




**REEL
DESIRES**

**CHENNAI
INTERNATIONAL
QUEER FILM
FESTIVAL 2020
ONLINE**

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

**Attend the festival via:
<http://tinyurl.com/rdciqff2020>**

A decorative graphic consisting of horizontal rainbow-colored stripes (red, orange, yellow, green, cyan, blue, purple) that transition into a vertical rainbow-colored bar on the right side.

SHORT NOTE

Welcome to the eighth edition of **Reel Desires: Chennai International Queer Film Festival** is being held online over two weekends – Dec 5-6 and 12-13 of December 2020. **Reel Desires** features films, shorts and documentaries showcasing sexuality and gender diversity issues. This year's lineup consists of 25 films from 12 countries, selected via a community-led review process.

The principal organizers of CIQFF 2020 are Orinam and Goethe-Institut, working in partnership with Nirangal, Chennai Queer Café (CQC), SAATHII, and East-West Center for Counselling and Training.

Highlights among shorts include the award-winning *After That Party* by Lucas Drummond, the poetic *Bodies of Desire* by Varsha Panikar; and the world premiere of *Sab Rab de Bande*, a documentary on queer Sikhs by Sukhdeep Singh. Among the feature-length offerings are *Boxed* by Sameeksha and *Kiss The Moon* by Khalid Gill.

On Sunday, December 6, 2020, there will be a play '*Siriippu thaan varuthu*' in Tamil with English closed captions. Directed by A. Mangai, the play and subsequent Q&A connects liberation movements such as Black Lives Matter with social justice movements in India. On Saturday, Dec 12, 2020, a panel discussion *LGBTIQA+ Community Activism: Priorities post-Navtej and COVID-19* features activists and community organizers from across India.

As LGBTIQA+ collectives in India work to expand inclusion and reduce discrimination on the ground, 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 2020, curated under this name since 2013, is the latest in a series of over 15 queer-themed film festivals held in Chennai to date, beginning in November 2004. In the wake of India's COVID-19 pandemic, the film festival and associated events are being held entirely online. Login details are available at ciqff.org





Orinam

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

Visit <http://orinam.net>, contact orinamwebber@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.



Chennai Queer Café (CQC)

A safe social space in Chennai for anyone who is a cis woman and/or assigned female at birth, and identifies as queer or questioning their sexuality/gender.

Contact chennaiqueercafe.cqc@gmail.com



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



East-West Center for Counselling and Training

A group of professionally-trained counsellors located in Nungambakkam, Chennai, India.

Visit <http://centerforcounselling.org> or contact magdalene@centerforcounselling.org

Day 1, Dec 5
4:00 - 7:00 pm

Welcome Address by Goethe-Institut Director
Willem
Not Your Ordinary Sister
In Orbit
Sab Rab de Bande
ஒருவனுக்கு ஒருத்தி?* (*A woman for a man?*)
Gay India Matrimony

Day 2, Dec 6
4:00 - 7:00 pm

Goliath's Henrychment
Canis Major
Coming out for Christmas
Ficus
Letter to my mother
Jay
Play: சிரிப்புதான் வருது (*Sirippu than varuthu*)
6:23 AM
Ionut and Calin
Bodies of Desire

Day 3, Dec 12
4:00 - 7:00 pm

Boxed
After That Party
Hey You
Panel Discussion: LGBTIQA+ Community Activism:
Priorities post-Navtej and COVID-19
Surprise Film

Day 4, Dec 13
4:00 - 7:00 pm

Saving Chintu
bEACH
இயல்* (*Natural*)
De Gris a POSITHIVO (*From Grey To POSITIVE*)
Marielle's Legacy Will Not Die
Kiko's Saints
Kiss The Moon

* Being screened again on popular demand



Day 1: Saturday, December 5, 2020

Welcome Address | 5 mins by Dr. Katharina G6rger, Director, Goethe-Institut, Chennai



Willem | Dave Hastings | UK | English | 2020 | 35 mins

It is June 29th 1943. In a confined prison cell, Alexander, a young Nazi officer, is awaiting his new prisoner he has been tasked with watching over until their execution.

His prisoner is Willem, a Dutch resistance fighter, who has been convicted of blowing up a building that held records of local Jewish residents. Willem and Alexander come to have profound emotional impact on one another. When hope is all you have left, watch it change the world.



Not Your Ordinary Sister | Masa Zia Lenardic | Germany/ Slovenia | English | 2019 | 4 mins

Not Your Ordinary Sister is a queer satire which, in a witty yet direct way, addresses both the startling popularity of lesbian vampire films as well as the lack of proper representation in queer cinema on the subject of queerness within the conservative and patriarchal religious organizations.



In Orbit | Katie McNeice | Ireland | English | 2019 | 17 mins

There was once an invisible optician, living in a strange and lonely world. Her story starts with a broken lens and the woman who taught her to see things differently.

Maura recounts her life story in an interview with the Head Archivist of the Human Experience Records. Hers is the greatest mission of all time, you see, because what bigger challenge can there be, than learning to love?



Sab Rab de Bande | Sukhdeep Singh | India | Punjabi, English, Hindi | 2020 | 28 mins

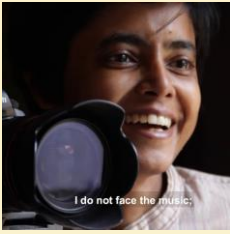
The first attempt at recording the experiences of Sikhs from the LGBTQ community. The film was shot over a period of two years by activist and director Sukhdeep Singh



Oruvanukku Oruththi? (A woman for a man?) | Vimal Santiago | India | Tamil | 2019 | 17 mins

A young man and a gender-fluid female-assigned person, who are uninterested in the idea of arranged marriage, are forced to meet each other by their parents. They succumb to the pressure and meet hesitantly. While they are both eagerly waiting to reject the other person, they surprisingly strike an engaging conversation about life, love, and themselves.





Gay India Matrimony | Debalina Majumder | India | Bengali, English, Hindi | 2019 | 67 mins

Gay India Matrimony revolves around three characters who are out exploring their marriage prospects with one of them documenting their travails. While Sayan and Gourab are assigned male at birth, Debalina, director of the film, is assigned female at birth. All three of them are looking for a same-gender partner, and the very suggestion of wanting to marry a same-gender partner drives people around them a into complete frenzy. Shot over five years, this documentary captures the watershed moment of reading down Section 377 (6 September 2018) Does that enable homosexual couples to marry, should they marry, or is this another instance of the center appropriating the fringe? The debate continues.



DAY 2: Sunday, December 6, 2020



Goliath's Henrychment | Luís Oliveira | Portugal | Portugese | 2020 | 14 mins

During a taping of an 80s-themed TV show, Henrychment meets Goliath, who is quite nervous holding the long boom mic for the first time. In the initial performance, oppressed by the deafening silence on set, they are limited to exchanging provocative looks that could lead up to something else. It is a colourful musical about an improbable fling, an excessive episode of mutual desire. Allow yourselves to be henryched!



Canis Major | Charli D Brissey | USA | English | 2019 | 10 mins



Gender-bending cyborg sci-fi meets experimental choreography as an artist works through severe writer's block with the imaginative help of their dog. Based on many true stories, this video-animation hybrid ruminates care and concern at the "end of the world."

Coming out for Christmas | Caris Rianne | UK | English | 2020 | 7 mins



Charlotte, who after meeting the love of her life at university, is determined to come out as a lesbian to her family. What a better time to do it, than on Christmas day. What could possibly go wrong?

Ficus | Andrey Volkashin | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Bosnian | 2018 | 17 mins



Almir is a closeted gay man struggling with self-acceptance. Left high and dry by his married lover, Almir decides to spend New Year's Eve with his dying friend Militsa. As the city celebrates, the two talk about their lives and loves. Does Almir dare to tell his closest friend his deepest secret?





Letter to my Mother | Amina Maher | Germany | Persian, English | 2019 | 19 mins

A son pushes at the bounds of his relationship with his mother as he unpicks the psychological consequences of the violence he suffered. In a bold and heartfelt cinematic letter to his mother, the filmmaker Amina Maher reveals the most painful of childhood secrets. The film explores gender confusion, sexuality, guilt and repression in relation with violence and identity.

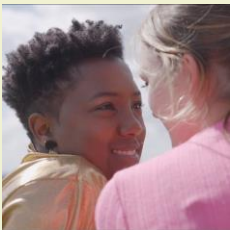


Jay | Szu-Wei Chen | Taiwan (ROC)/USA | Chinese | 2019 | 14 mins

Jay, a 13-year-old boy, is fascinated by his toned and athletic older brother. Steadily, Jay's fascination develops into attraction.

Play: சிறிப்பு தான் வருது (Siriippu than varuthu) | 60 mins

Directed by A. Mangai, the play connects liberation movements such as Black Lives Matter with social justice movements in India. It will be followed by a Q&A session. The play is in Tamil with English closed captions.



6:23 AM | Geoffrey Breton | UK | English | 2019 | 4 mins

Two women met last night, have seen the sun rise together, but one of them may be about to spoil things before they've quite begun...

Ionut and Călin | Sorin Poamă | Romania | Romanian | 2018 | 18 mins

Love becomes loss, only to become love again. Ionuț and Călin have recently broken up. When they accidentally meet again, their feelings resurface, along with the tensions that drove them apart. Two men coming from different worlds, a relationship that takes them beyond their own limits.



Bodies of Desire | Varsha Panikar and Saad Nawab | India | English | 2020 | 4 mins

Drawing on Varsha Panikar's poetry series, the eponymous *Bodies of Desire* is a visual poetry film co-directed by her and Saad Nawab. The film captures four sets of lovers amid passion; to create a portrait of tender intimacy, of longing, of discovery, of desire, of embrace and care, of profound companionship.





DAY 3: Saturday, December 12, 2020



Boxed | Sameeksha | India | English, Hindi, Kannada, Telugu | 2019 | 67 mins

The film focuses on the misinformation and lack of understanding about gender fluidity which marginalizes gender minorities and stifles gender expression that does not conform to cis-binary norms. It questions the notion of gender incongruence being 'unnatural' and how pop-culture representation influences the establishment of gender roles. The film is a culmination of the views of the transgender community on the trans bill 2019 and argues that many of its clauses are in contradiction with the Supreme Court's NALSA judgement.



After That Party | Lucas Drummond | USA | Portuguese | 2019 | 15 mins

Leo had never imagined he would see his father kissing another man in the middle of a party, until it happened. Now, with the help of Carol, his best friend, he has to find the most perfect way to tell his father that he has discovered his secret.



Hey You | Jared Watmuff | UK | English | 2019 | 5 mins

When two men arrange a hook-up, is who's top or bottom all they should be worried about? The film exposes how, with the convenience of social media and dating apps, our hard-fought rights and freedoms can be taken for granted -- and how, for many others, that fight isn't over.



Panel Discussion: LGBTIQ+ Community Activism: Priorities post-Navtej and COVID-19 | 90 mins

In 2018 the Supreme Court finally read down Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, decriminalizing consensual same-gender relationships. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdown caused tremendous financial insecurity and exposed queer and trans communities to familial violence. Given these two developments, what should be the priorities of community activism and advocacy? Is marriage the next frontier? Or basic livelihood and social security?

DAY 4: Sunday, December 13, 2020



Saving Chintu | Tushar Tyagi | India | English, Hindi | 2020 | 25 mins

An American-Indian gay couple travel to India to adopt a child living with HIV in an orphanage. Will the couple be able to cope with the cultural challenges?





bEACH | Declan McKenna | USA | English, no Dialogue | 2020 | 2 mins

A day outside, told through the feelings left on the body.

இயல் (Natural) | Santosh Krishnan | India | Tamil | 2018 | 13 mins

This film is about a heterosexual man's emotions when he first encounters two men in a relationship.

De Gris a POSITHIVO (From Grey to POSITIVE) | Juan De La Mar (Juan Franco) | Colombia | Spanish | 2019 | 18 mins

Two years ago I was diagnosed with HIV. Everything turned grey and I felt that I should say goodbye to the people I love. This is an act of healing to return to living, and show the strength that love has when you live an experience often considered synonymous with a death sentence.

Marielle's Legacy Will Not Die | Leonard Cortana | USA | Portuguese | 2019 | 23 mins

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, February 2019: artists and activists used the 2019 Carnival to call for justice for AfroBrazilian Councilwoman Marielle Franco, assassinated in March 2018. In the midst of social protest and rising fear over the Far Right Government of Jair Bolsonaro, the city is an active site of resistance and memorialization of Franco's legacy. Black women, Favela dwellers and Lesbian activists force the city to ask "who ordered Marielle Franco's murder?"



Kiko's Saints | Marmier | Brazil | Japanese | 2019 | 25 mins

Kiko, a Japanese illustrator on assignment in France, gets suddenly overwhelmed by a strange inspiration, while she realizes she's been spying on a gay couple on the beach next to the chapel where she's working. Obsessed by such a vision, she spies on those men and draw them secretly. This slowly pushes her towards an encounter that will change her life and breaks her social rules.



Kiss The Moon | Khalid Gill | Germany | English | 2009 | 80 mins

An examination of how transgender persons live in Pakistani culture. *Kiss the Moon* is a passionate attempt to create an intimate contact with the Khusra community, to comprehend how it feels to live in a world where life, in a very black and white way, is always either masculine or feminine. The ultimate goal of the film is to cross the boundaries of gender and talk about the issues of "being", and of the endless desire to be loved and to love.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Special thanks are due to Gabrielle Raul for designing the poster and brochure, and for his patience in accommodating last-minute requests for modifications.

Finally, we thank all those individuals whose financial contributions made this event possible.

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