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# barbican

## Queer 70s: LGBTQ+ Cinema in the Decade after Stonewall

Wed 11 June – Wed 16 July 2025



*A Woman Like Eve*, Netherlands 1979, Dir Nouchka van Brakel

During Pride Month, the Barbican travels back in time with [Queer 70s: LGBTQ+ Cinema in the Decade after Stonewall](#), a season with eleven screenings featuring films from around the world that revolutionised how queer people were represented on screen.

The 1970s was a fascinating and complex period for LGBTQ+ people. Following the Stonewall Riots in 1969, the next decade saw the rise of Gay Liberation movements and greater queer visibility across the world.

Queer cinema of the time reflects these changes, as directors grabbed opportunities to tell their own stories, with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/ questioning characters taking centre stage. Whereas representation in the pre-Stonewall era often depicted queer characters as victims and villains, the 1970s saw LGBTQ+ figures flourish on screen, and even enjoy a happy ending or two.

**Queer 70s** opens on Wed 11 June with [She's Beautiful, Sexy, Angry and Liberated! Barbara Hammer's Lesbian Films of the 1970s + live readings](#). The event celebrates the the legacy of **Barbara Hammer**, a true pioneer of LGBTQ+ cinema, with four key shorts from the 1970s and a newer tribute to Hammer by filmmaker **Deborah Stratman**. The programme also features live poetry by **Joelle Taylor** and readings by artist/filmmaker **Lisa Gornick**.

Female desire is central in **Chantal Akerman's** sexually provocative first feature [Je Tu Il](#)

[Elle](#) (Belgium, France 1974), which culminates in a famous ten-minute lesbian sex scene. Sapphic desire also runs throughout [Ticket of No Return](#) (West Germany 1979), **Ulrike Ottinger's** visually striking experimental film.

Male sexuality is explored in **Peter de Rome's** pornographic film [Adam & Yves](#) (US 1974), in which an American in Paris meets a young Frenchman who likes to mix sex play with complicated mind games. This romantic film includes several artistically shot sex scenes and is thought to be one of the most interesting erotic movies from the early 1970s.

The Australian film [The Set](#) (1970), is a fascinating camp curio, made at a time when gay sex was still illegal in every state in the country. It tells the story of a naïve young man who, whilst trying to make it in Sydney's competitive art scene, has a brief affair with another guy, reflecting the regressive attitudes towards gay men at the time.

Further season highlights include the groundbreaking Japanese film [Bye Bye Love](#) (1974), a wild road trip with a gender-queer partnership at its centre; the Oscar nominated [My Dearest Senorita](#) (Spain 1972), a sympathetic feature about an intersex person, made, remarkably, during Franco's regime; and [Badnam Basti](#) (1971), India's first ever LGBTQ+ film, with its love story about a woman and two men involved in a bisexual love triangle.

[Car Wash](#) (US 1976), is a comedic take on the daily life of the employees from the DeLuxe car wash in LA, and chronicles its oddball characters including the flamboyant Lindy, who holds up as an unapologetically queer role model, even decades later. The film also includes a cameo from comedy legend **Richard Pryor** (as a TV evangelist), a hit soundtrack from soul superstars **Rose Royce**, and an appearance by **The Pointer Sisters**.

The season closes on Wed 16 July with the trailblazing [Sebastiane](#) (UK 1976) + **ScreenTalk**, **Derek Jarman's** homoerotic reimagining of the life and death of Saint Sebastian, which drew parallels between the legend of the martyr and gay persecution of the time. British cinema had never seen anything like it, with its clash of beauty and vulgarity and ubiquitous male nudity.

**Alex Davidson**, Barbican Cinema Curator, says:

*"The 1970s were a fascinating time for queer creativity and representation, as the aftershocks of the Stonewall Riots was felt around the world. It's been a real pleasure discovering queer films that deserve far greater recognition, including a couple of real curios, alongside some acknowledged classics. As LGBTQ+ rights are once again under threat, I hope the films in Queer 70s remind us of how far we have come, and how vital cinema has been in resisting oppression."*

Celebrating Pride season across the Centre's programme alongside [Classical Pride 2025](#), [Queer 70s: LGBTQ+ Cinema in the Decade after Stonewall](#) is part of the Barbican's [Barbican's Summer 2025](#), a season packed with unmissable events in Theatre, Music, Cinema, Visual Arts and more. Highlights of the summer programme include [Encounters: Giacometti x Huma Bhabha](#); [Fiddler on the Roof](#) and [Good Night, Oscar](#) in the Barbican Theatre; Classical concerts [Khatia Buniatishvili & Friends](#) and [CBSO Orchestral Qawwali with Abi Sampa](#); as well as [Herbie Hancock](#) celebrating his 85th birthday; and Barbican's iconic **Outdoor Cinema** with its full season of films under the stars.

Further highlights also include [Frequencies](#), a packed programme exploring the power of sound and sonic experience featuring film screenings, concerts, workshops and talks, as well as the immersive exhibition experience [Feel the Sound](#); virtual reality adventure [In Pursuit of Repetitive Beats](#); and [Rebel Radio](#), a celebration of the history of pirate and community radio in the UK.

**[Queer 70s: LGBTQ+ Cinema in the Decade after Stonewall programme](#):**

**She's Beautiful, Sexy, Angry and Liberated! Barbara Hammer's Lesbian Films of the 1970s (18\*) + live readings**

**Wed 11 June, 6.45pm**

**Cinema 1**

Event runtime: 120 mins approx

The films Hammer made during the 1970s testify to the sugar rush of Hammer's newfound lesbian identity, sexuality and community. These frank, lustful shorts came out of the women's movement, an incredible era of personal and political liberation. This event celebrates her legacy with four key shorts from the 1970s and a newer tribute to Hammer by filmmaker Deborah Stratman, live poetry by Joelle Taylor and readings by artist Lisa Gornick.

***Dyketactics***

US 1974 dir Barbara Hammer 4 min

A celebration of lesbian sensuality and sexuality in nature. "*The first lesbian-lovemaking film made by a lesbian*" - Barbara Hammer

***Superdyke***

US 1975 dir Barbara Hammer 18 min

Women take to the streets! Barbara leads a platoon of vagina warriors with Amazon shields in an action to overthrow San Francisco.

***Women I Love***

US 1976 dir Barbara Hammer 23 min

A gorgeous playful series of cameo portraits of Barbara's friends and lovers interwoven with erotic fruit and vegetables.

***Double Strength***

US 1978 dir Barbara Hammer 15 mins

The cycle of a relationship. From its erotic formations to feelings of serenity, play and power; a breakup and lasting friendship. Starring Terry Sendgraft on trapeze.

***Vever (for Barbara)***

Guatemala, US 2019 dir Deborah Stratman 12 mins

Fragments of a film shot in Guatemala. A reflection on the problems involved in 'diary films.' A loving work of feminist historiography. A dedication to Barbara.

**Curated by Selina Robertson. In association with Club des Femmes.**

***Bye Bye Love (Baibai rabu バイバイ・ラブ) (18\*) + intro***

Japan 1974, Dir Isao Fujisawa, 85min

**Thu 12 June, 6.30pm**

**Cinema 3**

A wild and violent road trip with a genderqueer partnership at its centre, Isao Fujisawa's breathtaking and radical movie was thought lost until a negative was unearthed in 2018.

An exhilarating rush from start to finish, ***Bye Bye Love*** begins with a frenzied anti-'meet cute.' A young woman, referred to as 'Giko' ((Miyabi Ichijo) flees the cops and barges into a rebellious macho guy, 'Utamaro' (Ren Tamura) whom she implores for help. Soon, a policeman is dead, and the pair spend the rest of their relationship on the run. Giko is revealed to be gender fluid and the two forge a queer partnership in crime.

*Bye Bye Love* captures the nihilistic zeitgeist, (a character called Nixon is gunned down soon after entering the story), looking back on the broken promises of the 1960s. It's a thrilling, provocative film, infused with the energy of early Godard.

***The Set (15\*) + intro by Barbican cinema curator Alex Davidson***

Australia 1970, Dir Frank Brittain, 102min

**Sun 15 June, 3pm**

**Cinema 1**

A young designer, Paul (Sean McEuan) has hopes of making it in Sydney's art world. Adopted as a protégé by a wealthy woman, he struggles to navigate the caustic world of 'the set' while discovering his bisexuality after a one-night stand with another man. A more serious affair develops with a closeted, blokey student, Tony (Rod Mullinar), but the relationship turns abusive. Can Paul find happiness in the treacherous world of the set?

As a snapshot of contemporary Australian attitudes towards queer men, *The Set* is a valuable time capsule. As well as Paul and Tony, drag performers Tracey Lee and Ken "Kandy" Johnson make an appearance. Although the queer men are, aside from Paul, unsympathetic, the depiction of homosexuality is – relatively – unsensational at a time when gay sex was still illegal in every state and territory in Australia.

***Ticket of No Return (Bildnis einer Trinkerin) (15\*) + intro by Helen de Witt***

West Germany 1979, Dir Ulrike Ottinger, 107min

**Tue 17 June, 6.20pm**

**Cinema 3**

Tabea Blumenschein commands the screen in Ulrike Ottinger's playful and wonderfully bizarre trip through West Berlin. She plays an immaculately dressed unnamed woman (Blumenschein also designed the jaw-dropping costumes) whose drunken mission is accompanied by a Greek chorus who comment on her behaviour. Along the way, she encounters another woman with who she begins a semi-romantic relationship.

A plot synopsis cannot do justice to Ottinger's weird tale, which features appearances from contemporary pop culture figures such as Eddie Constantine and Nina Hagen. The visuals are quite beautiful in their strangeness and *Ticket of No Return* as one of Ottinger's best and most accessible works.

***Car Wash (15\*) + intro by Mzz Kimberley***

US 1979, Dir Michael Schultz, 97min

**Thu 19 June, 6.20pm**

**Cinema 3**

It's a normal day in the world of a Los Angeles car wash, which means there's nothing normal about it. Eccentric characters, such as Richard Pryor's phoney preacher, backed by his entourage (The Pointer Sisters), come and go. The boss' son wants to connect with the working men on the day shift, much to their irritation. A sex worker cunningly evades a taxi driver, from whom she fled without paying. A man who may or not be a bomber scuttles around the building.

And that's before we get to the employees, a likeable motley crew only too aware they are stuck in a dead-end job. Among the most memorable is Lindy, played by Antonio Fargas (Starsky & Hutch's Huggy Bear), a fierce queer man who fearlessly stands up to any hint of bigotry.

***Badnam Basti (Neighbourhood of Ill Repute) (15\*) + intro by Bidisha Mamata***

India 1971, Dir Prem Kapoor, 108min

**Sun 22 June, 5.30pm**

**Cinema 1**

"I thirst for you" – A bisexual love triangle in Uttar Pradesh is at the centre of Prem Kapoor's engrossing melodrama, regarded as India's first queer film.

Thought lost for four decades, and rediscovered in 2019 in a Berlin archive, Prem Kapoor's intense melodrama follows Sarnam (Nitin Sethi), a truck driver with a criminal past who is attracted to Bansuri (Nandita Thakur), a woman he previously rescued from attack.

He also begins to develop feelings for another man, Shivraj (Amar Kakkad), a relationship which grows increasingly intimate. Later, Sarnam declares his passion for Shivraj: "I thirst for you."

**Je Tu Il Elle (18) + intro by Mekella Broomberg**

Belgium, France 1974, Dir Chantal Akerman, 86min

**Tue 24 June, 6.30pm**

**Cinema 2**

Chantal Akerman's feature debut, made when she was just 24, remains a potent and radical portrait of the search for connection, culminating in a famous 10-minute lesbian sex scene.

Akerman plays a woman whom we first meet alone in her apartment. Later, she hitchhikes and has a sexual encounter with a male truck driver. Finally, she reconnects with an ex-lover (Claire Wauthion), leading to a lengthy sex scene, an extraordinarily intimate depiction of same sex love for the time when it was made.

**My Dearest Senorita (Mi querida señorita) (15\*) + intro**

Spain 1972, Dir Jaime de Armiñán, 80min

**Wed 25 June, 6.20pm**

**Cinema 2**

Adela (José Luis López Vázquez de la Torre) is a spinster who is desperately unhappy. Convinced there is something wrong with her, owing to a need to shave regularly and complex romantic feelings towards her maid, Adela visits her doctor, who advises that she was assigned the wrong sex at birth. After surgery, and a name change, 'Juan' (still played by López Vázquez) re-starts his life as a man and hopes to find happiness.

Under Franco's dictatorship, sympathetic portrayals of queer and intersex characters were almost non-existent. While its depiction of gender and sex identity may have dated, it's a small miracle that **My Dearest Senorita** dodged the censor's scissors.

**Adam & Yves (18\*) + extended intro by David McGillivray**

US 1974, Dir Peter De Rome, 72min

**Mon 14 July, 6.20pm**

**Cinema 1**

Pornography had a boom period in the 1970s. As queer liberation movements thrived, gay men were no longer just shown as victims and villains on film. Finally, they got to have an unapologetically great time, in sex films shot by gay men. Peter de Rome was one of the best in the business, and his romantic, poetic Adam & Yves is one of the most interesting erotic films of the era. This film has it all - filthy jokes, intense sex scenes and even brief documentary footage of Greta Garbo walking across Fifth Avenue.

By the 1980s, the outbreak of Aids and the advent of home video meant many porn cinemas were shut down and gay erotica became more commercial. De Rome's films belong to another era.

Screening with:

**Trouser Bar + intro from producer David McGillivray**

UK 2016 dir Kristen Bjorn 20 min

Two men enter Sir John's Trouser Bar but little do they know the adventure that awaits them ...

**A Woman Like Eve (Een vrouw als Eva) (15\*)**

Netherlands 1979, Dir Nouchka van Brakel, 103min

**Wed 9 Jul, 6.30pm**

**Cinema 2**

Eefje (Moniek van de Ven) is a loving mother and wife but feels unhappy and unfulfilled, leading to a public breakdown. A recuperating trip to the French seaside changes her life, for here she encounters a feminist commune and begins an affair with singer Liliane (Maria Schneider), who re-christens her with the name 'Eve.' Eve's husband is furious when she wishes to continue her new relationship and a bitter custody battle begins.

Featuring an excellent central performance from van de Ven, ***A Woman Like Eve*** captures the feminist zeitgeist of the 1970s without softening the tough consequences of following your heart. Van Brakel's films centre women's experience navigating a patriarchal world and this is one of her best works.

### **Sebastiane (18) + ScreenTalk**

UK 1976, Dirs Derek Jarman + Paul Humphress, 86min

**Wed 16 July, 6.20pm**

**Cinema 1**

In his first feature, Jarman started as he meant to go on, with an erotic take on the legend of martyred Saint Sebastian, exiled to a remote garrison where he becomes the object of lust to the menacing male guards. The tale is told in Latin with English subtitles, lingering on male bodies through an unapologetically gay gaze.

British cinema had never seen anything like it. It's a real one-of-a-kind, a potent clash of beauty and vulgarity, with a glorious Brian Eno score and packed with male nudity. Jarman would go on to become one of Britain's most exciting filmmakers, directing ***Jubilee*** (1978), ***Caravaggio*** (1986) and ***The Last of England*** (1987). Following *Sebastiane*, there will be a discussion about the film and Jarman's legacy.

**ENDS**

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### **About the Barbican**

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have a large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We're proud to be the home of the [London Symphony Orchestra](#), and a London base of the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#). We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our other associates and partners including the [Academy of Ancient Music](#), [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#), [Boy Blue](#), [Darbar](#), [Doc'n Roll Film Festival](#), [Drum Works](#), [EFG London Jazz Festival](#), [London Palestine Film Festival](#), [Serious](#), and [Trafalgar Theatre Productions](#).

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### **About Barbican Cinema**

We connect audiences with a curated programme of international cinema; from celebrated filmmakers to ground-breaking and under-heard voices from past and present. Our programmes are presented in Cinemas 1 in the main centre and Cinemas 2&3 on Beech Street.

Our programme ranges from thematic seasons that respond to today's world, to new releases, ScreenTalks, cross-artform collaborations, family events, access screenings and event cinema that presents the performing arts on screen.

We showcase the work of emerging filmmakers, as well as less familiar work of exceptional filmmakers from the UK and around the world. We champion the work of Barbican Young Programmers and give stage to emerging musicians in our ongoing film & live music series which includes our flagship collaboration with the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

As part of a cross-arts centre, our cinemas are a cultural space for people to share the viewing experience. We strive to be inclusive in everything we do; providing platforms for the widest possible range of filmmakers and ensuring we are an open, welcoming and accessible venue for all our audiences.



