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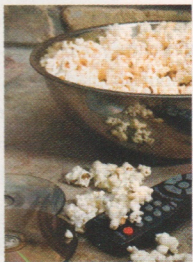
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## DATE NIGHT

TBS may have *Dinner and a Movie* but now we have our own gay-themed *Night at the Movies* from here! network (heretv.com). Each Friday night, settle in for the network premiere of one of here!'s great new titles. The new series began in February and kicked off with films such as the erotic mystery *Unconscious* and the scandalous Margaret Cho's *Assassins*. And what better way to enjoy these intriguing movies than with a bowl of popcorn? If you're like us and want to avoid popcorn lung (Google it, it's real) then you'll want to try out the 12-cup Nordic Ware Corn Popper (\$12, nordicware.com). Just throw some kernels and oil into this microwaveable bowl and voilà—perfect popcorn that comes out light and fluffy, without the potentially harmful fumes of artificial butter or the hassle of a stovetop. Popcorn and a gay movie on a Friday night. It's the perfect date at home.

—Katie Peoples

# Small Screen Queens

Queer women of color are taking TV into their own hands. | By Candace Moore



(From left) Yaniv Moyal, Guinevere Turner, Melange LaVonne, Sklyer Cooper, Nisha Ganatra and Janora McDuffie of *Don't Go*

White and straight characters are now the tokens as the following shows focus on colorful queer lives and communities. Director Amber Sharp's engaging pilot *Don't Go* played the film festival circuit last year, winning the Blue Flame Award for Best Director at the Oakland Black LGBT film festival in California. We're rooting for it to get picked up as a cable series. *U People* and *Playing Spades* are serial webisodes available for download at JengoTV.com, an LGBT people of color media network aimed at diversity.

**Don't Go (A. Sharp Productions):** The pilot episode of director Amber Sharp's *Melrose Place* for queer women of color introduces us to buddies Jaden (Melange LaVonne) and Bone (Sklyer Cooper) on a sunny day, two bois breaking a sweat while working out in the sand in Long Beach County, Calif. When Jaden gets uncommonly queasy, Bone teases Jaden about her femme-y girlfriend Melody (*Go Fish*'s Guin Turner), who is intersex, wondering aloud if Melody's been "sticking it" and if she's shooting blanks (or perhaps not). Drama does indeed unfold at the Los Angeles fourplex where lovers Jaden and Melody are the landladies and the lives of their friends and neighbors intersect and entangle around them. In the first episode, a long-lost father is found, we're let in on a big secret Bone has been keeping, the results of a pregnancy test

shake things up and new tenant Shanti (Nisha Ganatra) moves into the complex, running away from her family, who want to arrange her marriage. Light, funny, and true-to-life moments elevate the soapy stuff. Despite carrying quite a few story lines, this dramedy flies, perhaps due to its fresh characters. The actors are obviously having fun in their roles and it shows. ([dontgotheseries.com](http://dontgotheseries.com))

**U People (JengoTV):** Hanifah Walidah and Olive Demetrius are a charming butch-femme couple who make sweet, sweet art together. On JengoTV, they let us into their process, sharing their latest film project with viewers in this free podcast documentary series. Fifteen-minute-long webisodes take us behind-the-scenes to their apartment, where they frame their ideas and flirt with each other and the camera, and onto the streets, where their *U People* correspondent, Gloria Bigelow, chats with Brooklyn, N.Y., residents about moments when they've felt (or been made to feel) "different, other, or outside the box." Believing that "mostly everybody's America's misunderstood," Walidah and Demetrius cultivate a forum for a culturally diverse array of everyday people to tell stories of feeling othered, in order to heal and be heard. They also treat the camera to spins, dancing at Ubiquita, a New York

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# Q+A

## Kat Feller



Waiting 20 years to out yourself to former classmates sounds like an absolute nightmare. How about waiting all those years and having it be televised for anyone in the United States to see? Welcome to Kat Feller's world. Feller, who is a successful voice-over animation artist, put a relationship on hold to join the cast of *High School Reunion*, where she busts out, discusses her secret crushes and decides that telling former friends you are a lesbian can be positive, rewarding and a should-do experience. — Colleen M. Lee

### Why did you need to come out to your high school classmates?

The reason I felt like I needed to come out to my classmates was because it's something I've been sitting on for

the last 20 years. Some people had probably found out about it by word of mouth, but I just wanted to clarify the rumor myself, in person. To make it true and make it known—it is a fact and not just a rumor, and that it's OK and I'm proud and I don't care.

### You were a bit hesitant to tell the girls you were gay. Was that you reverting back to being 16 and in high school?

When you're sitting in a room full of straight girls and everybody's talking about their marriages and their accomplishments and what their husbands and boyfriends are doing, it's a little bit in the back of your mind: "I really want these girls to accept me." It's definitely nerve-wracking. Not knowing how they're going to respond. Hoping they're going to respond in a certain way. I was definitely nervous.

### So do you feel as if you conquered your insecurities on the show?

I actually do think it has changed. I feel like now that I've gotten rid of this weight on my shoulders

I can go through life with, "OK, I've got the acceptance of my family, I've got the acceptance of my peers. Now after 20 years, I finally have the acceptance of my classmates."

### Quite a burden to carry for 20 years.

Yeah, I know. It does make it a lot easier to know that you've got that weight off, and you can move on and do your thing and be OK with it. Really, the bottom line for me, and this has been my motto my whole life: As long as my parents accept me and love me, I truly don't really care about society. But it is nice to know that people that you grew up with, your friends that trust you and that you hung out with, accept you as well, because they were your family too then.

### So...did you flirt with any of the women on in the house?

Oh God! I did flirt with some of the girls in the house. All the girls in the house were really so sweet and so beautiful, and they actually brought one of my high school crushes on.

### Since we're on the subject of women, who would you date on TV?

Oh God, from a reality show? From *The L Word*, for sure. Remember Carmen? She's definitely the epitome of my type of woman. She was beautiful and just carried herself well...and [was] voluptuous and sexy.

### I'm sure she'll be happy to hear that.

Oh man, [can] you set me up with her?

### [Laughs.] I'm flattered you think I have her number.

You can slip her number in a note. That's fine, I won't tell her. I've never seen a woman on a reality show that's like, "OK, she'd be nice to take out on a date." At least not that I can think of at the moment. I think I like the Jennifer Garner type. The dark hair, dark-eyed, cute-girl face, long hair, feminine. I like the feminine girls. I don't tend to go for the more butchier types, although I can appreciate them. ■

### Queens of the Small Screen continued from page 68

City club, and other hotspots. *U People* gets to the political vis-à-vis the personal; the show offers viewers a close look at Walidah and Demetrius's lives, highlights local cultures and showcases on-the-fly interviews with passersby. All the segments feel positive, relaxed and spontaneous. Walidah and Demetrius also generously invite viewers to "holla back" on their website and upload videos with their own "U People stories." ([jengotv.com](http://jengotv.com))

**Playing Spades (JengoTV):** Affairs, jealousy, catfights, 3 a.m. phone calls and many other "intimate details" are front and center in this high-stakes game of lesbian love. Islande Evans (Tonya Fore-Holston) is introduced by the Internet serial's narrator as a "poised woman with an aggressive stance" who "with a beer, puff and a smile" can't help but play, but soon finds herself "embroiled in a love triangle." A powerful professional woman who has her shit together but still likes to party, Islande lets passion rile her up in her private life. We get to peek in at a player beset by plenty of sexy female melodrama in this soap opera with no stops. Well, there are four, technically, if you purchase the episode in five parts on Jengo TV (your money helps facilitate more media by LGBT people of color). The show is also on DVD. You never know which hand will be dealt next in *Playing Spades*, a show based on the *Girls Around the Way* novels by Deardria Nesbitt, but whatever it is, it's bound to get steamy. ([jengotv.com](http://jengotv.com)) ■



*Playing Spades'* Tonya Fore-Holston