



Vancouver Queer Film Festival
Announces Canadian Premiere
Opening and Closing Films
and Festival Spotlight Series
August 15 – 25, 2019

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(Vancouver, B.C. – June 17, 2019) **Out On Screen** is pleased to announce the 31st **Vancouver Queer Film Festival (VQFF)** award-winning Opening and Closing Gala films, as well as Festival Spotlights for 2019: **Coming Into Our Own: Youth Spotlight**, **Queer Kinship**, **A Higher Power**, and **projecting brilliance: a two-spirit showcase**. With more than 100 films from 27 countries, the Festival will run from August 15 to 25, 2019 at the Cineplex Odeon International Village Cinemas, SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, the York Theatre, VIFF Vancity Theatre, and the Vancouver Playhouse.

Curated by Artistic Director, **Anoushka Ratnarajah**, VQFF 2019 opens at the Vancouver Playhouse with the Canadian Premiere of Leon Le's **Song Lang** (Vietnam/U.S.A.), an exquisitely stylized paean to *cải lương* (a form of modern Vietnamese folk opera), a queer romance and gangster film that stars Vietnamese popstar, Isaac. Set in the richly imagined and dilapidated streets of 1990's Saigon, **Song Lang** is a gritty underworld noir hiding a tender, romantic heart. This first feature by Vietnamese-American filmmaker, Le, tenderly captures the romanticized visual style of Wong Kar-Wai like a faded family photograph. *Song Lang* is artfully filmed entirely in Vietnam and won 13 film awards including the 2018 Vietnamese Golden Kite Award for Best Feature Film, Best Cinematography, and Best Actor for Lien Binh Phat's portrayal of protagonist Dung Thunderbolt.

"The films at this year's VQFF are daring in both their scope and artistry. Queer and trans filmmakers are taking bigger narrative and aesthetic risks, and this year we see stories on screen that move beyond the more simplistic coming out narratives that are still popular in mainstream cinema", said Artistic Director Anoushka Ratnarajah. *"The filmmakers featured on our silver screens this year are creating art that pushes boundaries and taking audiences into new queer territories."*

VQFF's popular spotlight series continues with **Coming Into Our Own: Youth Spotlight**, where queer and trans youth shine while meeting challenges with creativity and courage. In **No Box For Me: An Intersex Story** (France), two young intersex folks connect with each other through letters and shared stories. In **Solace** (U.S.A.) and **Jules of Light and Dark** (U.S.A.), unlikely friendships prove to be defining and transformative for the young heroines at the center of these stories. The Youth Gala on August 17th, **Coming Into Our Own: Youth Shorts**, features a collection of films that represent the diversity of experiences that young queer people navigate as they come of age and step into their power.

The **Queer Kinship Spotlight** explores how familial and kinship ties often hold a complicated place in queer hearts. The **Queer Family** shorts program shows the ways in which our families of origin hurt, surprise and delight us. **Our Dance of Revolution** (Canada) explores the work of Black queer people fostering reciprocal community care in the absence of biological familial support and alienation from whitewashed queerness. **The Garden Left Behind** (U.S.A.) shows trans women of colour finding solidarity and comfort by sharing their stories and standing up for each other.

Faith, religion, the supernatural; the quest for a connection to something bigger than ourselves, whether it be god, the universe, spirit or an artistic calling, are themes that weave through the films in **A Higher Power Spotlight**. **Transfinite** (Canada) takes us through many realms where queer and trans people of colour step into their powers to confront hate and change their worlds. **The Gospel of Eureka** (U.S.A.) and **Gay Chorus Deep South** (U.S.A.) both explore the complex relationships between queer and trans people and Christianity in the United States.

projecting brilliance: a two-spirit showcase widens its focus beyond artistic discipline and ancestral roots to truly celebrate the brilliance that two-spirit/indigiqueer artists hold within. **all our relations: explorations on indigiqueer kinship** showcases an array of documentary and narrative film that invites audiences into the nuance of these relationships on screen. With **an evening of queer indigenous performance** (multidisciplinary artists Beric Manywounds and Anthony Hudson (Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde) will showcase their solo performance pieces, each individually blending a hybrid of film, performance and theatre.

VQFF's Closing Gala Film is the Canadian Premiere of a positive, feel-good LGBTQ comedy from Italy, **An Almost Ordinary Summer** (Italy) by Simone Godano. The film pays homage to the entertaining romantic comedies of Nancy Meyers, about two aging patriarchs who bring their two very different families together on vacation to announce their engagement.

The Centrepiece Gala Film, as previously announced, is **José** (Guatemala) by Chinese-American filmmaker, Li CHENG, which won the 2018 Queer Lion Award at the prestigious Venice Film Festival.

Early Bird passes for the 2019 Vancouver Queer Film Festival are already available for sale at www.queerfilmfestival.ca and all film tickets will be available for purchase on Monday, July 8. Full ticketing details, including pricing, can be found at www.queerfilmfestival.ca/tickets.

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About Out On Screen

Out On Screen is a charitable organization that illuminates, celebrates and advances queer lives through film, education and dialogue. The Vancouver Queer Film Festival creates a dynamic platform for queer cinema that reflects a diversity of experiences while connecting and strengthening our communities. The award-winning Out In Schools anti-bullying program brings age-appropriate queer cinema into secondary school classrooms to combat homophobia and transphobia. Out On Screen is proud to be among the leaders in Canada working to create an equitable society where sexual and gender diversity are embraced. www.outonscreen.com

Photos available on: [Media](#)

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