



## Global LGBTQ+ film campaign returns, bringing message of freedom to millions

#FiveFilms4Freedom, the world's widest-reaching LGBTQ+ online film campaign, returns for the fourth year running with distinctive voices from around the globe, including a transgender teenager dealing with discrimination and abuse in a Canadian school, gay farmers in the UK, a feisty teenage girl living in India exploring her burgeoning sexuality, a young Korean man who receives an unexpected visit, and a Greek goldfish called Tom Daley.

The British Council, working in partnership with BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival, will make five LGBTQ+ themed short films available for the world to watch online for free, over the twelve days of BFI Flare from 21st March to 1st April. The programme of films, which features work by emerging filmmakers from across the world, has been selected from BFI Flare.

On 26th March, a coordinated effort from the British Council's global network of over 100 countries stretching from the Americas, China and India to Europe, the Middle East and beyond will encourage people to watch the films in solidarity with LGBTQ+ communities in countries where freedom and equal rights are limited. The campaign will ask audiences to share the films using the hashtag #FiveFilms4Freedom in recognition of the fact that Love is a Human Right.

In the UK on the same day, MPs will attend a special reception at the Houses of Parliament organised by the British Council, coinciding with similar events being organised at embassies and cultural centres around the world.

To celebrate #FiveFilms4Freedom, BFI Flare and the British Council, in partnership with the UK Government's GREAT campaign, will project clips from the five films onto the Tower of London on 25th March in a spectacular display to spread the message that Love is a Human Right.

Last year the films were viewed 1.8 million times by people in 202 countries and principalities, including parts of the world where homosexuality is criminalised, and in some cases punishable by the death penalty.

### 2018 Films

The five short films selected for 2018 include drama and documentary, and shine a light on the experiences of people from different parts of the world, from India to Greece, Canada to South Korea. The films all speak to the idea that Love is a Human Right that everyone should be free to pursue. They are:

**GODDESS** (India)

Dir. Karishma Dev Dube | 13 minutes

Tara, a feisty teenager, risks both family and tradition as she pursues her attraction towards her housemaid, Devi. When they are caught together at a dinner party, Tara must suddenly define who she really is.

**GOLDFISH** (Greece)

Dir. Yorgos Angelopoulos | 10 minutes

Stratis' seventh birthday turns sour when he reveals to his father that he has named his goldfish after Tom Daley.

**HANDSOME & MAJESTIC** (Canada)

Dir. Jeff Lee Petry and Nathan Drillot | 12 minutes

The story of Milan Halikowski, a young trans boy from the rural city of Prince George, British Columbia. In the face of discrimination from his peers and teachers at school, Milan becomes a role model and an advocate for trans people in his small community and beyond.

**LANDLINE** (UK)

Dir. Matt Houghton | 11 minutes

A short documentary about the only helpline in the UK for gay farmers. Through recorded telephone conversations and reconstructed visuals, the film uses the helpline as a lens through which to view the often isolated experiences of LGBTQ+ people in the British farming community.

**UNINVITED** (South Korea)

Dir. Seung Yeob Lee | 20 minutes

Jungho's mother visits his new place unannounced, and Jungho's not comfortable with her visit.

The films will be available to view from 00.01 GMT on 21st March on the [British Council Arts YouTube channel](#). Interviews with the filmmakers and a trailer of all the films are available now.

The films will also be available to watch on the BFI Player, as well as select international platforms including Wechat and Tencent in China and JioCinema across India.

Briony Hanson, the British Council's Director of Film, says: '#FiveFilms4Freedom goes to the heart of the British Council's mission to share stories that transcend country borders and open people's minds to the experiences and perspectives of others. The selection of films we're championing in this year's campaign is truly global and together the films make a compelling case for the fact that love is a human right, no matter how we identify or where we are. We can't wait to see how audiences across the world respond.'

Michael Blyth, Senior Programmer for BFI Flare, adds: 'At BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival we strive to provide a platform for filmmakers from all across the globe to tell their stories. We believe in film as an essential tool to open hearts and minds, and to incite social, personal and political change. #FiveFilms4Freedom gives us the chance to share these vital stories with audiences worldwide. These short films may come from five very different perspectives, but all hold the power to enlighten, to provoke and to inspire.'

Matt Houghton, whose film Landline features the stories of gay farmers in the UK, says: 'From the very start we said to ourselves we don't want to make a film about an *issue* – we wanted to make a film which is about people. The aim is that anyone anywhere can watch the film and relate to it because if you can make someone relate to something then you can possibly make them understand it a little bit better and from that understanding, you know, good comes I think.'

ENDS

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About #FiveFilms4Freedom

#FiveFilms4Freedom is the world's widest-reaching LGBTQ+ online film campaign. The campaign is run by the British Council in partnership with BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival, and has been running since 2015.

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We work with over 100 countries in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year we reached over 65 million people directly and 731 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. We make a positive contribution to the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)

About BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival

BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival is the UK's longest running LGBTQ+ film event. It began in 1986 as Gay's Own Pictures. By its 3rd edition it was tagged the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and since then has grown to become the largest LGBTQ+ film event in the UK, and its most anticipated. The Festival changed its name to BFI Flare in 2014 to reflect the increasing diversity of its films, filmmakers and audience. The festival is programmed by Jay Bernard, Michael Blyth, Zorian Clayton, Brian Robinson and Emma Smart, led by Artistic Director, Tricia Tuttle.

MY DAYS OF MERCY opens the Festival on Wednesday 21 March with POSTCARDS FROM LONDON closing the Festival on Saturday 31 March; BFI Flare will offer for an additional day in 2018 with 'Second Chance Sunday' on 1 April, featuring on-demand repeat screenings of audience favourites.

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of filmmakers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.