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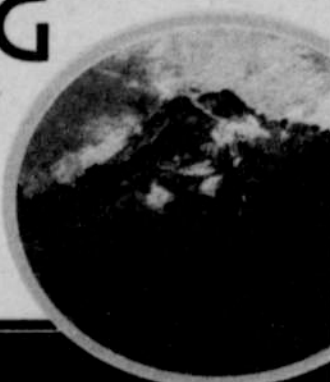
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QUEER DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL CELEBRATES CINEMA, COMMUNITY

BY GARY MORRIS

Portland's profile as a locale for queer media happenings gets a boost starting May 29 with the second annual QDoc: Portland Queer Documentary Film Festival.

Last year's event, the first queer documentary festival in the United States, was as much about community as it was cinema, with huge crowds of every description streaming into Clinton Street Theater, and more crowds waiting outside hoping to get a ticket. The generally high quality of the films, and the long roster of filmmakers attending, didn't hurt.

This year, QDoc is four days instead of three, with an equally strong selection of recent docs from around the world on all things queer. Again, most of the

filmmakers will be in attendance for Q & A's and schmoozing.

The closing night feature is Rob Epstein and Richard Schmeicklen's 1984 classic *The Times of Harvey Milk*. (See sidebar.) The opening night feature, set in Italy, is *Suddenly, Last Winter*, but it might as easily have been called *The Winter of Our Discontent*. The winter is 2007, and the discontent is a familiar one: the frustrations of the never-ending process of trying to break through the fire wall of church and state to gain our civil rights. The couple at the center of the story, Gustav Hofer and Luca Ragazzi, who also directed the film, appear initially as characters in a fairy tale. Witty vignettes show them happily going about their daily lives while a voice-over says things like, "Our heroes are wondering: 'What's for lunch?' " They're not closeted in the least—as the voice-over says: "Hide their love? They wouldn't

know how to. Neither of them can even keep a secret." But the bubble world of the couple, who have been together for eight years, is about the break as they start to focus on recent political developments. Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's homophobic reign has ended, and the new left-inclined Italian legislature is poised to pass a domestic partnership law. Unfortunately, the Vatican, aligned with surprisingly blatant neo-fascist groups and enabled by weak-kneed politicians, has stepped in to stop the "disease" of homosexuals seeking to "destroy the family." Gustav and Luca decide to make a documentary about this

