

# CINEMAROSA

queens only queer film series

Queens, August 20, 2005

An Interview with Hector Canonge, Founder-Director of CINEMAROSA –queens only queer film series-

## Is CINEMAROSA a film festival?

CINEMAROSA is not another film festival. There are many of them in the city catering to various audiences. The idea was not to create another event that would take place once a year, but instead to have ongoing presentations of a diverse body of work and genres. A monthly film series was a more appropriate choice because it would help implement the goals of the program that I had in mind. First of all, a series creates consistency, by having a presentation every third Sunday of the month at a particular time in the same place; people become familiar with the environment and the activity. Secondly, it permits the diffusion of information so audiences can advise others to attend the event. In that sense, CINEMAROSA is an ongoing effort. We never stop working, there is always something that needs to be done, people to call, information to prepare, promotions to create so the community is always informed of our screenings and programs.

## How does the project help the community, besides providing entertainment?

I started with very small in-house screenings at Queens Pride House in Woodside, Queens. What I wanted was to bring to many of the different neighborhoods in Queens was a needed awareness of the work that other independent queer filmmakers, like myself, were doing. I lived in Queens for many years, and upon my return, I realized that the gay and lesbian population of Jackson Heights, Woodside, Elmhurst, Forest Hills and Astoria had exploded, and that young LGBT people from all over the world were flocking the streets, bars, and clubs of Roosevelt and beyond. It was time to show movies related to that experience.

If people wanted to go and see a queer film, they had to go to Manhattan, and many of them did not find the information or the motivation to go there. There wasn't, and still isn't, a cultural arts center that caters to LGBT peoples of all ages in this borough. Yes, there are LGBT organizations, but their focus relies somewhere else. My motivation to create CINEMAROSA was to make possible the viewing of queer films and videos in a safe and comfortable environment and outside of the clubs and bars where people generally tend to socialize.

CINEMAROSA provides entertainment, naturally, but at the same time, education and information. The screenings are structured and thought off months in advance. With two full seasons to program, organize and create strategies to reach-out to the Queens and NYC LGBT community is a full time job that is done on a voluntary basis.

## Why CINEMAROSA at the Queens Museum of Art?

I'm very happy with the turn-out we had at QMA. The museum, its director and staff have been very supportive from the moment the series was moved to that prestigious organization. Though it is located in the center of the park, people and groups have made their way to our monthly presentations. QMA is an institution that best represents the multicultural groups in the borough, it fosters many exhibitions that help Queens' artists and it fits perfectly with the mission, the goals and future objectives of CINEMAROSA.