

Gay zombie film banned in Australia

Written by Michael Gingold
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Bruce LaBruce, the gay Canadian filmmaker who ventured into genre territory a couple of years back with OTTO; OR, UP WITH DEAD PEOPLE, has followed it up with another undead porn flick, L.A. ZOMBIE. While the movie is set to have its world premiere next week at Switzerland's Locarno Film Festival, it has been banned in Australia, leading to the cancelling of a pair of planned screenings at the Melbourne International Film Festival.

According to [The Age](#), Australia's Film Classification Board director Donald McDonald contacted festival director Richard Moore, informing him that L.A. ZOMBIE could not be screened as it would, in McDonald's opinion, be refused classification. While the festival isn't required to submit films for rating purposes, the Board requested a DVD screener after reading a description of L.A. ZOMBIE, then refused to issue an exemption—the first time a film has been banned from the Australian fest circuit since Larry Clark's KEN PARK in 2003. (OTTO screened at the Melbourne Fest in 2008.)



In L.A. ZOMBIE, a male alien ghoul prowls LA seeking to have sex with dead bodies of the same gender—which come back to life following the act. Moore told The Age, "Bruce LaBruce's blend of sex and violence can be confronting, but I would argue that within the context of the festival, it is nonsensical and patronizing to not allow people to decide what they want to see." The Melbourne Fest has yet to decide whether to appeal the decision, while McDonald was unavailable for comment.

LaBruce, however, says in a just-released statement, "Intriguingly, the version of L.A. ZOMBIE that has been banned by the Australian Film Classification Board is the softcore version, which features no explicit anally penetrative sex. Although this version does contain a few brief shots of flaccid penises, the only erect member in the show belongs to the alien zombie, played by

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French porn star Francois Sagat, and it is a prosthetic, not the actor's own. The hardcore version, L.A. ZOMBIE HARDCORE, will be released and distributed separately on Halloween after the softcore version plays for several months on the international film festival circuit." These will include the movie's North American premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival in September, plus screenings at the L'Etrange Film Festival in Paris the same month and the Sitges International Fantasy Film Festival in October.

"Although apparently the Australian Classification Board has no problem passing all manner of mainstream torture porn movies which feature, amongst other things, the rape and dismemberment of women," LaBruce continues, "it's interesting that they have no stomach for a movie that reaffirms life. The alien zombie may or may not be a homeless schizophrenic, so the film also serves as a kind of document of the epidemic of homelessness that currently ravages the city. Censorship in any form should not be tolerated, but to ban a film that one programmer at a major festival has called 'a masterpiece of melancholia' is truly beyond the pale." You can see L.A. ZOMBIE's official website [here](#) . *(Thanks to Ryan Bruce Levey.)*

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