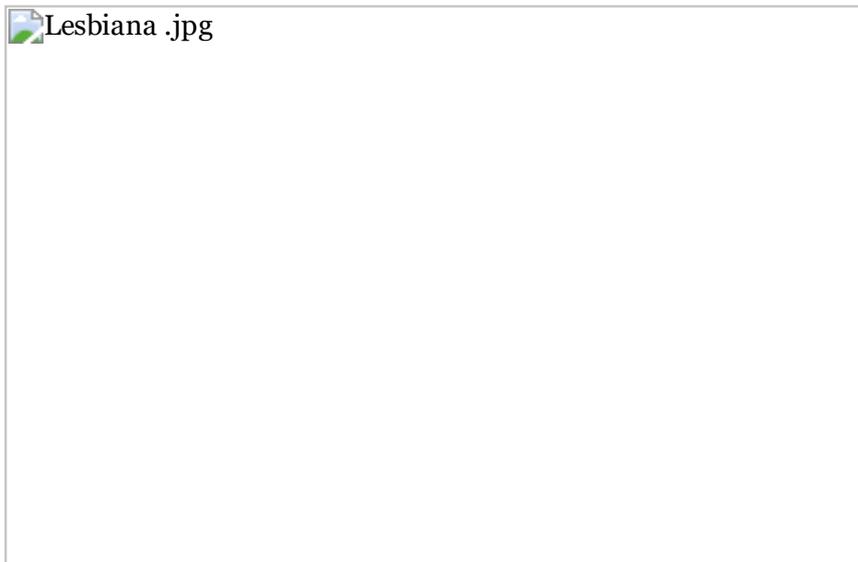


the f word **blog**
CONTEMPORARY UK FEMINISM

First ever London Feminist Film Festival opens in Hackney on Thursday

[Ania Ostrowska](#) // 27 November 2012

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 Lesbiana .jpg

With many screenings sold out already, a vibrant [website](#) featuring interviews with filmmakers and a four day programme packed full of films from around the world, the first ever London Feminist Film Festival opens on Thursday at the Hackney Picturehouse.

I managed to catch festival director **Anna Read** in the midst of pre-festival frenzy and ask her a couple of questions.

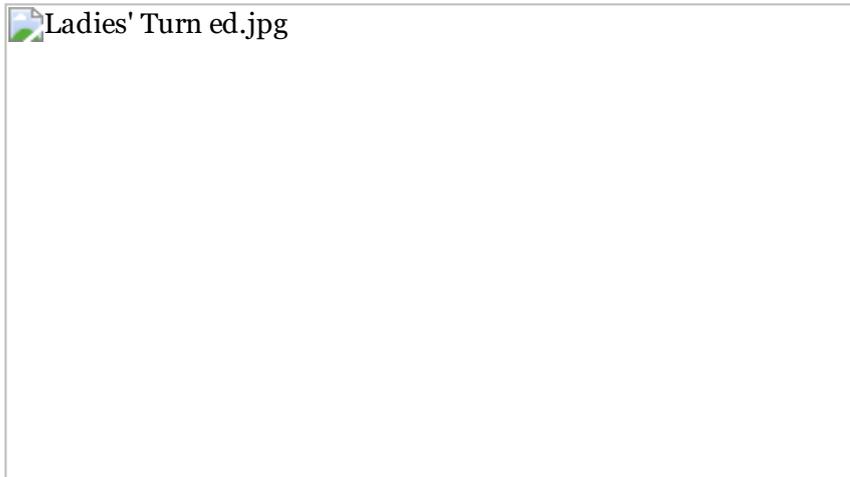
Q: The lineup of the festival looks stunning given it's its first year. Was it difficult to spread the message about it, were you relying on some previously existing networks/ platforms?

We used social media a lot to get word out about the festival and made contacts that way. This was especially important for the submissions process as we wanted to reach as international a pool of filmmakers as possible and I think we've succeeded pretty well in that.

Q: The audience's reaction is great already: you had to move the opening screening of *Lesbiana* to a bigger screen due to high demand. Do you think LFFF fills some important vacuum among other events highlighting women filmmakers or women's issues?

We've been very pleased with the reaction as we didn't really know what to expect beforehand. As you said, *Lesbiana* sold out in just eight days and has now been moved up to the biggest screen at Hackney Picturehouse and it looks like it may sell out again on that screen. *Audre Lorde – The Berlin Years* also sold out quickly, and

the rest of the sessions are doing very well too. I think that the London Feminist Film Festival definitely has its own place and fills a gap in the current UK film festival circuit. There are other film festivals which do a great job supporting and highlighting the work of women filmmakers [like Underwire festival [I blogged about last week](#) – AO]; the role of LFFF is to create a space that is equally about addressing women's rights issues.



I think there's a lot of interest in feminism in the UK right now, as people can see that women's rights are being eroded at the moment and are getting behind campaigns like the one to get rid of Page 3. So a feminist film festival can give people a chance to engage with these topics and I think people are excited about getting the chance to discuss the issues raised by the films we're showing through our panel discussions. We've tried to get a good mix of interesting people together to come along to talk about films and feminism. I hope LFFF will be a great addition to the feminist calendar!

Q: Given that you're opening with a doc on women-centred lesbian activism from the 1970s and feature an iconic Marleen Gorris' *A Question of Silence* [to which I am definitely coming!], do you expect charges of women-only separatism?

One of the aims of the festival is to show films about women's lives which are not usually seen in mainstream media, and I think both of these films meet that criterion.



Lesbiana documents a fascinating and important time for the feminist movement: this is a great film about some very interesting women. The feminist classic **A Question of Silence** (1982) was chosen because it is such an iconic film. The film had such an impact at the time it came out and I think contains themes which are still so relevant today. What's more, even though it won the prestigious Golden Calf when it was released and its director Marleen Gorris went on to win an Oscar, the film is rarely shown and it is almost impossible to get hold of a copy. The distributor didn't have a copy with English subtitles, so we had to rely on the Dutch Centre for Film Culture and Heritage to be able to obtain one of the few available copies.

Thank you and see you at the festival!

You can still get tickets for most of LFFF screenings, including opening night, on a Hackney Picturehouse [website](#).

All images (stills from *Lesbiana* and *Ladies' Turn* and LFFF logo) courtesy of LFFF.

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