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***The Year of the Cinema
Part Three***

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From the **Publisher**



I love movies, so you can imagine how very exciting this year of PinkPlayMags is for me. In part one of our series, I went over how that love started. In part two I talked more about growing up and watching a lot of movies with one of my younger brothers. Once an adult, I watched a lot of movies with my friends and a lot of movies with my mother (she's awesome). Mind you, I will watch a movie with anyone who asks, I am easy that way (lol).

So, this time why don't I talk about my most favourite movies of all time (it's such a tall order to list all of them, so this is just a snapshot, and in no particular order)

I. **Star Wars:** That's the one that started it all. The day I saw it, I knew that I wanted to spend a lot of time in a dark movie theatre, with a bunch of strangers, with popcorn and a drink, lost in movie magic, and having a common feeling of wonder, joy, laughter, or scares. When I first saw Star Wars, no one knew it would become such a phenomenon, and hold such a lasting spot in our pop culture. My cousin and I totally fell in love with it, and went on a rampage of buying all kinds of SW posters, toys, and memorabilia. Since then I have loved every new sequel, and I even love Jar Jar (damn you hatters.)

II. **Superman The Movie:** That's the one I cried to my dad for two months none-stop, until he caved in and bought us our first VCR. I just had to be able to watch Christopher Reeves in tights, again, and again. And yes it made me believe that "a man can fly". I have seen it, dozens of times over the years since then.

III. **E.T. The Extra Terrestrial:** I would watch this movie every day if I could. I don't think anyone with a heart can deny the charm of this film. It's a fantastic friendship that transcends species and distances, and it is one of those occasions where aliens are not

presented as scary evil creatures. He just wants to go home.

IV. **Jaws:** Come on don't tell me you also weren't terrified. My uncle snuck me in to see this one, because it was restricted in Kuwait (where I was born). To this day, I actually am spooked of being in the water and always on the look out for a shark fin swimming towards me.

V. **Planet of the Apes:** ALL of them, every one of the old ones, and every incarnation thereafter. It is more than a movie, it is a cautionary tale, and funny enough I usually root for the apes.

VI. **Pillow Talk:** Actually more like all the movies Doris Day did with Rock Hudson. I crawl under the covers with one of them anytime I want to feel happy.

VII. **Pretty Woman:** Please don't judge me. I have seen it a million times and I still laugh.

VIII. **Grease:** The happiest musical ever made.

IX. **Singing in the Rain:** The other happiest musical ever made.

X. **Airplane:** I once watched it on repeat for the whole entire day. And please don't call me Shirley.

Looking at the list, it seems it's mainly popular movies and block busters from the past. And, I just noticed three of them are Spielberg movies. Next time I will go over the more obscure, weird, and eccentric.

Have a fantastic autumn, and a safe Halloween!

Antoine Elhashem
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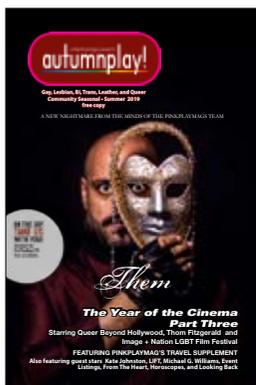
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Cover *Them*

Kero returns to the summer home where he spent many vacations in his youth. Faced with challenges of being a person of colour and non-binary, and recalling traumatic experiences from the past, he gets increasingly worried that something is about to happen. When a stranger shows up in his driveway, the masks come off, and Kero is faced with having to fight for his true identity, and a place in the community.

Written & Directed Antoine Elhashem
Cinematography Angel Torres
Starring Kerolos Saleib

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From the **Editor**



Thanks for picking up the third issue of **The Year of the Cinema** retrospective, where we look at queer representation within film over the decades, chat with established and emerging individuals who have contributed their works, and organizations who help open the doors to those interested in pursuing their dreams in the industry.

Our main feature is written by Jerry Schaefer who takes a look at queer representation through the years from an international perspective. **Queer Beyond Hollywood** discovers how film can be used both as a form of entertainment, and also politically in regions where being queer is still considered taboo. He chatted with Cameron Ray, from the *Toronto Public Library*, and also Matthew Toffolo, founder of the *LGBT Toronto Film Festival*. Our two other features include an exclusive interview writer Raymond Helkio did with Canada's **Thom Fitzgerald**, discussing his past works, *The Hanging Garden*, and *Splinters*, as well as getting the scoop on his latest upcoming feature, *Stage Mother*. In our third feature, Michael McNeely is back with a look at the **Image + Nation LGBT Film Festival** taking place in Montreal this November.

Also in this issue, we have our annual **LGBT Travellers (Special Pullout Supplement)** highlighting top destinations, safety tips, travel trends, and staying fit while on the road. Cat Grant spoke with filmmaker **Kate Johnston**, who has garnered awards for her past feature films, such as *Tru Love*, and is currently involved with three new upcoming releases. The **Community Cornerstone** series continues as Kelly Wilk does a spotlight on **Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto**. Our **Fiction** excerpt is from "A Fall in Autumn" the latest futuristic sci-fi novel from author Michael G. Williams.

As always, we have an amazing list of **Events** compiled by Sherry Sylvain, the intimate **From The Heart** column by Mychol Scully, **Horoscopes** by Julie Antoinette, and we close out with our **Looking Back** piece written by Michael Rowe.

Wishing you all a colourful fall season!

Bryen Dunn
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Queer Beyond Hollywood

By Jerry Schaefer

In our last two issues, I looked at classic Canadian films and Hollywood movies of interest to the LGBTQ+ community. Now, we're off to explore the world of international queer cinema, and all that it has to offer film buffs.

The Early Years

The silent film, *Anders als die Andern* (Different from the Others by Richard Oswald, 1919), is thought to be the first film to promote gay rights and to protest laws that made homosexuality a crime. Follow that with *Mikaël* (Michael by Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1924). The homoerotic subtext in this silent film dramatizes the passion of an artist for his muse and same-sex model.

Pandora's Box (Georg Wilhelm Pabst, 1929) is another silent film, that Louise Brooks beat out Marlene Dietrich for the lead in. See if you can spot the lesbian subplot. Hint: the Countess crushing on the lead looks great in a tuxedo. *Mädchen in Uniform* (Girls in Uniform by

Leontine Sagan, 1931) is also cited as a classic that helped pave the way for films featuring lesbian content. It must also be one of the first films to feature an all-women cast.

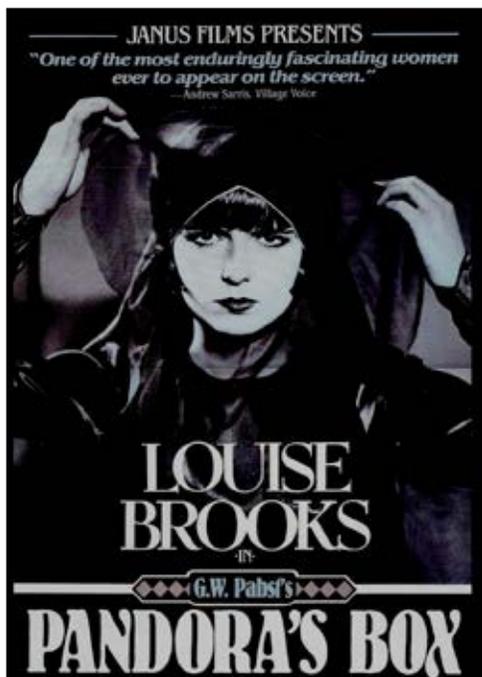
Free Flicks At Your Local Library

If the two of you missed the premiere of a hot new foreign film at TIFF, rest assured the Toronto Public Library has your back. Their collection offers a whole world of foreign LGBTQ+ content, and it's all available for free. As soon as a film's theatrical run is over and it becomes available on DVD, the library scoops it up. Anyone with a library card can go online and place a hold on any movie they like. In a day or two, you'll be able to pick it up from the library closest to you.

To learn more, PinkPlayMags spoke with Cameron Ray, Youth Services Specialist Librarian at the Toronto



Photo: Cameron Ray by Stephen Gallant



Public Library. He's one of the programmers who selects films for the library's collection.

"Yes and no," Ray replies, when asked if queer films had their own category. "They have their own category in that when they are catalogued they would be designated 'Gay men, drama,' 'Gay men, comedy,' 'Lesbian Drama,' 'Bisexual Drama,' etc. We do not make them obviously queer, as there's no little rainbow sticker on them, and they're interfiled with the rest of the collection, just so they can be found more easily."

So, you could just go to TPL.ca and search for "gay film" or "lesbian film," or something more specific? "If the film has a strong tendency toward LGBTQ content, then it will be given one of those nomenclatures. As opposed to if there was a gay character who was in a supporting role, then probably not," he explains.

In terms of producing queer content, Ray says the countries that really stand out are Australia and the U.K. "With the U.K., one of the first films I saw about bisexuality was called *Sunday Bloody Sunday* [John Schlesinger, 1971, UK]. It's

an interesting story looking at the gigolo as opposed to the harlot." Although Schlesinger is better known for *Midnight Cowboy*, his matter-of-fact approach to dramatizing a love triangle between two older people (Glenda Jackson and Peter Finch), and a young bisexual artist, makes this film one of the most mature and modern of its time.

Another English film Ray recommends is *Stonewall* (Nigel Finch, 1995). Not the more recent *Stonewall* from 2015, but the one starring Guillermo Diaz. "The original film is from 1995, and it does a really good job of showing how awful things were at the time of the Stonewall riots. You had to wear three items of clothing appropriate to your gender, or you could go to jail. And to actually be physically intimate with someone of the same sex was illegal," Ray points out. In spite of all that, he says the film "did a really good job of portraying LGBTQ people in a positive way, and showing the history of Stonewall. Now, they didn't get it entirely, historically accurate, but it's a very moving and powerful film."

And for something lighter, check out *Pride* (Matthew Warchus, 2014). Although it is based on the true story of queer activists supporting English miners on strike, it is a drama with some fun comic touches. “What’s interesting about *Pride*,” Ray notes, “is that if you look at the DVD box in North America, it nowhere says LGBTQ+, it looks like it’s just about the miners.”

Politics in Film

Queer cinema is more than entertainment. It’s often used to challenge repression, shine a light on injustice, and educate the public. We don’t see many queer films from Russia, for example, where LGBTQ+ and transgender people are not afforded the same rights as other citizens. But in countries where queer filmmakers are given a chance, the work is impressive and well worth watching.

“What’s really fascinating for me,” Ray says, “is that foreign films really show how different the treatment of queer people is around the world. The Australian mini-series, *Deep Water* (Shawn Seet, 2016) really showed how entrenched homophobia was in Sydney, and just how hateful people could be. How it was normalized for people to go out and faggot-bash, and even murder people. Even the police said it was okay, because they were dealing with a sub-section of the population that they didn’t want to deal with.” He adds that, “Australians are very good at social criticism and looking at their own society and saying, ‘Here’s a problem, and here’s how we fix this problem.’”

One of the most profound films Ray has seen recently is from South Africa. “*Kanarie* (Canary by Christiaan Olwagen, 2018) is about this young man, Johan, in South Africa. It’s set in 1984/85, and in South Africa, to complete high school, you have to complete two years of military service. Johan auditions to be in the musical choir, which is called The Canaries. It’s sort of seen as an easy way to get out of your two years of military service, because all you do is go around South Africa and sing. But it’s heavily religious and, of course, he falls in love with another young man. The film didn’t shy away from how stressful it was for this person

to accept who he is, and the romance was very charming. It didn’t go for too much R-rated material, it went more for magical realism, which I thought made the aesthetic of the film quite attractive.”

Ray also speaks highly of *The Cakemaker* (Ofir Raul Graizer, 2017). This successful, Israeli-German co-production was made for less than \$90,000 and plays better than many films made for millions. It tells the complex story of a woman grieving the death of her husband, while working in a bakery with a man who (unbeknownst to her) is also grieving the loss of that husband, who had been his lover.

Lesbian Love

At this point, however, we have to ask: Where are all the lesbians? Ray acknowledges that female representation in film is still a challenge. “When I was looking at the actual collection of gay films versus lesbian films in the library, there’s almost twice as many films featuring gay men as there is featuring lesbians. It’s not because we’ve bought them that way, but that’s the availability. I think it’s a sign of how female voices are always being overridden by male voices.”

With that in mind, we must mention a few fine films that buck that trend.

Rafiki (Wanuri Kahiu 2018 Kenya) is the story of two women from rival political parties who fall in love. Think of it as the play Shakespeare never got around to writing: *Juliet and Juliet*. Although *Rafiki* was banned in Kenya, where queer sex is outlawed, Kahiu did get to show this beautiful film at the festival in Cannes.

Next, see *Blue is the Warmest Colour* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2013, France). This film was controversial because it has two straight women playing the romantic leads. Both actors are brilliant, the love scenes are both loving and sexy, it’s beautifully photographed, and much more real than most are used to seeing onscreen. In a similar vein, *Habitación en Roma* (Room in Rome by Julio Medem, 2010, Spain) dramatizes the coming together of two women, one lesbian and

one curious, in a way that is sexy, mature, and believable.

If you're in the mood for some fun, Ray suggests the English film *Lesbian Vampire Killer* (Phil Claydon, 2009). "It's a horror-comedy, but it pokes fun at that trope. The idea is that there's a village, and at the age of eighteen all the girls become beautiful lesbian vampires. Then, these two guys who are just bumbling idiots, end up there one weekend and it's up to them to kill the lesbian vampires." The two men "just happen to save the day, because there's another woman with them that's helping them."

LGBT Toronto Film Festival



Photo: Matthew Toffolo by the author

If you'd like to see where queer film is headed, you'll want to check out the very latest from new filmmakers around the globe. Many veteran directors of queer content, like Derek Jarman and Pedro Almodóvar, got their start making short films. As it happens, four

or five times a year the Carlton Cinema plays host to the *LGBT Toronto Film Festival*—and it's free!

I spoke to its founder, Matthew Toffolo, and asked him why his focus is on low-budget short films.

"It's just about giving the audience films they've never seen before," he says, "without any marketing budget, and without any influence. People from around the world are making these amazing movies with their hard-earned money, and their raw talent."

For many directors, short films function as stepping stones to bigger and better things. But not everyone thinks this way. "Of course," Toffolo says, "we're from North America, so we have that kind of perception that that's where people want to go, Hollywood. In many of these countries, people just make the content and I think the viewing experience is different. A lot of

these people don't have these dreams of going to Hollywood, per se, or making a feature film."

And apparently, his audience likes the queer content he presents. "Generally," he says, "the LGBT program sells out very quickly every time we do it." For Toffolo, the key to a winning program is variety. "I try to put at least one comedy in every single festival, along with romance, drama, documentaries, and sci-fi. That's what's so fun about these festivals, it's that we can just mix the genres with LGBT content riding the thematic." Past themes include "Finding Identities," "Coming to Terms," and "Stand Up."

When asked which countries have the most prolific directors, Toffolo cites the United Kingdom and Spain, but he says, "A lot of really solid LGBT films come from Brazil. The films are very heavy and dramatic, and they're sad. They don't always end happily." In contrast, he says the German films he receives are, "very flamboyant."

Although both countries produce good movies, Toffolo believes they do so for completely different reasons. "In Germany, it's a different kind of culture where they're very capitalistic, but there is a lot of freedom to be who you are. But in Brazil, it's almost the opposite. There's so much conflict and resistance about LGBT rights, and because of that there's more films being made. It's like almost two different polarizing sides of how they get produced."

After each screening, the festival invites the audience to discuss the films and give feedback to the creators. To be a part of the *LGBT Toronto Film Festival*, look for their next program of LGBT shorts at the Carlton this coming September and December.

Cut. That's a wrap!

Jerry Schaefer is a Toronto actor and writer whose work has appeared on CBC radio and television.



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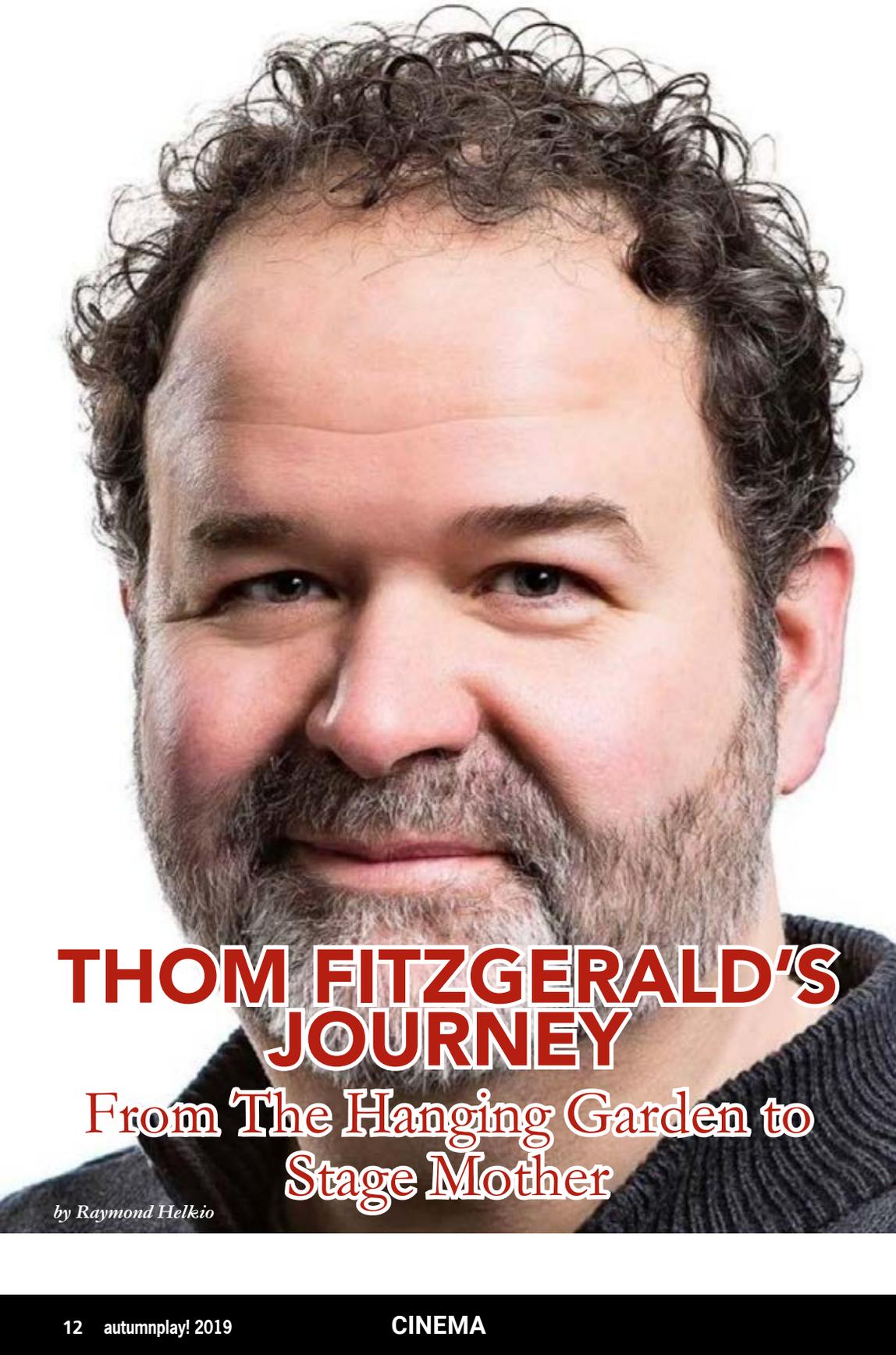
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A close-up portrait of Thom Fitzgerald, a man with dark, curly hair and a beard, looking slightly to the right with a gentle smile. He is wearing a dark, textured sweater. The background is plain white.

THOM FITZGERALD'S JOURNEY

From *The Hanging Garden* to
Stage Mother

by Raymond Helkio

Thom Fitzgerald is a Canadian-grown artist, writer, filmmaker, and gay activist who most recently made CBC's "Super Queerios" honour role, that features notable queers who have shaped this country for the better.

He shares that list with fellow stage and screen personality, Daniel MacIvor, who also starred along with Thom in his film, *Beefcake*, a homage to 1950's muscle magazines that combined interviews and footage with models and photographers who worked for the magazine. When the film premiered in 1999 it was met with (mostly) glowing reviews, like the *National Post* who referred to the film as, "the gay equivalent of every opening of every James Bond film ever made."

"It's very rare that I've directed somebody else's writing, but the truth is that I tend to really enjoy reading screenplays, whether they're great or imperfect, I love getting caught up in the stories. Writing is very very solitary, but when you're directing you never have a moment to yourself. Two hundred people lined up with questions all at the same time, and then editing is such a close collaboration with a small group of people. Doing a job from beginning to end on a movie is a great balance, but if I had to choose one, I don't know that I would," states Fitzgerald, on writing versus directing a screenplay.

While Thom has collected an endless array of accolades and awards, he is perhaps most revered by his peers in the film industry for his talent, thoughtfulness, and realistic take on how the world around him responds to a culture that is increasingly hungry for LGBT content.

Stage Mother is his latest work, a comedy-drama that stars *Jacki Weaver*, *Lucy Liu*, and *Adrian Grenier*, among others. The story follows a conservative church choir director who inherits a drag club in San Francisco, that was started by her deceased son, from whom she



was estranged after he came out as gay. During the mom's quest to love him posthumously, she gets to know him better through the remnants of his life, including his friends, and falls in love with him once again. *Stage Mother* is set to be completed later this year, with a planned festival debut in early 2020.

Two decades earlier, TIFF awarded one of Thom's most provocative and poetic films, *The Hanging Garden*, as Best Canadian Feature Film. Another of his queer-at-heart films, *Splinters*, debuts on CBC this fall after making its premiere at TIFF last year. In a recent interview with Thom, we spoke about his latest works and the rewards and challenges of making queer films in today's saturated market.

Where were you and what were you doing when you first read the script for Stage Mother?

I was on the A train in Manhattan, when I read the script. It's about a mother who had lost her son and it spoke very directly to me, as I was in New York because my own brother had just died.

Since reading the script, is there a favourite memory you can share from the production?

I flew down to New York to have lunch with Jacki Weaver, to meet her, and to see if we might like each other, and might like to work together, and lunch turned into dinner which turned into drinks, which turned into a rather glorious weekend of fun in New York getting to know each other.



Do you think it's any easier now to be a queer filmmaker than it was when you started out, and have things shifted at all?

I'm trying to quantify what's changed really, and it's not easy to do. I feel like perhaps the films are a lot less niche. The audience for queer content seems to have grown a lot with *Drag Race*, and so at the same time, generally speaking, audiences have splintered and have got more fractured with all the different platforms and streaming. I can't say that I've noticed the budgets going up [laughs]. Being an independent filmmaker is always a challenge, and I don't think that's changed at all.

What do you think the biggest challenge is for queer filmmakers?

When I became of age and started making movies in the 90s, they were queer in nature, although my first feature, *The Hanging Garden*, was not marketed as an LGBT film, even though the protagonist was very much a gay man. So I've never lived another life or career, and I never felt it affected my choices or opportunities really, but how would I know? [laughs]. How would I know if people weren't open to hiring LGBT people? I feel that I've always been able to pursue the things that I was personally interested in. If I was overlooked for other things I wouldn't know.

As a gay film director, what do you know now that you wish you had known when you just started out?

I guess that's sort of more about the quirks of my personality than about my sexuality. I would say that the art-form is very collaborative, and to extend trust as much as you can, because it requires a lot of help to

make something as enormous as a movie. I was a bit of a shy retiring younger person, and I stayed in Nova Scotia my whole adult life. So maybe get out of the house more. That's what I would tell my younger self. [laughs] Someone once gave me very good advice which was, 'don't believe it when they tell you you're a genius, otherwise, you'll have a hard time believing it when they tell you you're stupid'. [laughs].

Do you see a difference working in Canada versus the United States. Obviously, there's more work in the US, but why are you in L.A. now, is it just because of the film?

We have a feedback screening here in Los Angeles, then we move onto the sound. This is an American movie, although mostly Canadian made, and it feels more like a Halifax-California production. [laughs] I don't have jobs in Canada or the US. Mostly I'm preoccupied with my own work so I don't know how to compare, I'm not really a director for hire, but I shouldn't say that then no one will hire me. [laughs]

What was the last movie you watched and what was the last screenplay you read?

Mortal Engine. It's about the city of London becoming a predator on wheels, going around decimating small European towns. It was beautiful. I'm presently reading *Shandi Mitchell's, The Waiting Hours*. It was just published by Penguin, and I'm a big fan of Shandi. I also just read a screenplay called, *Gnaw*, about a giant killer beaver on the loose in the Nova Scotia forest. I had a good laugh reading it.

Raymond Helkio is an author, director and filmmaker. He graduated from the Ontario College of Art & Design University and is co-founder of The Reading Salon.
www.raymondhelkio.com
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image + nation

by Michael McNeely

In 1987, the founders of the Montreal's queer film festival named it, *image+nation* 'image et nation gaie et lesbienne,' a spin on queer imagination.

Imagination was and is certainly needed – to imagine how lives in the margins and fringes of society could be better lived, and to go against the status quo – the problematic representations of LGBT folks that depict them as deviant, immoral, and hopeless creatures that belong in closets, or on another planet that has an infinite supply of glitter.

Charlie Boudreau and *Katharine Setzger* are steady hands in running the Festival. Charlie has been involved with *image+nation* for 23 years, and first began as a volunteer programmer while finishing her MA in Communications. As the Festival carried on over the years, she moved up to the position of Executive Director, to ensure that it was able to grow and flourish. Katharine, now Director of Programming, also began as a programmer while finishing up her MA in 1997. Their years of service illustrate their continued

dedication and passion for making *image+nation* what it is today.

Both Charlie and Katharine have enjoyed watching the evolution of young upstarts who have had work featured at the Festival. These include *John Greyson* (*Lilies*, *Patient Zero*), *Cheryl Dunye* (*Watermelon Woman*, and currently directing *Queen Sugar* episodes), *Lisa Cholodenko* (*High Art*, *The Kids Are Alright*, and an upcoming Netflix series called, *Unbelievable*), and *Jeremy Podeswa* (*The Five Senses*, *Six Feet Under*, *Queer as Folk*, and *Game of Thrones*). As well, there's Quebec's own *Xavier Dolan*, the prodigious director and actor of queer classics such as, *J'ai Tué Ma Mère* (*I Killed My Mother*), *Tom à la Ferme*, *Les Amours Imaginaires*, and his current *Matthias et Maxime*.

In 2016, the Festival launched the *I+N ProLab* component to their overall experience. This event includes panels, hands-on workshops and masterclasses with industry professionals and filmmakers. The main focus of *I+N ProLab* is *Exploring New Queer Storytelling* – which involves asking, “How do we speak of our diversities, intersectionalities, and our specific experiences of growing up queer?” In other words, “How

do we exist in modern societies?” In 2018, the scope of *I+N ProLab* was broadened by examining queer gaming narratives and book to film adaptations.

Both Charlie and Katharine know that the secret to running a successful Festival is collaboration with the greater community. As such, *image+nation* partners with many local LGBT community organizations, sharing films in order to do outreach to as many diverse groups as possible. The organization also regularly collaborates with other film and cultural festivals, both within the queer and mainstream circuit, such as *Festival du Nouveau Cinéma*, *Fantasia Film Festival*, *POP Montreal*, and *MURAL Festival*, among others. Their objective is to make our stories part of the cultural narrative for all to see and to share.

How are films selected for *image+nation*? Katharine states, “We select films by asking ourselves, ‘What is Contemporary Queer Storytelling?’ This means we choose media works that go outside the scope of the habitual ‘coming out story’ and avoid the all too often victimizing narratives that represent what is available for LGBTQ2S audiences. This does not mean that we ignore LGBTQ2S realities, but try to emphasize stories that complicate our lives and make us part of a universal human story of joy and sadness.” Other criteria are considered, such as films made by and/or of interest to LGBTQ2S viewers, international titles and films from underrepresented countries, and films produced within Quebec.

Katharine continues, describing how they choose their final official selections. “Our process is a combination of attending both queer and mainstream film fests, maintaining well-established relationships with both local and worldwide distributors, and making a general call for submissions.”

Given the high number of submissions that *image+nation* receives each year, the Festival has a small screening committee that eliminates films that do not correspond to their main criteria. From there, Charlie and Katharine watch everything – which is unique within the queer festival circuit. After the best ones are chosen,

the programming is done, and all that is left is to identify overriding themes to create focuses for each year’s festival.

For example, as Charlie indicates, this year, “Our main focus is highlighting films from countries that are hostile toward LGBTQ rights.” Other themes include *#timesup* which highlights productions made by women of colour, queer women, and other marginalized cultural communities. As well, *CINÉ+littérature* focuses on film adaptations, bringing together filmmakers and authors.

Katharine and Charlie cite the following films as being revolutionary at the time - *Head On*, *Aimee & Jaguar*, *Only the Brave*, *Dandydust*, *Love is the Devil*, *20 Centimetres*, *Fistful of Flies*, *Eileen is a Spy*, *Hustler White*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Undertow* (*Contracorriente*), and *Dakan*.

As Katharine explains, “These films are mentioned because they were revolutionary at the time. They broke new storytelling ground and paved the way for films we see today and signalled the beginning of an evolution in how we occupy storytelling/ social space.”

The pair also gave a nod to these newer contemporary titles - *Yossi & Jagger*, *AWOL*, *Closet Monster*, *The Bubble*, *Call Me by Your Name*, *Plaire, aimer et courir vite* (*Sorry Angel*), and *Un conteau dans le coeur* (*Knife + Heart*)

image + Nation
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www.image-nation.org
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Michael McNeely is a second-year law student, critic, filmmaker, and actor.

He enjoys meaningful presentation of LGBT folks and those with disabilities in popular media.



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Hot Artist



Filmmaker Kate Johnston is best known for her international hit feature film, *Tru Love*. Before turning to writing and directing, Kate started her career as an actor. She went from charging a nickel entry (to buy candy) to the plays she put on with her four sisters, to performing with *The Caravan Stage Company*. This famous Canadian travelling theatre troupe had about 40 performers.

“There was a caravan with Clydesdale horses and a big circus tent that seated hundreds,” she recalls.

Her favourite role ever was the tough but vulnerable character, Jackie, in *Hot L. Baltimore*, by Lanford Wilson. She continues, “It was directed by the brilliant actor and director, Janet Wright, who I loved and who let me know I had talent.”

Kate was an ‘out’ actor which limited her casting, and she decided to leave acting when she turned 40. “I wasn’t getting the roles I trained for and wanted. It became depressing. I needed to go back to who I was as a kid - a story teller. I started to study (*George Brown, Ryerson*) writing, directing, and producing to have more control over my own art. As a woman and as someone queer, this was necessary,” she explains.

Kate credits being on set as an asset to her growth as a filmmaker. “Making shorts and then my feature film, *Tru Love*, was like earning a masters degree in the art of film making. My lessons were intense, a steep learning curve. Making short films are a sprint, making a feature is a marathon, and you must prepare for it.”

Much of the film business is hurry up and wait, and Kate has kept herself busy lately by writing for television and film, while her upcoming projects are

percolating. There are exciting new works coming, both solo and collaborative.

Turn Left (Three women in a Box Films) is a U.S. feature film that Kate is co-writing and directing with co-writer and producer, Jan Miller Corran, and co-producer, LeeAnne Pronitis- Matussek. The film has already garnered attention before going to camera, recently landing second place for best screenplay in the California Women’s Film Festival. Kate says, “Turn Left explores nature vs. nurture, belief systems, and the ability to find oneself.”

She is also co-writing and directing the feature, *Las Alas*, a movie based on author Joie Lamar’s bestselling memoirs, *Mambo Lips and Salsa Hips*. “It’s about love, loss, and the true meaning of forever,” Kate summarizes.

Probably her most personal work in production is, *Transit of Venus*, a feature she wrote and will direct, starring the hilarious, Gavin Crawford. Kate surmises, “This is a story about a lost chosen family who must learn to find their way back to each other, and do.”

Even with all this on the go, Kate hasn’t forgotten her stage roots, and is currently dramaturge and collaborator on two American plays. *The Last Word* by Jan Miller Corran, will be produced in Los Angeles (October 2019), and stars Barbara Niven (the queen of Hall Mark and Lifetime), as well as, *The Soldier and the Time Traveler*, by Ronni Sanlo.

Visit www.tomgirlfilms.weebly.com for more on Kate. Facebook @Las Alas and @Turn Left.

Cat Grant (OCAD) is a multidisciplinary fine artist, with a focus on photography, multimedia portraiture, and illustrating children’s books. She’s also a published poet, and senior reporter for On the Couch LGBTQ TV show.

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PLUS Tips to Stay Fit While Travelling
& Travel Trend Survey Report

TOP 5 FALL/WINTER TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

Below is a snapshot look at a few destinations that may be of interest to those seeking a winter escape, to the sun, or the slopes. Whether you are looking for party central, or a relaxing getaway with a lot of nothing to do, we've given you options for both.



Fort Lauderdale, United States

There are more than 100 gay-owned establishments within the city, with most being in and around the gay mecca of *Wilton Manors*, known locally as the Island City. Just north of downtown and only a few kilometres from the beach, the area is home bars, inns, restaurants, and businesses geared toward the LGBTQ community.

The city is so gay that it has two separate Pride festivals, *Pride Fort Lauderdale* on the beach held each February, and *Wilton Manors Stonewall Pride* held in June. As well, 2020 will see the inaugural edition of *Pride of the Americas* to be held April 21 to 26, an expanded event that hopes to encompass both South and Central America into the fold, akin to *EuroPride* in Europe.

www.sunny.org/lgbtq-travel
www.gayftlauderdale.com

Sitges, Spain

Located just 35 km south of Barcelona, Stiges offers everything from a relaxed beach vibe and great restaurants, to festivals, events, and a diverse nightlife. It gets very busy in the summer, so a visit in spring or fall might be better suited for relaxing, while summertime is perfect for letting loose.

There are a few gay beaches, as well as nudist beaches included in the 22 that encompass the

shoreline. *Platja de la Bassa Rodona* is the main gay beach, along with *Platja dels Balnains*, and *Playa del Muerto*, which are both clothing optional.

www.gaysitgesguide.com/



Buenos Aires, Argentina

Often referred to as the LGBT capital of Latin America, Buenos Aires offers a 24/7 scene with many bars, restaurants, and nightclubs that cater to the LGBT community, primarily centred in and around the neighbourhoods of historic *Recoleta* and the hip and happening *Palermo*, which is the gayest neighbourhood in the city, filled with art galleries, quaint cafes, charming shops, restaurants, trendy bars, and mega nightclubs,

like *Glam*, *Human*, and *Amerika*, that often go very late.

Plan your trip in November, during Argentina's spring, for *Asterisco International LGBTIQ Film Festival* early in the month, *Queer Tango Festival* mid-month, and *Buenos Aires Pride* toward the end of the month. The parade runs from Plaza de Mayo to the National Congress building,

www.turismo.buenosaires.gov.ar/en



Phuket, Thailand

Patong is the area of Phuket where most of the nighttime fun happens, centred around the pedestrian-friendly Bangla Road area along the beach. *Paradise Complex* is just off this main strip, and is considered more of the gay area, with many bars and restaurants found within the narrow streets and alleyways. The most famous bar is *ZAG*, which hosts nightly drag shows and go-go dancers. Also worth checking out are *Boat* and *Sundowners*.

The annual *TropOut Festival* in April is a luxury gay dance festival with cultural excursions, island tours and beach parties. April is also when Phuket hosts its annual Pride celebrations,



centred along Patong Beach, making it a great time to visit.

www.na.tourismthailand.org/About-Thailand/Destination/Phuket
www.phuket.com

Taipei



Taipei's main gay scene is centred around the *Red House* entertainment complex, which is home to dozens of gay bars, shops and restaurants. As well, *Ximan* is like a gay village full of bars with large outdoor patios, and there are many other gay venues located around the city, most notably in the *Jbongshan* area just north of Ximen, and *Zbongshan Dumbua*, around Taipei City Hall to the east.

In terms of gay happenings, Taipei has become famous for its large scale circuit parties, usually taking place on public bank holidays. Their Pride festivities happen each year in October, and offer a real glimpse into the outrageous antics of the local community. There's also a gay beach, and even hot springs that have become popular with the locals and tourists alike.

www.gaytaipei4u.com/guide

Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with an abiding interest in all things travel-related.



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TOP 5 SPRING/SUMMER TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

Summer is when many of us think vacation. The longer days and warmer nights tend to bring forth a form of calm and relaxation. Whether your travel itch is to jump in the car and go on a road trip, or hop on a plane and fly somewhere exotic, we've got a list of destinations that should be on your gaydar!



Philadelphia, United States

Philadelphia is often referred to as the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection, and for good reason. Unknown to many, it was the location of the first major LGBTQ rights demonstration held at Independence Hall on July 4, 1965.

The Gayborhood is located between 11th and Broad Streets, and Pine and Chestnut Streets, and sets itself apart with rainbow crosswalks and street signs, lined with restaurants and bars owned by and catering to the LGBT community.

Consider visiting in August for Philly Pride or in October for OutFest representing National Coming Out Day.

www.visitphilly.com/lgbt

Manchester, United Kingdom

Canal Street, the centre of the Manchester Gay Village, is one of the biggest, oldest, and most flamboyant streets in the U.K. There are even two gay-owned hotels (REM, New Union) with watering holes within them. How convenient is that? Be sure to stop by Napoleons which has been open for more than 40 years.

Manchester Pride is held annually in August, and continues to grow in size each year. Watch for big name headliners to take the stage, along with local legends. While there, why not take

a tour that visits some of the sites featured in the original Queer As Folk television series, and don't forget about the amazing Manchester music scene, that began in the 80s, flourished in the 90s, and is still top-notch today.

www.visitmanchester.com/ideas-and-inspiration/lgbt

www.simanchester.com/manchester-gay-tour/



Montreal, Canada

Montreal truly has a joie-de-vivre, laissez-faire, live and let live attitude when it comes to having a great time. There's nowhere else like it in Canada, where both French and English culture combine to provide a wonderful cultural atmosphere.

The Gay Village is filled with a multitude of bars, with one, Cabaret Mado, clearly standing out among the bunch. Look for the paper-mache likeness of Montreal's reigning drag queen, Mado Lamotte, hanging high above and you know you've found the place to catch the best

line up of local queens, along with RuPaul gals on regular occasions. Mado recently opened La Dinette à Mado adjacent to the Cabaret, making it a one-stop shop for dinner, drag, and dancing the night away.

www.mtl.org/en

www.quebecoriginal.com/en-ca/discover/lgbt-gay-tourism-quebec



Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo is a feast of the senses, with its luminescent lights, funky fashion, fabulous food, and alluring attitude. LShinjuku Ni-ch me is the densest gay bar district in the world with over 500 bars, clubs, saunas, and more. This is where you will find pretty much anything you're looking for, from a quiet drink, game night, or karaoke, to sex trade bars, strippers, and fetishes. Be sure to visit Campy, run by celebrity drag queen, Bourbonne, and Adezakura, a popular lesbian bar.

Harajuku Lane is definitely worth a stroll, just to get a glimpse into the latest clothing and accessory styles of the younger fashionistas. The Robot Restaurant is definitely one-of-a-kind, with high-tech lasers, robot battles, fireworks, funky dancers, and more that you won't soon forget. There are also 150 gay bars in Ueno, 100 gay bars in Shibuya, and 50 gay bars in Asakusa. Stay a while, and try a few.



As for events, Rainbow Reel Tokyo, takes place in July and has been running for over 25 years, offering locals a view into LGBT film from around the world. Tokyo Rainbow Pride takes over the streets of Shibuya and Harajuku each April. Be sure to check out Rainbow Events for other happening events and parties in the city.

www.gotokyo.org/en

www.tokyotokyo.jp

New Zealand



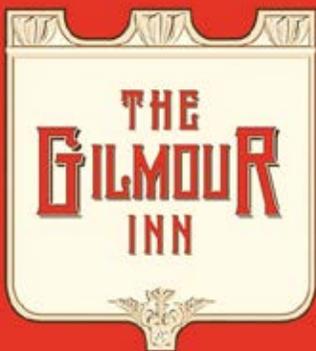
The largest city is Auckland, and is much more vibrant in terms of arts, culture, and gay happenings. Their annual Pride festivities are held in February (their summer), and is the largest in the country. Karangahape Road (K Road) is where most of the gay action happens, with everything from lounges and independent retailers, to strippers and sex shops. As well, the Britomart / Downtown area near Viaduct is where most of the later nightlife partying happens.

Christchurch has a small queer community, with only one gay bar, Cruz Nightclub, but boasts the second largest Pride festival, which is held in March. Watch for the Christchurch Bears, the most active gay group in Christchurch organizing monthly parties, brewery tours, movie nights, and more around the city. There are also a couple other local social groups who organize regular events.

www.newzealand.com/int

Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with an abiding interest in all things travel-related.





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TIPS TO STAY FIT WHILE TRAVELLING

Sticking to your normal workout routine while you're on the move can sometimes be challenging. Below are some tips from fitness expert, Cat Kom, founder of Studio SWEAT on Demand, offering high impact online workouts like yoga and Spinning classes from the comfort of your hotel.

Pack the Right Stuff

Planning your workouts away begins at home. Start with your attire: choose lightweight clothes that dry fast, and don't forget your running shoes. Next, pack a lightweight yoga mat that folds into a square. Squeeze it into your suitcase, so you don't have to exercise on the hotel floor. Throw in a couple resistance bands and you can do a bunch of strength exercises from your room.

Get Started Right Away, Then Schedule Those Workouts

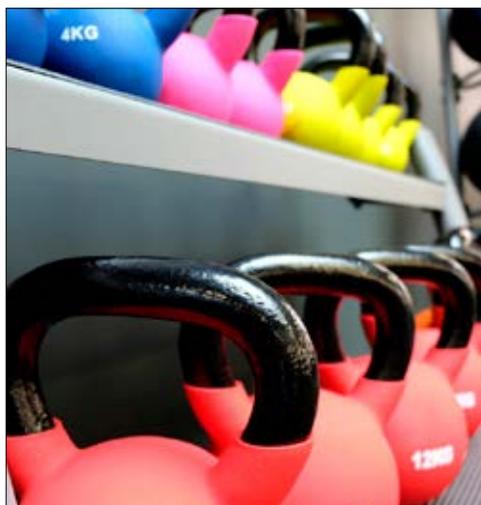
Start working out as soon as you can when you reach your destination, then set a predetermined time for workouts, like you would any other agenda item for the day. If you treat your workouts as you do any other appointment or plan, you reduce all the mental effort of trying to convince yourself that you should exercise. Instead, your workout becomes the next thing on the itinerary.

Stay Active and Eat Properly

If for whatever reason you really can't exercise, get creative and find other ways to stay active. Walk whenever and wherever you can. Use stairs rather than elevators. When you have the chance, get out and explore the city. And above all, maintain a healthy and balanced diet the whole time. This will help you feel better and will keep you energized.

Create Your Own Fitbit Challenge

Another great idea for burning calories on the road is with a homemade workout challenge. If you happen to have a Fitbit, or even just a smartphone app, you can track your steps, leading up to a goal that you set each day. If you haven't reached your goal at the end of the day,



walk around your hotel until you've reached your goal. Consistency is key!

Choose the Right Hotel, with the Right Equipment

Plenty of hotels out there come with a fully equipped gym, and that means access to stationary bikes. Do some research before your trip to find a hotel with a gym that meets your workout needs.

Cat Kom is a celebrated expert in the fitness world, who launched a global movement to bring fitness to the masses, no matter their age, ability or skill level. Through her company, *Studio SWEAT on Demand*, a fitness studio based in San Diego, California, she produces streaming workouts that can be accessed through their app, any internet browser, smart device or TV.

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SURVEY SAYS...

This past year, the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association Foundation (IGLTAF) worked with various organizations to survey LGBTQ+ travellers about their preferences in a variety of topics.

Among the survey findings were:

Travel Trends

- 48% of LGBTQ+ respondents are likely to engage in outdoor activities on their next vacation
- 79% of LGBTQ+ respondents say they're at least somewhat likely to plan a trip to a national park
- 51% of LGBTQ+ respondents say they're very likely to take a vacation to the beach
- Experiences: nature (28%) food and drink (24%), and entertainment (21%)

Safety

- 86% of LGBTQ+ respondents say a vacation destination's policies toward the LGBTQ+ community are at least somewhat important when selecting where to travel
- Over half (51%) of LGBTQ+ respondents say they're very unlikely to travel to a country where being LGBTQ+ is illegal

As well, IGLTAF held a *Think Tank* session, as part of their Annual Global Convention in New York City this past April. Included, were the results of the 23rd Annual LGBTQ Tourism & Hospitality Survey by *Community Marketing and Insights*, which found the top activities of interest in 2018 were: interesting and unique tourist attractions, historical attractions, interesting city neighborhoods, outdoor activities (like hiking and biking), LGBTQ+ specific nightlife or neighborhoods, art museums or elements of a local arts scene, theatre, concert or cultural performances, and also unique or luxury shopping.

The survey also found the following categories of activities preferred by LGBTQ+ tourists and travellers (listed in order of popularity):



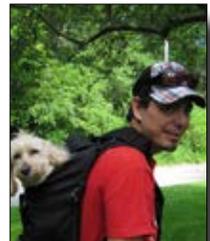
relaxation, local cuisine, travelling like a local, nature exploration, sightseeing, historic sites, LGBTQ+ site visits, art and design events, shows, music events, extending a business trip, nightlife, excitement, luxury, travelling with children, and media buzz.

Emerging Trends in LGBTQ+ Travel included romance travel such as marriage, honeymoon, family travel, and wellness travel. Other mentioned responses are listed such as cruises, Instagram perfect places, and non-gay friendly destination like Jordan and Egypt.

Resources

www.igla.org
www.travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories
www.travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/lgbt-travel
www.travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/travelers-with-special-considerations/lgbti.html

Bryen Dunn who has trekked across Canada, the United States, Europe, Asia, and Oceania shares some Travel Stats.



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Excerpt

The sun was over the trees at the southeastern edge of the sloped opening in the forest when I awoke. The sun woke me, actually: its rays on my face, the flicker of shadow and light as it played across my closed eyes. I was half dressed: my shoes off, my feet bare, and my coat spread over me in lieu of a blanket. My shirt was somewhere, probably. I wasn't wearing it, anyway, and my eyes hadn't opened yet, but I could feel it nearby the way you can sense an old dog by your chair or a former lover on the opposite side of an otherwise perfectly nice party.

My back curled against something firm and supporting and I felt gentle fingers stroke the tufts of silvery black at my temples. Hematite, a man told me once. I would always love him a little for saying that. My hair there wasn't yet gray but no longer black and when wet it looked like hematite, and he said it like that meant something deep and significant and mystical I didn't understand. Having someone's fingers run through it felt good, though. It felt like a happy memory, like something I didn't expect would happen much anymore if it ever really happened in the first place.

That simple touch was a comfort to me. It's the most minor thing and, for that reason, the most missed when it's gone. I don't go long stretches without being touched, but it had been a while between caresses. This was that: a caress, and more; not exactly sexual but not exactly platonic. It was that happy in-between we call intimate. I made myself vulnerable to other men, and they themselves to me, more times than I can count in my too-short life. It didn't always work out, though, that my usual flavor of street trade would show basic human kindness in return for mine.

None of that mattered, though. Those guys were long gone. Right that second, someone ran his fingers through my half-asleep

hair, intimate and kind and caressing. I felt vulnerable and that was okay. For a few moments I wasn't dying and I wasn't scared. I wasn't lonely and I wasn't alone. The sun felt good, and the breeze through the branches sounded like Gaia herself telling me to go back to sleep. I thought for a moment I might be okay with dying fairly soon if I got to wake up like this every morning for the rest of my life.

"Okay," I groaned. I didn't move and I didn't open my eyes because I wasn't quite ready for the moment to go away even as I lifted the pin to pop its balloon. "You want something. So tell me what it is. Because if I say yes – if– I may not have much time to hold up my end of the bargain." My voice dispelled all the magic of the moment, but his fingers were still at my temple, resting there, ready to go back to what we shared moments before. I rolled over and looked up at Alejandro, his purple hair down over half his face as he leaned on one elbow. I didn't kiss him, but I did put one hand to his jaw and brush his cheek with my thumb. I wondered if he could feel that – really feel it, like skin feels it. "Let's not pussyfoot around this. You want me to do something. The whole story about thinking someone was trying to kill you was bullshit, but there was something there, something worth chasing, so let's have the truth now and get on with things." I tried to smile at him. His expression was completely blank.

With the hand he used to brush my temples, he laid a fingertip behind my ear, cupping my face with barely a single point of contact. He still didn't smile, but his eyes searched my face, my own eyes, for something. It occurred to me the correct phrasing might be to say he searched my eyes for someone. I assumed he'd been alive long enough to know a hell of a lot of people, and I would bet a nickel he looked for one of them in me. There are a hundred romantic stories about golems: meat sacks like

me throwing ourselves at a golem out of infatuation with their embodiment of agelessness.

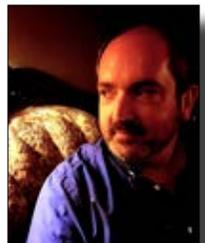
If he'd been there before, heard a hundred thousand of us wail about mortality and still willing to hear number one hundred thousand one, he must have a lot of love for humankind. No, I thought, more than that: he must have loved the hell out of one of us at some point. Maybe he was waiting for that guy to walk back into his life, reemerging from the vast but finite pool of genetic factors we possess as a species. I wondered if I simply seemed close enough to that long-lost lover to pass muster for a night.

I also wondered what made a golem want to get laid in the first place: ever the detective, after all.

"I really did see an angel in Splendor," Alejandro said. He still wasn't smiling. If anything, he had the muted seriousness, the understated gravitas, I'd long since come to recognize as the posture of someone telling the truth at long last. I wondered how long it had been. "I swear it to you. I swear it." He surprised me, then, because he didn't cry, golems don't have tear ducts, but his eyelids quivered with the autonomic response to strong emotion. He still hadn't moved at all, and we were shielded from the breeze so that his hair hung straight down like a perfectly still and settled curtain across half the stage of his face. "And I believe it would try to kill me if it knew I were here."

Michael G. Williams writes wry horror, urban fantasy, and science fiction: stories of monsters, macabre humor, and subverted expectations.

He is the author of three series for Falstaff Books: The Withrow Chronicles, including *Perishables* (2012 Laine Cunningham Award), *Tooth & Nail*, *Deal with the Devil*, *Attempted Immortality*, and *Nobody Gets Out Alive*; a new series in The Shadow Council Archives featuring one of San Francisco's most beloved figures, SERVANT/SOVEREIGN; and the science fiction noir, *A Fall in Autumn*.



Community Cornerstone

by Kelly Wilk



Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto, or LIFT, is both an appropriate acronym and word to describe the work this organization does, which is to increase skill level, provide accessibility, and eliminate education and access to professional equipment barriers for independent and local filmmakers.

I had the opportunity to chat with LIFT Executive Director, Chris Kennedy, to get a better understanding of all the great work that the organization does.

“The assistance we offer opens up the field of filmmaking to more voices and ideas, making a much more dynamic media landscape than if the filmmakers we support weren’t able to create their work” says Kennedy. “We’re always keen to make sure we support the widest range of filmmakers in the community. Toronto is such a diverse city, and it’s important to be available to artists who may not find an easy way into filmmaking without support like ours.”

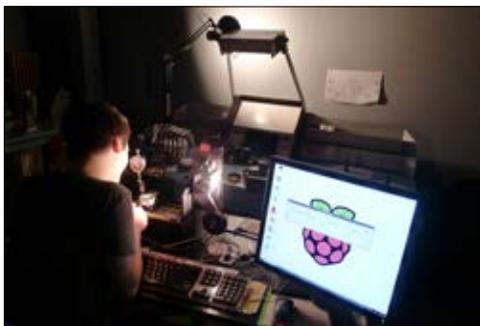
The workshops and mentorship programs that LIFT offers are other ways that it can help bring new voices to the industry of filmmaking. “The *Newcomer Mentorship* program supported three newcomer filmmakers (this year) by providing them each with a mentor who could help guide them through the network of filmmaking that is particular to Canada. The filmmakers are in the process of finalizing their films and we’re excited to see them,” says Kennedy.

“The *ImagineNative Mentorship* project has been supported by LIFT for over fifteen years and involves supporting an emerging indigenous filmmaker in the making of a short film (shot on 16mm!). The film debuts in October at the *ImagineNative Film Festival*. We are also supporting the *Tout-Monde: Markham* project that *Elegoa Cultural Productions* and the *Varley Art Gallery* are commissioning. We are providing in-kind equipment resources for filmmakers to make their projects, which will debut this fall in Markham,” Kennedy continues.

So what is it that the organization looks for in potential projects?

“When we have a call out for submissions for our residencies or mentorships, we tend to look at the uniqueness of the project, the feasibility of it being completed, and whether it is a project that we have the resources to support,” he says. “We look for more focused doable projects.”

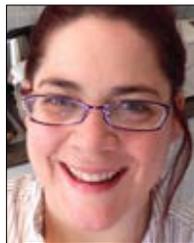
The *Local Heroes* program is presented by *Inside Out*, the annual LGBTQ+ film festival. This year eight LIFT projects were selected, and I was particularly intrigued by *My Fuzzy Valentine* by Ben Edelberg, and *Do You Even Carrot All?* by Daniel Sterlin-Altman.

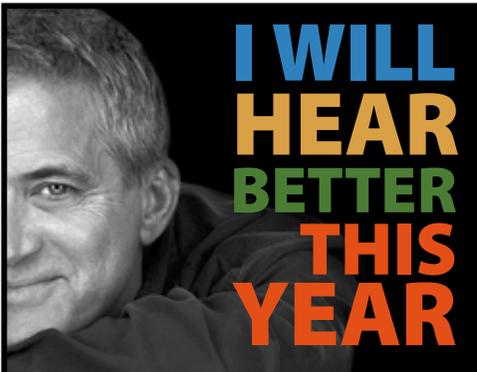


“That program is really important as it showcases the work of local filmmakers to the hometown crowd. Every year we’re excited to see that there are LIFT members whose films are selected. This year Brendan Prost and Ben Edelberg were filmmakers in the program, both active LIFT members who have used our equipment resources to make a few of their films. It’s always great to see that our members are able to build their careers and continue to make films with our help,” Kennedy shares.

It’s organizations like LIFT that make Toronto the diverse city that it is. More information can be found at www.lift.ca

Kelly Wilk is a freelance writer and single mom to a six-year-old, red-headed, Irish, Aries boy who is growing up way too fast. Follow “The Ginger Gent” on PinkPlayMags blog page, and Brave. Creative. Me at www.kellywilk.ca.





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AUTUMN IN THE CITY

by Sherry Sylvain

SickKids GetLoud

September 28; 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Fort York National Historic Site, 250 Fort York Blvd., Toronto
March among a SickKids army of 5000+ supporters for 5km to Fort York. Then celebrate with food, fun and a music festival featuring Serena Ryder, Dwayne Gretzky, and The Mini Pop Kids.

www.sickkidsfoundation.com

Tip: Get lots of sponsors to help you raise all the funds you can for a worthy cause, and start training now!

Fall For Dance North

October 2 to 6

Various times and venues – see the website

A striking line-up of 12 works from 11 of the world's most innovative dance companies across three unique programs. Presented in partnership with Ryerson School of Performance, with a special focus on international Indigenous artists. Also, free programming returns to Union Station September 23. www.ffdnorth.com

Tip: Try to see more than one of these exceptional performances, and detour your way through Union Station for the free shows on your way to one for which you have tickets.



Canada Beauty Health Wellness Expo

October 4 to 6 - Friday: 3:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m., Saturday: 11:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m., Sunday: Noon & 5:00 p.m.

The International Centre, 6900 Airport Rd., Mississauga
Local and International Brands are available to explore, try, discover and enjoy. Be it Yoga, Pilates, Zumba or the latest hair, nail or skin product, this expo has it all.

www.beautyhealthwellnessexpo.com

Tip: Wear comfy shoes, and clear a credit card in advance. Take a tote bag or knapsack to carry home your plunder.

Mandela

October 10 to January 7, Tuesday/Wednesday 1PM – 6PM; Thursday - Sunday 10AM – 6PM

Toronto Centre For The Arts, 5040 Yonge St., Toronto

Follow Mandela into hiding after he is declared an outlaw, then join him inside a replica of the prison cell that was his home for 18 years, witness South Africa's first democratic elections, and find out about Mandela's efforts to rebuild a nation shattered by racism and injustice.

www.tocentre.com

Tip: Try to work this in to a trip to see a show at this multi-event facility.



Shady Queens: The Last Shade - A Benefit For Fife House

October 10; 7:00 p.m.

Danforth Music Hall, 147 Danforth Ave., Toronto

This year, Fife House has secured two superstar queens from RuPaul's Drag Race - Trixie Mattel and Katya. Shady Queens is their largest signature fundraiser. Spotlight has raised more than \$1.3 million since its inception. Funds directly support their programs and services.

www.fifehouse.org

Tip: Take some Canadian \$5 bills, or US \$1 bills, and tip your queens if you can. At the very least, pay attention and cheer loudly to make them feel welcome and appreciated.



RuPaul's Drag Race: Werq The World

October 17; 8:00 p.m.

Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E., Toronto

Mission leader Michelle Visage is on a journey to save the universe with the help of her intergalactic queens including, Aquaria, Kameron Michaels, Asia O'Hara, Kim Chi, Naomi Smalls, Violet Chachki, and more from Season 11. VIP Option: Enjoy a private meet and greet with the queens before the show! Includes a customized VIP Galaxy Pass and a seat in the first few rows.

www.vossevents.com/events/werq-the-world

Tip: Dress to impress, and paint to make them faint.

Canada's Baking and Sweets Show

October 19 & 20; from 10:00 a.m. daily

The International Centre, 6900 Airport Rd., Mississauga

Professionally Decorated Cakes • Cake Competitions • Cake Decorating Experts • Baking Experts • Baking and Cake Decorating Classes • Recipes for Everyone • Home-Baked Recipe Competition • Family Zone • Exhibitors offering bake ware, cake decorating tools, and more.

www.canadasbakingandsweetsshow.com

Tip: Wear something with an elastic waistband in case of excessive sampling.

Empty Bowls

October 24; 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Gardiner Museum, 111 Queen's Park, Toronto

Annual culinary fundraiser in support of Anishnawbe Health Toronto, a culture-based centre committed to changing lives through traditional healing practices. Enjoy delicious soup by some of Ontario's most eminent chefs in your choice of one of over 400 hand-crafted, one-of-a-kind bowls donated by local potters and students. Tickets: \$55.00.

www.gardinermuseum.on.ca

Tip: You might want to plan a little after soup outing for further sustenance with a new appreciation for those who survive on soup kitchens.



Wizards Festival & Hallows Express Train Ride

October 26 & 27 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

York-Durham Heritage Railway, 19 Railway St., Uxbridge

This weekend festival brings the Wizardry World to life, filled with interactive shows, potion classes, a maze, magic shows, and workshops on how to defend yourself against the Dark Enemy. Premium ticket holders can go on the Hallows Express. Make sure to arrive early and take a walk through the Enchanted Alley. Family-friendly event, with a 19+ licensed area.

www.ydhr.ca/reservations

Tip: Pack your best wand, and book early for the most Harry event of the season.

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince in Concert

October 31 to November 2 7:30 p.m.

Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E., Toronto

Based on the sixth instalment of J.K. Rowling's classic saga, fans of the film can now experience the thrilling tale of Harry's obsession with a mysterious potions book, accompanied by the music of a live symphony orchestra.

www.sonycentre.ca

Tip: In the running as one of the most Harry events of the season, this might be a great follow-up to a train ride earlier in the week.

Just For Laughs Comedy Night In Canada hosted By Rick Mercer

November 3; 8:00 p.m.

Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., Toronto

Rick Mercer is hosting, joined on stage with 2018 Juno Award winner for comedy album of the year Ivan Decker, Gemini award-winning comedian Debra DiGiovanni, and host of CBC and Sirius XM's Laugh Out Loud, the hilarious Ali Hassan. Various dates across Canada

www.roythomsonhall.com

Tip: *Wear a tight top so you don't literally split your sides from excessive laughing.*

Toronto Ski & Snowboard Show

November 7 to 10 - Thu: 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.,

Fri: Noon to 10:00 p.m., Sat: 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.,

Sun: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The International Centre, 6900 Airport Rd., Mississauga

This is North America's largest consumer showcase of ski & snowboard related travel destinations, equipment, clothing, lifestyle information, and a vast array of related products and services.

www.skicanada.org/toronto-ski-snowboard-show

Tip: *If you love the cold and snow, and all the related outdoor activities, this is probably the show for you.*

The Eco Lifestyle Market - Holiday Market

November 10: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Great Hall, 1087 Queen St. W., Toronto

A collection of 60 of Toronto's finest local, handcrafted, sustainable, eco-friendly, and wellness goods vendors. A day of delicious local eats, vendors, and cheer. Skip the mall this holiday season and get that one-of-a-kind gift right in your own backyard. Admission is free, children and pet friendly. www.theecolifestylemarket.com

Tip: *Take some cash, because even though many vendors now take credit and debit cards, WIFI connections can often be spotty.*

Indie Week

November 13 to 17

Various times and venues – see the website

Indie Week (17th Edition) is one of Canada's top emerging artist festivals that brings industry professionals and artists together. Over 150 acts at 20+ venues, over five nights; 4:00 a.m. last call www.indieweek.com

Tip: *Check all the venues and acts available and create a tour for yourself over the course of the entire week. Pick up an All Access Pass to save time and money.*



Mavis Staples

November 16; 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W., Toronto

Mavis Staples is an alchemist of American music, having continuously crossed genre lines by weaving herself into the very fabric of gospel, folk, pop, R&B, blues, rock, and hip hop over the last 70 years. Her newest album, *We Get By*, was produced and written by Ben Harper. After the concert, enjoy a beverage and more music at the Postlude Performance. www.rcmusic.com

Tip: *Wear your dancing shoes and be prepared to fight the urge to jump out of your seat.*

The Everything To Do With Sex Show

November 29 to December 1 Fri: 05:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.,

Sat: Noon to 11:59p.m., Sun: Noon to 6:00 p.m.

The International Centre, 6900 Airport Rd., Mississauga

An upscale adult playground dedicated to enhancing lifestyles, encouraging romance, personal betterment, and all things taboo. Enjoy entertainment, provocative and educational seminars, unique shopping, fashion shows, and live demonstrations. 19 + Event.

www.tambooshow.com/toronto

Tip: *If you're at all uptight, stay away from this very adult oriented event.*

The 33rd Annual Women's Blues Revue

November 29; 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., Toronto

The Women's Blues Revue returns for its 33rd year, bringing blues lovers together for an evening honouring the contributions to the genre with some of Canada's finest female musicians.

www.torontobluesociety.com/womens-blues-revue

Tip: *Not an environment for those who can't handle expressions of the melancholy side of love and life.*

Flamingo Market - Winter Wonderland Edition

December 1; 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Buddies In Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St., Toronto

Toronto's only independent bi-monthly market for LGBTQ2SIA+ business owners and makers. This event features, promotes, and fosters the diverse small business and artisan talent that the community has to offer. Free admission within an all-inclusive, child friendly space.

www.buddiesinbadtimes.com

Tip: *Bring your eco-friendly shopping bags and prepare to fill them with everything you will need for the gift giving season.*

Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to).





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From The Heart

By Mychol Scully

I am not a movie fan. There! I said it!

Please understand; I appreciate the art and craft of film. The writing, direction, performances, editing, and technicality of making movies do interest me. As a writer, designer and artist, I appreciate the challenging work that goes into any and every film, no matter how epic or trashy.

Blame it on my OCD, but I find it almost impossible to commit to sitting and staring at a screen for ninety minutes or more while the movie attempts to engage me. Ninety minutes scrolling through **Facebook**? No problem. Binge watching **Netflix** (*Lucifer* comes to mind)? Compulsive. Reading a novel in one sitting? It happens.

But actually deciding to sit down and watch a movie? Almost impossible, especially if it comes “highly recommended” by friends or critics. Call me contrary.

That being said, in the six decades I’ve been kicking around this prison planet, I have come across a small handful of films that have engaged my attention and which I’ve watched more than once, with pleasure. There aren’t many and they’re certainly not your typical “blockbusters.”

Here, then, are my top picks for pics...

2001: A Space Odyssey (Stanley Kubrick, 1968)

I was eleven years old when this movie premiered. I was already a sci-fi junkie at that age and a huge fan of **Arthur C. Clarke**. This film promised to provide a detailed visualization



2001: A Space Odyssey (Stanley Kubrick, 1968)

of the future I was reading about voraciously at that time and didn’t disappoint. **Stanley Kubrick**’s detailed minimalism of the sets and costume design, combined with the advanced (at the time) technological execution of the special effects, drew me in and held me there. The surrealist final scenes leave the viewer in a mildly hallucinogenic state. I’ve probably watched this movie at least a dozen times.

Orlando (Sally Potter, 1992)

Based on a novel by **Virginia Woolf**, the story starts in 16th Century England and spans centuries. **Sally Potter**’s first feature length film, shot on a shoestring budget and mostly on location in various crumbling locales in the U.K., hooked me immediately and held me enthralled for more than 90 minutes. The brilliant (if unorthodox) casting of **Tilda Swinton** as Orlando, **Billy Zane** (as her lover), and **Quentin Crisp** (as Queen Elizabeth I) completely engaged me. I’ve watched this one at least six times and would definitely watch it again.



Orlando (Sally Potter, 1992)



Shortbus (John Cameron Mitchell, 2006)

This one's a Canadian work with a very interesting development story. John Cameron Mitchell cast the film for the characters he knew he wanted in the story, but at the time he was casting, there was no script. Subsequently, the director and cast then wrote the story together. It's a compelling puzzle of a film that introduces us to a quixotic cast of characters who eventually all converge on a New York salon, called "Shortbus," hosted by the enigmatic Justin Vivian Bond, who plays himself (no, that's not a typo) in the film. CBC's Sook-Yin Lee portrays a couples counsellor unable to experience orgasm. At the time of her casting, CBC forbade her to participate in the film, primarily because there were a lot sexual scenes in the script (NONE of them simulated!), and they felt it was bad for the CBC brand. After a massive outcry from fellow media personalities, Canadian writers and filmmakers and the general public, she was allowed to play her role in the film to great acclaim.



Shortbus (John Cameron Mitchell, 2006)

For me, it's Justin Bond who really makes the film. His iconic performance as the host/matron of the Shortbus salon keeps me coming back for more. The closing musical number ("In the End") brings me to tears. Every. Single. Time.

So that's it! The only three movies I consider keepers.. I'd watch all three again any time. If you haven't seen them, I highly recommend them the next time you're looking for something "different." Neither the Marvel Universe nor Tarantino's psycho-pathological tropes can hold a candle to any one of these.

Mychol Scully is Senior Art Director for INspired Media Inc. publications PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, The Local Biz Magazine, and The Pink Pages Directory. Mychol is available for thoughtful conversation or lascivious teasing anytime at mychol@mychol.com.





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Autumn Horoscopes

by Julie Antoinette

Aries (March 21 – April 20)

Be on the lookout for new opportunities. Many of these will cross your path over the coming weeks. You will have to make the very best choices you can amongst what is offered. You know that you cannot accept them all. Knowing this, let your excitement to what is presented be your guide.

Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

You've been hiding out recently. Well, perhaps you've been avoiding someone in particular who seems to have unknowingly hurt your feelings. You are no stranger to confrontation, but this situation has put you in a sensitive state that you can't quite manage publicly. It's okay to want some space sometimes.

Gemini (May 22 – June 21)

Your recent personal extravagances have people talking, Gemini. Some wonder if you've secretly won the lottery. Others wonder if perhaps you've caught the eye of a wealthy gentleman suitor? Or perhaps recently robbed a bank? Keep your aloof air of nonchalance. And enjoy the show.

Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

Your life is radically different now from where it was just one year ago. Situations and people have come and gone in and out of your life so quickly. Everyone seems transient. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Those that have moved on leave you with mixed feelings of loss and, oddly, relief. This could be one of life's "tabula rasa" moments. Clean slate. Grab your favorite color chalk.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

Take a moment to stand back and clearly evaluate all that you have accomplished with your life so far. You'll realize that you've manifested each goal you have dreamed of since you can remember. A moment of pause and appreciation will give you the second wind you'll need to hop back at it toward new goals and dreams. You're not done yet!

Virgo (August 23 – September 23)

Be careful to keep yourself safely out of the realms of overwhelm and burnout. Others must adjust their expectations of you and must consider you more. And you must be the one to help them make this adjustment. You've set a standard of service that has quite frankly become exploitative. You must learn to use the hardest and most magical word: NO.

Libra (September 24 – October 23)

Thoughts of an old friend accompany you lately. You've noticed that you've gone in one direction and they have gone in another. Your personalities don't mesh as fluidly as they did years ago and interactions are at times uncomfortable. It really is nothing personal. In life, we encounter people for a reason, a season or a lifetime. It's okay to realize that people grow apart. It means we've grown.

Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

Something in your subconscious from long ago is wanting to surface. Its projections can be felt by everyone, but in a cryptic way. Only you can decode its message. Your compass here is your emotions. Channel them in a safe and constructive way for best insights and results. Journaling perhaps?

Sagittarius (November 23 - December 21)

Go Sagittarius go! You're almost at the finish line. That goal you set long ago is ready to be realized. It's been a long slog but you're still here and you're almost out of the woods. Don't give up 5 minutes before the miracle.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

Someone in your workplace feels threatened by you. An authority-figure issue is presenting itself. Consider that oftentimes, the socializations organized within workplaces are much like the structure of families. How you handle this could be an opportunity to garner immense respect. Do a little research on effective leadership skills and family dynamics before making your approach.

Aquarius (January 20 – February 19)

Someone in your life has been a little testy lately. Your patience and understanding is implicitly requested. This person is encountering a number of triggers arising out of their personal environments. These triggers have made this person feel increasingly hypervigilant and defensive. They are working through a shadow and really appreciate your support.

Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

Recently, you've been relishing your alone time, perhaps a little too much? You've been exercising great self-care in protecting your space and ensuring your environment is safe and peaceful. However, this has meant that you've had to make adjustments to the exclusion of others. It's okay to have your space, but be sure you have a balance between you-time and others-time to avoid creeping isolation.

Julie is a Sociology and Psychology graduate, a Psychotherapy Intern and a lifelong student of the psyche. She seeks to relay intuitive messages of guidance from the collective astrological archetypes. As above, so below.



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Looking Back

by Michael Rowe

Pride of Chucky

The best job I ever had was the 17 years I spent as the first-tier Canadian correspondent for the premier American horror film magazine, *Fangoria*. That period included the magazine's pre-Internet golden years when the writer would spend a couple of unfettered days on the set of a horror film interviewing the stars, the director, and the FX crew. Then go home and write 3,000 words on the production, in advance of the film's release. Between 1989 and 2006, I conducted hundreds of interviews with some of the biggest names in the horror genre, and wrote more than a dozen cover stories for the magazine.

I even made a few friends along the way.

In the summer of 1998, I was covering two films that were shooting simultaneously in Toronto—*Urban Legend* and *Bride of Chucky*. It was on the latter film that I had the occasion to meet Don Mancini, the handsome young screenwriter of all of the Child's Play films, and Chucky's defacto creator. We hit it off right away. I don't remember how the discussion of our lives as two gay men began, but in a matter of weeks we had become great friends, bonding over a shared horror aesthetic, as well as our shared histories.

Bride of Chucky, Jennifer Tilly's voluptuous entrée into the franchise, was ripe with camp, and so beautifully shot by cinematographer, Peter Pau, that it might have been a cubist canvas with a pair of homicidal killer dolls (Chucky's bride, Tiffany, voiced by Tilly) perfectly embodying a wry queer take on a toxic

heterosexual marriage, all set to the beat of *Rob Zombie* and *Blondie*. The subtext was there for anyone with the wit to see it, but for everyone else, it was an unforgettably luxurious horror comedy that grossed \$50.7 million dollars worldwide.

In 2004, I went to Romania at Don's invitation to cover the filming of *Seed of Chucky*, his sequel to *Bride*, which also marked my friend's directorial debut. In that film he introduced Glen—Chucky and Tiffany's gentle, gender-ambiguous offspring, who is horrified by his macho father's taste for carnage. Long before the term genderqueer had entered wider cultural usage, Don had created an embodiment of the concept, and unapologetically given it undead life in a horror film—a genre that had traditionally been hostile to, or at best, uneasy with, the entire concept of positive depictions of queer identity.

I'm neither a film scholar nor a queer studies scholar, but as an ex-journalist with a penchant for horror films, among the lessons of that hot summer of 1998 is this one: it remains incumbent upon queer artists to shape our representation in the wider popular culture, even in horror films. Perhaps especially in horror films.

After all, if two possessed, homicidal dolls could have a PFLAG moment with their queer child in 2004, then it's long past time for the rest the monsters to sissy that walk.

Michael Rowe is the *Shirley Jackson Award*-nominated author of the novels *Wild Fell* and *Enter, Night*. In 2002, Clive Barker credited him with "changing the shape of horror fiction forever" with his groundbreaking anthologies *Queer Fear* and *Queer Fear 2*. His third novel, *October*, is forthcoming from ChiZine Publications in October 2019.



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