

Review: Edie and Thea: A Very Long Engagement – IOFF 2010

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Edie and Thea: A Very Long Engagement will be screening at the Inside Out Film Festival this year. Thea Spyer and Edie Windsor have been together for decades. After meeting in a lesbian club in New York sometime in the 1950s, they lived together, took vacations together, marched for civil rights, and crusaded for gay causes. And although their lovely story may have begun in New York, it also has a very Toronto connection. After a very long engagement of over 40 years, they finally flew up to our fair city in May of 2007 to officially marry.

Edie and Thea, as elderly ladies in their 70s, reminisce about their lives; where they grew up, how they met, their first vacation. As they speak, you get a very good sense of their relationship, their affection for each other. And the history of their life together has been startlingly well documented, visually-speaking. One (or both) of them is an avid and talented photographer, and the wealth of fantastic pics that are included in the film, from every stage of their relationship, makes their recollections that much more vivid for the viewer.

At just over an hour long, the film begins and ends with the couple narrating a slideshow. In fact, the filmmakers have made the whole of Edie and Thea feel just like that, an intimate slideshow with family or friends – them narrating the scenes, elaborating on the experiences, talking over each other. Humour, affection, and intelligence radiate from this lovely couple. I found them and their story to be charming, touching, and honest. And though this is a story of overcoming adversity, both societal and physical, it was far from overly sweet and sentimental. It is well worth a watch.

Edie and Thea: A Very Long Engagement screens Friday, May 28th at 7:45pm at the Isabel Bader Theatre. The directors, Susan Muska and Gréta Ólafsdóttir, will be in attendance.