

BLADE

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Serving New York's Gay Community

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on the air

Breaking the rules

Filmmaker Jörg Fockele was inspired by a single fact: there is a disproportionately high suicide rate among lesbian, gay male, bisexual, and transgender youth. Fockele's film *Rules of the Game* (10 p.m. on Friday, June 25, **Channel 13**) — part of **Reel New York**, WNET's eight-week series of works by independent New York-based artists — profiles four gay youth who live in New York City. Charly is a 16 year-old Dominican male, Peachy is a 20 year-old African-American lesbian, Angel is a 20 year-old transgender Latina, and Max is a 16 year-old Latino male. Using Manhattan's Hetrick-Martin Institute as the setting, the four young adults dispel stereotypes about what it's like to be young and gay.

"I was the first to fight back," says Max, who came out at 13. He tells a story about being bashed at his school, but notes, "I am no one's punching bag anymore."

While most of the teens have a less than ideal home life, they have all sought refuge at Hetrick-Martin, a social service organization for gay youth.

"Kids are safer on the street than in high school," says Joyce Hunter of Hetrick-Martin. "We live in a youth oriented culture, but have no respect for youth."

Hetrick-Martin's services range from a drop-in center to the Harvey Milk School, and various other outreach programs. Hunter goes on to say

that 58 percent of youth that come to Hetrick-Martin have been victims of violence. All of the youth interviewed in *Rules of the Game* have taken advantage of Hetrick-Martin's services.

The MTV-style documentary takes turns interviewing the teens about their general background, coming out stories, career goals, and current living situations. The documentary also takes time out to give them a chance to act out short fantasy scenarios that reveal who they admire or would like to be.

Fockele's fantasy sequences prove to be valuable and entertaining — perhaps the highlight of the program. From Charly's TLC-inspired drag performance to Angel's Marilyn Manson-eque video, the youths were able to reveal a side of themselves that they've never been allowed to express before.

"If you have any dreams, go for them now, leave your mark on the world," says Peachy in the closing moments of the film.

Following Fockele's short is **Purse**, a short film by **Liss Platt** and Kelly Dolak. This six-minute short examines purses as "foreign objects." The filmmakers, both butch lesbians, portray purses as almost evil constructions. Taking their cue from Edgar Allen Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* as well as Salvador Dali and Luis Buñuel's *Andalusian Dog (Un Chien Andalou)*, the film turns into an amusing and surreal chase between purse and lesbian.

—HEATHER CALOMESE



Smooth operator: Peachy, a 20 year-old lesbian, lives out her drag king fantasy in *Reel New York* on WNET.