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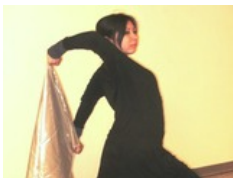

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Flag Dancing Film Opens on Christopher Street

October 13, 2011 12:25pm | By [Andrea Swalec](#), DNAINfo Reporter/Producer

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Flagging began in West Village gay bars in the late 1970s, the maker of the film "Flow Affair" said his film shows. (www.flowaffair.org)

MANHATTAN — Flag dancers use flags, fan dancers use fans and "floguers" combine flagging with "voguing."

A new film that premiered Wednesday night on Christopher Street explores the history of flag dancing and its origins in West Village gay bars.

Flag dancing and its related types of dance involve dancing with large, often colorful props, according to Wolfgang Busch, the director of "Flow Affair."

"Dancing with the flags is an extension to your dancing," he said. "Music is the inspiration and flagging is our meditation."

Busch said he and his production company [Art From the Heart Films](#), which specializes in movies on LGBT history, wanted to document flagging and help give its

community legitimacy.

"We wanted to create a documentary to talk about the origin of our artistic dance form and record our oral history," said Busch, who has tried flag dancing himself. "People now can give us credit for the art form that originated in the community, and can pass on the tradition to the next generation."

Flagging began in West Village gay bars in the late 1970s, Busch said his film details. Gay men wore handkerchiefs in their back pockets to signal their sexual preferences, and they sometimes danced with them, he said.

"Then, some queen came up with the idea of sewing a dime or a quarter in to the handkerchief as a weight, to help them wave," he said.

Flag dancing was particularly meaningful during the AIDS epidemic, Busch said.

"It became a healing, nurturing art form," he said.

R&B singer Meli'sa Morgan, whose song "All in the Name of Love" is on the soundtrack of "Flow Affair," called flag dancing under-recognized.

"Being able to express yourself in any form is important. I think that this film shows how important flagging has been to its community," she said.

Busch said he recently spoke with a man in his 20s about flagging, who said the dance style was "for old people."

"That sends a signal to me that the flagging community in New York has work to do," he said. "We can't lose this art form."

The free event begins at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at [St. John's Lutheran Church](#) at 81 Christopher St. with live organ music and a performance by the flag- and fan-dancing group [FloKaz](#).

Reverend Mark E. Erson of St. John's, Reverend Charles Gilmore and Morgan are scheduled to speak, and the screening will begin at 7:15 p.m.

A question-and-answer session with Busch and an after-party at Rock Bar, at 185 Christopher St., will follow the film.

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By [Andrea Swalec](#), DNAINfo.com
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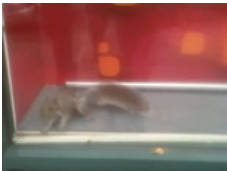
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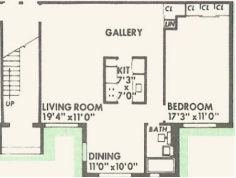
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