

ICONS

Last Men Standing

Erin Brethauer and Tim Hussin

USA | 2016 | 66:00

International Premiere

More than half of those living with HIV/AIDS in the United States are older than 50, many of them gay men who never expected to survive the dark days of the epidemic, let alone live 30 years beyond their diagnoses. As this moving documentary reveals, their survival has been both a blessing and a curse.

Set in San Francisco, Last Men Standing features eight HIV-positive men age 55 to 70, who let us into their lives where depression, suicidal thoughts, physical pain and loneliness are common threads and where financial worries are forcing some of them to leave the increasingly expensive city they call home.

But the men also experience moments of gratitude—volunteering, sharing dinner with loved ones, walking in yet another Pride Parade, and in the brave act of letting go.

MAJOR!

Annalise Ophelian

USA | 2015 | 91:00

International Premiere

Before there were high-profile advocates such as Laverne Cox and Janet Mock, many transgender women of colour fought tirelessly for the rights of their sisters. One of the extraordinary women at the forefront of the movement is the passionate subject of this documentary.

MAJOR! documents the ways in which Miss Major Griffin-Gracy's fascinating life has touched on many vital issues, from her participation in the Stonewall riots, her phenomenal HIV outreach in the 1990s, her outspokenness on the daily threat of violence for transgender women, and her support and advocacy, through the Transgender Gender Variant and Intersex Justice Project (TGIJP), for transgender women who are incarcerated. MAJOR! underscores the profound love that Miss Major gives and receives from those around her, proving the enduring and lifesaving power of community.

Strike a Pose

Ester Gould and Reijer Zwaan
Netherlands/Belgium | 2016 | 83:00

Don't just stand there, let's get to it. Strike a pose, there's nothing to it.

Madonna's 1990 Blond Ambition tour and the subsequent documentary, *Truth or Dare*, captured the controversial artist at the height of her artistic and commercial success. Sharing the stage and the nightly adoration were seven handsome and talented young male dancers: Kevin, Oliver, Luis, Carlton, Jose, Gabriel and Salim, whose lives were forever changed, for better and worse, thanks to the Material Girl.

Onstage and on camera, the young dancers epitomized Madonna's message of sexual freedom and personal expression, but after the tour ended and the cameras stopped rolling, many of the men found life away from the protective bubble of their superstar surrogate mother difficult to handle.

Twenty-five years later, *Strike a Pose* catches up with the six surviving dancers, who share their personal stories about life during and after the tour, culminating in an emotional reunion where they open their hearts and are able to finally express themselves.

Southwest of Salem: The Story of the San Antonio Four

Deborah S. Esquenazi
USA | 2016 | 91:00

The podcast *Serial* and Netflix's *Making a Murderer* shine a light on America's broken legal system, and director Deborah S. Esquenazi joins the fray with her riveting documentary that recounts the real-life miscarriage of justice that saw four young Latina lesbians—Elizabeth Ramirez, Cassandra Rivera, Kristie Mayhugh and Anna Vasquez—convicted in the 1990s gang rape of Elizabeth's two young nieces.

The four women, accused of satanic ritual abuse despite faulty medical science and questionable testimony from the nieces, suffered from a defence team that was no match for a homophobic legal system. Three of the women were sentenced to 15 years apiece while Elizabeth was handed a shocking 37-year sentence.

Yet, through it all, these courageous women fight to clear their names, and Esquenazi's camera is there to capture their journey, which includes a remarkable turn of events that sets the wheels of justice in motion.

The Slippers

Morgan White
Canada | 2016 | 91:00

The Slippers pulls back the Wizard's curtain on the unbelievable story and cultural impact of Dorothy's ruby slippers from *The Wizard of Oz*.

Using firsthand accounts and archival interviews, *The Slippers* details the life of the ruby slippers after their sale at the famed 1970 MGM auction. Discovered by costumer Kent Warner,

it is unclear how many pairs were found and how many pairs originally made. That mystery has only helped to propel the shoes to the forefront of the Hollywood memorabilia market.

They have been bought, sold, resold and coveted by many, and are considered the most important Hollywood keepsake.

The Slippers masterfully reveals the story behind the glamour—a story filled with crime, conspiracy theories, broken promises and a whole lot of Debbie Reynolds. The ruby slippers are all about dreams, both realized and wrecked.

Official Selection, 2016 SXSW Film Festival

Uncle Howard

Wednesday, June 1

Aaron Brookner

USA/UK | 2016 | 96:00

Toronto Premiere

Howard Brookner was an acclaimed documentary filmmaker on the cusp of mainstream Hollywood success when his life was cut short by AIDS in 1989.

More than a quarter of a century later, Brookner's nephew, Aaron, undertakes a personal journey to find the negative for Burroughs: The Movie, his uncle's critically successful documentary. In the process, Aaron discovers a treasure trove of personal mementos and archival footage that offer a captivating glimpse into New York City's cultural scene of the 1970s and 1980s and serve as an important exploration of his beloved uncle's legacy.

Lovely home movies of Aaron as a child reveal how he gravitated toward his favourite uncle, while interviews with friends and colleagues (including Jim Jarmusch, an executive producer on Uncle Howard) and long-lost footage and photos of Burroughs, Patti Smith, Allen Ginsberg, Andy Warhol, Madonna and more, provide a personal glimpse into a complex, creative man who died years before his time.

Official Selection, 2016 Sundance Film Festival