

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

# DAILY BRUIN

## Outfest 2011 to showcase more than 160 films from 25 countries at multiple venues at the 29th Annual Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

*“eCupid” and “Hit So Hard” are two of the 160-plus films screening at the 29th Gay & Lesbian Film Festival*

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Published July 5, 2011, 1:57 am in [A&E](#), [Film & TV](#)



*In “eCupid,” Marshall, played by Houston Rhines, is desperate for a new love life after being with his boyfriend, Gabe, played by Noah Shuffman. The film will debut Thursday at the 29th Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, also known as Outfest.*

A couple of years ago, producer J.C. Calciano, a past guest speaker at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, was interviewing actor Jonah Hill on the set of “Get Him to the Greek.” During the interview, Hill said that director Judd Apatow had all of the actors put aside their electronics and focus on interacting with each other on a more personal level.

Their conversation about the effect of technology on relationships formed the plot of his new movie, “eCupid,” which will debut this week at the 29th Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, otherwise known as Outfest.

Outfest, which was founded by UCLA in 1982 and was originally called The Gay and Lesbian Media Festival and Conference, will screen more than 160 films from 25 countries starting

Thursday. Calciano said that, in addition to screening a tremendous lineup of films, he likes that Outfest hosts events where filmmakers can interact with other professionals in the industry.

“eCupid,” Calciano’s 95-minute romantic comedy that he wrote, produced and directed, will also be screened at the Directors Guild of America on July 11. The film tells the story of Marshall, played by Houston Rhines, who is desperate for a new love life and turns to “eCupid,” an app that guarantees true love.

Calciano said that most young people can relate to the film’s basic premise of technology, but that he also hopes that audiences can realize that all relationships are the same, regardless of sexual orientation.

“All of my films have strong messages about love, compassion and community. ... When you love someone, there’s no difference between gay, straight, bi or trans(exual); it’s just about the other person. It’s about who we are as people and who we love,” Calciano said.

“eCupid” was shot in West Hollywood in only 12 days. He said that he worked efficiently and quickly to avoid the high costs of production. Calciano also said he test-screened the film at UCLA and invited students to provide input on his film.

While Calciano’s film is entered in the narrative feature category for Outfest, director and UCLA alumnus P. David Ebersole filmed a documentary centered around Patty Schemel, the original drummer of Courtney Love’s band, Hole. “Hit So Hard,” Ebersole’s seventh submission to Outfest, uses more than 40 hours of archival never-before-seen footage and follows Schemel as she went from near homelessness to being on the cover of Rolling Stone.

Schemel brought Ebersole the footage during the summer of 2007. From there, Ebersole did a series of interviews over the next four years to complete the documentary. Ebersole, who usually films narrative features, said he chose to do a documentary because he connected to Schemel’s story of battling obstacles as a female drummer.

He said that Schemel’s experience of going against the growing corporate situation in rock and roll music, which he said he believes attacked her artistry is a story any artist can identify with.

“Hit So Hard” is also the documentary centerpiece of Outfest and will be screening on July 14 at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre. Ebersole said that Schemel plans to have a band of friends play a concert after the screening.

In addition to documentaries and narrative features, UCLA alumna Nao Bustamante, who was a guest scholar in 2008 at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, developed a new genre in her film, “Silver & Gold,” her submission to Outfest 2011. Bustamante has also submitted two films to Outfest in 2006 and 2008.

The film, which showed at the Sundance Film Festival in 2010, combines film, live performance and original costumes into Bustamante’s portrayal of Maria Montez, a 1940s Dominican movie starlet and muse to filmmaker Jack Smith.

Bustamante said she calls the resulting genre a “filmformance” because it combines both film and stage performance.

“(The film) is a hybrid of filmmaking and performance. ... There’s a way with all my artwork, I tend to combine the familiar with the unseen. So, in my film, I worked with this old-glamour stereotype, essentially, but taking it into another level and bringing it into a more contemporary space,” Bustamante said.

Bustamante, who works with various mediums such as film, sculptural work, fabric and performance, also said she was a contestant on Bravo’s competition show for artists, “Work of Art.”

Ebersole said he is proud that Outfest has cemented itself as a well-respected film festival.

“I have a lot of pride and respect being somebody who belongs to (the festival) for years. When we have this movie that has more commercial potential in being a larger film, with the strength that Outfest has, it was a perfect match,” Ebersole said.