

PRESS RELEASE

The 41st edition of the longest- running LGBTQI+ Film Festival in Europe and the third in the world directed by Vladimir Luxuria comes back in Turin from 16 until 21 April.

(Cinema Massimo – National Museum of Cinema)

Festival's Patroness: Donatella Finocchiaro

**6 days, with more than 50 films from 21 countries
(of which 32 national, 1 World, 2 European and 3 International premieres)**

Guests: Sensualità a Corte, Simonetta Musitano, Nicola Savino, Raúl Tejón, Jose Mari Goenaga e Helen Walsh

Musical guest: Leo Gassmann



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41^o
Lovers
Film Festival

CHI GUARDA CHI
WHO'S WATCHING WHO

16-21 APRILE 2026 CINEMA MASSIMO - TORINO

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Lovers
Film Festival

The Lovers Film Festival, the historical Italian film festival that explores LGBTQI+ topics (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer e Intersexual), directed by **Vladimir Luxuria** and founded by **Giovanni Minerba** and **Ottavio Mai**, will come back in Turin from the **16th** to the **21st April 2026** at the Cinema Massimo, the multiplex of the **National Museum of Cinema**.

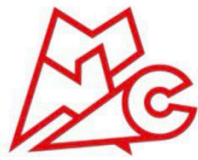
“The Lovers Film Festival, the longest-running LGBTQI+ Film Festival in Italy, is about to start its 41st edition and it will represent a main appointment in the national and international cultural scenery.

*The Festival finds in cinema its ideal language to develop its own story, bringing to Turin films and authors from all over the world: stories that cross relationships and gender identities, always offering to the public new and plural points of views about the present. Through these stories, the Festival promotes inclusivity, respect for the differences and a shared thought against all kinds of discrimination – highlights **Enzo Ghigo** and **Carlo Chatrian**, respectively president and director of the **National Museum of Cinema** – “The National Museum of Cinema supports with belief this event, which over the years has been able to strengthen its own identity while maintaining alive the attention toward new languages and new generations of authors. Today Lovers is not just a cinematic showcase, but also a meeting and dialogue place that helps to enrich the social and cultural debate. Sincerely thank you to Vladimir Luxuria and all the people that with their work have made possible what we are sure will be a magnificent Lovers”.*

Vladimir Luxuria

For the seventh year, Lovers is directed by **Vladimir Luxuria**, activist, writer, television star, actress, singer and playwright, famous also for her political work. The artistic director will be supported by **Angelo Acerbi**, artistic vicepresident and head for programming, and by selectors **Elisa Cuter** and **Alessandro Uccelli** with the collaboration of **Niccolò Gossi**.

*“We watch films that, in turn, look deep into us: every director and screenwriter with their creations, try to observe, dig and stir our consciences through storytelling, emotion and cinema. This has been a fruitful year for film productions you will love, full of a strong passion which is most likely a creative reaction to the obscurantism of rights happening in many parts of the world where the LGBTQI+ community has long faced repression, and in Western countries where we've taken not just steps but veritable leaps backwards. – comments **Vladimir Luxuria**, Lovers Film Festival artistic director – “Lovers is about socializing, culture,*



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NAZIONALE
DEL CINEMA
TORINO

Lovers
Film Festival

and entertainment. In addition to feature films, short films and documentaries, there will be talks, music and performances. Lovers is intersectional: on screen and on stage we will talk about homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, misogyny, racism, and discriminations of all kinds. Lovers is transgender, transcending sexual genders and artistic genres, art is fluid and knows no barriers: in films there is music, poetry, photography, storytelling and dialogues... Step into the cinema, switch off the lights and mobile phones and let ourselves be carried away by the magic of films to watch and to be watched by".

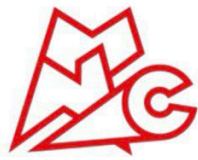
The inauguration night and the festival's patroness Donatella Finocchiaro

The 41st edition of Lovers Film Festival will be open **Thursday April 16th**, at **19,30** in the Aula del Tempio inside the **Mole Antonelliana**, symbol of Turin and headquarter of the **National Museum of Cinema** (Via Montebello 20) with the usual greeting from the patroness **Donatella Finocchiaro**. During the event the soprano **Federico Fiorio** will perform with some arias by Farinelli, accompanied by the pianist **Luigi Trivisano**.

The notorious actress from Catania who has worked in movies with Roberto Andò, Giuseppe Tornatore, Marco Bellocchio, Mimmo Calopresti, Edoardo Winspeare, Roberta Torre, Emanuele Crialese and Pupi Avati and, at the theater, with Luca Ronconi, Gigi Dall'Aglio, Ninni Bruschetta, Giampiero Ciccio and Andrea De Rosa, will be the patroness of the festival's opening night. Enthusiastic about the invitation from Vladimir Luxuria, **Donatella Finocchiaro** Donatella Finocchiaro says: *"I'm so honored to be the patroness of the Lovers Film Festival this year! In a time when rights and identities still need to be protected and seen, this festival represents a place where it can happen. Celebrating the LGBTQI+ cinema means celebrating all kinds of love, breaking all stereotypes down and building a community free from judgements. I'm glad to share this journey with the audience and with all the people who make this festival possible"*.

The **opening film** (at 9,15pm , Cinema Massimo, Room 1) will be the long film "**Maspalomas**" by **Aitor Arregi, Jose Mari Goenaga** (in the presence of director Goenaga) preceded by the short film "Mike and the Magazine" by Marcello Paolillo (present at the cinema).

"Maspalomas" – named after the "buen retiro" chosen by Vicente, age 76, after coming out to his family at the age of 50. Here, life revolves around sun, sea, parties and cruising among the dunes. Everything changes when, after suffering a stroke, he finds himself back in Donostia, his hometown: his daughter Nerea, with whom he had lost all contact, has



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DEL CINEMA
TORINO



admitted him to a care home. Vicente must therefore give up the freedom to be himself, a freedom he had won after years of living in hiding: the hedonism of Maspalomas is contrasted with a prison of social norms from which he seems unable, or perhaps unwilling, to escape. But life always knows what to do... A Spanish film that explores the detours fate often imposes on the paths each of us has mapped out, a multiple award-winner at the Goya Awards and the San Sebastian Film Festival, also thanks to the effective and measured performance of the lead actor, José Ramon Soroiz.

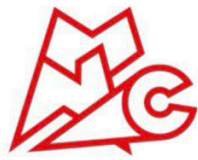
The Films

50 films on the program, from **21 nations**. Among the films out of competition at the festival, in addition to the opening film, "**Blue Film**" by Elliot Tuttle (USA, 2025, 82') on Friday 17th, at 10.30pm in Room 1.

To Aaron, a young and brash camboy from Los Angeles, it seems too good to be true: a user of the platform he works for has offered him \$50,000 for a night together: a considerable sum that would finally allow him to turn his life around. The meeting between the two, however, takes an unexpected turn: in an anonymous Airbnb, Aaron finds himself facing a cryptic and mysterious figure, hidden by a balaclava. Hank, as the man claims to be called, presses him with very specific questions and proves to know a lot, certainly too much, about the camboy's online life and, above all, about his offline life and past. *A provocative and claustrophobic thriller that ventures into the still little-explored universe of online sex work and addresses controversial and often taboo topics, such as pedophilia. The scandalous film from the last Edinburgh International Film Festival, and therefore ostracized, which also relies on the impressive and unforgettable performances of the two protagonists, including Kieron Moore from "Boots".*

"Strange journey: the story of Rocky Horror" by Linus O'Brien (UK, 2025, 89') Sunday 19 April at 4pm in Room 3.

The show that revolutionized the musical. An unprecedented phenomenon in the history of entertainment. The Rocky Horror Show was this and much more: the symbol of a generation, thanks to the themes it addressed, the iconic performances and the musical numbers that have achieved cult status. From its London debut in 1973 to the global success of Jim



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TORINO

Lovers
Film Festival

Sharman's film version in 1975: here is the behind-the-scenes story that have consecrated him in the collective imagination, featuring exclusive interviews with the original cast (primarily Tim Curry and Susan Sarandon) and equally famous long-time fans (including Jack Black and Trixie Mattel).

The closing film "**Plainclothes**" (USA/UK, 2025, 95') by Carmen Emmi will be on Tuesday 21st at 8.30pm in Room 1.

New York State, early 1990s. For Lucas, a promising young police officer, the role of undercover agent represents a significant career opportunity: in disguise, he frequents local clubs, aiming to be lured and then arrest, for indecent exposure, the unfortunate individuals he manages to deceive. When he meets Andrew, a mature Protestant pastor, something clicks inside him: the physical attraction, which he cannot immediately accept, turns into a feeling too powerful to be kept hidden from himself and the world. *But how can we escape a painful yet seemingly unsolvable impasse? Successfully presented at festivals around the world, it has won awards and accolades at Sundance (Best Cast) and Frameline (Best First Feature), among others.*

The Guests

Over the 6 days of the festival, many personalities from the world of cinema, culture and entertainment will be guests of the Cinema Massimo.

On Friday the 17th at 5:45 pm, in Room 3, essayist and journalist **Gianluigi Ricuperati** will be a guest at the Riflessi nel buio award ceremony. Also on Friday, but at 8 pm in Room 1, before the screening of Daniel Nolasco's "Apenas Coisas Boas", stand-up comedian **Simoneffa Musitano** will entertain the audience with a comic monologue.

On Sunday the 19th, at 4 pm, in Room 2, **Andrea and Alessandro** will be the protagonists of a true story that intertwines the themes of same-sex parenting and femicide. For the first time, the protagonists of a tragic story and enlightened justice share their stories with Vladimir Luxuria. On Sunday the 19th, at 5:45 pm, in room 3 there will be, as is now customary, a **EuroPride** focus (the international event will be hosted in Turin in 2027). Speakers will include **Alessandro Battaglia**, president of the EuroPride Turin 2027 committee, **Patrick Orth**, president of EPOA - European Pride Organisers Association, **Patrik Rásky** of Budapest Pride, and **Romas Zabarauskas**, director of "The Activist", which will be screened at the end of the meeting. On Monday the 20th, at 8 pm, in room 1 directly from the last



MUSEO
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DEL CINEMA
TORINO

Lovers
Film Festival

Sanremo Festival, the highly anticipated 2026 musical guest **Leo Gassmann** arrives at Lovers FF, with an exclusive performance opening the screening of Mike Doyle's "Bookends". On Tuesday the 21st, at 8:30 pm, the famous host **Nicola Savino** will be the godfather of the closing evening in Sala 1.

Film guests include the protagonists of "**Sensualità a Corte**" **Marcello Cesena** (Jean Claude), **Simona Garbarino** (Madre) and **Fabrizio Lopresti** (Daiana). They will receive the **Adoration Award** before the screening of "**Sensualità a Corte - The Film**" by Marcello Cesena (Italy, 2026, 80') on Saturday 18 April at 6 pm in room 1. Will also be a guest at the festival **Raúl Tejón**, protagonist of the series "Machos alfa" and the film "**Who wants to marry an astronaut?**", by David Matamoros, which will be screened on Saturday 18 April at 10.30pm in Room 1, and **Helen Walsh** director of "On the Sea" (Saturday 18 April at 8pm in Room 1) and famous British writer with many awards and recognitions to her credit.

Competitive section

There are three main competitive sections: **All The Lovers – Ottavio Mai Award**, international feature film competition; **Real Lovers**, international documentary competition; and **Future Lovers**, international short film competition. **The three juries** will be chaired by actor **Lorenzo Balducci**, critic **Vincenzo Patanè**, and artist **Josefine Yole Signorelli**, aka **Fumettibrutti**. The Lovers Film Festival will also award: **the Torino Pride Award**, **the Giò Stajano Award**, **the Young Lovers – Libere Gabbie Award**, **the Matthew Shepard – Il Groviglio Award**, **the Adoration Award**, and **the Riflessi nel Buio Award**. The Audience Award also returns. Viewers will have the opportunity to rate each major category of the festival's competitions: All the Lovers, Real Lovers, and Future Lovers.

The cover image and the claim

A **Dario Gazziero**'s shoot will be the cover of the 2026 edition of Lovers: a picture that aims to represent the 2026's claim: "**Chi guarda chi – Who's whatching who**", a clear reference to different levels of looking. Because looking does not always mean seeing. "*Three people, each of them with their own device, who fix their gaze on the viewer through the lens – said **Vladimir Luxuria** Lovers Film Festival's director – Those who find themselves in front of this image can feel observed with that healthy unease that one feels when the fourth wall*



Lovers
Film Festival

is broken down in cinema, like Giulietta Masina's eyes in "Le notti di Cabiria" which stare straight into the camera and into the eyes of the viewer. Who's watching is also watched, Who despise and discriminate could be despised and discriminated as well. With a positive message: trying to feel like you are being filmed helps you recover from selfishness, prejudice, and the presumption of superiority."

The **Lovers Film Festival** is powered by the **National Museum of Cinema** of Turin and it will take place with the contribution of **Mic, Regione Piemonte** and **Comune di Torino**.

You can download all the press material here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xIBxHBR6TZrMUTiL94HSEY-lw2II3KNy?usp=sharing>

Ufficio Stampa Lovers Film Festival

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