

Five Films for Freedom 2022 – About films

Frozen Out

(Hao Zhou, 5 mins, 2021, China/USA)

An immigrant retreats to frozen prairies and forests, hoping to escape the anxieties of dislocation and find meaning in an endless expanse. Delivered as a letter to the protagonist's sister in rural China, the film meditates on identity, self-exile, home, and ties to family.

Hao Zhou is from Nanchuan, China, and now lives in the United States, where he studied for an MFA at the University of Iowa. His first feature, The Night (2014), about young, queer, sex workers in China, premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival, where he is an alumnus of the Berlinale Talents programme. Frozen Out won a Gold Medal at the Student Academy Awards, Los Angeles.

All Those Sensations in my Belly

(Marko Djeska, 13 mins 19 secs, 2020, Croatia)

An animated documentary about the real life of transgirl, Matia, who relates the story of her experience of the transition process, and the complexity of finding true love with a heterosexual man.

Marko Dješka is an animation director, scriptwriter and comic book artist from Croatia, and an animation graduate from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb's animation department. He's an alumni of the European animation development lab, Animation Sans Frontieres, and the script writing programme at La Poudriere, France. All Those Sensations in my Belly has screened at over 100 international festivals, including Annecy (France), Outfest (Los Angeles) and Message to Man (Russia). It won the Best Script Award at the Ottawa International Animation Festival. Marko is a co-founder of animation studio Adriatic Animation.

Sunday

(Arun Fulara, 10 mins, 2020, India)

When the middle-aged Kamble makes his weekly visit to the neighbourhood barber shop, it's not just for a shave. He can't wait to be touched by Jaan, the new barber-boy he has a crush on. It's the highlight of his otherwise dull existence as a married man leading a dual life in a society that resists homosexuality.

Arun Fulara is a writer and filmmaker based in Mumbai, India. Sunday is his first short film, and it has travelled widely to festivals around the world including Tampere Film Festival (Finland), Frameline Film Festival (San Francisco), Inside Out (Toronto), and Kashish (Mumbai), where it won the Riyad Wadia Award for Best Emerging Filmmaker. Arun's second film, My Mother's Girlfriend, was awarded the KASHISH QDrishti Film Grant, and won Best Film

awards at both *REELING: Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival*, and *International Documentary and Short Film Festival of Kerala*. Arun is currently working on his debut feature film, *My Home is in the Hills*, a coming-of-age drama steeped in magical realism in the context of migration.

Birthday Boy (Vuelta al Sol)

(Judith Corro, 7 mins, 2020, Panama)

It's César's birthday and his parents expect him to wear clothes that make César feel uncomfortable. Now he has to make a decision: continue to please his family's expectations or be true to his identity as a trans man.

Judith Corro is a cultural manager and storyteller, and works in communications in the NGO sector, on projects focused on gender, identity and community. Birthday Boy is her first film.

For Love

(Joy Gharoro-Akpojotor, 13 mins, 2021, UK)

Illegal immigrant, Nkechi, lives happily in the shadows with her partner Martha, but when immigration officers turn up unexpectedly, the pair have to make difficult decisions about their future together.

*Joy Gharoro-Akpojotor was born in Nigeria and moved to the UK when she was 16. In 2016 she produced Joseph A Adesunloye's feature *White Colour Black*, which premiered at the London Film Festival. Joy was selected for the BFI's LGBTQ+ mentorship programme and in 2020, Joy was identified as both a Screen International Star of Tomorrow and a BAFTA Breakthrough participant. Having produced shorts and features, *For Love*, made with BBC Film, is the first short that she has written and directed.*