# 'Provocative, explicit and tender': Mikko Mäkelä’s gay 'romance' Sebastian



Mikko Mäkelä’s latest film, Sebastian, delves into themes of sex, identity, and the complexities of self-exploration and features a remarkable performance from Ruaridh Mollica in the leading role of Max, a young writer whose journey oscillates between ambition and clandestine desires.

Set against the backdrop of London’s literary scene, Max is portrayed as a 25-year-old aspiring writer working at a literary magazine. On the verge of recognition for his talents, he embarks on an unconventional path by taking on the role of a sex worker, seeking to enrich his understanding for his debut novel. As he adopts his alter ego Sebastian, the film carefully dissects the duality of his life, showcasing how these experiences shift his emotional landscape—from moments of ecstasy to the depths of shame and finally to a liberating self-discovery.

Critics have lauded Mollica's performance, with INDIEWIRE describing the film as "provocative, explicit, and ultimately tender." Furthermore, Screen International highlights the film as an intriguing examination of restraint versus abandon, and notes that Mollica's role is significant enough to propel him into the spotlight of contemporary cinema.

Mäkelä’s filmmaking captures the essence of queer sexuality's transformative power and the journey towards embracing one’s true self, placing significant importance on the conflict between personal desires and societal expectations. As seen in his previous works, he continues to position himself as an essential voice within contemporary queer cinema.

Following its premiere at Sundance and a recent showcase at the BFI London Film Festival, Sebastian will be available for audiences across the UK and Ireland starting 4th April 2025. With its critical acclaim, this film promises to resonate with viewers and provoke thought regarding the often-hidden facets of identity and society.

## References

* <https://brattlefilm.org/movies/sebastian/> - This URL supports the claim that Mikko Mäkelä's film Sebastian explores themes of identity and self-exploration, particularly through the protagonist's double life as a sex worker. It highlights the film's focus on queer sexuality and its transformative impact.