

# QUEER PRESS KIT



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# SYNOPSIS



1950. William Lee, an American expat in Mexico City, spends his days almost entirely alone, except for a few contacts with other members of the small American community. His encounter with Eugene Allerton, an expat former soldier, new to the city, shows him, for the first time, that it might be finally possible to establish an intimate connection with somebody.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES



“How can a man who sees and feels be other than sad?” William Burroughs asks himself in the last entry of his personal diary before his death. In adapting his second novel, published almost forty years after its completion, we have attempted to reply to this sombre invocation by the great icon of the beat generation. Lee loves Allerton, Allerton loves Lee, and they will manage to meet despite all the missteps and fears that act upon both in their picaresque journey through South America as projected by the mind of Burroughs.

Luca Guadagnino

# A Q&A WITH LUCA GUADAGNINO



**Is it true that your journey with Queer started with you reading the book as a teenager?**

Yes, I'm not particularly original in being a teenager who discovered the very inspiring William S. Burroughs. What's more interesting to me is that once I'd read the book, I discovered the name, and I found in the name some kind of iconicity that led me to dig deep into the world of Burroughs. I've realised that I've been thinking of William Burroughs, looking for William Burroughs and paraphrasing William Burroughs all my life. He's one of my real hooks of imagery on which I can try to climb up this very steep wall of creativity.

**The book Queer' is unfinished. Can you describe what you wanted from the third act of your own movie?**

The writer Justin Kuritzkes and I needed to find a way to create a third act in the spirit of Burroughs, that could be very profoundly truthful to the book. In the book, the main characters Lee and Allerton meet Doctor Cotter, and they are not given the ayahuasca, or yage, that they seek. We asked ourselves, 'what if they finally got hold of it, where would it take them?' Most importantly, we talked about the film not being a story of the unrequited love of Lee for Allerton, but a story of love. I wasn't interested in telling a story of unrequited love. This is a universal story about love, and the way in which people can reciprocate love or the tragedy of not being in the same place at the same time, but both being in love.

**What tone did you want the film to have?**

What I now know about Burroughs is that he was very shy and that Queer wasn't published for 35 years after it was written, partly because the book was too close to home, showing that he was a tender soul in search of love, which we just don't associate with its literary canon. That's why I, Justin, Daniel and Drew felt that this had to play as a love story. It would have been too easy to make the tone dry, ironic, sarcastic and detached.

# A Q&A WITH LUCA GUADAGNINO

**What made Daniel Craig your choice to play the character of William Lee?**

I know that Daniel is one of the great actors of his generation. And when I met him, I discovered a very warm man. I love that Daniel and I have nurtured and grown a great friendship. I knew from the very beginning that Daniel's commitment was complete and total, and that he also understood the depth of what needed to be brought out on the screen for the character of Lee. I think what he's made of the vulnerability and candour of the character of William Lee is astonishing.

**Did you ever think you should look for a gay actor to play the iconic role of Lee?**

It's quite insulting, as a homosexual man myself, to consider the possibility that casting a homosexual man to play the role of Lee would make it more real, as if one person is defined entirely by their gender identity or their sexuality. I think it's about what you can do as a performer, as an artist of a given task, and the depth that Daniel Craig brings is profound.

**Drew Starkey plays Eugene Allerton. How did you discover him, and did Daniel Craig also have a say on the casting of Allerton?**

Once I found my partner in Daniel for the film, it was an absolute no-brainer for me that the process of finding Allerton had to involve Daniel. I was given a recording of Drew Starkey for another project, and I saw something astonishingly committed and beautiful. I immediately showed it to Daniel, who agreed with me. We went on to view hundreds of other tapes of actors, and then at around three hundred, we said, 'there really is no need to look any further because Drew is it.'

**Have you cut down *Queer* since it was selected for Competition at this year's Venice Film Festival?**

I showed festival director Alberto Barbera an early cut of the film for the possibility of showing the film at the Venice Film Festival. He was patient enough to sit through three hours, but it wasn't the final cut. We had not finished the movie. And I kept working on it until I could finesse the movie to make it the way I wanted it, and that length is 135 minutes. There's never been a different version of the movie.

# MAIN CAST & CREW

**DIRECTOR**  
LUCA GUADAGNINO

**MUSIC SUPERVISOR**  
ROBIN URDANG

**STARRING**  
DANIEL CRAIG  
DREW STRARKEY  
JASON SCHWARTZMAN  
HENRIQUE ZAGA  
DREW DROEGE  
ANDRA URSUTA  
ARIEL SHULHMAN  
ANDRES DUPRAT  
OMAR APOLLO  
DAVID LOWERY  
LISANDRO ALONSO  
MICHAEL BORREMANS  
MICHAEL KENT  
COLIN BATES  
RONIA AVA

**COSTUMES DESIGNED BY**  
JONATHAN W. ANDERSON

**PRODUCTION DESIGNED BY**  
STEFANO BAISI

**MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE CREATED BY**  
KARIM BOUTAHER

**GRAPHIC DESIGNED BY**  
CHEN LI

**CINEMATOGRAPHY BY**  
SAYOMBHU MUDKEEPROM

**EDITED BY**  
MARCO COSTA

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS**  
JUSTIN KURITZKES

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**  
EMANUELA MATRANGA  
PETER SPEARS  
CHRISTIAN VESPER

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS**  
JAMES W. GRAUERHOLTZ  
ELENA RECCHIA

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**  
DAVIDE LUCHETTI

**PRODUCED BY**  
LORENZO MIELI P.G.A.  
LUCA GUADAGNINO P.G.A.

**WRITTEN BY**  
JUSTIN KURITZKES

**FROM THE NOVEL OF THE SAME TITLE BY**  
WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS

**DIRECTED BY**  
LUCA GUADAGNINO

**SUPPORTING CAST**  
DAAN DE WIT  
SIMON RIZZONI  
LA BRUJA DE TEXCOCO  
SILVERIO CASTRO  
AMIR ANTONIO SAMANDE CHAVEZ  
ANDREA MONTSERRAT RIOS HERNANDEZ  
CLAUDIO CARDENAS  
GILBERTO BARRAZZA  
JEAN CARLOS GONZALES FLORES  
MICHAEL KENT  
LORENZO POZZAN  
JUAN DOMINGO SANDOVAL PUGA

**CASTING**  
JESSICA RONANE CDG

**CASTING DIRECTOR LATIN AMERICA**  
LUIS ROSALES

**CASTING DIRECTOR ITALY**  
MAURILIO MANGANO U.I.C.D.  
VALENTINA MATERIALE U.I.C.D.

**CHOREOGRAPHY BY**  
SOL LEÓN  
PAUL LIGHTFOOT

**MUSIC BY**  
TRENT REZNOR  
ATTICUS ROSS

**VASTER THAN EMPIRE**  
WRITTEN BY TRENT REZNOR, WILLIAM  
BURROUGHS, AND ATTICUS ROSS  
PERFORMED BY CAETANO VELOSO, TRENT  
REZNOR, AND ATTICUS ROSS

# TECHNICAL DETAILS



TITLE  
**QUEER**

LANGUAGES  
**ENGLISH**

YEAR OF PRODUCTION  
**2024**

COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION  
**ITALY, USA**

RUNTIME  
**135 MINUTES**

# ASSETS



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