

Queer East Film Festival 2022



Festival Programme
18–29 May 2022



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Partners

Major Funder



Funding Partners



Programme and Community Partners



Venue Partners



Calendar

WEDNESDAY 18

Genesis Cinema

6.15pm Beautiful Boxer + Short:
It's All Because of a Katoe

THURSDAY 19

Barbican Centre

6.15pm Coalesce + Q&A

FRIDAY 20

Genesis Cinema

6.30pm Yes or No

SATURDAY 21

DocHouse

1.30pm Richard Fung
Double Bill + Q&A

Catford Mews

6pm Take Me Home

Genesis Cinema

9pm Shorts: Can You Keep
a Secret?

SUNDAY 22

Stanley Arts

2pm The Iron Ladies

Barbican Centre

6pm Artists' Moving Images:
Destination: Other Worlds
+ Q&A

MONDAY 23

Barbican Centre

6.10pm The Blue Hour + Q&A

TUESDAY 24

BFI Southbank

6.10pm Girls' School + Q&A

WEDNESDAY 25

Curzon Soho

6.20pm 24 (P) + Q&A

THURSDAY 26

Genesis Cinema

6.25pm A Distant Place

8.55pm Shorts: Days of Reverie

FRIDAY 27

Rich Mix

6pm Artists' Moving Images:
Film as a Political Art + Q&A

BFI Southbank

8.30pm East Palace, West
Palace (35mm)

SATURDAY 28

The Horse Hospital

12.45pm Shorts: 101 Butterflies +
Baby Girl + Xiaodi

BFI Southbank

3pm Malila: The Farewell
Flower + Q&A

Genesis Cinema

6.25pm What She Likes

9pm Mundane History + Short:
Journey to the Shore

SUNDAY 29

Rich Mix

1.30pm Love of Siam

BFI Southbank

6pm Metamorphosis + Q&A

FRIDAY 20 - TUESDAY 24

The Horse Hospital

VR Cinematic Experience - In the Mist

Welcome to Queer East Film Festival 2022.

It's hard to believe that Queer East turns three this year. The challenges the world has faced over the past two years might limit the number of new productions we are able to access this year, but this has also given us the opportunity to look back on what has already been achieved in the history of queer filmmaking.

This year, the festival returns with a programme of over 50 titles, spanning over half a century of film history, from East and Southeast Asia and beyond. The selection shines a light on the vibrant stories and life experiences of queer Asian people across the world.

After spotlighting Taiwan and Japan in previous editions, this year the focus turns to Thailand, a country known for its rich tradition of depicting gender ambiguity, and for its vibrant and energetic queer filmmaking scene, but which is often overlooked in western discussions.

Yi Wang 王裔

Festival and Programme Director

Queer East exists to amplify the voices of queer Asian communities, to challenge normative definitions of gender and sexual expression, and to introduce UK audiences to LGBTQ+ cinema that they might not otherwise get a chance to see.

Our work would not be possible without the support from our funders, filmmakers, partners, staff members, friends, and most importantly, our audiences, who share our passion.

Both queer and Asia are words that represent a wide spectrum of meanings culturally, linguistically, historically and politically. I hope that Queer East can play a role in combating stereotypical and generalised portrayals of queer Asians, and demonstrate the power of bold, complex, three-dimensional expressions of cinematic queerness.

Thank you all for being part of our journey.

Features



OPENING NIGHT

Beautiful Boxer

Ekachai Uekrongtham
Thailand, 2003



Wednesday 18
May 2022
Genesis Cinema
6.15pm

Running time
118 min

Based on the true story of Thailand's famed transgender kickboxer Parinya Charoenphol, affectionately known as Nong Toom, *Beautiful Boxer* is a poignant action drama. Believing since childhood that she is a girl trapped in a boy's body, Nong Toom sets out to master the hyper-masculine combat sport Muay Thai, to earn a living and to pay for her gender reassignment surgery. Uekrongtham's touching, funny debut feature retraces the boxer's steps from childhood days, to teenage life as a travelling monk, to the gruelling days spent in training camps, to widespread fame as a martial arts champion. Through intricately choreographed kickboxing sequences and a breathtaking performance from real-life fighter Asanee Suwan, *Beautiful Boxer* brilliantly confounds traditional perceptions of masculinity and femininity.

CLOSING NIGHT

Metamorphosis

(UK Premiere) + Q&A

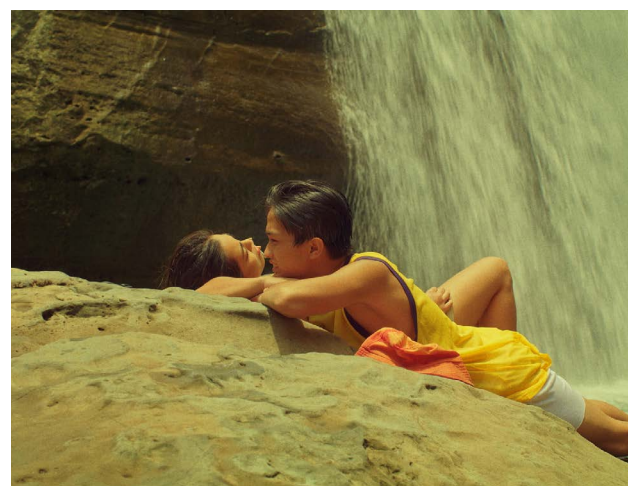
Jose Enrique Tiglao
Philippines, 2019

Raised as a boy, fifteen-year-old Adam harbours a secret: he has both male and female genitalia, and experiencing menstruation for the first time, his whole life is thrown into turmoil. As Adam discusses the possibility of gender reassignment surgery with doctors, tensions build between the teenager and his devout Christian parents, and he forms a surprising bond with Angel, an older transfer student at his high school who harbours a secret of her own. Soon, Adam's struggle for acceptance morphs into a journey of self-awakening, as he navigates the physical and spiritual limits of gender identity. Powered by a phenomenal performance from Gold Azeron, Filipino filmmaker J.E. Tiglao's debut feature is a fearless coming of age drama that showcases the exciting possibilities of intersex storytelling.

Sunday 29
May 2022
BFI Southbank
6pm

Running time
98 min

Q&A with director
JE Tiglao, moderated
by Valentino Vecchietti,
founder of Intersex
Equality Rights UK
and columnist



Coalesce

(UK Premiere) + Q&A

Jessé Miceli
Cambodia / France, 2020



Thursday 19
May 2022
Barbican Centre
6:15pm

Running time
82 min

Q&A with director
Jessé Miceli, moderated
by How Wee Ng,
University of Westminster

In contemporary Phnom Penh, thousands of young people are chasing the dream of a better life, and struggling to make ends meet, are swept up in the ferocious pace of the constantly-evolving city. *Coalesce* is Jessé Miceli's debut feature, in which the lives of three young men intersect: Songsa, an introverted teenager, is sent to the capital by his family to sell clothes; Phearum drives a taxi that he is desperately trying to pay off; Thy dreams of owning a motorbike and makes money by working as a host and dancer in a gay bar. What does fate have in store for these three men as they become embroiled in an aggressive race for money and survival? A compelling portrait of Cambodian youth, this bold debut explores interwoven destinies in a fast-changing world.

Yes or No

Saratsawadee Wongsomphet
Thailand, 2010



The first lesbian-themed film to achieve mainstream success in Thailand, *Yes or No* is a comedy about two university roommates. Pie comes from a conservative family and is shocked when she arrives at a Bangkok university and has to share a room with Kim, who openly adopts conventionally masculine behaviour. The disgusted Pie responds by marking a boundary line across their room with red tape, to ensure that the pair occupy separate spaces. The easy-going Kim is perplexed by this antagonistic behaviour, and the two women keep their distance. But soon, Pie finds herself falling for Kim's charms. Director Saratsawadee Wongsomphet draws on romantic comedy tropes to challenge popular Thai understandings of gender and sexuality, offering an entertaining perspective on serious issues such as discrimination and the difficulties faced by those commencing same-sex relationships.

Friday 20
May 2022
Genesis Cinema
6:30pm

Running time
111 min



Orientations: Lesbian & Gay Asians + Q&A

Saturday 21
May 2022
Bertha DocHouse
1:30pm

Running time
56 min

Q&A with director
Richard Fung, moderated
by Victor Fan, King's
College London

Richard Fung's seminal 1985 film was the first documentary to explore the perspectives of queer Asians in North America, featuring interviews with fourteen lesbian women and gay men of different Asian backgrounds. The film captures pivotal moments in Toronto's history, and presents an intimate portrait of the texture of queer lives and politics at that time. Its themes include the process of coming out; homosexuality within Asian communities; understanding racism within the lesbian, gay, and feminist communities; and cultural self-assertion through art. Active in Canadian LGBT organizations such as Lesbians of Colour and Gay Asians Toronto, the participants' commitment and outspokenness challenge the stereotype of passive Asians. Making a case for the importance of different communities working together in allyship, *Orientations* enables its interviewees to speak about the ways that being queer and Asian have shaped who they are.



RICHARD FUNG DOUBLE BILL

Richard Fung
Canada, 2016

Re:Orientations

+ Q&A

Saturday 21
May 2022
Bertha DocHouse
1:30pm

Running time
68 min

Q&A with director
Richard Fung, moderated
by Victor Fan, King's
College London

In 1984, Richard Fung released his seminal documentary *Orientations: Lesbian & Gay Asians*. Featuring fourteen women and men in Toronto of different Asian backgrounds, it was the first documentary to explore the experiences and perspectives of queer Asians in North America. Over thirty years after the film's release, Fung revisits some of the original participants, offering a fascinating peek into the lives and thoughts of seven queer pan-Asian Canadians. *Re:Orientations* features the original interviewees as they watch the footage of their younger selves, reflect on how their lives have changed, and discuss how the world around them has evolved over the intervening three decades. Their interviews are contextualized by conversations with six younger queer and trans activists, scholars and artists. Bold in scope, *Re:Orientations* relates the history of over three decades of queer Asian experience in Canada.



Take Me Home

(UK Premiere)

Han Jay
South Korea, 2020

Saturday 21
May 2022
Catford Mews
6pm

Running time
99 min

Eunsu and Yewon are a same-sex couple who live together. Their lives are happy and uneventful until one day, Eunsu meets up with her sister Eunhye and the pair are involved in a serious car accident. Hearing the devastating news, Yewon rushes to the hospital, and outside the operating theatre meets a young girl called Sumin, Eunhye's daughter. After a long operation, Eunsu survives but is left paralyzed below the waist. Eunhye, however, dies from her injuries, and as she was a single parent, Sumin has nowhere to turn except Eunsu and Yewon. As they return home, Yewon finds herself taking on responsibility for the child's welfare, while simultaneously caring for Eunsu, a situation that tests the couple's relationship to its limits. Director Han Jay's moving drama is a powerful testament to resilience against the odds.



The Iron Ladies

Yongyoot Thongkongtoon
Thailand, 2001

Sunday 22
May 2022
Stanley Arts
2pm

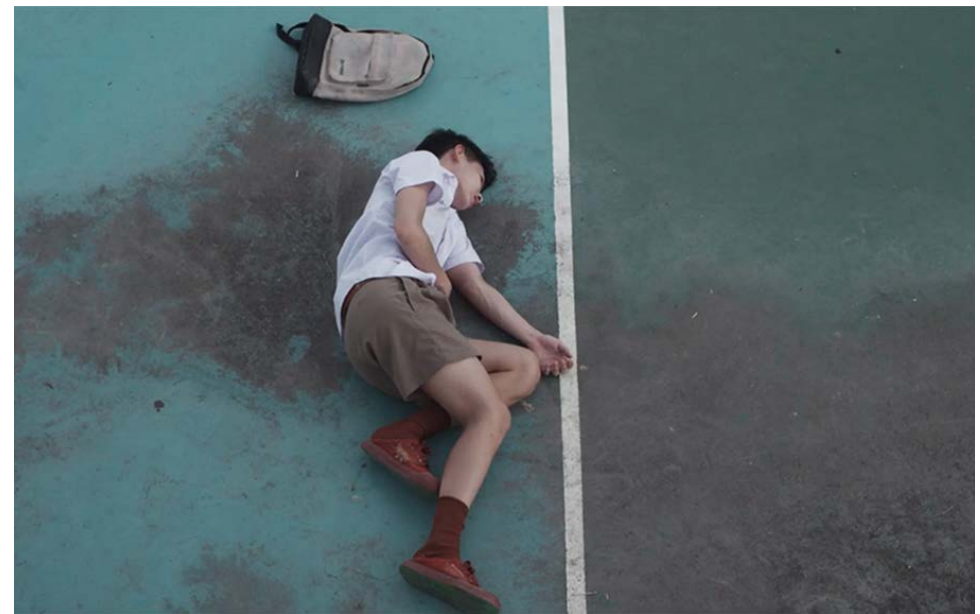
Running time
117 min

Fresh-faced Coach Bee's attempt to rejuvenate the men's volleyball team in Lampang, Thailand, is met with resistance when most of the members quit in protest that the two new recruits, Mon and Jung, are both gay. With little time left until tournaments begin, the team is in trouble. Their only solution is to enlist Mon and Jung's university friends: Pia, a transexual dancer, Wit, a closeted homosexual, and Nong, a gay army conscript. Soon they have a team in which all but one member is gay or transsexual. The film follows their journey as they compete in national volleyball competitions, facing discrimination and prejudice. But soon, they are popularly dubbed 'The Iron Ladies', and begin to focus on one goal – winning the final tournament. Based on a true story, Yongyoot Thongkongtoon's debut feature approaches the topical issue of sexuality in sport from a comic perspective, and won numerous awards at film festivals internationally.



The Blue Hour + Q&A

Anucha Boonyawatana
Thailand, 2015



Monday 23
May 2022
Barbican Centre
6:10pm

Running time
96 min

Q&A with director
Anucha Boonyawatana,
moderated by May Adadol
Ingawanij, University
of Westminster

The blue hour is the time between day and night, the realm between dream and reality, the space between good and evil. Inspired by a true story, the film is about the relationship between Tam, a young gay loner, and Phum, a mysterious guy he meets on the internet. Tam is constantly bullied by classmates at school and faces multiple pressures at home. One day, he arranges to meet Phum at an abandoned swimming pool, where they have sex and begin a passionate relationship. But events soon take a violent, hallucinatory turn, as Tam commences a disturbing journey of self-discovery. Anucha Boonyawatana's feature debut moves deftly between genres including Boy Love, family drama, and horror, gradually evolving into a nightmarish vision of repressed sexuality and desire.



Girls' School

(40th Anniversary) + Q&A

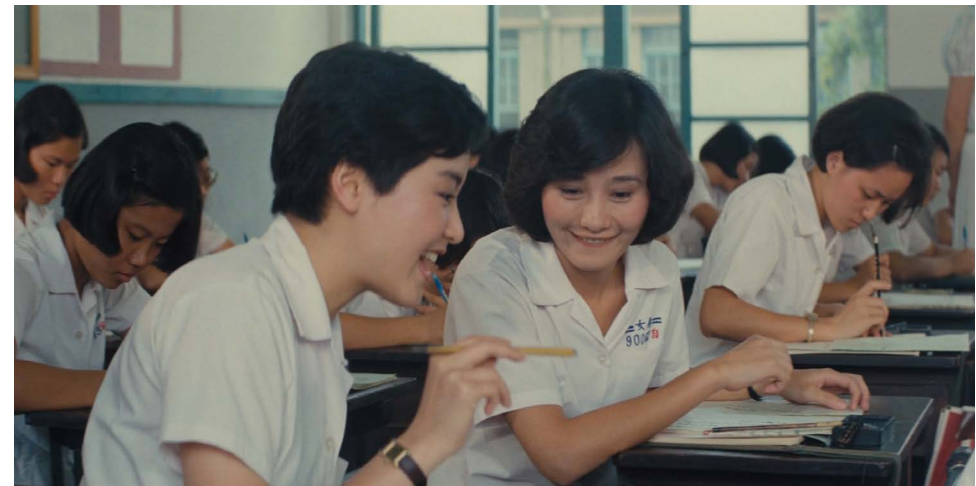
Lee Mi-Mi
Taiwan, 1982

Tuesday 24
May 2022
BFI Southbank
6:10pm

Running time
91 min

Q&A with Chun-Chi
Wang, Executive Director
of Taiwan Film and
Audiovisual Institute,
moderated by Isra Al
Kassi, Birds Eye View

Chih-Ting and Chia-Lin, two students at a girls' high school in Pingtung, have been good friends for years, and are always together, both inside and outside the classroom. The closeness of their bond leads their relationship to come under intense scrutiny, however, when their classmates start a rumour that the pair are a lesbian couple. *Girls' School* was one instalment in what was dubbed the 'Taiwanese Urban Female Trilogy' produced and directed by Lee Mi-Mi in the 1980s, centred around strong female characterisation and relationships. Made in 1982, when homosexuality was suppressed in Taiwan, this beautifully shot, rediscovered melodrama endorses the prevailing ideologies of the time – but simultaneously exposes the fragility of contemporary views on issues such as bullying, single-parent households, and same-sex desire.



With support from the Taiwan Film and Audiovisual Institute.

24

(UK Premiere) + Q&A

Royston Tan
Singapore, Thailand, 2021



Wednesday 25
May 2022
Curzon Soho
6:20pm

Running time
76 min

Q&A with director
Royston Tan, moderated
by How Wee Ng,
University of Westminster

Described by director Royston Tan as “a sound film that brings you to the past, present and future through the journey of a sound man”, 24 follows the journey of a deceased sound recordist through twenty-four diverse environments after his death. These include a forest, a theatre, a cinema, a temple, a cemetery, a truck carrying migrant workers, an apartment bathroom – and the set of a gay pornographic film. James Choong, a sound recordist in real life, plays the deceased ghost of himself as we follow his travels through multiple soundscapes, watching him collect the audio he needs in order to transcend. A hauntingly personal film by acclaimed director Tan, 24 is a work of compelling visual and sonic beauty, that reflects on what it means to hear life and death, time and space, and cinema itself.



A Distant Place + Intro

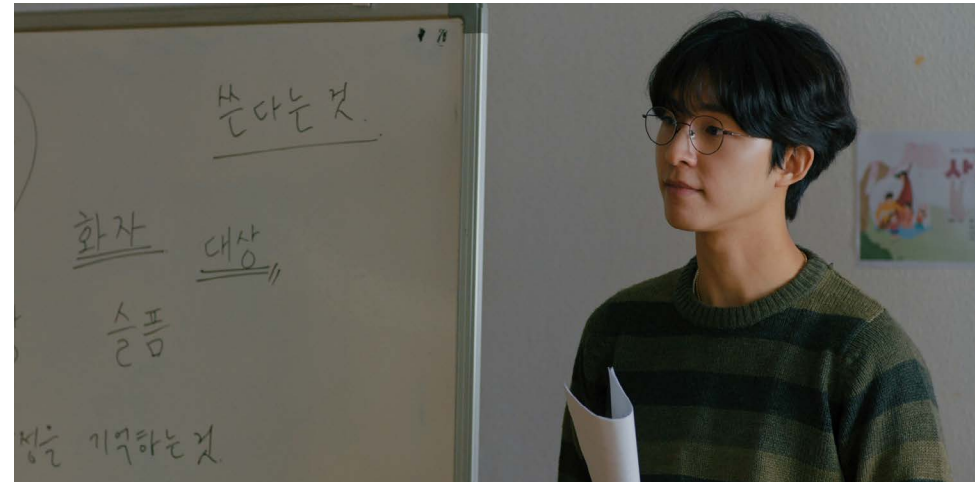
Park Kun-young
South Korea, 2020

Thursday 26
May 2022
Genesis Cinema
6:25pm

Running time
119 min

Recorded introduction
by Jinhee Choi, King's
College London

After settling down at a sheep ranch in rural Hwacheon five years ago, Jin-woo has been raising his niece Seol as if she was his own daughter. His same-sex partner Hyun-min arrives from the city to teach poetry, and for a while, they live happily together, although publicly concealing their relationship. But one day, Jin-woo's sister Eun-young, the wayward birth mother of Seol, arrives at their doorstep and insists on taking the child with her. Jin-woo's quiet existence is now threatened as he is faced with the breakup of his alternative family – but his sister's actions also force Jin-woo to confront the deception that has characterised his daily existence. *A Distant Place* is a searing drama about the enduring power of prejudice, and the impossibility of escaping one's past and identity.



East Palace, West Palace

(35mm)

Zhang Yuan
China, 1996



Friday 27
May 2022
BFI Southbank
8:30pm

Running time
93 min

Introduction by
Chris Berry, King's
College London

After a night raid in a Beijing park, a young gay writer named A-Lan is held by police and questioned. Recollecting his tumultuous childhood, sexual experiences, and search for love, A-Lan forms a complicated and masochistic bond with the officer subjecting him to interrogation. Derived from gay Beijing slang, the film's title refers to the two public toilets on either side of the Forbidden City on the north edge of Tiananmen Square, which became a favoured meeting point for homosexual men. Hailed as one of the first films from mainland China to dramatise gay experience, *East Palace, West Palace* is a controversial yet brilliantly shot drama, featuring exceptional performances from Si Han and Hu Jun. Zhang Yuan's acclaimed feature helped pioneer a new trend of Chinese filmmaking centred around gay characters.



Malila: The Farewell Flower

+ Q&A

Saturday 28
May 2022
BFI Southbank
3pm

Running time
96 min

Q&A with director
Anucha Boonyawatana,
moderated by Victor Fan,
King's College London

In this lyrical meditation on the fragility of life, former lovers Shane and Pitch reunite after years apart, and having experienced a series of personal tragedies. Pitch has a terminal illness and finds peace in painstakingly creating exquisite Bai Sri ornaments, delicate flower sculptures used in Thai religious ceremonies. Shane is struggling to come to terms with the death of his daughter, and the subsequent disintegration of his marriage. When the pair reconnect, together they must try to heal the wounds of their past, and rekindling their relationship, Pitch and Shane begin to release themselves from the pain that has burdened them for so many years. Touching performances and vivid cinematography characterise director Anucha Boonyawatana's mesmerising second feature, a hypnotic contemplation of desire and loss.



What She Likes... + Intro

(UK Premiere)

Shogo Kusano
Japan, 2021



Jun Ando is a high school boy who is concealing his homosexuality. One day, he meets Sae Miura, a female classmate and closet Boys Love comic fan. The two become close until one day, Sae confesses her love for Jun. But she doesn't know that Jun is gay and has a lover, Makoto, an older married man. They start to go out on dates, but as adorable and charming as Jun finds Sae, he can't love her romantically. With Jun unable to tell anyone the truth about his sexuality, the couple's strictly platonic relationship starts to show cracks. Can they find a concrete shape to the ideals they cherish? Based on an acclaimed novel, *What She Likes* sensitively depicts the troubled inner lives of teens, portrayed by a young cast who give terrific performances.

Saturday 28
May 2022
Genesis Cinema
6:25pm

Running time
121 min

Recorded introduction
by director Shogo Kusano

Mundane History + Intro

Anocha Suwichakornpong
Thailand, 2009



Saturday 28
May 2022
Genesis Cinema
9pm

Running time
78 min

Introduction by Sonali
Joshi, Curator & Founder
of Day for Night

Anocha Suwichakornpong's brave and original film focuses on the complex relationship between young nurse Pun, and Ake, the teenage patient he's been hired to take care of. Ake has been paralysed from the waist down following an accident, and barely leaves his bed, living in the residence of his affluent father. Initially, Ake is despondent and frustrated, but as Pun looks after his daily needs, the teenager's perspective slowly begins to change. Eschewing conventional narrative, this transcendent drama reflects on the theme of regeneration, as Ake gradually comes to reconcile his repetitive daily reality with a broader sense of his existence in a constantly transforming, luminous universe. Highly controversial in Thailand for its frank portrayal of sexual themes, Mundane History makes a powerful statement on caregiving, friendship, and spiritual rejuvenation.



Love of Siam

(15th Anniversary)

Chukiat Sakweerakul
Thailand, 2007



Sunday 29
May 2022
Rich Mix
1:30pm

Running time
154 min

Ten-year olds Tong and Mew first become friends when Tong steps in to defend the effeminate Mew from bullies at school. But just as their bond begins to grow, a heart-rending family tragedy results in the pair being separated. Several years later, they meet by chance at Siam Square, a popular place for teenagers to hang out in Bangkok. By this time, Tong is a popular and handsome guy who is bored with his girlfriend, while Mew is a quiet musician who pours all his energy into his band, and is secretly adored by his neighbour Ying. As Mew begins to compose a love song, his long-forgotten feelings for Tong resurface, and relationships in the present become inextricably tied to the shared pain of the past. Combining Boy Love tropes with intricately layered family drama, this box office hit is a modern classic of Thai queer cinema, a complex study of lives connected by love and loss.



In The Mist

Chou Tung-Yen
Taiwan, 2020



Friday 20 May –
Tuesday 24 May
The Horse Hospital

Running time
15 min

With support from
the Ministry of
Culture, Taiwan

In a dim-lit room filled with mist emerge blurred figures of men, tasting desire and experiencing loneliness. Entering a fantasized gay sauna through a VR headset, you are transported to a forbidden zone, a state between dreaming and awakening, a place in which you gaze at someone and are gazed at by them. Theatre, film and new media director Chou Tung-Yen revisits an often-unspoken life experience of gay communities and cultures, exploring this male environment through a poetic lens to speculate on the diverse kinds of love that motivate desire. *In The Mist* is a hallucinatory and explicit VR experience that has screened and won prizes internationally, that Queer East has installed in London in the form of an intimate sauna locker room.





Artists' Moving Image Programme

Destination: Other Worlds + Q&A

Sunday 22 May
Barbican Centre
6pm

Total Runtime: 86 min

Ranging from ghosts to AI, mermaids to musicals, digital animation to Super 8 - this shorts programme features artist moving image works that centre speculation, imagination, and dreaming as key strategies, shifting our notion of what is and could be possible. Inventing mythologies, cosmologies, and systems that depart from normative sense-making become bridges to worlds beyond the internalised fictions of capitalist fixity. Grounded in queering as an imaginative praxis, these films by queer Southeast and East Asian filmmakers ask: how might we find and grow pockets of the eerie, comical, or cosmical in the everyday, and what might these adventures enable?

Programmed by April Lin 林森.

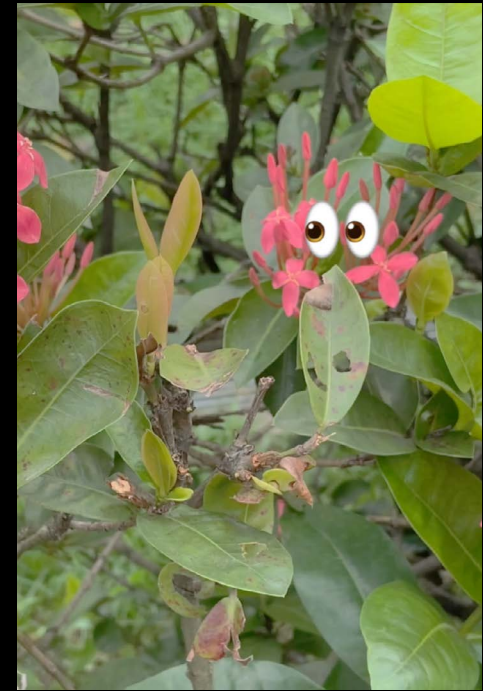
Q&A with artist-filmmakers Yarli Allison, Asuka Lin and Royston Tan, moderated by April Lin 林森.

Content warning: Self-harm, blood

Shapeshifter(s)

Khairullah Rahim
Singapore, 2021
2 min

Shapeshifter(s) looks into the uncanny parallel between the policing of pigeons and marginalised folks, whose bodies are constantly navigating and code-switching in between desire, shame and restraint under surveillance in a hostile environment.



A.I. Mama

Asuka Lin
USA, 2020
5 min

A.I. Mama is a post-cyberpunk short featuring Kei, a young programmer who attempts to resurrect their lost mother by coding an A.I. that can input childhood memories. Shot handheld on raw black & white Super 8, this frenetic 5 minute live action + animation crescendos into a cathartic collapse of the binaries of mother and child, creator and creation.



TR333

April Lin
UK, 2021
10 min

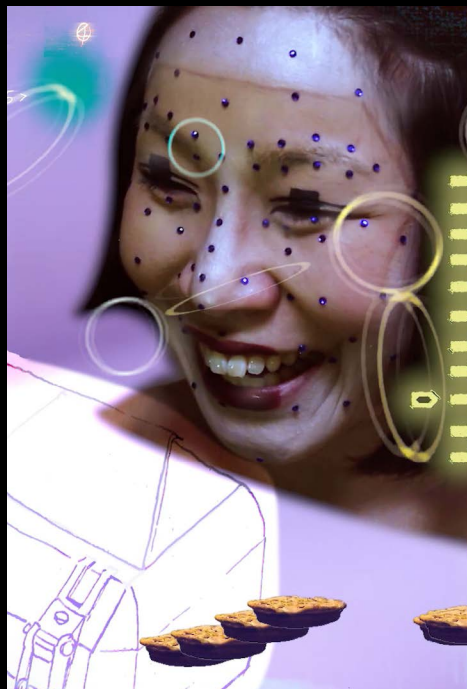
In collaboration with ecologist Dr. Nalini Nadkarni, artist-filmmaker April Lin 林森 presents 'TR333', a speculative documentary which imagines a new species of tree based on scientific literature on plants and climate hardness. As the spirit inhabiting the tree emerges to converse with the viewer, they share with us their experiences of ecocidal generational trauma, urging us to reflect around the ways all the beings on the planet are deeply interlinked.



Datafication Act 1 : May Ian Valley 0101

Yarli Allison
UK, 2021
5 min

In the looping dreamscape of 'Act 1', Yarli imagines daily influences of AI emergence and gamification on one's behaviour - taking the most intimate sexual encounters as departure. Viewers will join the data-mining authorities to monitor May Ian (美人)'s machine-readable body, known as 'Subject 06'. In the control room, all the subjects' sex acts are constantly being extracted and analysed.



How to Become a True Post-Human

Huh Need-you
South Korea, 2020
6 min

How to Become a True Post-human is an exploration work that examines and attempts to discover a new sense and desire: to escape from the existing order and to be reborn as a post-human being. Dew Kim's masochistic practice of destructing himself in his works acts as the driving force for dismantling the social norms and hierarchies.



Book of Permutation = Tale of a Dying House

Nuka Nayu, Harry Appleyard
UK, 2021
9 min

Commissioned as part of the Bagri Foundation's Chang/ce series.

Taking on themes of the Buddhist funeral tradition in Korea in which people hold a funeral every 7 days for 7 weeks, the work interrogates ways in which change can be evoked by decoding reality, history, and past. The work traces clues that others have left, while leaving marks to be observed and slipping in and out of the dark life that language and its inscriptions on matter extrude into the fiction of reality.



A Spider, Fever, and Other Disappearing Islands

Natalie Khoo
Singapore, 2021
21 min

A Spider, Fever and Other Disappearing Islands is an experimental documentary which connects the director's grandmother's migration from the Indonesian Riau Islands to Singapore with a spider spirit's migratory route, where memories of colonial ghosts, sisterhood, and disappearance are woven together. Emerging through this melange of media forms is a re-imagined archipelagic and family history that reclaims the act of story-telling as simultaneously generative and fluid.



Cambrian Explosion

Fuyuhiko Takata
Japan, 2016
2 min

In the fashion of a music video, a romantic song is featured in which a mermaid dreams of becoming a human. She sings the song whilst she cuts her fish tail in half in order to create legs, with red blood consisting of red beads pouring out from the tail, their sparkly splatter filling the screen.



Ex Nilalang: From Creature

Club Ate (Justin Shoulder & Bhenji Ra)
Australia, 2017
14 min

Ex Nilalang by collective Club Ate (Justin Shoulder & Bhenji Ra) is a body of work that uses myth as a form to explore the intersections of queer identities of the Filipino diaspora. *Nilalang* has a hybrid meaning 'to create' and also meaning 'creature' – This emphasizes the nature of the work being both a transformation of existing mythologies and also the imagining of future folklore.



Cut

Royston Tan
Singapore, 2005
13 min

Cheerfully navigating the local supermarket, Mrs Censor is suddenly hounded by an obsessive fanboy, who reveres her dedication to the art of censorship. Incorporating some of the world's greatest musical hits in this satirical piece, Royston Tan launches an attack on Mrs Censor, a personification of Singapore's censorship board.



Film as a Political Art + Q&A

Friday 27 May

Rich Mix

6pm

Borrowing its name from Amos Vogel's seminal book 'Film as a Subversive Art', this programme investigates the question: How can video be used to communicate, extrapolate, and extricate the intricacies of the political? In an age where video has never been more accessible (and arguably, more easily commodifiable), what potency does it continue to hold as a container for discussions about politics? These artist moving image works by queer Southeast and East Asian filmmakers range across the micro-macro layers of reality, dealing with issues ranging from intersections of gender and ableism, effects of Chinese soft power in Zimbabwe, and the anthropocene.

Programmed by April Lin 林森.

Q&A with artist-filmmaker Chooc Ly Tan, moderated by April Lin 林森.

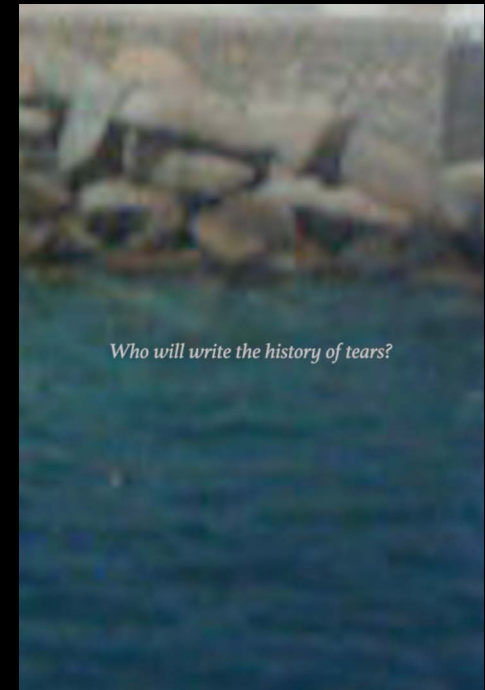
A Room of Oblivion

Dorothy Cheung

Hong Kong, 2019

6 min

A Room of Oblivion is an experimental film reflecting on the notion of queer memories, and the failure of it through rediscovered footage taken in a journey with an ex-partner.



Social Dance

Aya Momose

Japan, 2021

11 min

Social Dance – a documentary that re-enacts a woman's conversation with her ex-partner – depicts the discrepancies present in the visual mode of communication that is sign language. Using an interview that she conducted with a deaf female dancer, the artist wrote a narrative based on the interviewee's personal experience, which became the basis of the work. In the video, a woman lies in bed talking through sign language to her ex-partner.



Resolving 'Your Biggest Fan'

Stef Aranas
Philippines, 2021
17 min

Stuck in Manila's lockdown, Stef Aranas ruminates about her lost thesis film and her identity as a transgender artist in the Philippines. The film tackles several conversations between Stef and the members of her film crew, also touching on the government's response to the COVID-19 crisis and the struggles of graduating in a tumultuous political and social climate.



Differences do matter 大不同

Anson Mak
Hong Kong, 1998
3 min

This work explores the notion of differences and the impossibilities of clearly stating the importance of differences, regarding sound and images, visual and audio perception, sexual identity, Cantonese, written Chinese and English languages, representation by mass media and by ourselves, and interpretations of street actions.



Eye Your Ear

Jeanne Penjan Lassus
Thailand, 2021
9 min

A young Deaf woman tells us of her first experience going to the cinema. What ensues is a poetic exploration of Thai Sign Language and its imagined affinities with film. *Eye Your Ear* takes as a starting point how we develop our imagination and the ways we relate through language.



Sunu Jappo / 手拉手 / Hand in Hand

Ming Wong
Germany, 2019
14 min

Sunu Jappo / 手拉手 / Hand in Hand is a video-poem made by the artist from a two week sojourn in Dakar, recalling the role and the legacy of the ethnographic filmmaker, and questioning the ramification of Chinese soft power on the African continent.



Crespuscular Dreams of (Dis-)Alienation

Chooc Ly Tan
UK, 2018
15 min

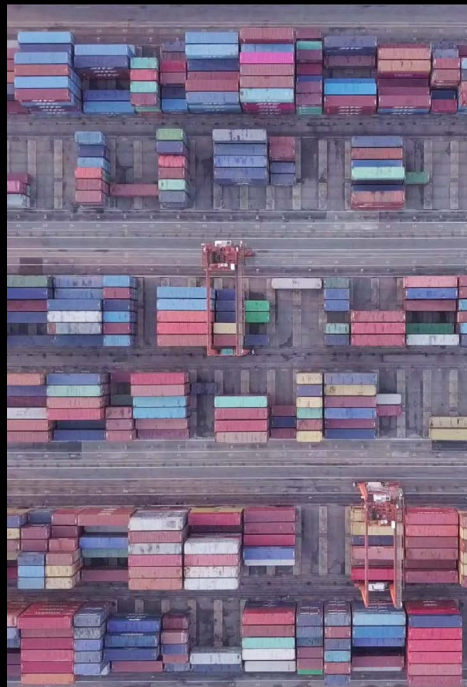
Tracing a diaspora across Paris, Algeria, Reykjavik, the Congo, Cambodia and Dublin, this audio-visual collage critically reflects on present day considerations from the position of those whose parents and grandparents directly experienced the colonial exploits of various European imperialisms.



Where Do We Go From Here?

Piyarat Piyapongwiwat
Thailand, 2021
21 min

A pilgrimage around the planetary crisis - from lichen, human organs, the very first emergence of Coronavirus and its aftermath, child labour in a mica mine in India, offshore and steel industries, and an internment camp of Uighurs in China.





Shorts Programme

Can You Keep a Secret?

Saturday 21 May 2022

Genesis Cinema

9pm

The short films in this collection tell the stories of queer people who conceal the truth about their sexualities – who face discrimination just for being themselves, so choose a life of duality. The characters are kids, teenagers and younger adults who, experiencing moments of profound transition in their lives, lurk in society's shadows, engage in acts of deception, and experience passion behind closed doors. Depicting the pleasure and jeopardy involved in keeping secrets, these are films about role-play in its myriad forms.

A Gift

Aditya Ahmad
Indonesia, 2018
15 min

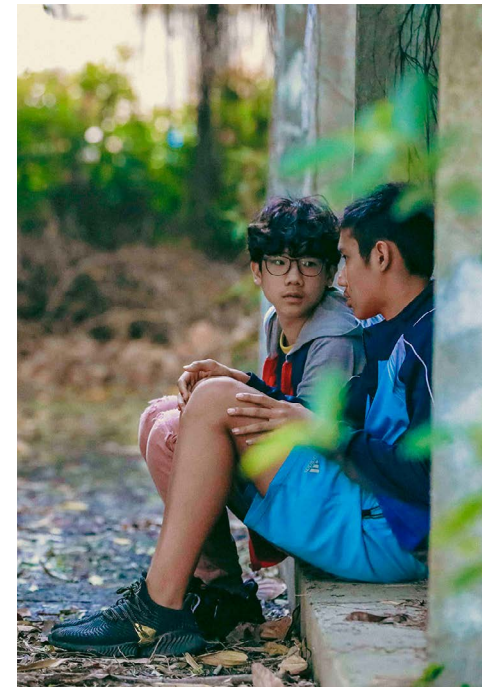
Isfi dresses as a boy when she is amongst her male friends, but has to wear a hijab to be accepted at her best friend Nita's house. Two days before Nita's birthday, Isfi decides to prepare a gift for Nita in her bedroom.



Hidden

Kuo Hsuan-Chi
Taiwan, 2021
30 min

Since he started to explore his sexuality and identity via dating apps, thirteen-year-old Xiao-Wei has felt distanced from his straight friends. But he doesn't realize that his best friend Pin-Rui has been carrying a secret of his own.



Solid

Iwasa Hiroki
Japan, 2020
14 min

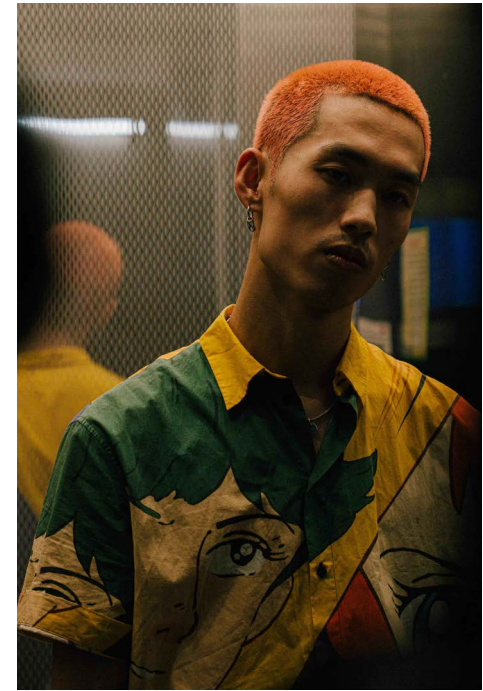
A man with an injured finger visits another man's apartment for the first time. The pair start having sex, but get interrupted by an earthquake, which marks the beginning of a surreal and unpredictable night together.



The Third Solar Term

Zhanfei Song
China / UK, 2021
20 min

Qizhe returns home to spend the spring break with his mother, whose constant lecturing makes him rebellious. When she catches him having a secret rendezvous with a red-haired man, the supposedly relaxing homecoming evolves into a turbulent identity crisis.



Return to Sender

Htet Aung Lwyn
Myanmar, 2020
23 min

In a fictional town in Myanmar, a young postman accidentally reads a letter that has been returned to its sender multiple times. He embarks on a mission to ensure that the letter – about queer identity and family acceptance – is read by the person for whom it was intended.



Days of Reverie

Thursday 26 May 2022

Genesis Cinema

8:55pm

This programme is dedicated to the power of queer dreams and daydreams to bring about change – a celebration of fantasy and its role in shaping LGBTQ+ identities. The characters in these films have vivid imaginations, whether envisaging unconventional futures, confronting contemporary illusions, or reminiscing about bygone love. The directors showcased in this selection are interested in fantasies and legends, though their films often feel like fables: lessons for our times, powerfully articulated through the blending of dream and reality, a testament to queer reverie.

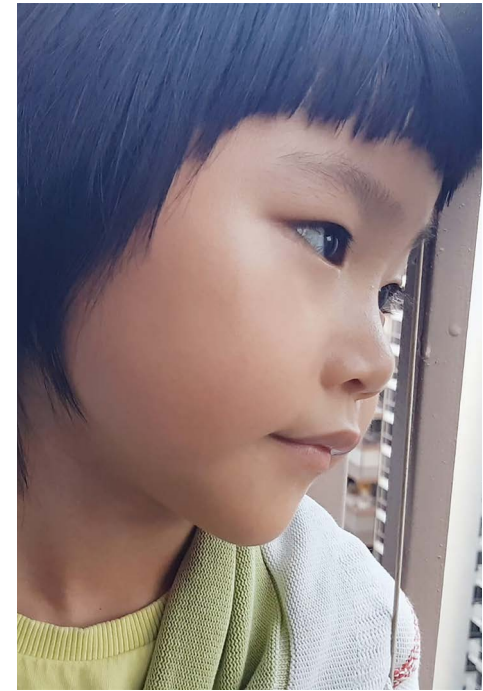
Elsa

Lim Jen Nee

Singapore, 2019

8 min

Six-year old Stanley enjoys dressing up as Disney's Queen Elsa, a role he performs with gusto. But his days of singing as Elsa appear numbered, as Stanley has only a year left before his formal education starts.



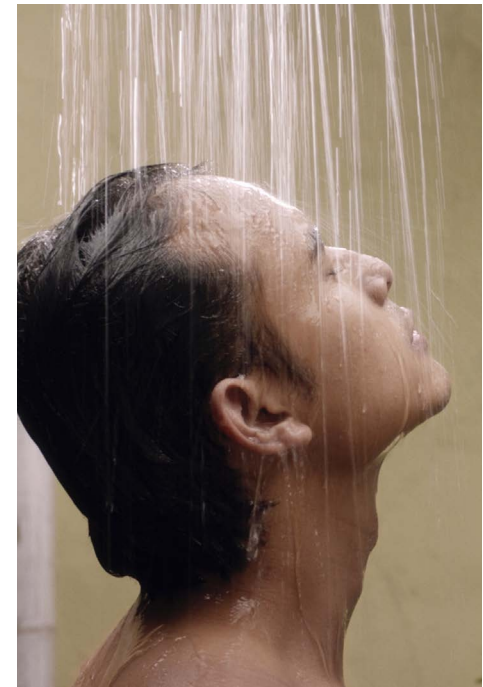
Dear to Me

Monica Vanesa Tedja

Indonesia / Germany, 2020

19 min

27-year-old photographer Tim is on vacation on a remote island with his parents. They are told about the myth of a reincarnated deer that islanders believe is a sign of meeting one's soulmate - a superstition that arouses Tim's curiosity.



Encore Martha

Natasha K. Sung
Taiwan, 2021
25 min

Dressed in a dashing suit, singing in a bar, and picking up younger women, Uncle Martha is going about her usual business when one day, she suddenly reconnects with her long-lost first love Mandy, the woman she continues to dream about at night.



In His Island

Christian Candelaria
Philippines, 2017
20 min

A small fishing community struggles amidst an oil spill. Meanwhile, one member of that community is a prepubescent and cheerful young boy who, battling with his identity, finds comfort in his dreams of becoming a mermaid.



Frozen Out

Hao Zhou
China / US, 2021
5 min

An immigrant artist retreats to frozen prairies and forests, hoping to escape the anxieties of dislocation and find a meaningful story. Delivered as a letter to the protagonist's sister in rural China, the film meditates on self-exile, identity, and fleeting ties to home and family.



God's Daughter Dances

Sungbin Byun
South Korea, 2020
25 min

Shin-mi, a transgender dancer, gets a call from the authorities asking her to attend a military service examination. Despite identifying as a woman, Shin-mi decides to attend the examination, where things do not proceed as she planned.



101 Butterflies + Baby Girl + Xiaodi + Q&A

Saturday 28 May 2022
The Horse Hospital
12:45pm

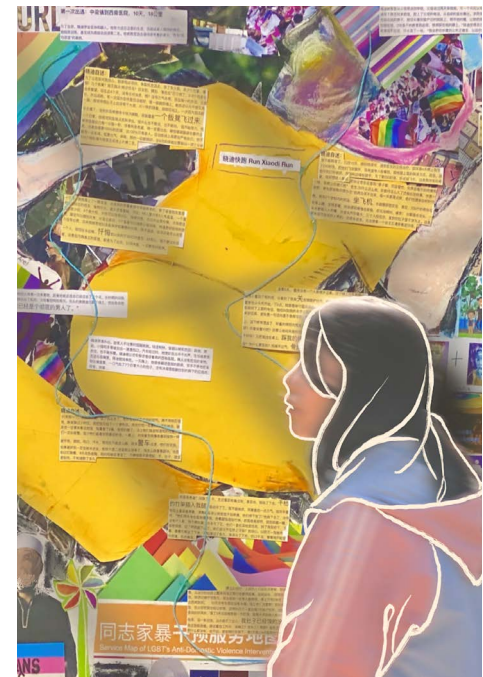
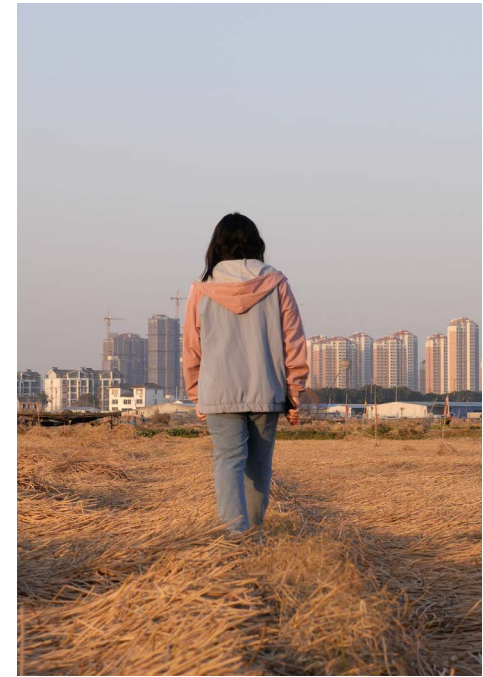
The three short films in this programme explore contemporary trans identities. Produced in three different countries, these works are stylistically diverse, spanning documentary and fiction, and focus on vastly different subject matter. But at the heart of each film lies a preoccupation with agency – an impulse to depict people who refuse to settle for the status quo, and resolve to shape their own futures. Each film selected here focuses on a trans person of a different age, and investigates themes of conflict and allyship between different generations.

Q&A with directors Junmi Chen and Guo Gao, moderated by Shanshan Chen, Video Consortium London.

Xiaodi

Junmi Chen, Guo Gao
China, 2021
45 min

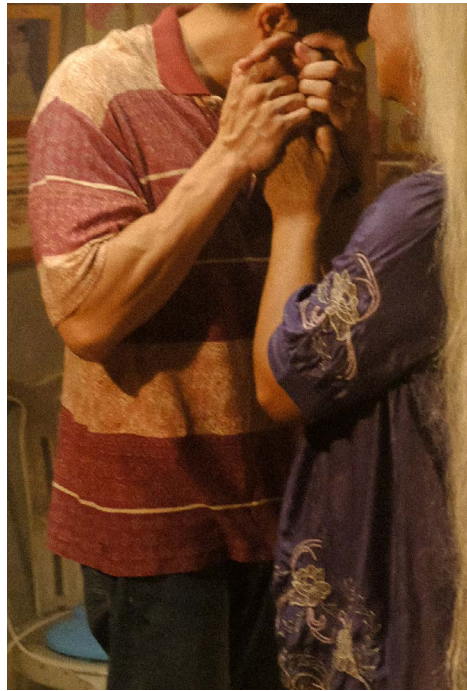
On the 17th birthday of transgender girl Huang Xiaodi, the whole family gathered to celebrate her birthday. After dinner, her parents asked her to get in the car, so that they could take her to buy a birthday present. However, what awaited her was not a shop, but an institution on Gele Mountain in Chongqing. Xiaodi's parents believed that sending her there would help convert Xiaodi, and turn her into a 'normal' boy. But in the face of violence and humiliation, Xiaodi hardened her resolve, and waited for a chance to escape. This gripping, uncomfortable documentary features interviews with Xiaodi, who recounts first-hand her traumatic experiences, as well as her mother, who discusses her motivations and changing perspective on questions of gender.



101 Butterflies

Norvin de los Santos
Philippines, 2020
18 min

It took one hundred queer years for Lola Perla to finally be recognized by a government that never really took notice of the likes of her. Receiving an envelope containing 100,000 Philippine Pesos, Lola confronts her long-standing personal covenant: to bail an ex-lover's son out of jail.



Baby Girl

Rofie Nur Fauzie, Mohamad Sulaeman
Indonesia, 2020
14 min

Cunenck grew up as a girl trapped in a boy's body, and could not wait to leave her village and become a trans performer. She is respected within her community, but once in a while, steps back into her male clothes in order to fundraise for the local maternity hospital.



SCREENING IN CONJUNCTION
WITH BEAUTIFUL BOXER

It's All Because of a Katoey

Ledger Group
Thailand, 1954
12 min

A beautiful woman arrives at a gentlemen's club, and the men start vying for her attention – but there's a surprise in store. Made around 1954, this surprisingly progressive silent comedy is the oldest existing Thai film to feature a 'katoey', a pre-LGBTQ term referring to a transwoman or an effeminate gay man.

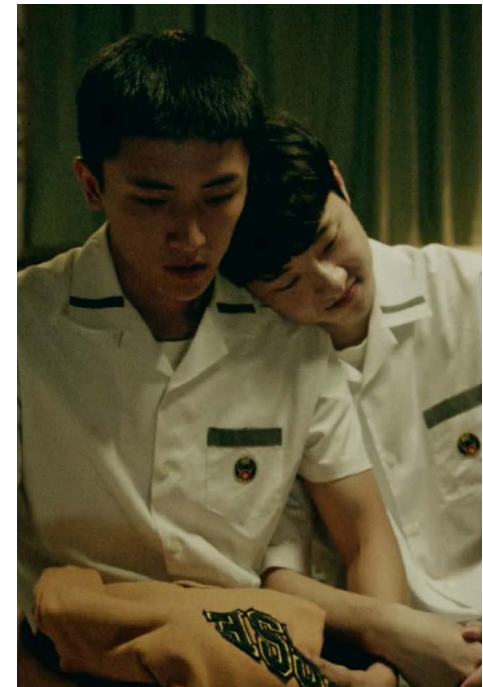


SCREENING IN CONJUNCTION
WITH MUNDANE HISTORY

Journey to the Shore

Uhm Ha-neul
South Korea, 2020
30 min

Minha and Sanbeom are a gay couple in high school, who take a trip to a seaside town to celebrate their 100th day anniversary. Minha does not care what other people think and publicly exhibits his affection, which makes Sangbeom feel uneasy.



I Told Sunset About You

แปลรักฉันด้วยใจเธอ



Naruebet Kuno
Thailand, 2020

5 Episodes
June / July 2022
Online at BFI Player

In the wind and sunshine of Phuket, high school friends Teh and Oh-aew meet again, at a tutoring school where they are preparing for a university admissions exam. They share the dream of entering the same faculty, but as they rekindle their friendship and rivalry, the pair begin to realize they have feelings for one another. *I Told Sunset About You* is an acclaimed miniseries that draws on the popularity of the Boys Love formula. But the series transcends the genre in its complex portrayal of sexuality, showing the subtle ways in which Teh and Oh-aew's relationship changes over time. The production value is unusually high for a Boys Love series; the stunning cinematography perfectly captures the mood and tone of the story, lending further weight to the accomplished performances of the lead actors. Demonstrating the hidden scope of a genre that is often dismissed by critics, *I Told Sunset About You* is a captivating testament to the purity of teenage love.



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Josh Watts / Outpost Studio

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ໄດໄກຼ (Daydream Blue) by fluffypak

FESTIVAL TRAILER – EDITING

Joe Lee 李曜辰



An LGBTQ+ festival that
showcases rarely-seen
queer cinema from East and
Southeast Asia and seeks to
amplify the voices of Asian
communities in the UK.

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#QE2022