

For immediate release

British Council's Five Films For Freedom Returns to Hong Kong with Bold LGBTQIA+ Stories from Around the World



[Hong Kong - 18 March 2026] Five Films For Freedom — the British Council's landmark global LGBTQIA+ short film programme — returns on **18 March 2026** with five powerful new stories from filmmakers in the **UK, Mexico, Brazil, Vietnam and France**.

Now in its 12th edition, the annual initiative is delivered in partnership with BFI Flare: London LGBTQIA+ Film Festival. The programme makes LGBTQIA+ storytelling accessible to audiences worldwide for free, using film as a bridge for cultural connection — especially in places where visibility and representation can still be challenging.

From **18–29 March**, audiences in Hong Kong can stream all five films via the British Council's digital platforms, while UK audiences can also enjoy them on BFI Player.

To celebrate the launch locally, a *private screening* will be hosted at the **British Consulate-General Hong Kong** on **19 March**, bringing together film lovers, community partners, and advocates from Hong Kong's LGBTQIA+ community. The evening will also feature a **rainbow market** showcasing local LGBTQIA+-affirming creators and organisations, including Grey and Pride Limited, Alongside and Blessed Ministry Community Church, creating an uplifting space for dialogue, creativity, and connection.

The programme comes at a time when conversations around LGBTQIA+ rights and representation continue to evolve globally. In more than **60 countries**, same-sex relationships remain criminalised — making visibility and storytelling all the more vital. Five Films For Freedom aims to shine a light where it is still dimmed, celebrating love, identity, and self-expression.

Since its launch in 2015, the initiative has reached audiences in **over 200 countries**, with close to **29 million total views** — underscoring the universal impact of personal stories told through film.

The programme's return also aligns with recent British Council research highlighting the influential role of film among young people. In a UK survey of 2,500 respondents aged 16–24, **38%** said film and television will be the most impactful cultural medium in the coming decade — nearly double the **22%** who pointed to digital content creators. This reaffirms the power of cinema to shape perspectives and inspire global conversations.

Susannah Morley, Director Hong Kong at the British Council, said, “Five Films For Freedom is a powerful reminder of how storytelling can bring people closer together. Here in Hong Kong, we see year after year how these films create space for empathy, reflection and connection — not only within the LGBTQIA+ community, but across the wider community who may be encountering these stories for the first time.

“By making these films freely accessible, we continue our commitment to celebrating diversity, valuing every individual's lived experience, and fostering a more inclusive cultural landscape. We hope the films encourage conversations that resonate far beyond the screen, and remind audiences that visibility, understanding and respect are essential to any vibrant society.”

Brian Davidson CMG, British Consul General, remarked, “We are delighted to host the annual Five Films for Freedom screening at the British Consulate-General Hong Kong for the third year, in partnership with the British Council and the British Film Institute. These films highlight the power of storytelling to connect communities across borders and reflect ongoing conversations around equality and inclusion here in Hong Kong.”

Notes to the Editor

Find out more about <https://www.britishcouncil.hk/en/programme/arts/five-films-for-freedom>

Watch the trailer [here](#).

This year's five films:

- **I Hate Helen**

Directed by Katie Lambert (UK – 7 minutes)

Priya hates Helen. She hates her in the canteen. Hates her in science. Especially hates her at swimming. Mostly, Priya hates the way Helen makes her feel. A short film about the tidal wave of gay lust some girls feel in school and letting those feelings just wash over you.

- **Rag Dolls**

Directed by Amy Adler (USA / Mexico – 12 minutes)

Married couple Rosalinda (born with spina bifida) and Diana (who has cerebral palsy) navigate life in Puebla, Mexico, where disability intersects with discrimination and poverty. Abandoned by family, underserved by government support systems, and facing persistent homophobia, the women have built a life centred on mutual care and protection. Observing a single ordinary day, the film follows their routines, a romantic date, and moments of reflection on their enduring love.

- **Room 206**

Directed by Laurie Bisceglia (France – 16 minutes)

After undergoing gender-affirming surgery, Clair no longer cares what the world thinks. Reclaiming his body becomes a path toward self-recognition for the first time in his life. This documentary accompanies him not only through physical change, but towards emotional renewal and a new beginning.

- **Sweat (Mô Hôi)**

Directed by Edward Nguyen (Vietnam - 15 minutes)

On the eve of leaving rural Vietnam, farm worker Hung prepares to illegally cross the border in search of refuge abroad. Defined by routine and labour, his final day with Hoang, a fellow worker, reshapes his understanding of desire, intimacy and selfhood.

- **Theo**

Directed by Monica Palazzo & Joana Galvão (Brazil -15 minutes)

Brazil, 1986. During the World Cup, seven-year-old Theo quietly navigates school life while defying rigid gender expectations. Between silence and rebellion, they begin inventing their own way of existing.

This year's directors:

- **Katie Lambert (I Hate Helen, UK)**

Katie Lambert is an English woman interested in behaving badly, making mistakes and trying to make them look beautiful. Sometimes those interests coincide with film making. She runs MrMr Films with Martha McGuirk.

- **Amy Adler (Rag Dolls, USA/Mexico)**

Amy Adler is a visual artist and filmmaker based in Los Angeles. She has had solo exhibitions at museums and galleries worldwide, including the Hammer Museum and MOCA Los Angeles. Her short film *Tear Jerker* (2016) screened internationally and won the Audience Award at Tampa Bay International LGBT Film Festival. Adler is a 2021 Guggenheim Fellow, a 2024 Sundance Screenwriters Intensive Fellow, and Professor of Visual Arts at UC San Diego.

- **Laurie Bisceglia (Room 206, France)**

Laurie Bisceglia is a French director and photographer living in Paris. Her studies initially led her to work as an assistant director, which enabled her to work on many film sets. Over time, her vision of the world sharpened and a visceral need to expose its flaws emerged. She initially decided to do this through photography, in which she was self-taught, and later through the moving image. From 2020 onwards, she became involved with associations fighting for women's rights, shooting portraits of inspirational women and reports on demonstrations and related events. At the same time, she developed her personal projects. In 2024, she completed the photographic series *Chambre 206*, selected as part of the Off des Rencontres de la Photographie d'Arles for the Prix Révélation de la SAIF.

- **Edward Nguyen (Sweat (Mồ Hôi), Vietnam)**

Edward Nguyen is a Vietnamese-American writer-director based between New York and Austin. His work centres around cross-cultural queerness, displacement, and urban isolationism. Inspired by queer and slow cinema auteurs, his works seek to challenge traditional structural powers and question how we construct a sense of "self" in the present. A recent Yale University graduate and the director of *Mồ Hôi (Sweat)*, he is a semi-finalist of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's How We Heal Shot Films Lab and is currently working on a short film revolving around a Vietnamese construction worker's journey through cruising.

- **Monica Palazzo (Theo, Brazil)**

Monica Palazzo is a Brazilian production designer, director and teacher whose work bridges poetic design, research and storytelling. She has directed the shorts *Páginas de Menina*, *Trilogia*, *Mãe do Ouro* and the immersive 360° film *Dilema*, developed through her PhD in Visual Poetics at the University of São Paulo (completed 2024). Across a 24-year career focused on fiction for film and series, she has worked on features including *Para Minha Amada Morta*, *Smoke Master* and *Meu Casulo de Drywall*. Her work has screened at festivals including Cannes, Berlin, Frameline and NewFest, and she teaches in São Paulo at Centro Universitário Belas Artes and the Academia Internacional de Cinema.

- **Joana Galvão (Theo, Brazil)**

Jo Galv studied professional communication on a full athletic scholarship in West Virginia, USA. She later pursued psychology and neuroscience (BA and MSc) in Germany, followed by a PhD in cognitive innovation (UK and Australia) through a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship funded by the European Commission. She also completed a BA in Literature at the University of São Paulo (USP), including a semester abroad supported by the Canadian government's Emerging Leaders in the Americas Program (ELAP). A Berlinale Talents alumna and Bravo Film Lab Fellow, she now develops independent creative projects in literature and film.

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. We do this through our work in arts and culture, education and the English language. We work with people in over 200 countries and territories and are on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2021–22 we reached 650 million people.

The British Council celebrated its 75th anniversary in Hong Kong in 2023, marking an important milestone of our commitment to building connections between the UK and Hong Kong. www.britishcouncil.hk

About Five Films For Freedom

Five Films For Freedom is an annual online celebration of global LGBTQIA+ stories, presented in partnership with BFI Flare: London LGBTQIA+ Film Festival. Launched in 2014 by the British Council and the British Film Institute, the initiative aims to amplify LGBTQIA+ voices and advocate for love as a human right.

About BFI

BFI is a cultural charity, a National Lottery distributor, and the UK's lead organisation for film and the moving image. Their mission is:

- To support creativity and actively seek out the next generation of UK storytellers
- To grow and care for the BFI National Archive, the world's largest film and television archive
- To offer the widest range of UK and international moving image culture through our programmes and festivals - delivered online and in venue
- To use our knowledge to educate and deepen public appreciation and understanding of film and the moving image
- To work with Government and industry to ensure the continued growth of the UK's screen industries

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Jay Hunt OBE.

Media Contacts

Weber Shandwick

Zoe Yeung Mobile: 9718 4141

Email: zyeung@webershandwick.com

Donna Chu Mobile: 6546 3546

Email: dchu@webershandwick.com

British Council

Jessica Li Mobile: 9196 9619

Email: Jessica.Li@britishcouncil.org.hk