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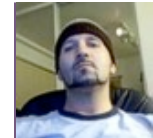
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Queer Lounge Launches Third Year at Sundance Film Festival

01.19.06

By Ross von Metzke

(Park City, UT) – The 2006 Sundance Film Festival kicks off today with the launch of the third annual Queer Lounge, which returns to Park City as the only gay organization sanctioned by the festival.

Launched in 2004, the Queer Lounge is a festival hot spot with a year-round mission: building mainstream audiences and boosting box office for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) films and filmmakers.

Organizers have stellar line-up of panels, parties, readings, and networking events for LGBT audiences in the works. Sundance 2006 comes on the heels of *Brokeback Mountain's* critical and box-office success - a beacon for the future of queer film, according to Queer Lounge founder **Ellen Huang**.

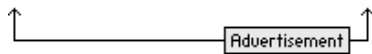
"This is an incredibly exciting time for queer film and the amazing slate of LGBT-related films at this year's Sundance make it clear that 'Brokeback' is just the tip of the iceberg," said Huang. "It's especially gratifying to see major stars, respected filmmakers, and emerging talent collaborating on films that tackle gay stories with such honesty, integrity, and humanity."

Huang said this year's Sundance and surrounding festivals boast over 40 films either exploring queer issues or created by LGBT filmmakers, many of which will serve as the centerpiece for Queer Lounge events from January 20 – 28.

Founded by Huang, a former feature film executive, Queer Lounge is a non-profit organization that creates queer-friendly hubs at major film festivals where up-and-coming LGBT filmmakers and artists can connect with industry leaders, audiences, and each other.

Since its launch, Queer Lounge has produced some of Sundance's most talked-about events. The 2005 Queer Lounge attracted such celebrities as **Naomi Watts**, **Jared Leto** and **Pamela Anderson**. In September, Queer Lounge will make its debut at the Toronto Film Festival.

According to Huang, some of the most hotly anticipated films this year are LGBT related, including: *The Night Listener*, based on **Armistead Maupin's** dark novel about a gay radio host played by **Robin Williams**; *Small Town Gay Bar*, a documentary about the patrons of two local gays bars produced by **Kevin Smith** (*Clerks*, *Chasing Amy*); and *Puccini for Beginners*, a new film starring



Gretchen Mol by director **Maria Maggenti** (*The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love*).

Queer Lounge will also present daily panel discussions exploring individual films, filmmakers, and industry trends. Confirmed participants include **Gus Van Sant**, **Rosie O'Donnell**, **Armistead Maupin**, **Maria Maggenti**, and **Jennie Livingston** (*Paris is Burning*).

For more information of Queer Lounge, visit www.queerlounge.org

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By Angela D'Amboise

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