

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**June 5, 2025—Calgary's Fairy Tales Festival Opens with Timely Look Back at Landmark 2SLGBTQIA+ Rights Victory Amid Current Political Tensions**

CALGARY, AB — As Alberta grapples with renewed debates over 2SLGBTQIA+ rights and policy rollbacks, the 27th Annual [Fairy Tales Queer Art & Film Festival](#), presented by the [Calgary Queer Arts Society](#), opens June 12th with a timely reminder of how far the province has come—and how much further it needs to go.

The festival kicks off at Contemporary Calgary with "[Pride & Prejudice: The Delwin Vriend Story](#)," revisiting the landmark 1998 Supreme Court case that led Alberta to include sexual orientation in its human rights legislation. The screening, followed by a "[Then and Now](#)" panel discussion (taking place on June 12 directly after the screening at 7 PM), couldn't be more relevant as the province once again finds itself at the center of national conversations about 2SLGBTQIA+ protections. The panel (featuring **Brendan MacArthur Stevens** - Blakes law firm; Amelia Newbert, trans advocate and founder of Skipping Stone Foundation; and Keith Purdy, 2SLGBTQIA+ advocate and representative of the Alberta Federation of Labour) will reflect on the legal and cultural impact of Vriend's activism—and the ongoing work for 2SLGBTQIA+ rights in Canada.

"When you share a story, you make space for understanding, healing, and connection. This story is a reminder of how hard-won our rights are and how much vigilance they still require," says [Shone Thistle](#), Executive Director of the Calgary Queer Arts Society. "Fairy Tales has something for everyone, but it is especially a place for queer people to see ourselves represented, respected and celebrated. At Calgary Queer Arts Society and through Fairy Tales, we honour our past, protect our present, and build toward a more inclusive future."

Fairy Tales Queer Art & Film Festival, one of the longest-running and most impactful queer film festivals in the Canadian Prairies features 21 film screenings including [Pride & Prejudice: The Delwin Vriend Story](#), an Artist Market showcasing 17 local queer artists and makers, interactive workshops, and dynamic drag performances—all celebrating the diverse intersectionality, talent, and lived experiences of queer creators.



Delwin Vriend, Pride & Prejudice

[A celebration of Queer joy, resistance, voices and building community](#)

The festival turns up the heat with a Friday the 13th presentation in partnership with Calgary's largest and most inclusive lifestyle club KNetic! Fairy Tales After Dark includes both fright night and erotic programming. [Fairy Tales After Dark: Love, Lust & Liberation](#) is a late-night curation and panel by award-winning queer porno tour de force, Kate Sinclair, known for her work with Cine Sincalire and Nuit Ranch. The provocative program explores a collection of short films that delve into themes of fantasy, power, liberation, and desire through a bold and unapologetic lens.

"The Fairy Tales Film Festival is a shining light! Since my first time taking Nuit Raunch on tour in 2022, I've watched with joy as the festival has changed and grown," Says Kate Sinclair. "Being a prairie kid from Winnipeg, I have to emphasize just how valuable and treasured a festival like this is in Canada. It really is in a class of its own! Fairy Tales feels like home."

The festival proudly introduces new partnerships with organizations including KNetic Calgary, Black Pride YYC, Rang De Pride, and Rainbow Elders, reflecting diverse voices within the queer community. Additionally, the festival welcomes a new programming lead who is working to strengthen connections within the creative community, as well as public understanding of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community through art, education, and conversation.

"Fairy Tales is more than a festival—it's a gathering place for joy, resistance, radical imagination and community" says **Wilmer Aburto**, Creative Community Program Lead at Calgary Queer Arts Society, who joined the team in 2025. He brings a rich background in photography, community-building, and connecting art with social justice. "We're here to celebrate our stories, foster dialogue, and build connections that empower and uplift."

As a long-time gallery founder and community arts facilitator, Aburto has worked with queer youth, women affected by domestic violence, veterans, individuals facing mental health barriers and more—using art as a tool for empowerment and skill development. His work has been instrumental in shaping values-driven programming, and he continues to expand on how queer art can be a force for connection, healing, and meaningful change.

Festival Highlights and Story Angles:

[Pride & Prejudice: The Delwin Vriend Story & Panel Discussion:](#) Exploring the legacy of Delwin Vriend, whose landmark Supreme Court case in 1998 led to the inclusion of sexual orientation in Alberta's human rights legislation. An impactful panel will follow the screening, "Then and Now," featuring legal experts and advocates who will discuss the historical significance, recurring themes, and the status of current 2SLGBTQIA+ human rights battles in Alberta, as well as the legacy of Vriend's activism. **Panelists include:** Brendan MacArthur Stevens, constitutional law specialists from Blakes law firm, Amelia Newbert, trans advocate and founder of [Skipping Stone Foundation](#), and Keith Purdy, 2SLGBTQIA+ advocate and representative of the [Alberta Federation of Labour](#).

[Winter Kept Us Warm:](#) Experience the groundbreaking film that changed Canadian cinema forever- the first English Canadian gay film ever made This beautifully shot black-and-white gem captivated audiences worldwide upon its 1965 release, boldly depicting queer desire at a time when homosexuality was still criminalized in Canada. A time capsule of pre-liberation queer intimacy and a watershed moment in our nation's film history. The screening also includes a talk-back component at the end with Kevin Allen from the Calgary Gay History Project.

[Why Queer Art and Representation Matters Now More Than Ever in Alberta:](#) In the face of rising anti-2SLGBTQIA+ sentiment, policy rollbacks, and a growing wave of misinformation targeting queer communities across Alberta and beyond, the Fairy Tales Queer Art & Film Festival creates a space where queer experiences are celebrated, shared, and reaffirms that visibility is not a luxury—it's a form of survival, and a tool for progress. Through film, performance, and visual expression, queer artists are reclaiming space, rewriting narratives, and reminding the world that queer lives are complex, joyful, painful, and worthy of being seen. Fairy Tales provides an essential platform for this work, bringing visibility to stories that challenge stereotypes, foster empathy, and spark crucial conversations in communities worldwide.

Schedule Overview

- Thursday, June 12th: Opening night with Pride vs. Prejudice: The Delwin Vriend Story at 7:00 p.m., followed by The Astronaut Lovers at 9:30 p.m., and Shorts Package: Tangled Hearts & Quiet Revolutions at 9:30 p.m.
- Friday, June 13th: Some Nights I Feel Like Walking at 7:00 p.m, Streets of Gloria at 7:00 p.m, FAIRY TALES AFTER DARK: Love at Lust & Liberation at 9:30 p.m, and Carnage for Christmas at 9:30 p.m

- Saturday, June 14th: Lakeview at 2:00 p.m., Shorts Package: Before the Break at 2:00 p.m., NEIRUD at 4:30 p.m., Really Happy Someday at 4:30 p.m., Sauna at 7:00 p.m., 1-800 On Her Own at 7:00 p.m., Shorts Package: Not that Kind of Phase at 9:30 p.m., and This Is Ballroom at 9:30 p.m.
- Sunday, June 15th: Avant-Drag! At 2:00 p.m, Shorts Package: Hold That Thought at 2:00 p.m, Winter Kept Us Warm at 4:30 p.m, All the Colours of the World are Between Black & White at 4:30 p.m and closing night with Parade: Queer Acts of Love & Resistance
- [Full Schedule](#) and [Trailer](#)

[Artist Market and Performances:](#) Over four days, the festival will showcase queer artists, drag performers, two dj's and surprise performances.

- Thursday, June 12th: Exhibition & Market 5:00 - 9:30 PM,
- Friday, June 13th: Exhibition & Market 5:00 - 9:30 PM
- Saturday, June 14th: Exhibition & Market 1:00 - 9:30 PM
- Sunday, June 15th: Exhibition & Market 1:00 - 7:00 PM

Ticket/Passes Information:

- Full Festival Pass: \$115.00
- Individual Screenings:\$18.95

At Contemporary Calgary from June 12th to June 15th, 2025

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit: <https://www.artscommons.ca/whats-on/fairy-tales-queer-art-film-festival-2025>.

[Film Trailers stills, assets and, photos are here](#) and team photos can be sourced upon request.

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Boiler Plate:

[Calgary Queer Arts Society](#), formerly known as Fairy Tales Presentation Society, is a nonprofit organization located in Calgary, Alberta that exists to give voice to queer people and their stories. Historically, LGBTQ2A+ individuals have been suppressed, deprived of power, misrepresented, and often overlooked by institutional support systems. We are committed to transforming this reality and will continue to work passionately towards an inclusive future for all people. In 2025 Fairy Tales Queer Film Festival will celebrate 27 years of sharing uniquely queer films from around the world. It is the longest-running queer film festival in Canada and the 4th largest with a devoted and enthusiastic following. We have screened over 1,600 films over the years, including films you may never see anywhere else, always with a queer perspective, because representation matters more than ever. As we enter our 27th edition of the festival, we are thrilled to be back with LIVE screenings at Contemporary Calgary.. These artists deserve a platform to bring their stories to life, and The Fairy Tales Queer Film Festival helps queer artists find a home and audience.

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AUSTEN ROWDEN

LEAD, DIGITAL MARKETING & CONTENT

AUSTENROWDEN@STARTMEUPPR.COM

403 993 9855

SHONE THISTLE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CALGARY QUEER ARTS

SHONE@CALGARYQUEERARTSSOCIETY.COM

403 819 5926