

## “It Runs In The Family” premieres in Vancouver - MetroVan Independent News



Vancouver filmmaker, Joella Cabalu, proudly awaits the premiere of her feature documentary “It Runs In The Family,” an inspiring story of acceptance within modern queer family life amongst the Filipino diaspora, at the 2016 Vancouver Queer Film Festival. The documentary follows the Cabalu family who meets their queer relatives living in California and Manila. The Cabalu family seeks answers on how they can make peace with family relationships, maintain their Roman Catholic faith, and accept their sexuality.

Produced, directed and written by Cabalu, “It Runs In the Family” has recently had successful major screenings in San Francisco and New York and has also garnered the Audience Choice Award at the Seattle Asian American Film Festival. This feature documentary touches deeply on Cabalu’s gay younger brother, Jay, who is a mixed-media collage artist. In the documentary, Jay creates a new piece of collage reflecting his journey and its significance on his challenge and struggle being gay while maintaining the Catholic faith.

Here’s MVI’s interview with Joella Cabalu: **“It Runs In the Family” is very personal to you. Some families would just keep this all in and ignore the fact. Why is it important to put the story out there?** I think the film is important because it reflects the experience of people of color who are also LGBTQ that are not widely represented in media. Throughout the journey of making this film, I have met many LGBTQ people in similar situations with their own families whether they are Filipino or Asian, raised Catholic or not. That power of representation carries so much value and it is inspirational for folks who may have encountered similar challenges. **How did you manage to stay calm and objective when the story is about your own brother’s struggles? Then the story branching out to your other gay relatives, how did they welcome your idea? What are the challenges and how did you conquer those challenges?** It was a balancing act to be a sister and director during the making of the film. My relatives were so supportive of the project, much to my surprise but I think it was an opportunity for them to openly talk about their own experiences. It was definitely a challenge

to broach a subject that is typically unspoken but I think it was through constant communication and checking in with people's comfort levels that I was able to create a space for open and non-judgemental dialogue. **The Catholic Church and its stand on homosexuality and gay marriage is a pretty sensitive issue, what do you think has to change?** I think it would be arrogant of me to attempt recommending changes to the Catholic Church but I can say that what has changed for me during the making of this film is that my world view has expanded and I've been challenged to be more inclusive in that view. Again in this journey, I have met LGBTQ folks who are also Catholic, Christian, Sikh, Indigenous, religious or faith-based and I think the two identities are not mutually exclusive. **Just like you, I also have a gay younger brother who struggled for acceptance, understanding and compassion. How difficult is it for you to watch your brother grow up and find that confidence to finally come out?** Even though Jay is my younger brother, I look up to him. In whatever traits that I lack, Jay embodies them – boldness, willingness to call out an injustice and I think he's developed those qualities because of the mere fact that he felt different growing up. During the filming, I was surprised to discover the inner conflict he had struggled with when growing up because he did a great job of masking those feelings. I'm forever grateful to Jay for being vulnerable and trusting me with his story and I am and have always been proud of him. **As a filmmaker, what's more important to you, FAITH or TRUTH?** I don't think faith (if you mean a belief in something or someone) and truth are independent from each other in filmmaking. Faith comes into play especially in documentary when the outcome or ending is unknown and you must believe that the story will reveal itself to you in time. And truth or rather the pursuit of truth is your guide along that journey. "It Runs in the Family" is scheduled to premiere at the 2016 Vancouver Queer Film Festival on Tuesday, August 16 at 9:00 PM at Cineplex Odeon International Village Cinemas. Special guests at the premiere include Joella Cabalu, Jay Cabalu and Cari Green. The film was also produced by Cari Green, Philip Webb, and Brad Danks, and produced in association with OUTtv and Meaningful Films Inc. The film will also have its national broadcast premiere on OUTtv in October 2016. Like it on Facebook:

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Watch the trailer here: