

who plays his boyfriend in the film, will be at the screening September 29 to discuss the film including the sure-to-be-asked question of what differentiates graphic sex in art films from plain, old-fashioned porn.

Other festival highlights include opening and closing films *Gayby* and *Cloudburst*. It's unusual for the event to open with a comedy, preferring heady dramas or documentaries such as last year's critically acclaimed *We Were Here* directed by local David Weissman. But this year switches it up with a flick that may actually be more familiar to Portland thirty-somethings than a national LGBT audience. *Gayby* follows two childhood friends, both of whom are single, one of whom is gay, who decide to follow through with a youthful promise to have a child together ... the old-fashioned way. It explores the intersections of family, friendship, sex and co-parenting in a way that is sincere and relatable.

*Cloudburst*, starring the exceptional Olympia Dukakis, should also be a gem. Though the film is not about gay marriage per se, it brings this current political issue into a very personal realm of two elderly women desperate to stay together, humanizing a normally polarizing topic. Stella and Dot have been together for three decades, but as they begin to become unable to care for themselves their homophobic grandchildren try to break them apart, so they escape their nursing home for the marriage promised-land of Canada.

Through all the changes, in both name and culture, PLGFF has endeavored to represent a wide swath of our community and has included trans subject matter almost every year. This year *Trans* aims to combine the verity of documentary with the emotion of fiction, making it especially accessible to a mainstream audience. "You run the risk of falling into the 'talking head' trap," says director Chris Arnold, "and because [trans] stories have such a powerful emotional quotient, I find myself turning to other storytelling tools of narrative features ... like music."

Queer film, like queer politics and society, has come a long way since PLGFF's beginning nearly two decades ago, and this year's fest is a good example of how we have moved on from the campy and flip gay romps of the 90s to rich and exciting features that would do well in any fest. Silly "gay flicks" may be a thing of the past but salient and meaningful queer film convocation is alive and well. ■

The film festival runs September 28 to October 6. See [plgff.org](http://plgff.org) and check out full reviews of selected films at [JustOut.com](http://JustOut.com).

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