

Queer festival lets community see rare films

■ This year's event features movies about drag queens, a lesbian model and wrestling

By Lisa Toth
Oregon Daily Emerald

When Julia Query, the co-director of the first University Queer Film Festival, came to campus in 1992, anti-gay state ballot measures were trying to define homosexuality as perverse, abnormal, immoral and unnatural.

This was the atmosphere that led Query to the office of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Alliance, and her first encounter with queer films at the University.

The LGBTQA "was showing a lesbian movie I had already seen, and it became apparent that we needed a film festival," she said.

Query said people were extremely excited by the idea of a queer film festival. The first year of the festival, she said they showed a lesbian film.

"We were so starved for lesbian films," Query said. "It was great to see our imagery on screen."

The film festival has become a tradition on campus that continues nine years later. The University's Queer Film Festival, presented by the Student Activities Resource Office, begins today and runs through Sunday. The festival will bring together a collection of homosexual, bisexual and transgendered amateur films, including short and full-length films, as well as documentaries.

"We created an oasis — where straights and gays could show their support — and opposition to the rabid homophobia politics of the time," Query said. "It was a place for something urban to happen outside of Portland."

Query said the film festival, which is the second-largest gay event in the state, created a foundation for people to discuss their feelings and debate the imagery presented in the films.

"It became bigger than pride in a way," Query said.

Starting the festival helped Query to eventually become a filmmaker herself. Her newest film, "Live Nude Girls UNITE!" is a documentary about an organized stripper club in San Francisco. The film was recently bought by Cinemark Theater, and it will play at the Cinema 21 theater in Portland beginning Feb. 26.

For this year's festival, two-time event director Morgen Smith said she has a handful of non-mainstream films planned to attract a crowd. The event will culminate Sunday at the Hult Center with an evening with featured speaker John Waters, a writer and director renowned for his twisted sense of humor.

Debby Martin, a project coordinator in the Cultural Forum, has helped to host the festival every year. She said the self-supporting event offers the queer community an opportunity to come together to watch the films.

Smith brought a jury committee together fall term to pick the winning national and international flicks that will be shown during the festival.

Hanna Perrson, a freshman and volunteer on the jury, said out of the eight short films, "kalin's prayer," directed by DeSales, was her favorite.

The film is set in Tulsa, Okla., where a crack-addicted lesbian model battles for the love of an attorney while facing the memories of sexual abuse.

"I hadn't seen anything like it," Perrson said. "It was so abstract."

Perrson said she wanted to be on this year's selection committee be-

cause she felt she could relate to the content of many of the films.

"It is issues that I have seen happen to me and my friends," Perrson said. "It is something that expresses people's lives on different levels."

Perrson also said that the rareness of queer festivals should be an incentive for students, faculty and members of the community to attend.

"There are not very many queer festivals," she said. "[The films are for] a collection of people who don't get exposed and who don't cater to commercial media."

Smith recommended festival participants check out "Queens for a Night," a short film directed by Christopher Gomersall that will be shown Friday. The film focuses on Southern drag queens in their 60s.

"Below the Belt," a short film directed by Kaizzad Navrose, addresses harassment and death caused by homophobia in the United States. The plot concentrates on a member of a college wrestling team who is injured because of the presence of homosexual issues in the locker room.

"It begins in the hospital with the kid who as been hurt because of homophobia," Smith said. "But instead of being the kid who was the product of homophobia, he's the one who started it who got hurt."

Smith said the five-minute film, "Baking with Butch," directed by Melissa Levin and Nina Levitt, is sure to be a hit because it pokes fun at Martha Stewart.

"This year, it is so many documentaries," Smith said. "Go to see what is out there — the short films, the competition winners — to see what people are doing that can be done pretty well on a low budget and aren't mainstream but could be eventually."



Courtesy photo

9th Annual University Queer Film Festival

Feb. 15: Paragraph 175
Feb. 16: Short Film Competition Winners
Feb. 17: Divine Trash
Feb. 18: An Evening with John Waters
All events begin at 8 p.m.

Ticket information:
Individual Films (At the door):
Room 180 PLC
Students with ID: \$4.00
General Public: \$5.00

Campus film pass (All three films):
Room 180 PLC
Students with ID: \$8.00
General Public: \$10.00
The campus film pass does not guarantee a seat, please arrive early.
An Evening with John Waters:
Hult Center, Silva Hall (Reserved seats)
Students with ID: \$12.00
General Public: \$18.00

For more information, call the Student Activities Resource Office at 346-4000.

Source: University Queer Film Festival

Wanted: 3 suspects in series of local store robberies

■ EPD offers a \$500 reward for leads resulting in arrests

By Darren Freeman
Oregon Daily Emerald

Police believe three people may be responsible for a string of robberies of Eugene businesses in the past two months.

Among the dozen stores hit, the closest to the University are Jabberwocky Cards and Gifts, at 1308 E. Hilyard St., and Tom's Market, at 1490 E.

19th Ave.

Police believe one woman robbed both Jabberwocky Cards and Gifts and Euphoria Chocolate Company, 199 E. 5th Ave., on Jan. 31. Witnesses described the suspect as a white woman in her 20s, about 5 feet 6 inches tall and about 130 pounds. The woman used threatening notes to demand money.

Another suspect, believed to have recently robbed at least three businesses, has been described as a white woman in her 30s, 5 feet 6 inches tall

and 130 pounds. This suspect uses a knife to make her demands.

Police believe she has robbed the Check into Cash, 48 W. 18th Ave., and Jasper's Deli, 1504 Coburg Road. She is also believed to have robbed Ashley's Bento, 2578 W. Willamette St., twice.

The Eugene Police Department is offering a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrest of these two women. Police haven't ruled out the possibility that all the above robberies were committed by the same woman.

The third suspect in the recent string of robberies is a white male who is believed to have robbed Circle K, 296 E. 13th Ave.; Dari-Mart, 2429 E. Hilyard St.; and Tom's Market. He is described as in his 20s or 30s, about 5 feet 7 inches tall and 160 pounds. He is said to use a fixed-bladed knife during robberies.

"This amount of robberies is normal for this time of year," EPD Sgt. Scott McKee said, adding that the busiest time of the year for robberies is typically the holiday season because

increased spending makes businesses more tempting to would-be thieves.

McKee advised anyone witnessing a robbery to comply with the robber's demands and try to study the person's appearance to aid police.

"Typically, a robber is a desperate kind of criminal, and we find out often that it's motivated by addiction," McKee said. "When somebody needs a fix and he has no money, they go out and get it. We find these kinds of people difficult to deal with because they're so desperate."

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