

# The Festival with a Conscience

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Thursday, 27 October 2005

In its breakout third year, the Queens International Film Festival has grown in reach and depth presenting films from around the world with a socially conscious edge.

Believing that films can educate as well as entertain, this year's QIFF features documentaries that expose humanitarian injustices both abroad and at home. Documentaries from America include: *Fighting for Life in the Deathbelt* a groundbreaking film that considers the controversial institution of capital punishment in America through the eyes of Stephen Bright, the nation's leading anti-death penalty lawyer; and *Stalin's Wife* a look into the life of woman imprisoned by her marriage to one of history's most notorious despots.

With an international focus on Cuba, QIFF will be premiering: the documentary *Looking for Cuba*, a film that focuses on social injustices both on the ground in Cuba and in the foreign relations between Cuba and America; and *Bye Bye Havana* About a city and a nation pummeled by an unworkable socialism and a voracious consumer appetite.

QIFF is featuring two documentaries that focus on the exploitation of the poor by wealthy nations: from Spain comes the stirring *Apaga y Vamonos*, about a European hydroelectric plant built in an Andes valley that dislocated indigenous people and caused snowballing human rights violations; and *Streams of Gold* documentary centered on the social injustices surrounding gold prospecting from West Texas to the mountains of Ecuador.

Believing that dramatic film can also shed light on important social issues, this years QIFF presents: *September Tapes* in which an American journalist travels to Afghanistan in an effort to learn the truth behind the search for Osama Bin Laden; *Both* about a woman haunted by memories of her long-lost hermaphrodite brother who discovers that her sexual identity is a tissue of lies created by her parents and doctors; *Façade* a real-time drama about a young man's struggle with the insurmountable grief surrounding his father's death; and on the lighter side, *Life Coach* a hilarious yet poignant documentary about the shallowness of Hollywood's cult of personality.

Check out the 2005 Queens International Film Festival ([www.queensfilmfestival.com](http://www.queensfilmfestival.com)) for the thought provoking films that are making a difference the world over.

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