

# Peterborough Arts Cinema

Films that make you think

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June at 7:30pm

## Moonlight (2016)

US | 1h 51min, cert R

**Director;** Barry Jenkins,  
**Stars;** Mahershala Ali, Shariff Earp  
& Duan Sanderson

The tender, heartbreaking story of a young man's struggle to find himself, told across three defining chapters in his life as he experiences the ecstasy, pain, and beauty of falling in love, while grappling with his own sexuality.

*Oscar Winner; Best Picture*



## After the Moonlight fades: what's next for LGBT cinema

Eleven years ago, when Brokeback Mountain was surprisingly defeated by Crash following rumblings of discomfort among older, rightwing voters over the former film's gay content, a message was sent out that such narratives were still marginal; only last year, when Todd Haynes' lavishly acclaimed lesbian romance Carol failed to score a Best Picture nod, the limitations of the old guard were once more suggested. Warm and wistful and sexually inexplicit, [Moonlight is not a highly radical work in the annals of queer cinema](#), but it shall now forever be regarded as a pathbreaker: the film that got LGBT stories fully past the establishment. "It changes everything," proclaim the film's post-victory billboards across Hollywood – a grand statement that somehow, at this moment, doesn't sound too grandiose.

Even before Oscar night gave the movement a red-letter day for the ages, 2017 was shaping up as a banner year for queer film-making and film-makers. Just two months and two big-league festivals in, more major gay-oriented films have premiered than we once could hope for in an entire year – all bound for cinemas in the months to come.

It began in January at Sundance, typically a hothouse for square, mostly straight American indie quirkfests – which this year revealed an unusual curve to its programming. For once, the uncontested breakout hit of the blizzardy Utah festival wasn't American, but the kind of Euro auteur vision you'd expect to see unveiled at Cannes or Venice: adapted from André Aciman's celebrated 2007 novel, the Italian director Luca Guadagnino's [Call Me By Your Name](#) is an unabashedly queer coming-of-age love story, steeped in the peachy, sensuous pleasures of gay erotic awakening.

If Call Me By Your Name looks to be this year's gay cinema event – the one, like Moonlight and Carol before it, that adult viewers of all persuasions make dates to see – it's supplemented by equally fine works of slightly more specialised appeal. Another Sundance hit, the Yorkshire-based film-maker Francis Lee's windswept, rough-hewn love story [God's Own Country](#), was already been dubbed "the British Brokeback" – a tag that's both glib and irresistible, given that Lee's film also details the gruff courtship of two hardy shepherds in the hills. That basis aside, this deeply moving film has very much its own story to tell, particularly with its stirring anti-Brexit stance: the lovers here are a surly young Yorkshireman and a dreamy Romanian migrant worker, complicating the film's politics of social prejudice. Lee was a popular winner of the festival's world cinema directing award.

In addition to giving God's Own Country and Call Me By Your Name a second hurrah – along with the South African Sundance highlight The Wound, a fascinating study of unspoken homosexuality in the country's tradition-bound Xhosa community – last month's Berlin film festival also gave the neglected trans quadrant of LGBT cinema some welcome attention. Chilean director Sebastián Lelio's [A Fantastic Woman](#) is a riveting, profoundly empathetic story of a trans woman frozen out by her male partner's family following his death. Its elegant Almodóvar-esque stylings earned it a best screenplay award from the jury and a hefty distribution deal with, again, Sony Classics.

And what of the multiplexes? Slower to catch on, of course, but even blockbuster cinema is oh-so-gradually making allowances for gay narratives. A much-vaunted gay character in Disney's Beauty and the Beast may have turned out to be a bit of a damp, stereotyped squib, with the director, Bill Condon, eventually admitting that what he had touted as an "[exclusively gay moment](#)" for the Mouse House was "overblown" by hype – but the very conversation it inspired is one we can expect to recur more often with regard to studio movie-making. The internet is already speculating on the fate of the Alien franchise's first gay couple: in advance footage for Ridley Scott's [Alien: Covenant](#), set for release in May, Demián Bichir and Nathaniel Dean are shown kissing and canoodling. It's ostensibly an unremarkable moment, but gay romance is rarely made to seem unremarkable in the mainstream. *Perhaps 2017 is the year LGBT representation onscreen comes to seem not so queer.* (edited A O'Reilly from the Guardian March 2017).



