



A Week in Review: The Athens International Film and Video Festival

April 2017. Justin Cudahy, Staff Writer

For the 44th year, [The Athens International Film & Video Festival](#) made its return to The Athena this past week, showcasing some of the best films and shorts from all over the globe. With over 230 entries across 40 different countries, moviegoers were given the opportunity to not only enjoy, but to also go outside of their comfort zone and learn about what is going on around them. Throughout the week, several filmmakers entered in the festival held various discussions, Q&A's and talkbacks, giving people the opportunity to get a look behind the scenes as to how their works came to be.

On Thursday, The Athena brought in [Dani Leventhal](#), Assistant Professor of Art at Ohio State, as well as [Sheilah Wilson](#), an Assistant Professor in Studio Art and Queer Studies at Denison University to show off their latest collaboration. The event kicked off with a live performance of [Shameless Light](#), a 25-minute piece in which both Leventhal and Wilson shared the stage, exchanging love letters written by the likes of [Toni Morrison](#), [Carson McCullers](#), and [Frida Kahlo](#). With the only light source coming from a lit-up crimson colored sign with the title, “*Shameless Light*”, it created an intense and sensual experience among the audience, making this the perfect transition to the second act of their performance, [Strangely Ordinary This Devotion](#). This 27-minute experimental piece purposefully clashed emotionally with *Shameless Light* to make the audience uncomfortable, and it worked really well. By using shocking depictions of gore and sexually explicit images, the duo got their point across in the most brazen of fashion, delving deep into present-day issues, such as the global water crisis. While touching upon themes of love and family, the filmmakers also incorporated some personal experiences.



On Thursday, filmmakers Dani Leventhal and Sheila Wilson kicked off the event with a live performance of *Shameless Light – Readings from the Love Letters*.

“The only thing that I can really know is my experience and I try to offer that ... It’s a matter of how you do that,” stated Leventhal.

When asked about the collaboration process, it turns out that it’s much more difficult when two people put their minds together. “In every collaboration, there’s a chance where you can always ruin the friendship. Often times Sheilah and I will get into these arguments over the duration of a clip and it’ll last for months until we finally decide through a tie-breaker.” Considering the future, Wilson is optimistic for what is to come. “It makes you want to make more. I think there is something about it once you make it work... That’s when your adrenaline gets going and you start to develop this mindset.”