



## British Council brings the world's largest LGBTQ+ digital campaign to Indian audience

**Tuesday, 26 March 2019:** British Council has revealed the film line-up for the 5<sup>th</sup> season of **#FiveFilms4Freedom**, the world's widest-reaching LGBTQ+ digital campaign. The project, a partnership between the British Council and BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival, will see five short films from the BFI Flare programme made available to Indian and global audiences through the British Council's global digital platforms, free of charge.

Running since 2015, the programme has seen more than 10 million people viewing one of the films in more than 200 countries. The latest season, therefore, holds even greater significance as it is part of **Anyone//Anywhere: the web at 30**, British Council's global campaign acknowledging and celebrating the impact of the world wide web on every aspect of our lives over the past 30 years.

This year's #FiveFilms4Freedom collection presents a range of compelling and thought-provoking stories, including one made under the guidance of legendary filmmaker, Werner Herzog. In the visually mesmerising *Carlito se va para siempre*, a man is forced to choose between his lover and his community in rural Peru. Director, Quentin Lazzarotto, made the short after Herzog challenged a group of emerging filmmakers to produce a film in the heart of the Amazonian jungle.

Two UK films are included in this year's programme. *Ladies Day* focuses on a young lesbian trying to navigate uncomfortable conversations in a Sheffield hair salon. *Crashing Waves*, from director Emma Gilbertson, is an experimental dance piece depicting the tenderness and brutality of a complicated relationship.

Intersex rights activist Pidgeon Pagonis is the star of *A Normal Girl*, by award-winning director Aubree Bernier-Clarke. In this vital film Pagonis – whose activism was recognised by the Obama administration – candidly discusses the discovery in their late teens that their intersex condition had been hidden from them.

From Iceland, *ÉG*, is a moving yet exhilarating drama, following a teen breaking away from societal expectations after a visit to a gender identity clinic. Vala Ómarsdóttir and Hallfríður Tryggvadóttir are the creative duo behind the film.

World over, there is heightened awareness and discussion around equal rights for the LGBT community. LGBT rights in many other countries have been transformed, including India where homosexuality was decriminalized last year. The campaign illustrates how the medium of films can help to secure global influence. As an art form it can be used to educate, engage, inform, debate, illustrate, and challenge.

Talking about the #FiveFilms4Freedom programme in India, **Tom Birtwistle, Director North India, British Council**, said, "Cinema is a powerful medium, and perfect artistic format for the internet age. #FiveFilms4Freedom shows the power of human connection and reminds us all the love is a human right."

### 2019 #FiveFilms4Freedom films

#### **A NORMAL GIRL (USA)**

*A Normal Girl* brings the widely unknown struggles of intersex people to light, through the story of intersex activist Pidgeon Pagonis.



[Aubree Bernier-Clarke](#) is a non-binary director and cinematographer based in Los Angeles, CA. Aubree is committed to using film to tell diverse stories, often focusing on LGBTQ+ and social justice issues. Aubree uses she/her and them/them pronouns.

#### **CARLITO SE VE PARA SIEMPRE / CARLITO LEAVES FOREVER (Peru/France)**

A short poetic film following Carlito, a young man living in an indigenous village at the heart of the Amazonian jungle, who decided to leave and change his life forever.

[Quentin Lazzarotto](#) grew up in the mountainous and forested region of Haut Jura, France. *Carlito se ve para siempre* is his second professional short fiction film.

#### **CRASHING WAVES (UK)**

Two young working-class men explore the intimacy and vulnerability of relationships in a combative dance against the backdrop of an inner city estate, risking all under the scrutiny of a tight-knit, ever judging community.

[Emma Gilbertson](#) is a UK filmmaker originally from Liverpool. She has a keen interest in films about working class, queer and female identity.

#### **ÉG / I (Iceland)**

A young trans person living in a small town travels to the city searching for the freedom to be their self.

[Vala Ómarsdóttir](#) is a film director and writer from Iceland. Vala is the co-founder of GERVI Productions.

[Hallfríður Thora Tryggvadóttir](#) is a New York-based director and producer. Originally from Iceland, Hallfríður has led numerous international film and theatre productions. *ÉG* is Hallfríður's film directorial debut.

#### **LADIES DAY (UK)**

Amma, a young, black lesbian, spends the day in an Afro-Caribbean hair salon full of fun, sheen spray, gossip and laughter - but how will she deal with the casual homophobia?

[Abena Taylor-Smith](#) is a writer and filmmaker. She is a 2017-18 participant of ShortFLIX, the Creative England/Sky Arts talent development scheme for emerging filmmakers and has been selected for the 2019 Diverse Directors workshop at the National Film & Television School.

All five films will be available to view from 00.01 on 21 -31 March via the [British Council Arts YouTube channel](#)

--XXX--

#### **Notes to Editor**

##### **About #FiveFilms4Freedom**

#FiveFilms4Freedom is the world's widest-reaching LGBTQ+ online film campaign. The campaign is run by the British Council in partnership with BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival, and has been running since 2015 [www.britishcouncil.org/fivefilms4freedom](http://www.britishcouncil.org/fivefilms4freedom)

##### **About BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival**

BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival is the UK's longest running LGBTQ+ film event. It began in 1986 as Gay's Own Pictures. By its 3rd edition it was tagged the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and since then has grown to become the largest LGBTQ+ film event in the UK, and its most anticipated. The Festival changed its name to BFI Flare in 2014 to reflect the increasing diversity of its films, filmmakers and audience. The festival is programmed by Jay Bernard, Michael Blyth, Zorian Clayton, Brian Robinson and Emma Smart, led by Artistic Director, Tricia Tuttle.



The full programme of BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival will include 52 feature films, an expanded industry programme, selected films on BFI Player VOD service, a series of special events and archive screenings. fiveFilms4freedom will see Flare offer five LGBT short films for free across the world and promoted through the British Council's global networks. The full programme was announced on 20th February. The festival runs 21st - 31st March [www.bfi.org.uk/Flare](http://www.bfi.org.uk/Flare)

#### **About the BFI**

The BFI is the UK's lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a cultural charity that:

- Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of World Cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online
- Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world
- Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers
- Works with Government and Industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE [www.bfi.org.uk/](http://www.bfi.org.uk/)

#### **About the British Council**

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We work with over 100 countries in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year we reached over 75 million people directly and 758 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. We make a positive contribution to the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. [www.britishcouncil.in](http://www.britishcouncil.in)

**For more information about the British Council, contact:**

Shonali Ganguli | [Shonali.Ganguli@in.britishcouncil.org](mailto:Shonali.Ganguli@in.britishcouncil.org)

**For media information, please contact:**

Pratishtha Kaura | [pratishtha.kaura@archetype.co](mailto:pratishtha.kaura@archetype.co) | +91 7838350768