

TOP STORY

Full of Pride: NFMLA presents June Film Festival LGBTQ+ Cinema

By Hayden Dobb, LA Downtown News Staff Writer 12 hrs ago



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NewFilmmakers Los Angeles (NFMLA) is hosting its June Monthly Film Festival dedicated to its annual celebration of InFocus: LGBTQ+ Cinema program.

NFMLA showcases films by filmmakers of all backgrounds across general and InFocus programming, with its core programming being its monthly film festival. The InFocus series initiative aims to fight the lack of diversity in the film industry by giving a platform to underrepresented groups of filmmakers.

“We consider ourselves an organization that intersects the arts, culture, media and entertainment,” NFMLA executive director Larry Laboe said. “Some bigger festivals take place annually, while our core program is one day a month, and each month comes with its own theme. The InFocus series gives us the chance to recognize underrepresented voices and stories and sharing them with different audiences.”

Soon to be celebrating its 17th anniversary this July, NFMLA follows each monthly program with Q&A segments with each filmmaker, and offers receptions for the audience to meet the filmmakers and talent, while also networking with industry professionals.

The InFocus: LGBTQ+ Cinema event will consist of two short film programs displaying a wide range of emerging work from LGBTQ+ creators.

This starts with InFocus: LGBTQ+ Cinema Shorts I, which will include a collection of work that explores gender and gender identity, queer high school drama, nonmonogamy, passion, history and the juxtaposition of struggles and joy of being an artist and navigating family dynamics. This first half of the festival will feature two world premieres: Molly Kirschenbaum’s “Harpies” and Frank Arthur Smith’s brand new series episode of “Open to It.”

LGBTQ+ Cinema Shorts II will be a selection of films that celebrate self-expression, queer joy and vulnerability between strangers. Two more world premiere screenings will take place in the second half of the day, including Jordyn Katz and Leigh Reddick’s “The Craine Maiden – Friday Night Dinner” and Derek Mari’s “Skunk.”

“The InFocus: LGBTQ+ will contain 15 shorts across the two programs. Within that we have an exciting and widely represented slate of queer voices that we’re getting to showcase, which is exactly the point of our InFocus program,” programming director Bojana Sandic said.

The Los Angeles Premiere of Students Emmy Award Winner will wrap up the LGBTQ+ film night with Benjamin Howard’s debut feature, “Riley.” The film covers a modern, grounded and deeply personal coming out story of a high school athlete, highlighting the struggle of what queer youths may experience during high school.

Sandic and Laboe both shared admiration for their blended audience, who are a melting pot of people rallying for their love of movies, storytelling and representation.

“The audience alone makes the event so much fun, but we also have a full bar and mixers,” Laboe said.

For more information on the LGBTQ+ Cinema event or NFMLA, visit newfilmmakersla.com.