

Five Films For Freedom 2025

FILMMAKER BIOGS AND SYNOPSES

DRAGFOX

Lisa Ott, 8 mins, UK

Struggling with their gender identity, eleven-year-old Sam feels alone and confused, not quite sure how to express the way they feel. That is until a mischievous neighbourhood fox (marvelously voiced by Ian McKellen) jumps through their window late one night, taking Sam on an all-singing, all-dancing journey of self-discovery and acceptance.

Director Bio

Lisa Ott is a Swiss animation director based in London. They moved to the UK nine years ago to pursue a career in film and fell in love with stop-motion in the process.

Lisa studied Model Making before joining the puppet team at Mackinnon & Saunders, helping to create puppets to bring other people's stories to life. Most recently Lisa worked on projects including Oscar and BAFTA-winning Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio* and Netflix's *The House*. Eager to see more LGBTQIA+ stories being told in animation, they decided to take a leap into directing by attending the Directing Animation course at the National Film and Television School. There, Lisa was able to find like-minded creatives and directed the debut stop-motion short, *Dragfox*.

Lisa's work consistently deals with themes of belonging and their experience of growing up queer in a rural farming village, as well as celebrating the differences within the LGBTQIA+ community

IF I MAKE IT TO THE MORNING

Andre Shen, 9 mins, USA

Accompanied by her overbearing mother, Chinese teenager Ziyi spends the final night of her cross-State college tour at her cool aunt's apartment in New York. But as Ziyi starts to think this could be the perfect place to live and study, an unexpected revelation suddenly brings tension to the group.

Director Bio

Andre Shen 沈天扬 is a Shanghainese writer-director and graphic designer currently based in New York. His work centers around cross-cultural queer experience exploring femininity and whimsy with a melancholic twist.

Andre's short *One Way Trip Like an Arrow* was selected to be presented with live performance by the NYU Symphony Orchestra at the Iris Cantor Theatre, New York in 2024. His latest short 月亮总在照顾大地 *If I Make it to the Morning* premiered at MiX International Festival of LGBTQIA+ Cinema and Queer Culture (2024) in Milan, Italy and is now selected to be at BFI Flare: London LGBTQIA+ Film Festival in 2025. *Sunday Matinée*, the 150-second 2-part commercial campaign that he wrote and directed for Peter Pan Donuts & Pastry Shop is available online now.

Before moving to New York in 2021, Andre received his BA in Graphic Design from Shanghai Jiao Tong University and worked as a graphic designer for companies such as Condé Nast, FINE & Fiu Gallery. Andre is currently in his thesis year at NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Graduate Film. He is a recipient of the W.T.C. Johnson Scholarship and C.V. Starr Fund for Asian/Pacific/American Institute Research.

NGGGAK!!!

Oktania Hamdani and Winner Wijaya, 8 mins, Indonesia

As they play an online game together, loved-up girlfriends Sekar and Bebi laugh, chat and send each other memes. But their simple bliss is shattered when Sekar's mother phones to tell her she is to be set up with a potential partner. Can Sekar make her mother understand that she has already found *the one*?

Director Bios

Oktania Hamdani

Oktania Hamdani is a film critic, journalist, and the founder of 'WatchmenID,' one of the largest film media platforms in Indonesia on X. She is very active in covering film news and festivals across the country.

Passionate about issues related to gender-based violence and queer rights in Southeast Asia, Oktania's debut project, *NGGGAK!!!*, holds deep significance exploring her personal concerns and based on her own story. It marked her first experience as a director, writer, and producer. She is currently working on a documentary that focuses on the lives of queer women in South East Asia.

Winner Wijaya

Indonesian filmmaker, Winner Wijaya, fell in love with cinema at an early age. Inspired by their elementary school teacher, Winner would spend their childhood weekends making movies on a MiniDV camcorder. Years later, their short documentary *Ojek Lusi* was nominated for Piala Citra and won the Best Short Documentary Award in Festival Film Dokumenter 2017. In 2020 they won Minikino Best Begadang Filmmaking Competition for the film *Hey Guys Balik Lagi Sama Gue, Tuhan!* and were nominated for Best Short Fiction Film at Festival Film Indonesia 2020. Winner is currently in the process of editing their first feature documentary.

WE'LL GO DOWN IN HISTORY

Cameron Richards, Charlie Tidmas, 25 mins, UK

The story of TRUK United, a grassroots, proudly trans football club formed in January 2021. Filmed over two years, this heartfelt documentary captures the highs and lows of the pioneering UK team on and off the pitch as they strive to create a safe haven for their community in the face of rising transphobia.

Director Bios

Charlie Tidmas

Charlie is a writer and director whose work focuses on intersectional masculinities. He has a feature project in early development with BFI NETWORK and is currently in production co-directing a Doc Society short. Charlie was selected to be a BFI Flare x BAFTA Mentee for 2024 and is a BAFTA Connect member. He has received short film commissions from BFI NETWORK and Channel 4's Random Acts. His previous works have placed in the Academy Nicholl Fellowship and screened on Short of the Week. Alongside writing and directing he works as a script editor and a script reader for the BBC and BFI.

Cameron Richards

A director and producer with an extensive portfolio of work for creative and corporate clients including CocaCola and the Pret Foundation. Cameron's short films have played at Oscar/BAFTA-qualifying festivals worldwide, and in 2020 Cameron released *The Sea* in partnership with Alzheimer's Research UK, a personal short film starring Anna Friel & Russell Tovey which won plaudits across the worldwide festival circuit. Cameron is also an experienced script developer having graduated from the National Film & TV School.

WAIT, WAIT, NOW!

Ramon Te Wake, 12 mins, 48, New Zealand

When best friends Alex and Sam are left at home for the night, they do what all teenage boys do: raid mum's wardrobe, play dress ups, and create a fantasy world where they feel safe and accepted. Well, maybe that's just what some boys do. But little do they know, the parents are on to them. Is there a safe bubble about to burst?

Director Bio

Ramon Te Wake is a dynamic force in the world of film and storytelling, known for her bold and unapologetic approach to exploring complex narratives that center around identity, culture, and queerness. As a trans Māori creative, Ramon brings a deeply personal and authentic lens to her work, making her a standout in the industry. Her ability to seamlessly blend cultural insight with cutting-edge creativity has earned her a reputation as a visionary director. Ramon's projects, such as the much-anticipated short film *Wait, Wait, Now!*, showcases her talent for tackling important social issues while maintaining a powerful sense of artistry. She is fearless in challenging conventions and pushing boundaries, making her work not just a reflection of her own journey but a platform for marginalised voices.

With each project, Ramon continues to influence and shape the future of indigenous and queer storytelling, paving the way for new perspectives in film and media.