

Hatboxes

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SHORT FILM "HATBOXES" WINS TWO AWARDS

"Hatboxes," a short film with both lesbian and Jewish themes, had its Chicago premiere at the [Chicago International REEL Shorts Film Festival](#) and received an audience award and best director award. Shot last summer in the Andersonville neighborhood of Chicago, the film was produced by [Etta Worthington](#) and written and directed by [Susana Darwin](#).

"Hatboxes" is about two women from very different backgrounds who meet by chance, and it follows the chemistry that develops between them. Darwin explains, "It's a lesbian love story, but the sense of struggle and longing will feel familiar to a lot of people."

Starring in the film are two actresses who are veterans of the local theatre and independent film worlds. [Robyn Okrant](#) has the role of Miriam, an orthodox Jewish woman and mother. Playing Nadine, a Jewish lesbian lawyer quite disconnected from her heritage, is [Kat O'Connor](#).

Supporting actors include [Fawzia Mirza](#), [Tom Hickey](#), and [Maya Boudreau](#).

The film is produced by [Etta Worthington](#), of [Fernwork Productions](#). Worthington was one of the producers of the feature [Jamie and Jessie Are Not Together](#), and also produces and directs the web cooking show [FOODGASM](#). She teaches in the film department at [Columbia College Chicago](#).

"What I like about this story is that it looks at a woman from a traditional community who has an encounter that really changes her life," Worthington said.

Darwin majored in filmmaking in college but then moved in a different direction.

"It was great to focus on making 'Hatboxes' after so many years away from filmmaking," says Darwin, whose career has taken her into book publishing, politics, and the law, but whose early passion for film has never left her. "Years went into writing 'Hatboxes,' and I should say that the script made meaningful gains from the time I spent on it at Chicago Filmmakers."

"It was great to reconnect and partner with someone from my early days in publishing who is now a successful filmmaker," she said, referring to producer Worthington. "We had a great time making the film and look forward to many screenings in the festival circuit."

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