



Blue Artichoke Films Press Release
Date: August 23, 2009

Australia bans explicit drama *Matinée*

On Thursday the OFLC (Australia's Office of Film and Literature Classification) notified the Melbourne Underground Film Festival that the film "*Matinée*," directed by Jennifer Lyon Bell for Blue Artichoke Films, is the only unrated film which they will not allow MUFF to screen, citing "sexual content". In Australia, film festivals must apply for "exemptions" for unrated films.

Matinée (2009), a dramatic film with intense sexually explicit content, was accepted the Melbourne Underground Film Festival (MUFF) and scheduled for screening this coming Wednesday August 26.

MUFF is outraged by the decision and stands by the film. Today they released an open letter to the OFLC stating their belief that the decision is unfair. In their press release to the Australian media, they cite the artistic merit of the film, including its "subtle, entirely naturalistic feel....[and] highly stylized, enigmatic and atmospheric world". With regard to the depiction of graphic sexuality, they point out that the OFLC has historically privileged violent and misogynistic representations of explicit sex over the type of unabashed female sexual pleasure shown in *Matinée*. MUFF contrasts *Matinée's* ban with the OFLC's acceptance of Lars von Trier's violent sexually explicit film *Antichrist*. In the past, festival exemptions have also been granted to *Shortbus*, *9 Songs*, and *Destricted* – where the latter two are much less story-driven than *Matinée*.

MUFF says they are considering their options, including holding a special "civil disobedience" screening in support of the film. A screening like this would be in line with some of their past protests; the 2006 OFLC ban of Tony Comstock's erotic documentary *Damon and Hunter: Doing It Together* motivated MUFF to hold a special unofficial screening --which promptly sold out. A similar situation in 2007 occurred with Comstock's *Ashley and Kisha: Finding the Right Fit*, but in that case Melbourne police were dispatched to bar filmgoers from the venue.

Matinée is the story of a reserved stage actress who decides to improvise her onstage love scene in a bold attempt to inject creativity into the play. Their improvisation evolves into actual sex onstage in front of a live audience. *Matinée's* themes involve trust, ambition, and creative risk.

Recently *Matinée* won the CineKink/NYC film festival's jury award for "Best Narrative Film", and won Honorable Mention at the 2009 Feminist Porn Awards. It was also selected for the #4 spot in Cosmopolitan magazine's "5 Best Sex Films For Women" (German edition, July 2009) and has been featured in top-ranking Dutch magazines and television programs, including a variety of feminist and women's magazines.

Matinée was produced in Amsterdam, Netherlands by an American filmmaker, Jennifer Lyon Bell, who has been living in Amsterdam for 10 years. *Matinée* was released May 1 and has mainly screened in Europe. Bell's film can be seen this autumn at festival screenings worldwide and is currently available for sale online at www.blueartichokefilms.com. The next screening will take place at the Strasbourg International Film Festival in France in early September.