

'SISSY'

30 min documentary

Broadcaster: ABC

'SISSY' was produced and filmed during 1999 and 2000 in Western Australia. Directed by Debbie Gittins, Produced by Brian Beaton, Director of Photography, Leighton de Barros.

The short film has recently been awarded the best film for "I'll Say Wot I Like" short film competition as part of the WA Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. It has also been screened at various festivals in San Francisco, Toronto, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

Synopsis:

Charlene (Charles Colbung), Anna Mae (John Collard), and Ella (John Fitzgerald) are three black queens who glam up the nightlife in Perth. Charlene and Ella are well known socialites in the gay scene while Anna Mae struts regularly on the stage.

SISSY takes you behind the scenes to give a rare insight into a sub culture that has created its own space within the gay culture, and it explores the bond that sets the black 'sisterhood' apart from the white gays. SISSY is an expression of gay black identity: "We are glamorous, we are here and we are queer".

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By Mark Naglazas

"Despite Cathy Freeman's famous Olympic victory and widespread support for the government to apologise to indigenous Australians for past injustices, it's still tough being black in Australia.

And it's a lot tougher being black and homosexual, with gay Aborigines having to deal with as much prejudice in their own families as they do in the greater white community. We get a rare glimpse into the world of indigenous gay men in tonight's *Sissy (ABC, 11pm)*, an energetic, inventive and occasionally touching Western Australian-made documentary that looks at the lives of three colourful drag queens

Astutely, director Debbie Gittins stops Sissy from wallowing in anguish and despair by cutting between the story of Charlene's difficult coming-out in the redneck town of Mt Barker and the guys readying themselves for the annual gay pride parade.

In fact, what's fascinating about Sissy is how similar black drag queens are to their white sisters. Put make-up and glittery costume on a man of any colour and it seems you get the same shrieks of delight."