

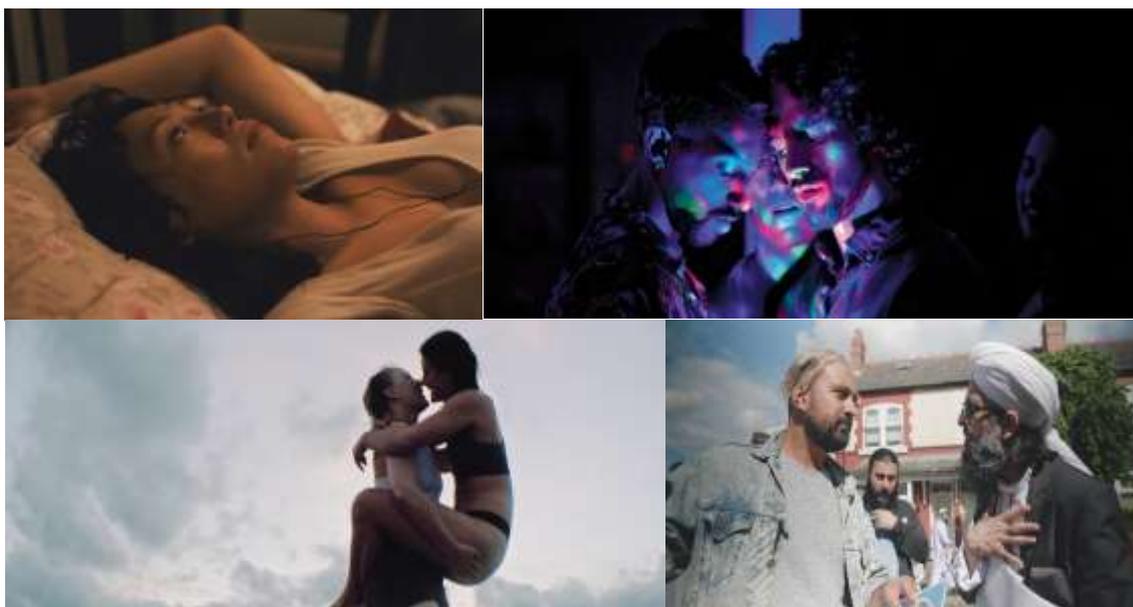
BFI **2020**
FLARE
LONDON LGBTIQ+ FILM FESTIVAL

BFI FLARE: LONDON LGBTIQ+ FILM FESTIVAL 2020 FULL PROGRAMME ANNOUNCED
18th – 29th March at BFI Southbank

OPENING NIGHT FILM World Premiere CICADA starring Sheldon D. Brown and Matt Fifer
18th March 2020 at BFI Southbank

CENTREPIECE SCREENING UK Premiere DISCLOSURE featuring Laverne Cox, Mj Rodriguez and Lilly Wachowski
26th March 2020 at BFI Southbank

CLOSING NIGHT FILM UK Premiere SUMMERLAND starring Gemma Arterton and Gugu Mbatha-Raw – 28th March 2020 at BFI Southbank



Top row, L to R – LINGUA FRANCA (Dir. Isabel Sandoval), **DON'T LOOK DOWN** (Dir. Olivier Ducastel, Jacques Martineau)
Bottom row, L to R – JUSTINE (Dir. Jamie Patterson), **PRIDE & PROTEST** (Dir. Blaise Singh)

The 34th edition of BFI Flare: London LGBTIQ+ Film Festival unveiled its full programme tonight at BFI Southbank. One of the world's most significant and long-standing LGBTIQ+ film events, BFI Flare will present over 50 features, 85 shorts and a wide range of special events, guest appearances, family-friendly and free events, club nights and more. Tickets go on sale via bfi.org.uk/flare to the general public on 27th February.

As previously announced, the Festival will open with the World Premiere of Matt Fifer and Kieran Mulcare's remarkable feature debut **CICADA**, about a young man forced to face past traumas when he embarks on a new relationship. The Closing Night Gala is the UK Premiere of acclaimed theatre

director Jessica Swale's **SUMMERLAND**, a moving Second World War drama about a woman rediscovering her ability to love, starring Gemma Arterton and Gugu Mbatha-Raw.

The Centrepiece Screening of the Festival is the UK Premiere of **DISCLOSURE**, the latest documentary from acclaimed filmmaker Sam Feder. Absorbing and informative, providing a timely history lesson at the crossroads of change, the film features Laverne Cox at the helm and a cast of big hitters that include the Wachowski sisters and Chaz Bono.

Additional programme highlights include Jamie Patterson's arresting sophomore feature **JUSTINE**, which sees a young woman struggle with her demons in this powerful rumination on how the past can shape the present, **MOFFIE**, Oliver Hermanus' beautiful yet brutal study of closeted homosexuality in the Apartheid-era military and **MONSOON**, Hong Khaou's poignant meditation on cultural displacement featuring Henry Golding in a tender portrayal of a man endeavouring to reconnect with the place he once called home. With **DON'T LOOK DOWN**, Olivier Ducastel and Jacques Martineau serve up a deliciously enigmatic chamber piece which is far more than just an exercise in style, but is also a sly critique on power, submission and the destructive side of love, while Claire Oakley's debut feature **MAKE UP** is a riveting psycho-sexual drama in which nothing is quite what it seems.

Among the key themes emerging from this year's programme are strong representations of activism, resistance and rebellion in stories about brave individuals and communities that will not give up in the ongoing fight for change. Highlights include:

- **LINGUA FRANCA** (Dir. Isabel Sandoval), a deftly woven tale of love and inequality for an undocumented Filipina transwoman living under the radar in New York.
- BFI Flare Official Partners PGIM and Mishcon de Reya are supporting **CHANGING THE GAME** (Dir. Michael Barnett), a compelling account of the hard-won victories by Trans teenage athletes competing across America.
- **OUR DANCE OF REVOLUTION** (Dir. Phillip Pike), a documentary portrait of how skilful organising created a cohesive Black LGBTIQ+ movement in Toronto.
- **PRIDE & PROTEST** (Dir. Blaise Singh), opening with the anti-LGBTIQ+ lessons protests in Birmingham, the modern face of activism is the focus of this timely and necessary documentary.
- **STEELERS: THE WORLD'S FIRST GAY RUGBY CLUB** (Dir. Eammon Ashton-Atkinson), an inspiring testament to the power of teamwork and friendship, this uplifting documentary will charm the (rugby) socks off you – whether you are a fan of the game or not!
- **WE ARE THE RADICAL MONARCHS** (Dir. Linda Goldstein Knowlton), activism is alive and well in this documentary portrait of a group of women who champion the importance of community, and this joyous film is full of hope and inspiration to see the next generation of fierce confident young women more than ready to take on the world.

2020 marks an impressive year for LGBTIQ+ feature fiction films coming from the UK with **SUMMERLAND** Closing the Festival, and with **JUSTINE**, **MONSOON** and **MAKE UP** screening in the main programme alongside the UK co-produced **MOFFIE**. The world premieres of **PRIDE & PROTEST** and **STEELERS: THE WORLD'S FIRST GAY RUGBY CLUB** also represent strong documentary offerings from the UK.

Michael Blyth, BFI Flare's Senior Programmer says: *"This year's Festival feels more relevant than ever with filmmakers reflecting moving, urgent stories about LGBTIQ+ lives. We are privileged to share such a wide range of films from around the world that will entertain, provoke, perhaps most importantly, help us better understand ourselves and each other."*

Tricia Tuttle, BFI Festivals Director says: *“As ever, the programmers have pulled together a truly international selection of films exploring LGBTIQ+ themes, but we’re heartened to see just how much strength in depth there is in work coming out of the UK. British features really shine in this globe-spanning programme.”*

The Festival is thrilled and very grateful that the Pureland Foundation returns as the Main Supporter of BFI Flare: London LGBTIQ+ Film Festival. This year marks the third year of their critical and generous support. This partnership is established in a shared commitment to empowerment and social wellbeing, which the Foundation so resolutely represents.

Bruno Wang, Founder of Pureland Foundation says: *“We are delighted to support BFI Flare: London LGBTIQ+ Film Festival and to be back, for the third year, as Main Supporter. The Festival mirrors Pureland Foundation’s belief in the power of the arts and culture to promote inclusion and social well-being and to celebrate diversity in our communities. As ever the programmers have done an incredible job in bringing together an exciting, ambitious and thought-provoking schedule of films and we look forward to seeing audiences’ reactions to these great films.”*

The BFI Flare x BAFTA Crew Mentoring programme in partnership with BFI NETWORK returns for a sixth year, offering six emerging LGBTIQ+ filmmakers an incredible opportunity to strengthen and develop their industry knowledge and professional connections. Since its launch in 2015, the programme has supported 29 LGBTIQ+ filmmakers working towards their first feature or major broadcast / online commission. Previous mentees have included producer Joy Gharoro-Akpojotor (*Blue Story* – mentee 2016), producer Eimhear O'Neill (*The Go-Gos* – mentee 2016) and writer Amrou Al-Kadhi (*Little America* – mentee 2017). Participants are matched with a senior industry mentor, based on their individual needs and ambitions as writers, directors or producers, alongside additional support from BAFTA on how to get the most out of the experience.

This year’s mentoring programme begins at BFI Flare: London LGBTIQ+ Film Festival with selected mentees getting to participate in a series of exclusive sessions with senior industry professionals and festival guests before being paired with a mentor, with meetings facilitated throughout 2020. This year’s festival UK shorts programme **GO THROUGH IT** (Saturday 28 March, 15:10, NFT1) features a number of films made by scheme alumni including **POMPEII** (writers/directors Harry Lighton, mentee 2017, Matthew Jacobs Morgan, mentee 2018, and producer Sorcha Bacon, mentee 2018), **SOMETHING IN THE CLOSET** (writer/director Nosa Eke, mentee 2018) and **SWEET MOTHER** (exec producer Garry Paton, mentee 2019).

The Festival's Industry Programme returns this year with a series of panels and masterclasses that explore contemporary LGBTIQ+ filmmaking practice. Events will examine a range of topics and will be announced in detail in the coming weeks.

Once again, BFI Flare will be in partnership with the British Council for #FiveFilmsForFreedom, which makes five LGBTIQ+ themed short films available for the world to watch online for free over the duration of the festival. Running since 2015, the programme has seen nearly 14 million people viewing one of the films in more than 200 countries and principalities, including many parts of the world where homosexuality is criminalised, and in some cases, punishable by the death penalty.

Building on the success of #FiveFilmsforFreedom, #MOREFilms4Freedom is an international collaboration between British, Syrian, Palestinian and South African filmmakers, in which three moving and urgent short films exploring LGBTIQ+ lives have been commissioned by BFI Flare, the British Council, and BFI NETWORK. The films are funded by the British Council and Producer Loran

Dunn (A DEAL WITH THE UNIVERSE) has mentored the project teams from script stage through to the edit.

BFI FLARE: LONDON LGBTIQ+ FILM FESTIVAL, 2020 FULL PROGRAMME

From 18th – 29th March at BFI Southbank, the Festival will showcase the best of the latest global LGBTIQ+ features and short films. BFI Flare is divided into three thematic strands: HEARTS, BODIES and MINDS. Following are highlights from this year's programme:

HEARTS includes films about love, romance and friendship. Bumping into an ex the day she moves into a new apartment makes Anne reflect on her past in Valerie Bisscheroux's **ANNE+ (Episodes 1-6)**, a smart and sexy web series. Taking refuge in an idyllic lake house following her recent break-up, Karen meets the mysterious Lana in **CLEMENTINE** (Dir. Lara Jean Gallagher), a moody and atmospheric debut. This year the Interbank LGBT Forum Members will support debut director Monica Zanetti's **ELLIE & ABBIE (& ELLIE'S DEAD AUNT)**, a delightful rom-com where Ellie's dead aunt has the perfect dating advice for her. But will she listen to it? A kiss between two childhood friends has dramatic repercussions in **MATTHIAS & MAXIME**, Xavier Dolan's eighth film. Grief draws out unexpected emotions and new beginnings in **MY FIONA**, a riveting feature debut from Kelly Walker. Love blossoms unexpectedly for two older Hong Kong gents in **SUK SUK** (Dir. Ray Yeung), whilst lies in the past and secrecy in the present has a potentially devastating impact on a relationship between two older women in the poignant drama, **TWO OF US** (Dir. Filippo Meneghetti). Past mistakes haunt the present and threaten a new love affair between an older woman and her patient in Suzanne Guacci's compelling melodrama, **T11 INCOMPLETE**, and in BFI Flare alum Marco Berger's **YOUNG HUNTER**, a lonely teenager gets more than he bargained for when he meets an older boy at the skate park.

BODIES includes stories of sex, identity and transformation. A varied selection of films includes Evan Purchell's **ASK ANY BUDDY**, a lovingly edited compilation of erotic gay films that are the nearest you'll get to experiencing queer life in the glory days between 1968 and 1986. Faraz Shariat's **NO HARD FEELINGS** is an incisive portrait of what it means to be an immigrant in contemporary Germany, while flamboyant fun and temper tantrums can be enjoyed in Megan Wennberg's cute foray into the world of child drag artistes, **DRAG KIDS**. Meanwhile Carter Smith's stylish gay slasher film **MIDNIGHT KISS**, and Kurtis David Harder's socio-political shocker **SPIRAL** are sure to appeal to all horror-loving scream queens.

MINDS features reflections on art, politics and community. In **BUSY INSIDE** (Dir Olga Lvoff), a therapist works with several women struggling with dissociative identity disorder, while dealing with the illness and impact of her own childhood trauma. A young undocumented teenager is confronted with deportation under the Trump administration in Patricia Vidal Delgado's **LA LEYENDA NEGRA**. Daniel Karlake's powerful documentary **FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO** is an incisive and timely documentary about four different LGBTIQ+ individuals who experience bruising encounters with organised religion. Queer Black youth in New York contend with homelessness and discrimination with dedication and humour in Elegance Bratton's **PIER KIDS**. BFI Flare presents the restoration world premiere of **DRAG BALL** (Dir, John Samson), a thrilling archive rediscovery which captures with joyful panache one of the legendary drag balls at West London's Porchester Hall. After his 1986 album Keyboard Fantasies is rediscovered, a black Trans musician recounts his life in **KEYBOARD FANTASIES: THE BEVERLY GLENN-COPELAND STORY** (Dir. Posy Dixon), while the history of queer women on screen is explored in the insightful and entertaining documentary, **QUEERING THE SCRIPT** (Gabrielle Zilkha).

BFI Flare also includes a wide range of events, talks and debates including illuminating and insightful histories of representation on screen exploring intersex, queer disability and lesbian culture on

screen as well as a focus on bodily autonomy and consent, the legendary festival quiz, photography exhibition and a family-focused fun day.

BFI Flare's **BIG GAY FILM QUIZ** (Mon 23rd March) returns for a fifth year running, inviting you to put your queer knowledge to the test, whether you're a film buff or a novice, everyone is welcome and stands a chance to be crowned the ultimate queer film genius.

Continuing the dialogue that was explored in last year's in-depth discussion on Operation Spanner looking at consent, bodily autonomy, sexuality and lifestyle choices, BFI Flare celebrates the 25th anniversary of **BLOODSISTERS: LEATHER, DYKES AND SADOMASOCHISM** (Sat 21st March). Following the restoration world premiere of Michelle Handelman's film, join BFI Flare programmer Jay Bernard and a panel of filmmakers, writers and activists for a discussion on **BODILY AUTONOMY** (Sat 21st March) and how consent laws are still being used to frame legislation around sexuality, fetishes, porn and body modification.

Intersex columnist and writer Valentino Vecchietti hosts an engaging, informative and illustrated overview of intersex culture, **INTERSEX STORIES: ACTIVISM, RESISTANCE AND BEING** (Tue 24th March). Told through narrative storytelling, documentary, curated Instagram feeds and protest, this remarkable journey connects intersex people across the world seeking to gain equal rights.

BFI Flare guest programmer Tara Brown presents **WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN HERE** (Sat 21st March), a discussion event that highlights the importance of queer disability representation within the landscape of film itself and access to the festival scene. This illustrated in-depth panel event will take a closer look at the intersection of queerness, disability and film, including contributions from some of the leading figures in the movement for accessibility and queer disability. This event will be followed by a zine-making workshop to capture the conversation beyond the panel discussion. £3 tickets are available for D/deaf and disabled patrons.

Expanding on this important theme of queer disability representation and accessibility, Tara Brown will also host a discussion exploring disability, race and queerness on screen following a special archive presentation of Waris Hussein's **SIXTH HAPPINESS** (Sat 28 March).

BFI Flare Programmer Emma Smart and Dr Clara Bradbury-Rance, author of *Lesbian Cinema After Queer Theory*, will explore the myriad ways queer women have been reflected on screen since the earliest days of film in **LESBIAN CINEMA: FROM SUBTEXT TO VISIBILITY** (Sun 22nd March), a free, thought-provoking event with a panel of experts who will discuss shifting portrayals of women on screen.

'Are we sitting comfortably?' Drag duo Adam All and Apple Derrieres give us a whimsical morning of storytelling in **DRAG QUEEN STORY TIME** (Sat 21st March). A free family event celebrating the diversity that exists within the LGBTIQ+ community by introducing 'difference' in a positive way, our drag storytellers imagine a world in which people can present as they wish and where dress up is real. Based on the original Drag Queen Story Hour, created by Michelle Tea and RADAR Productions in San Francisco.

After the success of last year's much celebrated *Transparent Love* exhibition, BFI Flare has invited leading London Photographer Amanda Searle to return with a new curated collection of photographs exploring transgender lives. Once again commissioned by All About Trans, Amanda is in the process of shooting this year's, as yet untitled, show.

Don your best Ver-sayce and leave your inhibitions at the door for a night you will never forget. Join award-winning Baby Lane as your host for a trash-tastic interactive screening, **SHOWGIRLS SHADE-ALONG** (Fri 20th March), bringing Paul Verhoeven's outrageously camp classic to life as you've never experienced it before. This special event will screen alongside Jeffrey McHale's fascinating *Showgirls* documentary, **YOU DON'T NOMI** (Fri 20th March, Sun 22nd March) which puts one of cinema's most baffling creations under the microscope.

The Festival fun continues with our popular free entry **BFI FLARE CLUB NIGHTS** at BFI Southbank's BFI Bar & Kitchen with an eclectic line-up of DJ's including: The Batty Mama (Fri 20th March), Twang (Sat 21st March), Lavender Nights (Thu 26th March) and Club Kali (Fri 27th March). Joining us for the **BFI FLARE CLOSING NIGHT PARTY** (Sat 28th March) in the BFI Southbank Foyer we have DJ sets from Jonathan Kemp & Sadie Lee (Lower The Tone), Unskinny Bop and GIN (Nite Dykez) representing Faggamuffin Bloc Party, Hackney Carnival's ground-breaking QTIPOC sound system.

The BFI Southbank will also host the popular press and industry (P&I) screenings for all those with accreditation. For further details about Press and Industry accreditation and the full programme see www.bfi.org.uk/flare

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PRESS CONTACTS

Mia Farrell, PR Manager, BFI Festivals

Mia.Farrell@bfi.org.uk / Tel: 020 7957 8970 / 07774 332 926

Sarah Bemand, Press Officer, Cultural Programme – Archive & Heritage, BFI

Sarah.Bemand@bfi.org.uk / Tel: 02079578940 / 07752370745

Victoria Millington, Press & PR Coordinator and Flare Accreditation, BFI

Flare.Pressaccreditation@bfi.org.uk / Tel: 020 7957 4833

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NOTES TO EDITORS

BFI Flare: London LGBTIQ+ Film Festival is the UK's longest running queer 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 LGBTIQ+ 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, Emma Smart and guest programmer Tara Brown, led by Festivals Director, Tricia Tuttle.

The 2019 edition of BFI Flare: London LGBTIQ+ Film Festival included 53 feature films, an expanded industry programme, selected films on BFI Player VOD service, a series of special events and archive screenings. fiveFilms4freedom saw BFI Flare offer five LGBTIQ+ short films for free across the world and promoted through the British Council's global networks. The full programme was made available on 20th February. The festival ran from 21st - 31st March 2019. www.bfi.org.uk/Flare

The Pureland Foundation

The Pureland Foundation supports institutions, charities and programmes that promote social, spiritual and emotional wellness, with an emphasis on art and music.

Pure Land in Buddhism refers to the realm of higher consciousness, peace and harmony. Although not based in any religion, the Foundation seeks to create and promote the interconnectedness and sense of “pure land” in our daily lives.

The Pureland Foundation was founded by Bruno Wang, a Chinese philanthropist, cultural patron and businessman. The Foundation reflects Mr. Wang’s well-established interests in meditation, holistic wellbeing, art and music.

www.purelandfoundation.com

About the BFI

The BFI is the UK’s lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a cultural charity that:

- Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of World Cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online
- Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world
- Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers
- Works with Government and Industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally

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

BFI Flare Sponsors

In 2020 the Festival is delighted to introduce a number of new supporters and welcome back some of its most valued and enduring partners.

We are delighted to welcome back Pureland Foundation as our Main Supporter for the third year. Such significant and continued support we could not value more highly. We could not deliver BFI Flare without the continuing support of the Department for Digital, Culture Media & Sport. American Airlines are flying back in to ensure we can continue to bring some of the very best talent to the UK. The May Fair Hotel returns to accommodate the Festival’s special guests, marking it the 11th year of this fantastic, long-standing partnership. We are delighted to welcome back Mishcon De Reya for a second year as Official Partner. They will also be joined by our newest Official Partner, PGIM who are supporting Flare for the first time this year. We would also like to thank our returning special screening sponsors, the Interbank LGBT Forum for their continued support of the Festival. And special thanks to our Media partners Attitude and Diva, and our Distribution Partner Impact. Similarly our sincere thanks go out to our new and returning in kind partners: Barefoot Wine, Dalston’s Soda, Konditor, Little Creatures Pale Ale and Pink Pepper Gin, and lastly, but by no means least, our other hugely important Funding Contributors, Venue Partners and Community Partners.

Further information on our BFI Flare Sponsors can be found here: <https://we.tl/t-A1ECtB8Yqx>

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