

London Feminist Film Festival: 20-23 August

[Sophie Mayer](#) // 11 August 2015

Tags: [discussion](#), [documentary](#), [film](#), [film festivals](#), [LFFF](#), [representations of women](#), [women of colour](#)

The London Feminist Film Festival is back!

After a break in 2014, the festival returns with its third, full-to-bursting [programme](#): eight screenings over the weekend of 20-23 August, at the Rio Cinema in Dalston and the Tricycle in Kilburn. East or West Londoner, for four have your pick of feminist documentaries from around the world, starting on Thursday 20 August with a mash-up of UK and Cuban music in 'The Lady of Percussion' and **Through the Lens of Hip-Hop: UK Women**, and closing in rural Canada on Sunday 23 August with Cynthia Scott's award-winning classic drama from 1990 **The Company of Strangers**. In the latter, eight women from different walks of life are stranded when their bus breaks down. Mainly improvised around stories from the actors' own lives – who include a nun, a Mohawk elder, and a lesbian feminist writer Mary Meigs – the film is a magical, absorbing docufiction that [The New York Times](#) called “an outstandingly tranquil vacation... in a beautiful, pastoral setting”.



Every film across the festival will feature a panel discussions, as part of its feminist commitment to dialogue and activism. You can talk UK hip-hop with Jessica Horn, musician Chardine Taylor-Stone and **Through the Lens** directors Samantha Calliste and Silhouette Bushay on Thursday 20 August; how to get your short film made and seen with the filmmakers whose work appears in the Feminist Shorts screening on Saturday 22 August; women's empowerment in rural Nepal with Sarita Panday after the screening of Elena Dirstaru's documentary **But They Can't Break Stones** on Sunday 23 August. In addition, the festival will be raising funds for Rape Crisis England and Wales with a UK premiere of Lisa F Jackson's polemic documentary **It Happened Here**, a timely exposure of the mishandling of sexual assault cases by US universities. It's been [screened at the White House](#) and catalysed debate in the US – given the Guardian's [recent report](#), here's hoping it can do the same in the UK.

At another UK premiere from the US, you can hear **Straight Sex** author Lynne Segal reflect on the emergence of American second-wave feminism from 1966-71, as shown in Mary Dore's **She's Beautiful When She's Angry** (2014). Co-promoted with [Club des Femmes](#), this screening on Friday 21 August is a centrepiece of the festival. The film has caused huge excitement in North America but is still [fundraising](#) to pay for music clearances and subtitles so that it can be distributed elsewhere. Lynne Segal will be joined on the panel by younger scholars, including film historian Clarissa Jacob, to debate the second wave's legacy and its connections to contemporary feminism. The strategies and

sheer brilliant out-there-ness of groups like W.I.T.C.H. – the Women’s International Conspiracy from Hell – make the film a revelatory, incantatory and inspirational portrait of an era and movement often sold by dominant history as humourless and/or white middle class liberal politesse.

There’s more inspiration in two documentary portraits of outstanding and outspoken feminist writers, both showing at the Tricycle. **Ester Broner: A Weave of Women** on Sunday 23 August looks at the creator of the Feminist Passover Seder, while **The Art of Ama Ata Aidoo** on Saturday 22 August is a tribute to the Ghanaian poet, novelist and playwright as she travels back to her ancestral village and to the US to attend the premiere of her play **Anowa**. The two women have both nothing and everything in common: as feminists, their creativity and activist work are inseparable, providing an inspiration and empowerment for subsequent generations.

Ranging internationally, across decades, between documentary and fiction, the London Feminist Film Festival is a bit like its closing film, **The Company of Strangers**: a vacation to feminist-land, (hopefully with no buses breaking down...), where everyone has a story to tell, one connected to gender politics and feminist awakenings. Just being in the company of women onscreen (screenings are open to all genders) is a radical act: as **She’s Beautiful** director **Mary Dore** told **Mother Jones**: “Ellen Willis told me that an amazing part of the women’s movement for her was actually starting to enjoy the company of other women, because basically that was something that hadn’t been done.”

Come and enjoy the company!

Get your tickets on [the LFFF website](#).

Read our previews of previous editions of LFFF in [2013](#) and [2012](#).

A picture is a still from **The Company of Strangers**, courtesy of LFFF, copyright: NFB Canada.

It shows a tranquil evening scene by the lake, two older women hang out on two sides of a large stone in the middle of the picture. One on the left is wearing a straw hat with a ribbon and is holding a long stick made from a branch, venturing off to the left of the frame. Woman on the right is resting, sitting on the ground. Both are wearing comfortable looking clothes, including loose fitting jeans.

Permalink // Tags: discussion, documentary, film, film festivals, LFFF, representations of women, women of colour