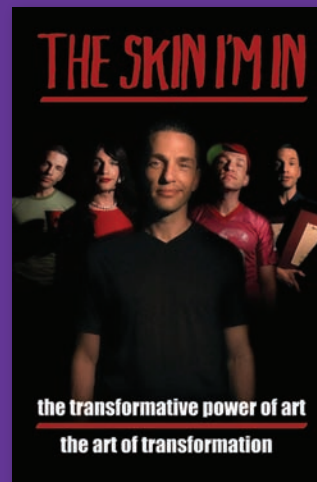


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Review: The Skin I'm In - Broderick Fox's Film Launches Internationally

Janine Eva Trotta



The Skin I'm In now on DVD

Broderick Fox's film launches internationally on iTunes and Amazon

By Janine Eva Trotta

A film that takes you down deep into the underbelly of one man's struggle with identity, gender, sexuality, body image and alcohol will be readily available to view across the globe beginning October 1st.

The Skin I'm In is a candid, honest and raw autobiographical look at Broderick Fox's brush with death in a Berlin subway terminal and rise to self-actualization.

"Being blunt about my story I can... entertain but potentially also help other people," he says. "One of the gifts that sobriety has given me is the sense that honesty is a great liberator."

In his film Fox, a world travelled gay university professor/film maker/erotic hairdresser/actor/singer and variety of other things journeys to Victoria, British Columbia to have First Nations artist Randy Cook design him a personal tattoo, commemorative of a lifetime of trial and achievement.

In the process he analyzes the events that have composed his life, interviews his parents, explores his four personas, and reunites them in a comfortable agreement to be one true self.

"Everything that I've gone through I've had to verify through personal experience," Fox says, recognizing that even with a privileged upbringing and caring parents, one still needs to embark on their own journey to forge out the self that feels right to them.

"I always knew that I wanted to make media or somehow find a way to express things creatively, but I've also had this critical side to everything... which I can do to a fault," he describes. Now he has found his balance.

As a professor in the media arts and culture department at Occidental College in Los Angeles, Fox teaches theory and production based classes by day, leaving him free to make the films he dreams of after hours.

"I'm very fortunate to have tenure and job security at a pretty liberal teaching institution that allows me to be this open," he says.

"People [now] can use the tools at their disposal to make work that is important to them...work that hasn't been represented by mainstream media."

Fox is speaking on the accessible, and affordable, digital age. The first draft of Fox's film was entirely self-funded, self directed and self made. As this base version was polished from an amateur reel into a feature length piece, Fox collaborated with some talented, creative artists, sought and secured grants, and crowd sourced the rest.

"Friends, family and strangers that believed in the content," he names as the people who generated the funds to make the film possible. Fox tends to steer clear of the corporate arena.

With *The Skin I'm In*'s official release date looming, Fox's trepidation over how it would be received by his family, colleagues and pupils mounted.

"I knew I needed to show it to [my parents] before it got it out there to the world," he says. Fox sat with them, just prior to Christmas, to view the film. "It was the longest 86 minutes of my life."

Though initially his parents were saddened, Fox says the screening "opened up a tremendous new space now for me – approaching 40 – to have an open relationship with my parents that I don't know, necessarily, everyone has."

"That alone made the movie worthwhile."

Following its public release faculty members wrote Fox privately to talk about their own addictions, students used the film as an opportunity to raise coming out issues with their own families, and Fox was able to assemble smaller focus groups and conversation groups on campus.

A forum was created on which to discuss "what it means to be queer and come of age in our sort of rapidly globalizing and ...post identity politics moment," he says.

That forum was brought to 17 different cities in 11 countries during an intense festival circuit that included a handful of LGBT film festivals but an interesting assortment of non-community festivals as well.

One of these was the DMZ Korean International Documentary Film Festival, which takes place annually in the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea.

Fox says he embraces the opportunity to show his film to new audiences with fresh questions and perspectives on his story and themes.



The last festival screening of *The Skin I'm In* took place at Fairytales here in Calgary.

"It was a sweet and special end to our festival run," Fox says. "The festival was really intimate; it felt like the queer community was a really tight knit community."

Fox says unlike larger cities, such as LA where the LGBT festivals can get quite large, corporate and political, Fairytales offered a refreshing atmosphere and tackled prevalent, hard-hitting subjects.

The director was especially affected by his attendance at the film *Love Free or Die*, a movie that follows the first openly gay Bishop's appointment and inner struggle between his love for God and his love for his partner Mark, and its screening venue – a church.

"It was humbling and exciting to be with audiences that are asking tough questions and going through this stuff together," Fox describes.

Fox's female persona Dina Brown had the chance to make an appearance at the racy screening of *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, in an open-back pantsuit that revealed the Aboriginal tattoo LA artist Zulu summoned out of Fox's back in a series of gruelling ink sessions we get to see in his film.

"A Calgary premier as it were... which was fun," Fox says.

Though *The Skin I'm In* was Fox's first feature length film it was not his first time behind or in front of the camera. Fox previously directed a feature documentary with peers as well as numerous shorts, including the evocative 2001 short *Things Girls Do*.

"*Things Girls Do* looks at gendered treatment of body dysmorphia and eating disorders, viewed as a woman's issue," he says. Fox cleverly uses the slowing of the female narrator's voice as a segue for his own voice to emerge – thus revealing that this woman's issue is his own.

"Embodied media," he calls this very personal, resonating film style. 🌈



The Skin I'm In

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