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WELCOME TO THE FIRST QUEER EAST FILM FESTIVAL, A FORTNIGHT SERIES SHOWCASING RARELY-SEEN LGBTQ+ CINEMA FROM EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA. The fight for LGBTQ+ rights in Asia remains strong and committed, but stereotyping, misrepresentation and discrimination still exist. This is especially true for queer people of colour, who are marginalised on the grounds of both race and sexuality, and often excluded from mainstream discourse.

By introducing these brave storytellers to audiences in the UK, I hope Queer East can be a gentle reminder for all of us that the LGBTQ+ community should not leave anyone behind. The film festival circuit needs to challenge boundaries, provide a more inclusive space, and welcome diverse perspectives.

Our programme this year invites audiences on a journey through LGBTQ+ culture in East and Southeast Asia, blending classic retrospectives and new releases, alongside panel discussions with frontline activists and filmmakers. Through screenings and conversations, we want to explore how culture, legislation, history, and social norms have affected the contemporary queer Asian landscape.

Queer East would not be possible without our filmmakers, speakers, sponsors, supporters, partners, staff members and those who contributed and believed in us.

Together, I hope the film festival will provide a platform for us to celebrate our heritage and identity, and to address the challenges many of us face. Most of all, I want us to exchange inspiring stories through the sharing of cinema and culture.

Thank you and I hope you all enjoy the festival!

## /ELCOME

#### Yi Wang

Festival Director and Programmer, Queer East Film Festival



18.04 19.04 20.04 21.04 22.04 23.04 24.04 25.04



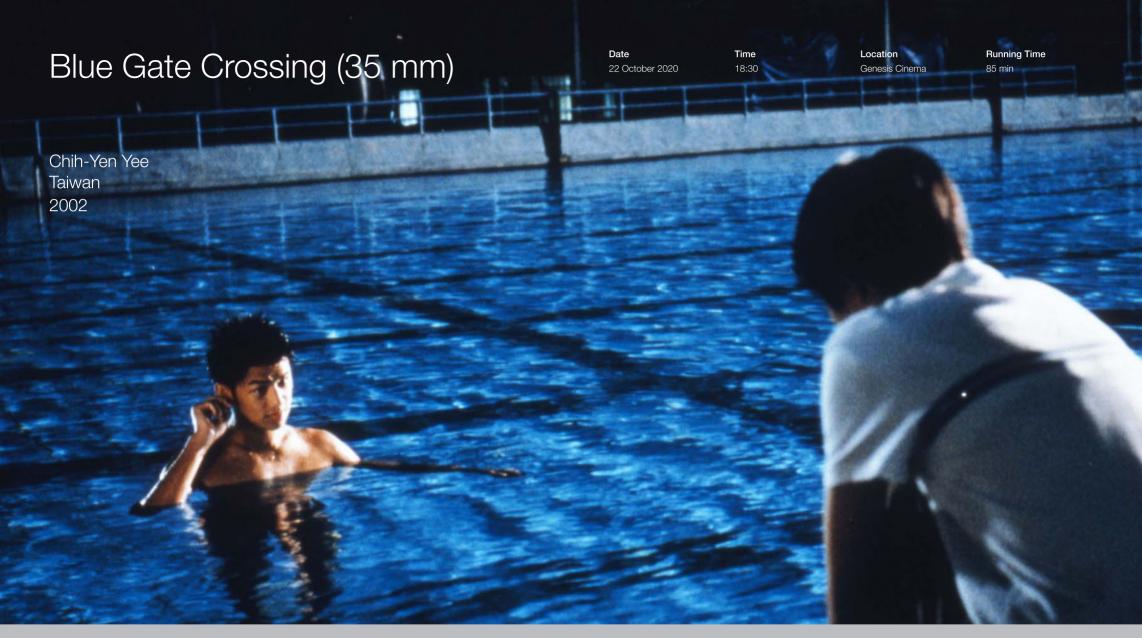


PROGRAMME









A favourite with audiences and a milestone in Taiwanese LGBTQ+ cinema, this comingof-age drama explores the odd-couple relationship that develops between high school
students Meng (Lun-Mei Gwei) and Zhang (Bo-Lin Chen). The carefree Zhang is
preoccupied with winning a swimming championship when Meng strikes up a friendship
with him. Her goal is to set him up with her best friend, but heartache ensues when
Zhang falls for Meng instead. As the pair's relationship deepens, it becomes clear that
Meng has been concealing a secret, and both teens must face up to the realization that
their lives will head in different directions. Chih-Yen Yee's lightly comic film is a bittersweel
meditation on growing up, and marks the talented Gwei's cinematic debut.



Yu-Lin Wang's film explores the journeys of three interconnected characters. Alifu is an indigenous boy who works at a salon in the city. He dreams of becoming a woman, but as the only son of the tribal chief, finds himself under pressure. Sherry is a transsexual who runs a drag queen bar. She is terminally ill, but given strength by her old friend Wu. Chris is a civil servant, who is straight but performs in Sherry's drag show in order to relieve his stress. As the three stories intertwine, the film explores the enduring bonds that unite the characters.



## Between the Seasons (UK Premiere)

The reserved Hae-Soo (Rie Young-Zin) starts a new life, moving from Seoul to a new city and taking ownership of a small café. A high-school student, Ye-Jin (Yoon Hye-Ri), becomes a regular customer and eventually starts working there on a part-time basis. Fate pushes the two women together, and a friendship develops that brings a spark of life back to Hae-Soo. However, it soon becomes clear that they both have their secrets, which they guard carefully. Displaying a sensitive touch, Kim Jun-Sik's debut feature avoids melodrama and gently develops the emotional lives of the two women, slowly blossoming into a thoughtful, touching reflection on gender, sexuality and self-acceptance.



## The Teacher (UK Premiere)

Ming-Lang Chen Taiwan 2019 Presented in partnership with Iris Prize LGBT+ Film Festival When gay Civics teacher Kevin openly voices his stance on marriage equality at school, he stirs up a storm and his boss warns him not to mention the subject again. But the tension between Kevin's professional role and personal life becomes much more damaging when he begins a passionate relationship with Gao, an older married man who is HIV positive. Kevin soon finds himself facing conflict on all sides, not least with Gao's wife, who resents the threat he poses to their marriage of convenience. When a rumour breaks out in the school about his HIV status, Kevin is forced to confront personal betrayal and deep-rooted prejudice. Director Chen Ming-lang's second feature film resonates with the recent campaigns for marriage equality in Taiwan, and exposes the everyda discrimination faced by people diagnosed with HIV.

Date

Running Time

23 October - 5 November

101 mir

Online

Barbican Cinema On Demand

#### Song Lang

#### Leon Le Vietnam 2018

Film noir merges with romance in this visually gorgeous Vietnamese drama about the relationship between a gangster and a young, gay opera singer.

A charismatic singer specialising in cai luong, a modern form of traditional Vietnamese folk opera, falls hard for a brutish debt collector who forcefully collects money from his opera troupe. Despite their different backgrounds, the two men share great chemistry, and an unexpected romance seems to blossom...

A popular award-winner at film festivals worldwide, Leon Le's ravishing drama, set in 1980s Saigon, blends genres to create a unique queer tale of love, loss and tradition, with a superb central performance from V-pop star Isaac as the passionate singer.

- Alex Davidson, Barbican Cent



97 min

Barbican Cinema On Demand



#### Sisterhood (UK Premiere)

Tracy Choi Macao 2016 A woman returns to Macau and looks back at the intense relationship she had with a massage parlour colleague in Tracy Choi's haunting melodrama.

Macau-raised orphan Sei returns to her birthplace after 15 years in Taiwan, still guilt-ridden after the abrupt break-up of her relationship with her best friend Ling. Sei revisits her past and slowly realises that the emotions Ling felt for her may have been romantic.

Choi adeptly mirrors the complex relationship between the two women with the handover of Macau back to China. All the performances in this female-focused drama are excellent, especially from Malaysian-born Fish Liew as Sei. Choi's film won the audience award at the Inside Out Toronto LGBT Film Festival.

- Alex Davidson, Barbican Centre



Date

30 October - 5 November

**Running Time** 

Online

Taiwan Film Festival Edinburgh

## The Shepherds (UK Premiere)

Elvis Lu Taiwan 2018

This documentary charts the struggles of LGBTQ+ Christians in Taiwan, and the challenges they face in making their voices heard. In 1996, a heterosexual female pastor founded the first Taiwanese church to affirm LGBTQ+ people, finally providing them with a safe haven. Today, while the founder has passed away, the church members continue to express their faith, and to confront social discrimination and institutional prejudice. But this comes at a high personal cost, with some living a precarious and desperate existence. Director Elvis Lu's compassionate film captures the bravery and defiance of this religious community. In particular, it focuses on their role in challenging traditional notions of the family and advocating for marriage equality in Taiwan.

Presented in partnership with Taiwan Film Festival Edinburgh



No Body

Date
3 November 2020

Time 20:00

Location
Riverside Studios
HOME Manchester

Running Time

87 min



Turning 18

Ho Chao-ti Taiwan 2018

The documentary follows the experiences of Chen and Pei, two indigenous Taiwanese teenage girls, who meet at a vocational training programme. They both come from eastern Taiwan and their family circumstances are difficult. Chen takes care of her siblings and her unstable alcoholic mother, and constantly dreams of leaving. Pei has decided to move in with her boyfriend in order to escape abuse at home. As they approach the age of 18, their lives are destined to take very different paths. This is a story about abandonment and struggle, but also about the girls' courage and conviction in making changes to their lives. Director Ho Chao-ti approaches their experiences from a female perspective, addressing issues of sexual abuse, LGBTQ rights, and rural poverty.

## Funeral Parade of Roses

Toshio Matsumoto Japan 1969

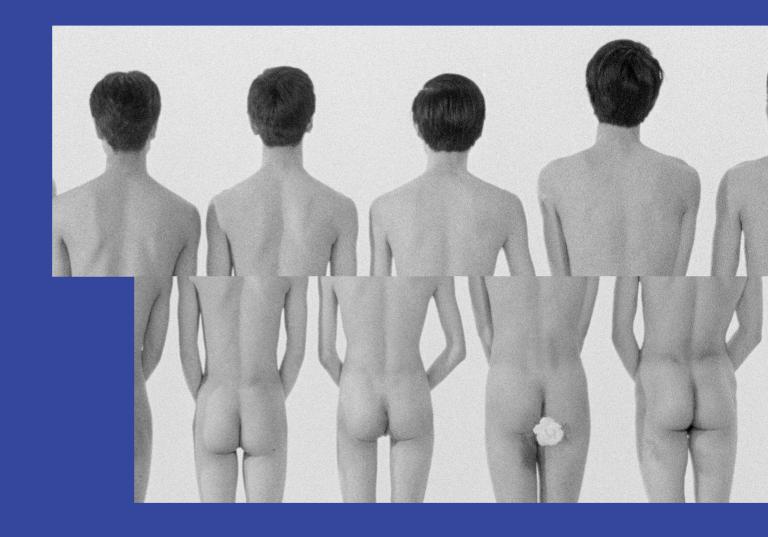
Toshio Matsumoto's shattering, kaleidoscopic masterpiece is one of the most subversive and intoxicating films of the late 1960s. Loosely adapted from Sophocles' Oedipus Rex and set in Tokyo's dazzling underground gay scene, the film follows Eddie (played by the androgynous actor Peter), a transgender hostess at Bar Genet, who has ignited a violent love triangle with drag queen Leda (Osamu Ogasawara) and the club's owner Gonda (Yoshio Tsuchiya). Blending documentary interviews, fictional narratives, and his own unrestrained avant-garde footage, Matsumoto leads us into a dizzying whirl of images and sounds. The film offers a frank, openly erotic and unapologetic portrait of an unseen community of drag queens. and has been restored in 4k from the original 35mm negatives.

**Date**6 November 2020

Time 20:00

**Location**Catford Mews

Running Time



## Looking For? (UK Premiere)

Tung-Yen Chou Taiwan 2017

This documentary explores questions of digital and virtual intimacy in contemporary gay communities. 'Looking for?' is one of the most commonly asked questions on gay dating apps, but it's not one that's easy to answer, at least for the director, Yen. Seeking to discover the different answers to this question, Yen interviews around sixty gay men from cities including Taipei, Beijing, New York and London. Some are looking for love, some are looking for lust – and for others, their search is far more complicated. As stories and personal histories are exchanged, Yen reflects on his own relationships, and invites the audience to consider what they themselves have been looking for.

Running Tim

sation

Time

ate November 2020 Preceded by

Beer! Beer!

**Dir** Popo Fan Germany | 2019 | 17 min

Tao, a Chinese guy, meets Sebastian, a local German, in this antiromantic comedy, set in the early morning following a wild party in Berlin.

#### Adorable

**Dir** Cheng-Hsu Chung Taiwan, UK | 2018 | 6 min

This animation presents a journey of sexuality, evoking the fantasies of freedom offered by gender fluidity, and developments in contemporary queer culture. Time

Location

Riverside Studio

Running Time
119 min

#### Tracey

Jun Li Hong Kong 2018

This pioneering transgender drama from Hong Kong tells the story of 51-year-old Tung Tai-hung (Philip Keung), who seems to be living an ideal life, with both a successful business and a doting wife, Anne (Kara Wai). But after being notified of a school friend's sudden death and reuniting with an old pal, Brother Darling (Ben Yuen), a veteran Cantonese opera actor who specialises in playing female roles, Tung's past resurfaces. He is confronted with his deepest secret: that he is, in fact, a woman trapped in a man's body. Caught between his duties as a family man and his innermost desires, he struggles to determine the right thing to do. Jun Li's multi-award-winning debut feature tells a powerful story of identity and acceptance.





Introduction by Victor Fan, King's College London
Presented in partnership with Chinese Visual Festival



Winner of the Teddy Jury Award at the 2019 Berlinale, 21 Xiang's debut feature is a sensitive study of a man's homosexuality from the perspective of his daughter and wife. Upon returning to China with her French husband to visit her family, pregnant writer Xiaoyu Huang (Gaowa Siqin) is immediately drawn into her parents' longstanding conflicts. Caught between her reticent gay father and her cult-obsessed mother, Xiaoyu finds herself overwhelmed by their years of resentment and secrets. This forces her to confront her own memories of childhood, as she comes to terms with the tragic complexity of her family's situation. Constantly shifting between past and present, the film powerfully reveals how the misery resulting from repressive cultural norms is passed from one generation to another.

#### Spider Lilies

Zero Chou Taiwan 2006







#### The Wedding Banquet

Ang Lee Taiwan, US 1993

Introduction by
Christopher Brown,
University of Sussex

Director Ang Lee's second feature film is a romantic comedy about Wai-Tung Gao (Winston Chao), a Taiwanese immigrant to the USA who lives happily with his partner Simon (Mitchell Lichtenstein) in Manhattan. Despite having achieved success as a real estate investor, Wai-Tung faces pressure from his parents, who wonder why he hasn't yet gotten married and attempt to set him up with women. To appease them, Wai-Tung resolves to marry Wei-Wei (May Chin), a struggling Chinese artist who needs a green card. But what begins as a convenient lie evolves into an elaborate deception when the parents decide to fly to America for the wedding. Both farcical and touching, Lee's film is a landmark of LGBTQ+ cinema and anticipates later debates over gay marriage.



## Memories of My Body (UK Premiere)

London screening is presented in partnership with Forbidden Colours, Barbican Centre

 Date
 Time

 23 November 2020
 TBC

 19 January 2021
 18:00

Location

HOME Manchester

Barbican Centre

Running Time 106 min

Garin Nugroho Indonesia 2018 An Indonesian dancer explores his identity when he joins a traditional Lengger dance company in Garin Nugroho's stunning drama.

Juno, a sensitive boy living in a Javanese village, is abandoned by his father, but finds solidarity in a traditional Lengger dance troupe. The nature of the dance involves men assuming female forms, which sparks a new sense of identity in Juno, to the horror of traditional members of the community.

Beautiful dance sequences merge with a powerful journey towards acceptance of self and the beauty of the body in Nugroho's film. The release of the film sparked controversy in Indonesia, where the director received death threats when a petition to ban the film was signed by 93,000 people.

- Alex Davidson, Barbican Centre





Hong Khaou UK 2013

Presented in partnership with Unicorn Nights

#### Lilting

Lilting is a drama about the relationship that develops between a man's partner and mother after his untimely death. When Kai (Andrew Leung) dies, his long-term partner Richard (Ben Whishaw) reaches out to his mother Junn (Cheng Pei-Pei), whom he never met while Kai was alive. With Richard speaking only English and Junn Cambodian Chinese, communication becomes a challenge. But with the help of a translator, Richard attempts to build a connection that will help them both deal with their loss. Despite cultural and generational barriers, they piece together memories of aman they both loved dearly, and realise they are connected in their grief. Lilting is the assured, deeply moving debut feature of Cambodian-born British filmmaker Hong Khaou.



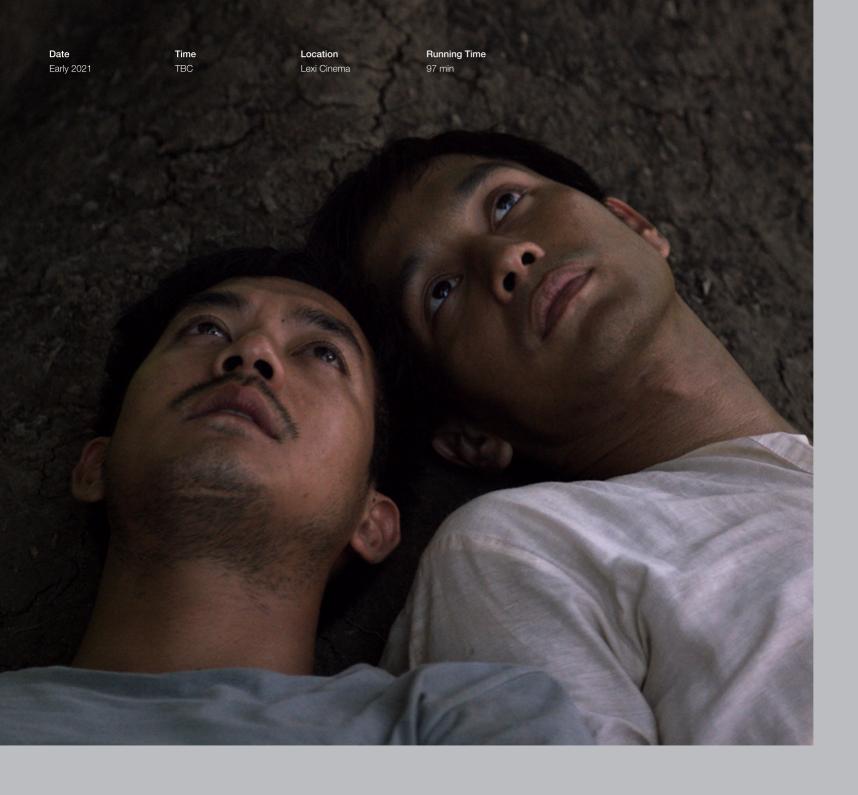
Time TBC **Location**Lexi Cinema

Running Time



Ya-Che Yang Taiwan 2012

Introduction by Christopher Brown, University of Sussex Set in the 1980s when Taiwan was still under martial law, GF\*BF charts the experiences of three friends growing up in turbulent times. At the film's centre is a tender love triangle: Aaron (Rhydian Vaughan) is attracted to Mabel (Gwei Lun-Mei), who has feelings for Liam (Joseph Chang), who is secretly in love with Aaron. The personal and political collide as Mabel, Liam and Aaron join the social revolution that is sweeping across Taiwan, and head to Taipei to fight for democracy. But when the truth about Liam's feelings for Aaron emerges, the friends' relationship is tested to its limits. Yang Ya-che's drama charts a parallel between Taiwan's transition to democracy, and the characters' journey from teenage repression to emotional maturity.



#### Malila: The Farewell Flower

Anucha Boonyawatana Thailand 2017

Pich (Anuchyd Sapanphong) has cancer and finds peace in making Bai Sri, a Thai floral ornament used in traditional rituals. By chance, he reunites with his former lover Shane (Sukollawat Kanarot). Together they must try to heal the wounds of their past, and Shane, who has plans to become a monk, must face up to the prospect of Pich's death. As he bids farewell to his lover, Shane learns how to practice 'Asupakhamathan,' meditating over corpses in order to contemplate the fleeting nature of life and its fragility. Director Anucha Boonyawatana incorporates elements of Buddhist philosophy and Thai art into his second feature film. Driven by thoughtful performances from the leading actors, Malila: The Farewell Flower offers a quiet and meditative, yet strikingly visceral portrayal of mortality.



#### Queer Japan

Graham Kolbeins JSA, Japan 2019

Running Tin

Location Lexi Cinema

Time

Date

C

Trailblazing artists, activists, and everyday people from across the spectrum of gender and sexuality defy social norms and dare to shine in this kaleidoscopic view of LGBTQ+ culture in contemporary Japan. Dazzling, iconoclastic drag queen Vivienne Sato peels back the layers of language and identity. Maverick manga artist Gengoroh Tagame tours the world with his unapologetically erotic gay comics. Councilwoman Aya Kamikawa recounts her rocky path to becoming the first transgender elected official in Japan. At legendary kink-positive hentai party Department H, non-binary performance artist Saeborg uses rubber to create a second skin. Featuring material from over 100 interviews conducted over 3 years, Queer Japan showcases a vibrant and inspiring group of people, sharing their experiences of queer expression in their own words.





#### Adorable

Cheng-Hsu Chung Taiwan, UK 2018 6 min

#### A Woman's Wife

Ahlam Jang South Korea 2018 20 min



This animation presents a journey of sexuality, evoking the fantasies of freedom offered by gender fluidity, and developments in contemporary queer culture.



Beer! Beer!

Popo Fan Germany 2019 17 min

#### Alienation

Kang-Chien Chiu Taiwan 1966 6 min

This experimental short features a caterpillar crawling on a wall, a naked man seemingly masturbating, poetic captions and stills of crucifixion-like poses. Considered lost for 52 years, Alienation was found and restored in 2019.

Eungyeong faces heartache and confusion when her husband Seonghun decides to live as a woman.





#### Echo Each Other

Pin-Ru Cher Taiwan 2017

#### Catch the Light

Siddharth Chauhan India 2019 22 min

A teenage girl who is visually impaired finds it difficult to start a relationship, but things change when she falls in love with her friend. It's difficult making the transition from being single to starting a relationship. So how should we cope? Echo Each Other abandons spoken dialogue, instead using sign and body language to silently communicate with the audience.



## Kiss of the Rabbit God

Andrew Thomas Huang US 2018

#### Gentleman Spa

Jhi-Han Yu Taiwan 2019 18 min

lao works as a janitor at a gay spa. One day, he chats with Kai, an attractive customer, but things do not go as A Chinese-American restaurant worker falls in love with an 18th century Qing dynasty god, who visits him at nigh and leads him on a journey of sexual awakening and self discovery.





#### Lupah Sug

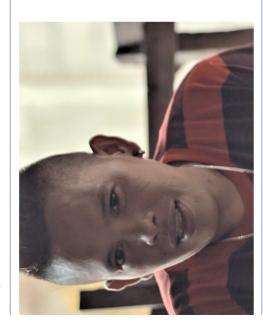
**Rhadem Camlian Morados Philippines** 2018 30 min

#### Langit Budak Biru

Kean-Hian Lim Malaysia 2018 23 min

Two teenage boys in a Malaysian boarding school grapple with the challenges of bullying, as they come to terms with their mutual attraction.

This documentary narrates the first-hand accounts of a group of LGBTQ+ people in a Muslim-majority region of the southern Philippines, as they struggle for a safe space and acceptance.



Ping-Wen Wang Taiwan 2018 11 min

New to BDSM, young military officer Lee Jun-Zhong must complete a risky task in order to prove his loyalty to his master. But can he overcome his doubts and fear to face his inner desires?

#### Reality Fragment 160921

Qigemu -April Lin and Jasmine Lin UK 2017 14 min

#### Military Dog

The film follows two people in their process of realitycuration. How do their multiple lived worlds, each their own amalgamation of memories, sensations, and thoughts, coexist with presentations of distance, history, and totality?





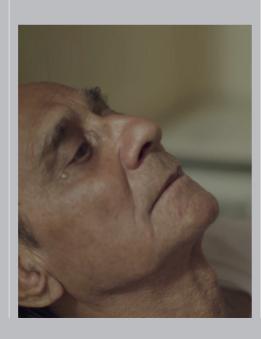
#### The Last Letter

Vishal Jejurkar India 2018 15 min

### The Glamorous Boys of Tang

Hui-Yu Su Taiwan 2018 15 min

Hull-Yu Su's film captures a glitter-scattered, bloodsplattered orgy, invoking scenes from the screenplay of the 1985 Taiwanese cult film Tang Chao Chi Li Nan that were not filmed due to budgetary restrictions and censorship. Mohan, a 60-something married man, lives with a secret that leaves him conflicted and creates tension in his family life. Deciding to face his past, he writes letters to an unnamed recipient.



#### Tidal

Yan-Xun Li / Origin Sun Studio Taiwan 2017 15 min



Kuan-Ling Kuo Taiwan 2019 25 min



Hai, a boy who was born and raised on a small islandhas a taboo relationship with Tai, a sailor whose ship regularly docks at the harbour.



## FOCUS A JOURNEY OF LGBTQ+ RIGHTS IN ASIA



#### SCREENING LIST













As part of the Brent 2020 London Borough of Culture, Queer East is proud to bring a series of five curated screenings in partnership with the Lexi Cinema, echoing Brent's strong Asian affiliations and championing the diverse voices.

BRENT 2020 LONDON BOROUGH OF CULTURE







## ENNAL

ART IN PUBLIC SPACES, **CIVIC BUILDING, ONLINE AND ON THE STREETS OF BRENT. OVER 20 NEW ARTWORKS & PROJECTS INSPIRED BY THE CULTURES, PEOPLE AND** PLACES OF BRENT.

**UNTIL 13 DEC** 

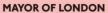
**BRENT2020.CO.UK** 



Taiwan Docs is a window between local filmmakers and professionals overseas.

International curators, media, institutes and anyone who is interested in Taiwanese documentary films and filmmakers, join us to explore!















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Festival Director & Programmer

Yi Wang

Festival Team

Chia-Wei Tung Cheng-Yu Tan Penney Chu

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Christopher Brown

Web Developer

Josh Watts (Outpost Studio)

PR Consultant

Mel Paramasivan

Festival Trailer

Music

Lead Visual Designer

Xinhao Cao

Abao 阿爆(阿仍仍) feat. DJ Didilong 李英宏, Elevenz Music 十一音樂

**Editing** 

Joe Lee 李曜辰

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The Culture Laboratory

