

FILM

Moving pictures

Eugene film fest validates the queer experience

BY TODD SIMMONS

If film and gluttony are two of your favorite vices, get ready for a week-

end binge of features, shorts and documentaries as the bursting-at-the-seams University of Oregon Queer Film Festival presents its 12th annual weekend program Feb. 20 to 22 in Eugene.

A student-produced event since its inception, the festival isn't as large as some of its big-city counterparts, but what it lacks in size, it makes up for in variety: Seven features and documentaries, most international in origin or focus, accompany more than a dozen shorts.

Among this year's notables: *A.K.A.*, an inventive British drama based on the colorful life of its director, Duncan Roy; *Dangerous Living*, an ambitious documentary look at the harrowing lives led by queers across five continents; and *Hope Along the Wind*, Portland director Eric Slade's award-winning biopic on the late legendary activist Harry Hay.

"It's fascinating to see, through these films, what it means to be queer in other countries and cultures," says festival coordinator Douglas Hopper. "Understanding queer culture, particularly in the developing world, helps you understand the commonality that connects us."

Several features screened last fall as part of the Portland Lesbian & Gay Film Festival. In addition to *Dangerous Living* and *A.K.A.*—the latter was Portland's closing-night film—Hopper has scheduled *Suddenly*, Argentinean director Diego Lerman's lesbian comic drama; *Don't You Worry, It'll Probably Pass*, a coming-of-age documentary project from Swedish director Cecilia Neant-Falk; and *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*, the story of the queer civil rights pioneer who worked alongside Martin Luther King Jr.,



"The Milkman," Canadian director Ken Takahashi's short about an unlikely connection between two very different men, screens during the U of O Queer Film Festival

co-directed by Nancy Kates and Bennett Singer.

Hopper didn't flinch in opting to open with a Spanish-language, woman-focused film. "*Suddenly* is just incredible. It's poetic, the cinematography is beautiful, and the acting is subtle but powerful," he says. "The great part about our local community is that it's so integrated in terms of gender that both women and men will enjoy this film."

Suddenly's 7 p.m. Friday screening will be followed immediately by a free reception. Then at 10 p.m. will be a trio of shorts exploring gender and transformation.

Saturday's program includes "Love Life," which will be presented by San Francisco director Nanci Gaglio as part of the evening's screening of shorts competition winners.

Sunday's program concludes with the *Audience Choice Short Film Competition*, in which eight films will compete for a \$200 prize.

Hundreds of movie fans from Eugene and surrounding areas are expected at this year's event. "Few media bring us together in the same way that film does," Hopper states. "For many of us, it validates the queer experience." □

Contact the UNIVERSITY OF OREGON QUEER FILM FESTIVAL at 541-346-0007 or www.uoregon.edu/~qff.

TODD SIMMONS is a Eugene writer whose work has appeared in *The Advocate* and in several members of *The New York Times Regional Newspaper Group*.

Schedule

The University of Oregon Queer Film Festival screens in Room 180 of Prince Lucien Campbell Hall, 14th Avenue and Kincaid Street, with the exception of *A.K.A.*, which will show at Bijou Art Cinemas, 492 E. 13th Ave.

Full festival passes are \$5 for U of O students and \$7 for the general public. Single-screening tickets are not available. Buy passes at the university ticket office in Erb Memorial Union (541-346-4363) or at any screening. Free events that do not require a pass are noted.

Friday, Feb. 20

7 p.m. — *Suddenly*

9 p.m. — Opening Night Reception

10 p.m. — *Trans-Formations*: Shorts program that includes "Neon," "Saul Searching," "Strap 'Em Down: The World of Drag Kings"

Saturday, Feb. 21

12:30 p.m. — *A.K.A.* (Bijou Art Cinemas, free)

4 p.m. — *Don't You Worry, It'll Probably Pass*

7 p.m. — *Shorts: Jury Winners & Honorable Mentions*: "The Milkman," "Salty Wet," "Love Life," "Mother's Day," "Butch Dyke," "Just Be It," "Eroticism"

Sunday, Feb. 22

1 p.m. — *Proof*: Documentary screenings of *Hope Along the Wind* and *Word Is Out*

3 p.m. — *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin* (free)

6 p.m. — *Dangerous Living*

8 p.m. — *Audience Choice Short Film Competition*: "Fairies," "Seventy," "Pussies from Outta Space," "Jan-Michael Vincent Is My Muse," "Blue Tuesday," "Paradisco," "How to Lose a Guy," "6 p.m. in America" (director of winning film will receive a \$200 prize)

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