

# Two killer lesbian-themed films to catch at the Vancouver Queer Film Festival this weekend

by [Adrian Mack](#) on August 12th, 2016 at 12:50 PM

•



2 of 2

- Kimmy Schmidt's Dylan Gelula nails the sweet pain of adolescence in director Kerem Sanga's *First Girl I Loved*.

Artistic director Shana Myara is the not-so-secret weapon at the [Vancouver Queer Film Festival](#), which launched its 216 edition on Thursday (August 11) with the fine French drama *Summertime*. Sticking to lesbian-themed entries in the otherwise abundantly inclusive schedule, Myana has brought in another two outstanding entries for your weekend viewing pleasure.

Screening tonight and Saturday (August 13), [First Girl I Loved](#) is built on the painfully accurate, wincingly awkward interactions between teens Anne and Sasha, both 17, both reckoning with their sexuality in middle-class suburban California.

Director Kerem Sanga's gift for quantum observation is one thing, but it's the performances that make this Sundance audience favourite really sing. Once those girls start beaming goofy and uncertain messages at one another, you want to look away, or maybe give them some space and privacy.

Leads Dylan Gelula and Brianna Hildebrand are more familiar to us as caricatures; Gelula as the eye-rolling teen bitch-queen in *Kimmy Schmidt* and Hildebrand as Negasonic Teenage Warhead from *Deadpool*. Here they

play—my God!—recognizable human beings, and they both feast on the opportunity. As Annie’s sweetly confused (and sometimes *aggressively* confused) best friend, Mateo Arias similarly gets to graduate from Disney’s tween sunshine factory and put his offbeat charisma to good use.

There’s also a quirky buzz to the film’s supporting cast, with the ever-watchable Pamela Adlon (*Louie*) as Anne’s single mom, battling suburban conservatives outside the home, her own disorientation within.

The film climaxes with a beautifully played-out confrontation that also includes comedian Tim Heidecker’s wearily pragmatic school counsellor and a colleague played by *Workaholics* super-goof Erik Griffin. But even those two are quietly outrun by Jennifer Prediger as an assistant principal all too ready to cede her authority inside a Gordian knot of clashing sensitivities.

Coming at you from a much harder edge, the wickedly funny [Women Who Kill](#), screening Saturday (August 13), crystallizes equally flummoxed hipster attitudes as it sends writer-director-star Ingrid Jungermann wandering through (where else?) queer Brooklyn on a deadpan path to emotional self-destruction.

She plays Morgan, who podcasts about women murderers with her former flame Jean (Ann Carr, of *Louie*, again). The film begins with these two underemployed wiseacres paying queasy tribute to child-killer Myra Hindley’s style sense, and the film stays inside that coyly provocative groove throughout. Best of all is Jungermann’s dialogue, which ricochets from one tangent to the next, dropping depth charges on its way back to the one subject Morgan can never avoid—her lethal intimacy issues.

These are put to the test yet again when Sheila (*A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*) Vand’s vampy Simone, who may or may not be a serial killer, turns up at Morgan’s organic food coop.

What follows is more acrid comedy than thriller, but Morgan’s alienation has real bite, and Jungermann’s hilariously flat affect sells it while keeping us endeared to her character. She’s a real star, and *Women Who Kill*, queer themed or not, is a must-see for anyone impressed with some of the tyro indie filmmaking (a la *Fort Tilden* or Desiree Akhavan’s *Appropriate Behaviour*) coming out of the New York culture engine these days.

**Both *First Girl I Loved* and *Women Who Kill* are followed by post-screening Q&As with directors Kerem Sanga and Ingrid Jungermann**

Women Who Kill Trailer - VQFF 2016



