

Documentary About Queer Activists Premieres

“Queer Lives Matter” is a cinematic journey to brave LGBT-activists around the world. The documentary will premiere in Berlin in February as an official selection of the Berlin Independent Film Festival.

What do queer activists worldwide do to achieve equality? The documentary "Queer Lives Matter" explores answers to this question. The film premieres on February 11, 2019 at 8pm. In “Queer Lives Matter”, journalist Markus Kowalski embarks on a journey to encounter young LGBT-activists in five countries around the world. He brings to the screen deeply moving stories of the brave people who fight for equal rights against all odds.

The story

“Queer Lives Matter” is a portrait of activists in Turkey, India, South Africa, Morocco and Greece. In Turkey, the Erdogan regime threatens LGBT-activists. The filmmaker meets Madır Öktaş, a Youtube activist, who was arrested at the Istanbul Pride 2016 by the police. In India, the filmmaker meets the transwoman activist Neysara Rai who helps other trans people with the online forum Transgender India. In South Africa, he meets lesbian activists who get threatened with violence on the street. Now, they stand strong and fight against these hate crimes. In Morocco, he meets Hajar Moutaouakil, a lesbian activist who begins to build an LGBT-community with her friends. In Morocco, homosexuality can be penalised with up to three years of imprisonment. In Greece, he meets the gay Syrian, Nour Alahmmad, who organises along with other queer refugees to help themselves in order to survive their new lives in Athens.

The idea

Markus Kowalski (24) studies politics, works as a journalist and lives in Berlin. „Queer Lives Matter“ is his first documentary film. For five months he travelled alone around the world in order to meet these activists. He filmed most everything with a camcorder.

“The people I met on the way face different kinds of problems in each country. I’m deeply touched by their bravery to fight for equal rights and recognition”, says Kowalski. “Through this trip, I realised that gay and lesbian equality in Germany is such a great achievement. I also realised that queer people can live relatively free in Europe, not having to deal with of many of the harsh challenges face in other lands. Around the world, LGBT people still need to fight these battles. They deserve our support for their courage and solidarity for their activism.”

The low-budget-production was accomplished with about 10,000 Euros and took around two years. In April/May 2018, a crowdfunding campaign raised around 2,800 Euros. This support was used for finalising post production. The project was also financially supported by “Hirschfeld-Eddy-Stiftung” and “Schwul-Lesbischen Förderkreis Elledorado”.

The premiere

The short film “Queer Lives Matter” has a running time of 30 minutes and will be screened at the “Berlin Independent Film Festival“ on February 11, 2019, at 8 pm at the Babylon cinema (Rosa- Luxemburg-Str. 30, 10178 Berlin). Tickets are available for EUR 8 online (<https://www.kinoheld.de/r/21oysw94>) or at the ticket office of the cinema. More information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/732008707193838>

Film, trailer and photos

A screener is available for journalists upon request. The English trailer is available here: <https://vimeo.com/299108762> The German trailer is available here: <https://vimeo.com/312359169> Photos are available in the “Electronic Press Kit” online: <https://queerlivesmatter.com/download/230/>

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