

## The BFI presents LLGFF on Tour

*May to October 2009*

1 May 2009

Following a record-breaking two weeks of the **23rd BFI London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival**, a selection of highlights will go on tour to key venues across the UK and Ireland from May.

This year the Festival attracted audiences in excess of 28,000 people, making it our most successful year ever. There were over 250 international filmmakers and industry delegates attending, including **Monika Treut**, **Irene Azuela**, **Maria Beatty**, **John Hurt**, **Shamim Sarif**, Aids activist **Cleve Jones**, **Max Roeg**, **Jennifer Phang**, **Wash West & Richard Glatzer**, **Ulrike Ottinger**, **Paul Hallam**, comedian **Matt Lucas**, **The Raincoats**, **Allyson Mitchell**, **William E. Jones**, **Greta Schiller**, and Pet Shop Boy **Chris Lowe**.

On the Tour we are delighted to include both the LLGFF's Opening and Closing Night Gala films – **Karin Babinská's** debut feature *Dolls* and veteran French director **Vincent Garenq's** *Baby Love*, as well as a Centrepiece title – *Ghosted* from renowned director **Monika Treut**.

*Dolls* is a poignant coming of age tale about a summer road trip which tests the limits of friendship between three young women and leads one of them to accept who they truly are, while *Baby Love* is a delicious comedy of contemporary manners about the highs and lows of gay parenting with **Lambert Wilson**, **Pilar Lopez** and **Pascal Elbé**. **Monika Treut's** *Ghosted* comes fresh from its world premiere at the Berlin Film Festival, mixing flashback with present day story-telling in Germany and Taipei, as we follow Hamburg artist **Sophie** as she comes to terms with the death of her Taiwanese lover **Ai-Ling**.

Other LLGFF on Tour titles are: *Bandaged*, an old-style horror with more than a touch of camp from cult director **Maria Beatty**; *Greek Pete*, a semi-improvised drama based on the lives of a group of rent boys with whom director **Andrew Haigh** worked over a period of six months; **James Bolton's** *Dream Boy* which tells the story of young love between a shy introspective teenager and the boy next door in an adaptation of **Jim Grimsley's** Louisiana-set novel; **Ron Peck** and **Paul Hallam's** 1978 classic *Nighthawks* contrasting the daily work of a schoolteacher against his nights spent cruising bars, and recently restored by the BFI and released on DVD and Blu-ray; moving biopic *Pedro*, from first-time director **Nick Oceano**, celebrating the remarkable **Pedro Zamora** who, having been diagnosed with HIV in his teens, became a peer educator, speaking in schools about prevention but died aged just 22; Canadian **Heather Tobin's** award-winning low-budget debut *To Each Her Own*, a self-scripted, produced, shot and edited coming out tale, that has marked her out as a director to watch; and a special preview of **Jacques Martineau** and **Olivier Ducastel's** *Born in '68*, a hugely enjoyable epic drama covering 40 years life and sexual politics in France.

The Tour starts at Greenwich Picture House on 18 May and will continue until October across the UK at venues including Watershed in Bristol, Chapter in Cardiff, the GAZE festival in Dublin's IFI, Edinburgh Filmhouse, Broadway in Nottingham, Eden Court in Inverness, and the Glasgow Film Theatre. Full venue and screening details will be available online at [www.bfi.org.uk/llgff](http://www.bfi.org.uk/llgff) as they are confirmed.

BFI Head of Festivals **Sandra Hebron** said: 'The LLGFF is one of the highlights of the BFI's cultural programme and fundamental to our ambition to present the broadest range of moving image work to the widest audiences. LLGFF on Tour is an essential part of the Festival's ability to share its richness with audiences across the UK, and bring the work of new and established film-makers to as many people as possible.'

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**More about the films:**

***Dolls*** (Pusinsky) Czech Republic 2007.

*Dir Karin Babinska. With Marie Dolezalová, Sandra Nováková, Petra Nesvacilova.*

This debut feature from Babinska is a beautifully made and poignant coming of age tale about three best friends from high school embarking on their last summer together before going their separate ways at summer's end. Iška has been forced to join her little brother Vojta at a summer camp for athletes, but whilst he can back flip and somersault like a pro the timid Iška can barely hold her own against a punch bag. When her two friends turn up, flirtatious Karolína and plain Vendular, to whisk her away on their agreed plan of hitchhiking to Holland for summer jobs there's only one problem, Vojta insists on coming along. Before they even leave the camp tensions mount between the trio, with Karolína and Vendular competing for the attentions of a macho security guard and Iška looking on longingly at the pretty Karolína, her secret crush getting harder to conceal from her friend. Teetering on the edge of adulthood, trying to discover and understand who she is, each young woman takes a step closer to growing up, and finding their place in the world. For anyone who has harboured a secret love, remembers the agony and ecstasy of discovering their sexuality, and who had friends as a teenager you just couldn't live without, *Dolls* is the perfect embodiment of that time, those feelings. *Dolls* is a richly layered, slow-burning and ultimately uplifting film.

***Baby Love*** (Comme les autres) France 2008.

*Dir Vincent Garenq. With Lambert Wilson, Pilar Lopez de Ayala, Pascal Elbé.*

A well-off established Parisian gay couple, a lawyer and a doctor living in trendy Belleville, split up when the doctor (Lambert Wilson) decides he wants to raise a child. But making the decision is only the beginning of a comedy of errors which takes our hero (a paediatrician) on a surprising journey. Gay adoption is illegal in France so he is forced to consider surrogacy but finds it impossible to find a potential mother or lesbian couple who share his lefty bourgeois world view. When he meets a young Argentinean woman by crashing into her car it seems he has found his perfect match. Nothing is simple, but this delicious and affecting film gives a brilliantly entertaining insight into the emotional highs and lows of gay parenting and its pitfalls. The sometimes comic tone is wonderfully balanced by the deadly serious intent with which the fathering instinct inspires our hapless hero. Lambert Wilson heads a talented cast who attack their roles with gusto. And just when it seems that everything is going your way, nature

and human frailties have a way of throwing you into confusion. This modern comedy shows how everyone can be overwhelmed in different ways by the profound experience of trying to have a baby. Behind the comic façade we learn about just what it means to be a lover, a friend or a family.

***Ghosted*** (*Ghosted Ai-Mei*) Germany-Taiwan 2009.

*Dir* Monika Treut. *With* Inga Busch, Huan-Ru Ke, Ting-Ting Hu.

*Ghosted* is a mysterious love story set in Hamburg and the beautifully depicted Taipei, marking a return to narrative filmmaking for the director after almost a decade in documentary work. Through a mixture of day storytelling we follow the Hamburg artist Sophie as she comes to terms with her Taiwanese lover Ai-Ling's murder. To ease her grief she creates a video installation about Ai-Ling, travelling to Taipei to exhibit and dedicate it to her. There she meets ambitious and seductive journalist Mei-Li who is investigating Ai-Ling's death, and whom the artist is immediately drawn to. Unable to forget her dead lover Sophie runs from the journalist's advances back to Hamburg, but when Mei-Li turns up on her doorstep Sophie can no longer deny her attraction. She risks opening her heart up once more until she discovers Mei-Li isn't all that she seems, and Sophie realises that you can't run away from your past. *Ghosted* is an intimately shot film with excellent use of location shooting in both Hamburg and Taipei. Treut's return to narrative film builds on an already impressive oeuvre, creating a modern love story that questions and explores the differences between eastern and western cultures.

***Bandaged*** Germany-USA 2009.

*Dir* Maria Beatty. *With* Janna Lisa Dombrowsky, Susanne Sachsse.

*Bandaged* is a camp classic in the making, where old-style horror blends with forbidden love in this kitsch homage to *Eyes Without a Face*. Lucille lives with her domineering father and grandmother in a creepy mansion out in the middle of nowhere. She longs to go to college to study poetry, but her surgeon father insists the sciences are the way to go. Feeling as though she has no way out Lucille attempts suicide after rifling in her father's lab. She survives, but is left with hideous burns to her face, which her father chooses to treat at home. He hires a sultry nurse with her own chequered past to look after Lucille. Spending 24 hours together every day leads patient and nurse to discover passionate feelings for each other, the bandages come off and soon a torrid affair begins.

***Born in '68*** France 2008. Peccadillo Pictures.

*Dir* Jacques Martineau, Olivier Ducastel. *With* Laetitia Casta, Yannick Renier, Yann Trégouët.

Festival favourites Martineau and Ducastel return to the LLGFF with an epic drama covering life and sexual politics in France. Friends and lovers caught up in the excitement of May '68 at the Sorbonne eventually leave Paris for a communal life in the country. The collective seems at first like a fairytale of left wing hippydom. But principles are betrayed as members of the commune drift away to bourgeois careers. Laetitia Casta gives a great performance as the central figure, Catherine, loved by both Hervé and Yves, eventually left by everyone, she remains a gentle but determined matriarch. At almost three hours this film doesn't feel like its navigation through 40 years is rushed. It offers a lesson in the hopes and dreams of the generation of 68 and how we live now.

***Dream Boy*** USA 2008. Peccadillo Pictures.

*Dir* James Bolton. *With* Stephan Bender, Maximillian Roeg, Diana Scarwid.

In the isolated surroundings of rural Louisiana, Nathan is the new kid in town. Shy and introspective, Nathan keeps to himself, but it is not long before he notices Roy, the boy next door. Offering to help Roy with his homework, Nathan becomes increasingly fascinated with his confident neighbour, and the two soon begin a tentative love affair. Based on the novel by Jim Grimsley, what begins as a seemingly traditional story of young gay love, takes some surprising turns along the way, ultimately ending up a far darker and more rewarding prospect than one might first imagine. Director James Bolton sensitively handles the material, and invokes a fine air of mystery during the film's intriguingly abstract conclusion. Commendable too are the young male leads, Bender and Roeg, who expertly capture a time of adolescent discovery and uncertainty.

***Greek Pete*** UK 2009.

*Dir* Andrew Haigh.

Over six months Andrew Haigh worked with a group of London rent boys to create a semi-improvised drama based on their lives. Speaking their own words they are presented as they want to be seen. Sometimes explicit, sometimes awkward this is a million miles from an idealised version of prostitution. The boys may gloss over some of the issues but this is a privileged record of a sub-culture as never before seen on film. The star is Greek Pete and we meet some of his clients as well as other rent boys. Haigh has

achieved a remarkable degree of closeness and trust to his collaborators edited to form a snapshot of a less well known part of the gay scene. The lure of easy money is balanced with some alarming encounters and a keen sense of solidarity among the boys.

***Nighthawks*** UK 1978. BFI

*Dir Ron Peck, Paul Hallam. With Ken Robertson, Stuart Craig Turton, Rachel Nicholas James.*

Recently restored by the BFI and 30 years since its first UK release, this pioneering film was the first British gay feature which dealt unapologetically with homosexuality. Centring on the character of Jim, a gay teacher, it is an important historical document of a moment in London gay life that offers a view of the potentially alienating effects of the gay scene but emphasizes the importance of coming out. The hundreds of extras were drawn from London club-goers and gay activists and filmed in a number of London pubs and clubs. One of the most memorable scenes is when Jim is forced to confront a class who ask if he is gay. A close-up of Jim on the dancefloor, his eyes darting to and fro, captures the anxiety of the endless search for Mr Right.

***Pedro*** USA 2008.

*Dir Nick Oceano. With Alex Loynaz, Justina Machado, Hale Appleman.*

A biopic celebrating a remarkable individual, Pedro Zamora, who appeared in MTV's *Real World* show in 1994 as an openly HIV positive person. He had been born in Cuba and then moved to Miami in the Marielitas exodus in 1980. Diagnosed with HIV as early as seventeen he became a peer educator speaking in schools about prevention. He died aged just 22 before the *Real World*'s final transmission but he had been able to carry out his dream of getting his message across to as many people as possible. Producers including Wash West and Richard Glatzer (*The Fluffer, Echo Park, LA*), scriptwriter Dustin Lance Black (*Milk*) and first time director Nick Oceano have combined their talents to make this a very special film. Acting honours to Alex Loynaz as Pedro and his sister Mily played by Justina Machado who you may recognize from *Six Feet Under*. Bring a hanky.

***To Each Her Own*** Canada 2008.

*Dir Heather Tobin. With Hannah Hogan, Tracy Rae, Shaughnessy Redden.*

This assured debut by talented all-rounder Heather Tobin (she scripted, produced, shot and edited the film) is the coming out tale of young married Jess and the emotional rollercoaster she finds herself on when she meets and instantly falls for out and proud lesbian Casey. Growing up with a mother that believes homosexuality is a sin it's no wonder Jess buried her true feelings and married her high school sweetheart fresh after graduation. Yet she's unable to keep away from the charming Casey and the two young women embark on an affair, discovering what it means to truly love someone. But will love be enough for Jess to tell the truth and come out? An award-winning film at numerous festivals this low-budget gem marks Tobin out as a director to watch.

### **Notes to Editors**

The LLGFF, as we know it now, was established in 1986 and is the third largest film festival in the UK. The LLGFF on Tour runs from May to October visiting towns and cities across the UK and Ireland. Now in its 23rd year, the Festival continues to celebrate the diversity of lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender culture from around the globe.

The LLGFF programming team is led by senior programmer **Brian Robinson** with **Jason Barker**, **Michael Blyth**, **Nazmia Jamal**, **Emma Smart** and **Kyle Stephan**.

For the first time the Festival in association with the **Campaign for Homosexual Equality** introduced **The Derek Oyston CHE Film Award** for the film screened in the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival which most reflects the aims and objectives of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality. The Award winning film was *Darling! The Pieter-Dirk Uys Story*, directed by **Julian Shaw**.

**A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting  
BFI London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival screenings can be found at  
[www.image.net](http://www.image.net) in the Festivals & Awards section.**