

# fresno reel pride

  
16th annual gay & lesbian film festival

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## **The 16<sup>th</sup> FRESNO REEL PRIDE GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL ADDS SECOND VENUE & UNVEILS ITS 2005 PROGRAM LINE-UP**

- **Opening Night Gala Screening - "Saving Face" by Alice Wu**
- **Centerpiece Screenings - "Unveiled" and "Adam and Steve"**
- **Closing Night Gala Screening - "Loggerheads"**
- **Second venue sponsored by Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences®**

**Fresno, California...** Opening September 14<sup>th</sup>, Fresno REEL Pride Film Festival begins its 16<sup>th</sup> annual festival of gay and lesbian films during a five day festival at the historic Tower Theatre in Fresno. New to the 2005 Festival is the addition of a second venue—the Starline Lounge – in order to present additional films and programs and sponsored through a grant from the Academy Foundation of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences®.

The five-day event attracts over 15,000 attendees each year —gay and straight— to view the best alternative and independent short films, documentaries and feature films. Reel Pride is the Central Valley's largest film festival and the sixth oldest gay and lesbian festival in the United States.

"This year, we are proud to receive recognition by the prestigious Academy Foundation of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences®" said Jon Carroll Reel Pride Festival Director. "Reel Pride's constant goal is to bring the best, brightest, and most interesting films to our Central Valley audience and this year we feature more premieres than ever before. In 2005, we have also increased the overall number of programs by adding a second venue space. We have increased the total number of films in the festival to fifty four and we will continue to offer the popular filmmakers forum and other signature events, as well as appearances by the filmmakers and stars from films represented in our 16th festival."

This year's festival program will include a wide variety of award winning films from Australia, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Norway, Peru and the United States. The 2005 finalists were selected from a record number of film submissions and include award winning features, documentaries and short films.

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### Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>

Reel Pride Film Festival will open on Wednesday, September 14th with the Opening Night Gala presentation of the romantic comedy **Saving Face**. In her debut feature, director Alice Wu establishes herself as a fresh new American voice in a delightful, sexy and heartfelt comedy of manners that explores the clash of traditional and contemporary views on love within one Chinese family. The cast is led by the radiant Joan Chen in a tale that explores how to live life honestly.

### Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>

Thursday films begin at 4:30 pm in the newly added second venue, the Starline Lounge, with the documentary film **Harold's Home Movies**, featuring an unparalleled collection of footage chronicling gay life over the last 70 years. Followed by the film Argentinean film **El Favor (The Favor)**, a comedic romp reminiscent of over-the-top Mexican *novelas*. The Tower Theatre program begins at 5:30 pm with the world festival premiere of **Camp Michael Jackson**, capturing the intangible, confusing and eccentric icon to millions that is Michael Jackson through the eyes of some of Jackson's most ardent fans as they too endure their own personal trials, including Fresno native Nayiri Torigian (scheduled to appear). The night continues with the uplifting crowd pleaser **Guys and Balls** a tale of soccer-loving men from Germany and ends with Greg Araki's latest work, the luminous and controversial **Mysterious Skin**. An adaptation of Scott Heim's disturbing look at society, teens, pedophilia, and drug use, Araki has assembled a lovely and talented cast, transformed them into a hypnotic set of characters, and woven a story that is not to be missed.

### Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup>

On Friday, September 16th, the Festival begins at 4:00pm at the Starline Lounge with **Maricones (Fags)** a fascinating and revealing look at homosexuals in Peru as they describe their lifestyle and their past, in a much different version than you might expect to hear from other Hispanic cultures. This is followed by **Joy of Life**, a minimalist and deeply penetrating discourse on the twin impulses of physical yearning and emotional abandon in the fog-shrouded city of San Francisco. Friday films at the Tower Theatre include **Pursuit of Equality**, a film that follows the rollercoaster process in San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsome's office as the first volley is waged against the constitutional question of marriage equality and passions ignite this civil rights battle right to the heart of the nation. Next follows a sexy, evocative coming-of-age story **Sommersturm (Summer Storm)**, a crossover box office hit in Germany. The film renders its teenage characters and their "issues" in gorgeous full relief, placing them in context right alongside the turbulent confusion of their straight peers. The Friday Night CentrePiece program at 9:00 pm features **Unveiled**, a tale of forbidden love between women in a land where such relationships under Islamic law could mean death. The Friday films wrap with the French film **Comme Un Frère (Like a Brother)**. The tearing away of youthful dreams and the realization of electric adulthood provide the core of this dramatic telling of both sides of a young man's life.

### Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>

On Saturday, Reel Pride presents its All-Day program with a full day of screenings that begins at 11:00 am with a full **Youth Program** of short films followed by the highly acclaimed **The Education of Shelby Knox**. This amazing documentary follows the entire high school life of one Miss Shelby Knox, Christian Conservative Virgin, and daughter of lifelong Republican right-wingers in the bible-belt town of Lubbock, Texas.

## Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup> (continued)

Shelby wages her own one-person battle against the school establishment and her fellow conservative students as an activist for realistic sexual education and advocate for equality for all – gay and straight. Miss Knox is scheduled to appear.

The Starline venue concludes with **Transgeneration**, a sneak preview of an eight-episode documentary series to be seen on the Sundance Channel just days after Reel Pride. The film captures the triumphant and often painful journey between gender roles of college students facing the real world as they face their transgender lifestyles.

The Saturday Tower Theatre program begins at noon with hauntingly moody French love triangle **Le Dernier Jour (The Last Day)**, and is followed by the entertaining and very popular **Boy's Short Films** program. At 4:30 pm Reel Pride features a world-premier sneak peek of **Dante's Cove**, a soon to be released original series debuting on here! tv in October 2005.

**Dante's Cove** follows the lives of a group of gay and lesbian twenty-somethings living in an apartment complex on a California beach and is expected to be the next best television series on gay life, featuring some of the sexiest and out actors in Hollywood. Several cast members are scheduled to appear.

Saturday continues with the popular **Girl's Film Shorts**, followed by the Saturday Night CentrePiece film **Adam and Steve** by Craig Chester (scheduled to appear with other cast members). After an unforgettable and regrettable one-night stand of sorts, the action cuts to 15 years later where lightning strikes a second time between Adam and Steve...only these two are blissfully unaware of their prior meeting. A dash of *There's Something About Mary* crossed with *When Harry Met Sally*, this spectacular and hilariously sweet love story from first time director (but long-time indie icon and queer idol) Craig Chester also features Malcolm Gets as Chester's love interest along with a funny and poignant performance from Parker Posey as the best girl friend, and SNL alum Chris Kattan as Gets' sarcastic ladykiller roommate.

## Sunday, September 18<sup>th</sup>

The Festival's final day begins at Starline on Sunday morning with a Script Reading Performance of a new film **Dear Diary**, written by Christian Calson (writer/director of *Shiner*) and Chris J. Russo (*A Woman Reported, Size 'Em Up, Straight Down the Aisle*). *Napoleon Dynamite* meets *The Wonder Years* in this script, soon to be shot right here in Fresno this spring! This script reading is a unique chance to watch the filmmaking process from the near beginning, and to ask questions of the screenwriters and director and is FREE to the public.

At 2:00 pm in the Starline the **Filmmaker's Forum Discussion Panel** convenes as once again visiting filmmakers take the time to discuss their entries into this year's Reel Pride festival, and share the secrets and inspiration to successful filmmaking. This FREE program is ideal for fans of film as well as aspiring actors and directors (and producers and editors and production assistants!).

The **Filmmaker's Forum** is followed by **Not Straight Forward** a hilarious, touching, and very revealing documentary that gives the viewer full access into a dating experiment for the comic Tan...ten blind dates with ten very interesting and beautiful girls. Who will she pick? The final festival film at the Starline venue is the provocative thriller **Strange Fruit**. In a reference to the Billy holiday song, Manhattan attorney William Boyals is forced to go home to Louisiana when a childhood friend – much like William, African American and gay – has been brutally assaulted and lynched. William vows to bring the killer to justice for the sake of the victim's grief-stricken mother.

## **Sunday, September 18<sup>th</sup>(continued)**

At noon in the Tower Theatre, Reel Pride presents a Spirited Women program with the documentary features **Tomboys**, detailing the lives of women across all walks of life and **In My Father's Church**, a moving exploration of two women wanting to get married in their father's strict church. This is followed by **Twist of Faith** at 2:00PM -- a mesmerizing saga of abuse by a Catholic priest and an Oscar<sup>®</sup> nominee for best documentary.

Presented at 3:30 pm is a sobering documentary that covers what must seem a true minority, **Gay Republicans**, as they are torn between their love of party and the disregard of the leader they've chosen. The festival races towards conclusion with a 5:00 pm presentation of **Blood Sweat and Glitter**, where the road to the title of "Miss Trannyshack" is filled with lust, desire, and lots of big hair. Nothing is as fiercely combative as when contestants square off in this backstage look at what it takes to become San Francisco's "Miss Trannyshack!"

**Loggerheads** will be the final film of the 2005 Reel Pride Film festival will be presented at the Tower Theatre at 7:00pm. Tim Kirkman (*The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me*) returns to Reel Pride with his latest and hauntingly beautiful tale of love, loss, and the longing for connection. **Loggerheads** features a stellar cast, including Bonnie Hunt and Tess Harper, Michael Learned, Michael Kelly and Chris Sarandon in roles that helped to make **Loggerheads** a 2005 Sundance favorite. The night culminates with the Awards Night Party and the presentation of the Audience Awards and Directors Club Awards immediately following the screening.

The 16th Annual Fresno Reel Pride Gay & Lesbian Film Festival is sponsored by over 80 national corporations and local businesses including: AAA Travel, Academy Foundation of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences<sup>®</sup>, American Cancer Society, Bank of America, Bilsten's – A Paul's Certified Appliance Co., Bud Light, BulldogPride.com, Central California Alliance, Chukchansi Gold Resort and Casino, Clear Channel Communications, Comcast Digital Cable, CTX Mortgage Company, Dumont Printing, Engelmann Cellars, Freed Custom Builders, here! TV, Imperial Dove Court de Fresno/Madera, London Properties, Me-N-Ed's Pizza, Miller-Clark Landscape and Nursery, Nextel, Planned Parenthood Marmonte, Quality Inn and Suites, Red Bull, Regal Entertainment Group, Salazar's Grill, Telephone Service of California, Three Olives Vodka, Tower District Marketing Committee, Uncle Harry's, United Security Bank, Walker Lewis Rents, Warner Co. Jewelers, Washington Mutual, Wesley UMC, WestCare California and Wolfe Video.

**Fresno REEL Pride Film Festival**; September 14-18, 2005 at the Tower Theatre and Starline Lounge in Fresno. For a complete schedule of films and descriptions go to [www.reelpride.com](http://www.reelpride.com). Advance tickets available online at [www.reelpride.com](http://www.reelpride.com) or beginning September 6<sup>th</sup> at the REEL Pride Box Office located at 807 E. Olive Avenue. Festival passes available for \$50, \$75 and \$125 and individual screening tickets range from \$5-15.

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