REEL DESIRES

Chennai International
Queer Film Festival

16, 17 & 18
August 2024

A Festival of shorts, feature films and documentaries
on sexuality & gender diversity

REEL DESIRES
CHENNAI INTERNATIONAL
QUEER FILM FESTIVAL 2024

NOTE

REEL DESIRES
CHENNAI INTERNATIONAL
QUEER FILM FESTIVAL 2024

We welcome you to the 12th annual edition of Reel Desires: Chennai International Queer Film Festival. Reel Desires features films, shorts and documentaries showcasing sexuality and gender diversity issues. This year's line-up consists of 20 films from nine countries, selected via a community-led review process. The principal organisers of CIQFF 2024 are Orinam and Goethe-Institut Chennai, working in collaboration with Nirangal Charitable Trust and SAATHII.

Commencing Friday Aug 16, 2024, the film festival opens with Love and Let Love, an evocative short by Shailaja Padindala (2024) that examines unconventional love in couples of two generations. Other highlights of Friday include Prayers for Sweet Waters by Elijah Ndoumbe (2021) a look into the vivid realities of three transgender women living in Cape Town, South Africa, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ili-Ili (Little One) by Clister Santos (2024) is a charming animation in which a pregnant woman seeks parenting advice from her two gay dads. It was part of the 2024 Five Films for Freedom selection of BFI FLARE, London International LGBTQIA+ film festival.

Friday's feature film My Father's Clothes (Anima: Die Kleider meines Vaters), by Uli Decker (2022), set in Bavaria, is a story about family secrets, gender issues and the turmoil of love - told as a roller coaster ride through animated and documentary imagery.

Among the films on Saturday, August 17, the internationally acclaimed Jodi (If) Bengal short by Tathagata Ghosh (2024) explores the tribulations of an arranged marriage that tears a lesbian couple apart, suggesting that with a mother's love, perhaps another future is possible. Samlingi, a documentary debut, by Mohan Singh Aulakh (2024) explores queer lives in rural and urban lives in Punjab. Hai Con Chuột (Two Little Mice) by Nguyen Anh Thach (2024) depicts the tender affection between a gay man and his crush, on the eve of the latter's wedding to his girlfriend. Make-up Majhi Dhaal Ga (Make-Up Is My Shield) by Kunal Vijayakar (2024) is a short music video in the Laavni style of song and dance from Maharashtra. It follows the affectionate banter between a cis heterosexual man and his trans sister as the latter recounts her process of embracing her transness and decision to perform an exaggerated femininity.

Supported by
BRITISH COUNCIL

As part of CIQFF 2024's collaboration with the British Council, we bring you three shorts from the British Council Touring Programme series 'More Films for Freedom'. On Saturday, the UK/Nigerian film Egungun (Masquerade) by Olive Nwosu (2021) explores a woman's return to her hometown in Lagos, and her new understanding of the people and experiences that shaped her.



Saturday's film screenings will be followed by a panel discussion Surviving Queerphobia: Online and Offline. Panelists, who include members of Chennai's LGBTQIA+ communities and allies, discuss the upsurge in homophobia and transphobia in recent months leading up to Pride month, influenced by the "gender critical" movements and bathroom panic of the global north. Following the panel discussion will be a Hip-Hop Party on the roof of Goethe-Institut, with spot registration and entry limited to 100 persons. It will be DJ'ed by K. Phani Kumar and team.

The program on Sunday, August 18, commences at 3 pm with Naan oru Pen (I am a woman) a 17 minute solo theatrical performance by Sowmiya in Tamil, directed by A. Mangai. The performance draws on poet-memoirist Maya Angelou's Phenomenal Woman and Still I Rise, to present an embodied narration of un-making the body, lived experience and resilience of queerness, especially of a trans life in India.

Highlights among the shorts on Sunday include Ragasiya, a Tamil short on love and friendship by Chandrasekar Srinivasan (2024) featuring Chennai's own Prahasini Arumugam as the protagonist. Love Positive by Tushar Tyagi (2024) speaks of love among two gay men, one of whom is living with HIV. Melvilasam (Address) by Hariprasad KN (2024) is a heartwarming documentary of Parvathi T.S and her arduous journey of becoming the first openly trans postwoman in India, and successfully changing name and gender markers in her government identity documents. They/Them by Phelian (2023) describes the self-realisation of a 49-year-old art professor of their non binary identity.

The film festival closes with the Gujarati feature film Katlaa Curry by Rohit Prajapati (2024). Set in a sleepy fishing village along the banks of the river Narmada, a local fisherman, Raaymal, pulls a young man, Ratan, adrift in his fishing net, setting off a journey of profound connection and self-discovery.

As LGBTQIA+ collectives in India advocate for inclusive institutions and reduced discrimination, we also work to engender change in hearts and minds, a task substantially more challenging than legal reform. One way we do this is by participating in and producing cultures that reflect both the universality and specificity of our experiences.

Reel Desires: Chennai International Queer Film Festival 2024, curated under this name since 2013, is the latest in a series of over 19 queer-themed film festivals held in Chennai to date, beginning in November 2004. The event is free and open to individuals 18 years and older.

ORGANISERS

ORINAM

A local collective that has been working since 2003 to end gender-and sexuality-based discrimination.

Visit http://orinam.net, contact orinam.net@gmail.com or http://orinam.net/contact. For a list of support resources relevant to Chennai, visit http://orinam.net/resources-for/lgbt/crisis-support/

GOETHE-INSTITUT

Goethe-Institut Chennai/Max Mueller Bhavan offers language courses, promotes education and cultural exchange, and organizes a wide range of events and supports projects in the fields of film and new media, arts, theatre and dance, music, literature, Architecture, and more.

Visit http://www.goethe.de/chennai, contact info@chennai.goethe.org

NIRANGAL CHARITABLE TRUST

An NGO working for the welfare and upliftment of all marginalized and disenfranchised groups to protect and further their human rights.

Visit http://nirangal.co.in, contact nirangal.india@gmail.com or +91 98406-99776

SAATHII

An NGO working to advance access to health, justice and social welfare for communities marginalized on account of HIV, gender and/or sexuality in India.

Visit http://saathii.org or email info@saathii.org

SCHEDULE

DAY 1

FRIDAY | AUG 16, 2024 | 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

- Love and Let Love | 8 mins
- Prayers for Sweet Waters | 16 mins *
- Ili-Ili (Little One) | 9 mins
- Mehroon | 10 mins
- Break | 15 mins
- Anima: Die Kleider meines Vaters (Anima: My Father's Clothes) 95 mins

DAY 2

SATURDAY | AUG 17, 2024 | 3:00 PM - 9:00 PM

- Jodi (If) | 26 mins
- Summer Night's Fantasy | 6 mins
- Samlingi (Same-Gender) | 37 mins
- Hai Con Chuột (Two Little Mice) | 16 mins
- Egungun (Masquerade) | 15 mins *
- Make-up Majhi Dhaal Ga (Make-Up Is My Shield) | 6 mins
- Break | 15 mins
- Panel Discussion: Surviving Queerphobia: Online and Offline 90 mins
- Break | 15 mins
- Hip Hop party

DAY 3

SUNDAY | AUG 18, 2024 | 3:00 PM - 9:00 PM

- Naan oru Pen (I am a woman) - a solo theatrical performance by Sowmiya in Tamil, directed by A. Mangai | 17 mins
- IYKYK (If You Know You Know) | 18 mins
- Nowhere | 22 mins *
- Ragasiya | 28 mins
- Love Positive | 17 mins
- Break | 15 mins
- Sifar | 20 mins
- Melvilasam (Address) | 15 mins
- They/Them | 17 mins
- Muscat | 16 mins
- Break | 15 mins
- Katlaa Curry | 111 mins

* These three shorts are being screened in partnership with the British Council Touring Programme from their series 'More Films for Freedom'.

Supported by BRITISH COUNCIL

DAY 1

FRIDAY | AUG 16, 2024 | 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM



1.1 Love and Let Love | Shailaja Padindala | India
No Dialogue | 2024 | 8 mins

The film portrays a middle-aged widow who has dutifully been a single parent most of her life, finally decides to let go of her past and go on a date for Valentine's Day. Her daughter, a young painter and a closeted lesbian, also goes on a date that very day to the same café.
What happens when the two couples meet?



1.2 Prayers for Sweet Waters | Elijah Ndoumbe | UK, South Africa | English, French and Kirundi | 2021 | 16 mins

A submergence into the lived realities of three transgender sex workers living in Cape Town, South Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic.
In collaboration with the British Council Touring Programme, from their series 'More Films for Freedom'.



1.3 Ili-Ili (Little One) | Clister Santos | Philippines | Filipino
2024 | 9 mins

A pregnant woman unsure of how to raise a child, arranges an interview with her two gay dads but fate intervenes when his dad suffers a heart attack. Her dad reflects on their family's history, captured on an old camcorder. This short is part of BFI FLARE 2024 selection of Five Films for Freedom.



1.4 Mehroon | Abu Sohel Khondekar | India | Bengali | 2024
10 mins

In the wake of her father's death, trans woman Mehroon is confronted with a will that holds her in a suffocating grip. Determined to break free from this oppressive force, Mehroon embarks on a journey of self-discovery and liberation; while navigating the expectations of society and family.



1.5 Anima: Die Kleider meines Vaters (Anima: My Father's Clothes) | Uli Decker | Germany | German | 2022 | 95 mins

Little Uli wants to become a pirate or the pope, but in no case does she want to fit into the role stereotypes of her Bavarian hometown. After her father's death, her mother hands over his secret box to her as an inheritance. The content suddenly changes her view of the father, herself, her family, and the society in which she grew up. A true story about family secrets, gender issues and the turmoil of love - told as a roller coaster ride through animated and documentary imagery.

DAY 2

SATURDAY | AUG 17, 2024 | 3:00 PM - 9:00 PM



2.1 Jodi (If) | Tathagata Ghosh | India | Bengali | 2023
26 mins

This acclaimed short explores the tribulations of an arranged marriage that tears a lesbian couple apart, suggesting that with a mother's love, perhaps another future is possible.



2.2 Summer Night's Fantasy | Guby Moon | Spain | Spanish
2022 | 6 mins

It's a summer night and it's very hot. Mila is lying in bed and can't sleep. Then her hands slide down all over her body as her mind fantasizes taking her on a cosmic journey to the stars and beyond. This is a poetic story about a hot summer night's fantasy.



2.3 Samlingi (Same-Gender) | Mohan Singh Aulakh | India
Punjabi | 2024 | 37 mins

LGBTQIA+ persons in Punjab are often misunderstood and subjected to ridicule because of their non-conformity to gendered norms of appearance and behavior. Going beyond the "urban" and "elite", the documentary lends voice to diverse queer and trans persons, their struggles and triumphs.



2.4 Hai Con Chuột (Two Little Mice) | Nguyen Anh Thach
Vietnam | Vietnamese | 2024 | 16 mins

The scene fades in on a vision: a crimson wedding backdrop, a radiant bride, and a handsome groom. A young man, An (25), blinks, the warmth of the dream replaced by the cool reality of his old apartment hallway. An spots his best friend, Chuot (Mouse), popping in for a visit. The following morning marks Chuot's wedding to his girlfriend. But An's eyes betray a deeper truth - a secret love he harbors for Chuot.



2.5 Egungun (Masquerade)
Olive Nwosu | UK, Nigeria | English, Yoruba | 2021 | 15 mins

In this captivating and stylish drama by Olive Nwosu, a woman returns to her hometown of Lagos in search of healing. What she discovers instead is a path that takes her into her past and toward a new understanding of the people and experiences that shaped her.
In collaboration with the British Council Touring Programme, from their series 'More Films for Freedom'



2.6 Make-up Majhi Dhaal Ga (Make-Up Is My Shield)

Kunal Vijayakar | India | Marathi | 2024 | 6 mins

In the Laavni style of song and dance from Maharashtra, this short follows the affectionate banter between a cis heterosexual man and his trans sister as the latter recounts her process of embracing her transness and decision to perform an exaggerated femininity.

Panel Discussion:

Surviving Queerphobia: Online and Offline

90 mins

Hip Hop Party

Open to film festival attendees through spot registration on first come first in basis, due to limited space.

7:15 pm onwards

DAY 3

SUNDAY | AUG 18, 2024 | 3:00 PM - 9:00 PM



Naan oru Pen (I am a woman) | 17 mins

Taking on from Maya Angelou's Phenomenal Woman and Still I Rise, this solo performance presents an embodied narration of un-making the body, lived experience and resilience of queerness, especially of a trans - life.



3.1 IYKYK (If You Know You Know) | Bonita Rajpurohit | India | English, Hindi and Gujarati | 2024 | 18 mins

We follow Kusum, a young trans woman on a series of dates with cis men. All her dates seem to have a different approach to the elephant in the room; her gender identity.



3.2 Nowhere | Christopher Manning | UK | Arabic, English and Hebrew | 2020 | 22 mins

A young Palestinian woman crosses the Israeli border to find her long-lost brother, who she hopes will be her ticket to a new life far from the West Bank. When she discovers the truth behind his exiled existence, her dreams of a happy reunion are shattered, and she must face her next steps alone. In collaboration with the British Council Touring Programme, from their series 'More Films for Freedom'.



3.3 Ragasiya | Chandrasekar Srinivasan | India | Tamil 2024 | 28 mins

Ragasiya and Swetha are roommates. Swetha's family is looking to get her married to a man but she is not interested. Still they end up meeting Krishna, who matches Swetha's matrimony profile, and turns out to be Ragasiya's school crush. A story of love within and across gender and boundaries of cis and trans.



3.4 Love Positive | Tushar Tyagi | India | Hindi, English 2023 | 17 mins

Ajay wants his live-in partner, Utkarsh, to join him for a live interview, but Utkarsh wants to keep their relationship a secret. The concern for them seems bigger than appearing together for the live interview. Will this couple have a positive love story?



3.5 Sifar | Edythe | India | English | 2024 | 20 mins

TW: suicide As we explore the themes of love, grief, acceptance, and resilience within queer identities, through Inaaya, the narrative unravels emotions in the face of life-altering loss. It is a story of many transgender people who are lost to suicide every day and what they leave behind. Inaaya wakes up every day, grieving the suicide of her partner, Shaayra, and the life she thought she once had.



3.6 Melvilasam (Address) | Hariprasad K N | India Malayalam | 2024 | 15 mins

Parvathi T.S, the first transgender post woman in India, fought long battles to overcome social and economic backwardness to be recognized and accepted in her own identity, including in employment, a fundamental right guaranteed by the Indian constitution.



3.7 They/Them | Phelian | India | Language | 2023 | 17 mins

While signing up on a dating app, Shakuntala - a 49-year-old single art professor - is confronted with the question: "What are your pronouns?" Shakuntala is dumbfounded by the possibility that there might be options beyond the binary. Thus starts a saga of flashbacks juxtaposed with them researching and navigating through their journey of self-exploration.



3.8 Muscat | Philippe Grenier | Canada | French, English and Darija | 2023 | 16 mins

Samir, a 16-year-old boy from a fishing family, discovers his attraction towards men when he meets Louis, a tourist traveling Morocco with his wife. When Louis faces the worst, Samir is the only one who can help him.



3.9 Katlaa Curry | Rohit Prajapati | India | Gujarati | 2024 111 mins

Fishing in the river Narmada, a local fisherman (Raaymal), pulls a young man (Ratan) adrift in his fishing net, setting off a journey of profound connection and self-discovery. Katlaa Curry, a local fish delicacy, becomes a symbol of both their connection and differences, and ignites their physical chemistry and deep-seated affection. However, Raaymal, succumbs to familial obligations and societal pressures, reluctantly entering into marriage with Kumati, severing ties with Ratan. Hope emerges when the encouragement and unwavering support of his wife and friends, set Raaymal on a journey of self-discovery, and determination to embrace his authentic self.

REEL DESIRES

CHENNAI INTERNATIONAL QUEER FILM FESTIVAL 2024

www.ciqff.org | chennaiintlqueerfilmfest@gmail.com

ORINAM.NET Orinam | NIRANGAL CHARITABLE TRUST | SAATHII Solidarity and Action Against The HIV Infection In India | GOETHE INSTITUT MAX MUELLER BHAVAN