



## Press Release 'Queer' Asia Conference and Film Festival 2018

The third edition of the 'Queer' Asia Conference is taking place from 26-28 June, 2018 at SOAS, University of London and UCL and the Film festival is taking place on 24 and 29 June at the British Museum and 27 and 28 June at SOAS. All the events are free to attend.

'Queer' Asia is a network and platform for collaboration and research on LGBTIQ+ issues in Asia. The aim of our annual conference and film festival is to bring together activists, artists, academics and film-makers from various parts of Asia on a common platform and interrogate latest developments on LGBTI rights and culture in the region.

The theme of the conference and film festival this year is 'Bodies X Borders' which aims to look at issues around migration, diaspora and displacement. With the resurgence of right wing nationalism and enforced migration due to conflict and war in various parts of the world, 'Queer' Asia examines their impact on LGBTIQ+ lives.

We have eight academic panels all of which will explore these themes. These feature academics and early career researchers from some of the top international universities. We also have a range of panel discussions and talks by activists, policy experts, academics and donors, some of which are highlighted below:

- A panel on [challenges faced by refugees in accessing asylum](#) featuring Alana Eissa from Pelangi, Campaign for equality and human rights, Malaysia; Moni Sikdar, a queer refugee; Chaka Bachmann from Stonewall UK, Paul Dillane from Kaleidoscope Trust and Suraj Girijashanker from Outright International and Columbia Law School.
- A roundtable on [situation of LGBTI rights in Central Asia](#) featuring Anna Kirey from Amnesty International, Nazik from Labrys, an NGO in Kyrgyzstan working on LGBTI rights in Central Asia and Javid Nabiyeu from Nefes (Breath) LGBT Azerbaijan Alliance, currently living as a political refugee in Germany.
- A panel on the [use of data for policy advocacy on LGBTI rights in Asia Pacific in partnership with UNDP](#) featuring Joe Wong from Asia Pacific Transgender Network; Ryan V. Silverio from ASEAN SOGIE Caucus; Prof. Suen Tung from Chinese University of Hong Kong; Edmund Settle from UNDP and Eszter Kismodi, Health and Human Rights Consultant
- A panel on [philanthropy and grant making for LGBTI rights activism in Asia](#) featuring Susie Jolly from IDS UK; Zohra Moosa from Mama Cash, Netherlands; Bridget De Gersigny from Astraea Foundation, US; Urooj Arshad from Advocates for Youth, US; Matthew Hart from the Global Philanthropy Project.
- A panel on the [role of businesses in advancing LGBTI rights in Asia](#) featuring Salil Tripathi from Institute of Human rights and Business, UK; Midnight Poonkasetwattana from APCOM – an Asia Pacific Community Network; Amazin Lethi from the Amazin Lethi Foundation, Vietnam and US; Vicky Hayden from Stonewall UK and Chelsea from Citibank, Hong Kong.
- We have featured talks by [Haneen Maikey, Executive Director, Alqaws - Palestine's leading LGBT rights NGO](#) about politics of queer organising in Palestine; [Dr. Lynette Chua from National University of Singapore on LGBT movement in Myanmar](#) and [Dr. Wen Liu from University of Albany on issues faced by queer Asian Americans](#).

We have an [art exhibition](#) around the theme of the conference that celebrates Asian artists (from Japan, the Philippines, India, South Korea, and Syria) who are exploring issues related to sexuality and gender identity from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2018 at SOAS. These themes are not normally addressed in contemporary Asia, with many artists struggling with state censorship, the sensitivity of professional art spaces and a general lack of public interest.

We also have two plays as part of the conference this year:

- [Stage reading of 'Contempt'](#) - a play that dramatizes the arguments made during court proceedings of the judgment that recriminalized homosexuality in India and
- [Humera - a play](#) that chronicles a chapter in the lives of three Pakistani teenagers and their intertwined stories through the lens of religion and sexuality.

Our film festival this year features 33 films from Asia, including Palestine, Lebanon, Pakistan, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, and Myanmar. These include (in order of appearance): Poshida (Pakistan), Screaming Goats (Thailand), Lanang (Indonesia), Inaayat (India), Reality Fragment 160921 (Sweden/USA/China), Our Vaginas Our Selves (China), My Son is Gay (India), A Post-Ottoman Trilogy (Bosnia, Greece, Macedonia), Rarely Normal (China), Re-births (France, Russia, China), Journey (Thailand), Close Friends (China), Smokers die slowly together (China), Chi Chu (China), Unconditional Love (Myanmar), Mo bai (China), Is it too much to ask? (India), Pink Pill (China), Linceul (Lebanon), Sisak (India), Tritiya (India), A thousand years to love (Myanmar), Where are you from and Look like myself enough (UK based Chinese artist).

Synopsis of some of the films are below.

- [Slay \(The Philippines\)](#) – a film that features the story of Floyd Scott Tiogangco, a homosexual trans-androgynous gender-queer Filipino performance artist
- [Front Cover \(Hong Kong\)](#) – a film, set in Manhattan, New York that tells the love story of a Chinese American boy who rejects his Chinese identity growing up in America and a Chinese gay man who has just moved to the US.
- [Carlos Jauregui: The Unforgettable Fag \(Argentina\)](#) – tells the story of Carlos Jauregui, Argentina’s most prominent gay rights activist.
- [Haki Fadi \(Empty Talks\) \(Palestine\)](#) - a film that is a statement by non-normative people in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region who refuse to define and box themselves.
- [Crossing Bridges \(Canada/ Indonesia\)](#) – story of a man who confronts his insecurities and internalized homophobia as he reflects on his experience as a gay Asian man and immigrant
- [Hong Kong Transgender Stories \(Hong Kong\)](#) - self told stories of six transmen and transwomen living in Hong Kong highlighting the issues they face at family, work and in society,
- [Ka Bodyscapes \(Kerala, India\)](#) – a film banned by the censor board in India traces lives of three young queer people who struggle to find space and happiness in a conservative Indian city.
- A [panel discussion](#) on 29<sup>th</sup> June at the British Museum on [Censorship and queer production](#) featuring Jayan Cherian, film maker from India; Kit Hung, film maker and lecturer, Hong Kong Baptist University; Ghiwa Sayegh, editor-in-chief of Kohl: a journal for body and gender research in MENA and Rahul Rao, Lecturer at SOAS.

Full schedule of the Conference is available [here](#) and full schedule of the film festival is available [here](#).



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