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"Leaving Las Vegas" director Mike Figgis Debuts Erotically Charged Dance Film Saturday, June 18 in Los Angeles

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Dance Camera West

A still from "The Co(te)lette Film," courtesy of Dance Camera West

The Oscar-winning director will host the U.S. premiere of "The Co(te)lette Film", his new movie exploring women's sexuality and the male gaze, at this weekend's Dance Camera West film festival

In Mike Figgis' new movie, *The Co(te)lette Film*, three female dancers wag their hips while on all fours, grind against each other and suggestively spread their legs while stone-faced men surrounding a stage look on intently. The emotionally freighted piece — which explores issues of desire, sensuality, female objectification and the search for satisfaction — will have its U.S. premiere at the Dance Camera West film fest this weekend on Saturday June 18 at the Hammer Museum's Billy Wilder Theater.

"There has really been a strong reaction. People that either really love it to quite militant feminists who take exception to some of the images. The material is taking male clichés about

women and women's bodies and sampling them and repeating them until they become almost grotesque at times," Figgis told *The Hollywood Reporter*. His 55-minute film is a collaboration with Ann Van den Broek, the Dutch choreographer of the original dance piece. Figgis will also give a director's talk and Q and A on June 18.

"There's a huge amount of emotion in the piece. Sometimes playing with a sexual cliché you just create another sexual cliché. I'm pretty sure this doesn't happen with this piece," says the *Leaving Las Vegas* and *Timecode* director, who has made previous forays into the dance world, including helming the 1997 documentary *Flamenco Women*.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, Dance Camera West, which runs June 16 to 19, will screen 32 dance shorts and documentaries from ten countries. "The festival includes everything from experimental shorts to documentaries — ranging from surreal visual abstractions to strict narratives," said the fest's artistic director Lynette Kessler.

So what does Figgis think of such TV dance phenomenons as *Dancing With the Stars* and *So You Think You Can Dance*? "I don't watch them but once in a while I think I'd quite like to watch them," says Figgis, who thinks they may be inspiring a new generation of dancers. "I'm doing something at the Royal Opera House now and they were telling me submissions for ballet school have gone through the roof."

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