor emerges naked from a suitcase as a refugee who soon invites themselves into a filthy rich, binary-bending family's mansion, seducing

them to the cause one-by-horny-one. This NSFW fury was up for the Teddy Best Feature Award at this year's Berlinale.

content advice: This film contains flashing images.

session times

THE CAPITOL FRI 15 NOV, 8.45PM

THE CAPITOL FRI 22 NOV, 8.45PM

THIS IS BALLROOM

(2024)

DIR. JURU, VITÃ

92 MIN | BRA | U15+

The performance art of Ballroom is alive and kicking in this sonically and visually stunning treat from queer Brazilian filmmaker duo Juru and Vitã. This is an insiders' gaze into unique blends of voguing culture, integrating indigenous styles of dance into the local Ballroom spaces to give it a trans-American flavour. Identity is everything in this intimate and glorious record of the Houses of Alafia, Bushidö, Blyndex and more. It's an immersive vision of the Kiki houses of Rio de Janeiro, as members challenge each other on the floor, blended with discussions on race and gender in a celebration of Black and Brown queer community.

SESSION TIMES

PALACE CINEMA COMO FRI 15 NOV, 6.30PM

ACMI SUN 24 NOV, 3.45PM

THROUPLE

(2024)

DIR. GREYSON HORST

89 MIN | USA | U18+

Throuple follows Michael (Michael Doshier), a lonely gay singer-songwriter who's lost his voice and his way. Stuck in a cycle of avoiding relationships, Michael hasn't marched to the beat of his own drum for years, but everything changes when he meets Georgie and Connor, a gay married couple looking for something new. A casual hook-up turns into an unexpectedly intimate connection, pushing Michael to confront his fears around love and intimacy. Set against the backdrop of Brooklyn's DIY music scene, *Throuple* is an exploration of modern love, queer relationships, and the pursuit of artistic

expression. Greyson Horst's debut showcases how queer artists navigate the triple threat of life, love and music in this full-of-fun film.

SESSION TIMES

PALACE CINEMA COMO.....FRI 15 NOV, 8.45PM
CINEMA NOVA SUN 17 NOV, 3.15PM

TURTLES

(2023)

DIR. DAVID LAMBERT

83 MIN | BEL, CAN | U15+

Turtles is set in the cosy Brussels nest of over-60s Thom (Dave Johns) and Henri (Olivier Gourmet), two peas in a pod — or so it seems. Henri, a recently retired cop, is becoming bored with domesticities with stay-at-home hubby Thom, the optimist of the pair, who is nonetheless increasingly wary of Henri's aloof behaviour (and time on dating apps) feeding the growing cracks in the relationship.

When Thom brings home a hook-up from the local pool, Henri soon follows suit and adds a dog to the rift (triggering Thom's allergies), and as things escalate, Thom petitions for a divorce. But who is entitled to keep the house, left to them years before by a late friend? And who the pair of turtles, Topsy and Turvy, that came with it? Indignities and co-dependence aside, this is not the usual marriage/divorce narrative but a tender and thoughtfully paced examination of what happens to love as it ages.

SESSION TIMES

CINEMA NOVA SAT 16 NOV, 3.30PM

WE FORGOT TO BREAK UP

(2024)

DIR. KAREN KNOX

94 MIN | CAN | U15+

We're gonna party like it's 1999 in this musically charged Canadian feature that spans the turn of the millennium. Trans man Angus (Jordan Dawson) navigates a day job and his transition while rehearsing late nights in the Canadian town of Emmett Lake alongside his indie bandmates, including girlfriend Isis (June Laporte). Moving to Toronto and gaining momentum as The New Normals, temptation awaits in the form of new guitarist Lugh (Daniel Gravelle). Can Angus balance being true to himself with the

pressures of fame, or is a breakup of the band inevitable? This bracingly authentic feature from director Karen Knox, is adapted from Kayt Burgess' award-winning book *Heidegger Stairwell*.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SUN 24 NOV, 1.15PM

WHERE IN THE HELL

(2024)

DIR. LARAMIE DENNIS

87 MIN | USA | U15+

Lesbian prop-master Casey (Cam Killion) is abandoned by her girlfriend after a fight at a run-down motel, at the height of COVID-19 lockdowns in California. What's worse, her girlfriend has taken not only her car, but her dog as well. She teams up with unemployed actor Alan (Joohun Lee) on a road trip to an audition in Canada. Casey is bitterly cynical while Alan is blindingly optimistic, making for a hilarious odd-couple road movie. Laramie Dennis's laidback debut will delight fans of offbeat indie comedies, reminiscent of the works of Hal Hartley and Alison Anders.

session times

PALACE CINEMA COMO FRI 15 NOV, 9.00PM

ACMI THUR 21 NOV, 6.00PM

YOUNG HEARTS

(2024)

DIR. ANTHONY SCHATTEMAN

97 MIN | BEL, NLD | U15+

For families frustrated by the Australian federal government's backflipping on protecting queer kids from being removed from schools on the basis of their sexual or gender identity, seek solace in the sweet-hearted debut feature from Belgian filmmaker Anthony Schatteman.

It follows the tentative first steps out of the closet of 14-year-old Elias (Lou Goossens) as he falls head over heels for handsome new neighbour Alexander (Marius De Saeger) despite technically still dating girlfriend Valerie (Sara Rogiers). Garnering a special mention in the Berlinale's youth-focused Generation Kplus competition and nominated for a Teddy Award, this gently unfurling romance was co-written by *Close* director Lukas Dhont but won't leave you emotionally ruined. Instead, it offers a metaphorical hug for the soul with a hint of *Heartstopper*.

SESSION TIMES

PALACE CINEMA COMO SAT 16 NOV, 6.30PM

ACMI (SENSORY—FRIENDLY SCREENING) MON 18 NOV, 3.00PM*

YOUNG SOUL REBELS

(1991)

DIR. ISAAC JULIEN

105 MIN | UK, FRA, GER, ESP | U15+

It's London in 1977, in the days leading up to Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee celebrations. Soul boys Chris (Valentine Nonyela) and Caz (Mo Sesay) run a pirate radio station, "Soul Patrol", from an East End garage, when not running the gauntlet of the neighbourhood bover boys. Their lives are upturned when a close friend is murdered while cruising in the local park. This riveting, Cannes Critics' Week prize-winning, coming-of-age whodunnit remains a landmark Black British queer film. And the soundtrack is *fantastic*, featuring Funkadelic, X-Ray Spex, Parliament, Sylvester and more.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI FRI 22 NOV, 9.00PM

ZERO PATIENCE

(1993)

DIR. JOHN GREYSON

100 MIN | UK, CAN | MA15+

SESSION PROUDLY SPONSORED BY THORNE HARBOUR HEALTH.

Canadian New Queer Cinema luminary John Greyson's audacious 1993 musical about the AIDS pandemic imagines an encounter between Victorian-era explorer and sexologist, Sir Richard Burton (John Robinson) and the hot ghost of "Patient Zero" (Normand Fauteux), in order to debunk a widely propagated myth that a French Canadian flight attendant wilfully introduced the virus to North America. Greyson queers all norms of tone and genre, fusing experimental cinema, documentary sequences involving ACT UP activists relating their lived experiences of AIDS, and high-camp musical numbers, inclusive of a little Busby Berkeley-esque synchronised swimming... and singing anuses.

SESSION TIMES

ACMI SAT 23 NOV, 4.00PM

SHORT FILM PACKAGES

BLACK PRIDE SHORTS

From a dance work told entirely in Aboriginal language — Yankunytjatjara — to a thriller set in Lagos or a jazz bar in the US, these staunch stories shine a light on Black voices.

FEATURING

Demons (DIR: Emmanuel Imani, United Kingdom)

Ele of the Dark (DIR: Yace Sula, United States)

Marungka Tjalatjunu (Dipped in Black) (DIR: Matthew Thorne, Derik Lynch, Australia)

Mélange (DIR: Deshon Leek, United States)

Shade in the Sunshine State (DIR: Olivia Bendis, Ben Nakhuda, Julio Rocha, United States)

SESSION TIMES

ACMI FRI 22 NOV, 6.30PM

FREAK OUT! SHORTS

Booooo! This frightfully queer dungeon's worth of spooky stories unleashes the scariest stuff, from sentient lampposts attacking possessed spirits and the end of the world.

featuring

Adrenaline (DIR: Vedd Vijay Rawtaani, India)

Bath Bomb (DIR: Colin G Cooper, Canada)

Burrow (DIR: Leaf Lieber, United States)

Consume (DIR: Aliyah Knight, Australia)

Jinx (DIR: Harry Brakha, Australia)

Last Night (DIR: Ryan Mack, United States)

Streetlight People (DIR: Emily Pink Dwyer, Australia)

Tapped (DIR: Benjamin Brewer, Australia)

SESSION TIMES

ACMI WED 20 NOV, 8.45PM

GENDER JOURNEY SHORTS

Gender splendour abounds in this exciting collection compiling exhilarating short stories that take great joy in celebrating resilience and upending the hoary old binary.

FEATURING

Black Trans Miracle (DIR: Tinaye Nyathi, Australia)
I Would Like to Live on the Moon (DIR: Emily Burke, UK)
Just Jackie (DIR: Michael Richardson, United Kingdom)
Lea and the Flamingo (DIR: Antonio De Palo, Italy)
Shrimp (DIR: Lisle Turner, United Kingdom)
Time Capsule (DIR: Constanze A Brodbeck, United States)
Trans Heaven, Pennsylvania (DIR: Hansen Bursic, United States)

SESSION TIMES

ACMI MON 18 NOV, 8.45PM

LOVE IS LOVE SHORTS

Prepare to swoon as these heart-full stories of queer joy explore love on the apps from a neurodiverse perspective, the poetry of love and reconnecting to what was lost.

FEATURING

A Poem Called Love Jones (DIR: Linda Neveah Denson, Diana Khong, United States)
Halfway (DIR: Kumar Chheda, India)
Monologue (DIR: Beau Low, Australia)
Neuromance (DIR: Brodie Pyke, Australia)
Park Life (DIR: Marco De Luca, United Kingdom)
Seen (DIR: Shuchi Kothari, New Zealand)
Take Me There (DIR: Elliot Slade, United States)
The Blurring of Trees (DIR: Fanny Perreault, Canada)
You Can't Get What You Want but You Can Get Me (DIR: Samira Elagoz, Z Walsh, Netherlands)

SESSION TIMES

CINEMA NOVA SAT 16 NOV, 1.00PM

ONE WORLD SHORTS

Skipping gaily from a rural Japanese village to a baking hot Athens and following a Hong Kong activist resettled in the US, this collection highlights connection.

FEATURING

A Bird Called Memory (DIR: Leonardo Martinelli, Brazil)
Anywhere the Wind Blows (DIR: Jay Liu, United States)
Blood Like Water (DIR: Dima Hamdan, Palestine)
Farewell, Saranghae, Farewell (DIR: Sunhye Hong, South Korea)
Pigeons Are Dying, When the City Is on Fire (DIR: Stavros Markoulakis, Greece)

OUT(LOOK) SHORTS

From Myanmar to Germany, Brazil to Iran and on, this fascinating round-the-world ticket offers spectacular viewing for hungry minds set on exploring.

FEATURING

Angelo (DIR: Helias Doulis, Greece)

Goodbye First Love (DIR: Shuli Huang, Germany/China)

Inside the Skin (DIR: Maryam Mahdiye, Shafagh Abosaba, Iran)

The Bus Driver (DIR: Ku Ki, Myanmar)

Zagêro (DIR: Victor Di Marco, Marcio Picoli, Brazil)

SESSION TIMES

PALACE CINEMA COMO SAT 16 NOV, 6.15PM

OUT THERE SHORTS

Are you impossible to shock? Challenge accepted! This weird and wonderful collection of the surreal, silly and sexy is designed to push your buttons.

FEATURING

Auganic (DIR: Krit Komkrichwarakool, Canada)

Crow (DIR: Morgan Ermter, Canada)

Joan The Kid (DIR: Kat Silverosa, Grace Hackney, Australia)

King Ed (DIR: Nick Fascitelli, United States)

The Exchange (DIR: Marco Berger, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Uruguay)

SESSION TIMES

ACMI TUE 19 NOV, 8.30PM

ACMI SAT 23 NOV, 3.30PM

QUEER LIVES SHORTS

Vogue balls, orgies and US politics, oh my! Truth can often be queerer than fiction, so settle in for these daring documentary shorts sourced from across the LGBTQIA+ spectrum.

FEATURING

A Home Called Vogue (DIR: Yazeed Kamaldien, South Africa)

Femme (DIR: Adele (delsi cat) Jacquilyn Moleta, Australia)

Hello Stranger (DIR: Amélie Hardy, Canada)
Institution (DIR: Jonathan Wysocki, United States)
Orgy Every Other Day (DIR: Samuel Döring, United States/Germany)
Seat 31: Zooey Zephyr (DIR: Kimberly Reed, United States)
The History of the Carabiner (DIR: Gianna Mazzeo, Netherlands)

SESSION TIMES

CINEMA NOVA SUN 17 NOV, 5.45PM

SOUND OF MUSIC SHORTS

Can you feel the beat deep down in your bones? Then get up and boogie to this swinging collection of shorts that have music and dance thrumming in their soul.

FEATURING

Bolero (DIR: Nans Laborde-Jourdàa, France)
Dance with Pride — A Journey of Identity Through Movement (DIR: Javier Cataño-Gonzalez, Australia)
Hands Tied — Ukulele Death Squad (DIR: Sam Osborn-Rassaby, Australia)
Harbor (DIR: T Lavois Thiebaud, United States)
Sorcerous Love (DIR: Orlando Mora Cabrera, Cuba)
Symptom (DIR: Kamee Abrahamian, Armenia)
Vollúpya (DIR: Éri Sarmet, Jocimar Dias Jr., Brazil)

SESSION TIMES

ACMI FRI 15 NOV, 6.15PM

WE ARE FAMILY SHORTS

Whether navigating sperm donorship, parental responses to transitioning or caring for elderly parents, the beauty of rainbow families lies at the heart of all these shorts.

FEATURING

Chavo (DIR: Alecio Araci, Sweden)
Dive Into the Blue (DIR: Ge Gao, United States)
I Don't Know If I'll Have to Say Everything Again (DIR: Vitória Fallavena, Thassilo Weber, Brazil)
Kezét Csókolom (I Kiss Your Hand, Madame) (DIR: Jeremy Luke Bolatag, Hungary)
Son (DIR: Saman Hosseinpuor, Iran)
What We Do for Family (DIR: Jennifer JP Piper, Australia)

SESSION TIMES

PALACE CINEMA COMO SAT 16 NOV, 9.00PM

WIDE HORIZONS

From a Turkish tailor's shop to graffitied streets in Argentina via Berlin apartment hunting and a poetically sexy Croatian animation, this window on the world is wondrous.

FEATURING

A Wayfarer (DIR: Roselyle Zhao, United States)

Buffer Zone (DIR: Savvas Stavrou, UK/Cyprus)

Circle (DIR: Ferhat Ertan, Turkey)

Du Bist So Wunderbar (Paradise Europe) (DIR: Leandro Goddinho, Paulo Menezes, Germany)

Stay Still or I'll Love You (DIR: Federico Luis, Argentina)

Uli (DIR: Mariana Gil Ríos, Colombia)

Y (DIR: Matea Kovač, Croatia)

SESSION TIMES

CINEMA NOVA SUN 17 NOV, 1.00PM

THANK YOU

Music is synonymous with cinema and with the queer experience. Many of us, young and old, will have clear recollections of music that has sound-tracked various stages of our journey through our wonderful LGBTQIA+ communities.

As you enjoy the films in this year's festival, we encourage you to consider the role that music plays and the particular emotions and memories that music brings. We hope that this year's Melbourne Queer Film Festival will help you discover some new music that will become part of your soundtrack.

A festival this size is not possible without a cast and crew that works tirelessly to bring you the stories of queer communities.

The people and partner organisations listed on this page are the ones who make this possible – each of you has our most sincere thanks and appreciation for supporting this important part of Victoria's queer and arts communities.

A special thank you goes out to our volunteers and the festival team, who are the face of our festival and will be working away while we enjoy this year's program. Please take the time to thank them in between screenings and at our events, and especially this year back at our Festival Lounge at ACMI.

We also want to thank you for your support of MQFF. While we can't list each ticketholder in our program, the contribution that you make by buying tickets,

encouraging friends to join you and sharing our films on social media makes a tremendous contribution to our festival.

Thank you to all of you for being part of MQFF's greatest hits — we look forward to sharing films and a few songs at this year's festival.

With love and pride,

Gail Veal & David Micallef

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selection panel
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Jessica Seychell
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Matthew Howship-Burness
Monique Chiari
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PROGRAMMING INTERN
Nikita Menon

2024 MQFF Campaign
Studio White Noise

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Festival Sweethearts

MQFF Sweethearts directly support the Festival's operations and programming, and by doing so help maintain our reputation for excellence in LGBTQIA+ film presentation and community access. The Festival warmly acknowledges our Sweethearts.

GOLD

Emily Campbell-Pretty & Adrienne Wilson

DIAMOND

Richard Laslett & Colin Gunther

Samuel T Murray

Michael Stephens

EMERALD

Serena Chow

Ross Coller

Susanne Dahn

James Houghton

David Imber

Ant Jarvis & Mark Matthews

Sue Malta

Phillip Maude

Shaun Miller

Tim Smyth

Gail Veal

Kristen Walker

RUBY

Pauline Barnett

Lee Centra & Ben Ladbrook

David Cheshire

Jasmine Fiegehen

Jamie Gardiner

Rob Hoskin & Henry Gaughan

Mike Kendall

Stephen Masterman

John McCormack

Jason Ngam

Desmond Thompson

Leonard Vary AM & Dr Matt Collins AM KC

Lan Wang

Campbell Watts

Jane Weston

Frazer Wilson

SAPPHIRE

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Traiano De Corrado
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Kristen Stone
Boyd Tolley
Jimmy Twin
Alexander Wilson