

## From Activism to Glam, VQFF Elevates Diversity - Northernstars.ca

25



Image from the film *Strike a Pose* courtesy of Lisa Guarnieri. Used with permission.

(August 11, 2016 – Vancouver, BC) Late summer in Vancouver is often a sleepy meandering season, with long walks around the seawall and lingering visits to coffee shops and for those seeking stimulating and thought provoking cinema to complement the late summer vibe, the Vancouver Queer Film Festival has a diverse selection of films. In an era of rainbow sidewalks and marriage equality, many still struggle and the VQFF provides a platform for those voices yearning to be heard, while creating community space for dialogue and respectful exchange. For 28 years, the fest has been offering everything from exuberant celebrations to quietly contemplative films that portray all the complexities of the queer experience.

Under the artistic direction of Shana Myara, it's billed as the largest Queer Arts event in Western Canada. The 2016 festival runs from Aug 11-21, with a splashy launch gala party at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. Award winning choreographers Jose Gutierrez Xtravaganza and Kevin Stea, both celebrated for their role in Madonna's famed *Blonde Ambition* tour will be the featured guests. The documentary *Strike a Pose* (pictured above), part of the gala evening, follows their rise to fame and the exultant rush of being true to one's passion.

Also from New York, filmmaker Ingrid Jungermann's *Women Who Kill* is featured, fresh from the Tribeca festival. Described as "A gripping, terrifying, awkward, wry, and at times eerily prescient depiction of the vagaries of modern romance," it's for anyone that struggles with trying to carve out a relationship in the era of short attention spans and commitment phobia.

Local filmmaker Jason Karman's five minute short *The Promise* will be playing as part of the Coast is Queer line-up, a selection of films from BC creators. [Click here](#) for the full list of films.

*It Runs in the Family*, production still. Used with permission.

Vancouverite Joella Cabablu will also be in attendance for *It Runs in the Family* (pictured), a documentary about the Filipino queer experience. When Cabablu discovered her brother was gay, she also learned several other relatives were queer and willing to share their experience, so she traveled to Oakland, California and the Philippines to tell their stories.

"We are delivering a world class program of queer cinema that will both entertain and provoke queer communities, both local and international", said Executive Director Stephanie Goodwin.

As part of the Out on Screen charitable organization, the overarching goal of the festival is to illuminate, celebrate, and advance queer lives through film, education and dialogue.

The Vancouver Queer Film Festival shows at various venues including the Vancouver Playhouse, International Village, SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, The Rio Theatre, and the Vancity Theatre.

Based in Vancouver, Roberta McDonald is West Coast Editor for Northernstars.ca. She is a best selling writer, arts journalist and photographer. She has profiled extraordinary filmmakers, including Ang Lee and Sturla Gunnerson. Her short film *The Spiral* was released in 2014 and she is currently writing her first feature screenplay.