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Queer Tango Festival kicks off in Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires, Argentina - Buenos Aires Queer Tango Festival examines gender identity one sensual step at a time.

It takes two to tango, as they say, but at the 2011 Queer Tango Festival in Buenos Aires same-sex dance partners from across the globe broke the traditional norms of just who those 'two' should be.

The famously sensual dance -- born in the 19th century ports of Buenos Aires and danced in the early morning hours after work by prostitutes and dockworkers - has since gravitated to numerous audiences. The LGBT community is no different as they embrace cheek-to-cheek gliding across the floor at the fifth annual festival.



But the Queer Tango Festival is not just a twirl at the 'milonga,' or tango club. Guests are also invited to a conference on tango and gender where they can examine gender identity in relation to the dance that has brought them together from all corners of the globe.

"Our spaces are defined by the possibility of being able to interchange roles. At the same time, it has to do with the queer theory that exists in the gay community and in those spaces, diversity is promoted from tango and within tango," said festival organizer, Mariana Docampo.

The week-long celebration is packed with tango workshops teaching everything from the basic steps to some of the most complicated twirls and combinations, where queer tango allows each partner to switch from leading to following.

"I am dedicated to dancing tango, outside of Buenos Aires and as a teacher and as a dancer, I think it is very important to learn both roles. The role of being led and the role of leading, as it is referred to here in Buenos Aires," said Alejandro Villalobos who attended the festival from Mexico.

The festival organizers honoured Copenhagen as 2011's Honorary Sister City for the European city's ongoing "fight for human rights."

"I am very happy to be here at the Queer Tango Festival in Buenos Aires. It's the fifth time we've have this festival and I think it's really an important thing to do for the right to dance with whoever you want to dance with despite their sexuality or nationality. It's kind of a human right. We are very proud to be here. In 2009, we had a big international Queer Tango Festival in Copenhagen and we are very honoured to have guests from Buenos Aires," said Tina Koch, a guest from Copenhagen and one of two organizers of the International Queer Tango Festival of Copenhagen.

The festival started on Monday (November 14) and runs through Sunday (November 20). It also features films, live performances of both music and dance, and workshops.

Published on November 16, 2011
Authored by: Camilo Camacho/Reuters

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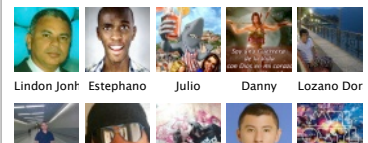
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