

A FILM BY
OLIVER ZEL

EPK

HOLY WATER

15 MIN COMING-OF-AGE USA 2026

LOGLINE

On a nocturnal search for connection, a teenager is lured into a night he cannot control.

SYNOPSIS

Starved for affection, a queer teenager is drawn into a world of sex and drugs, where he mistakes desire for connection. When the intimacy he longs for proves illusory, he must return home and find himself.

DIGITAL SCREENER

Private screener available to accredited press and programmers upon request.

HOLYWATER@OLIVERZEL.COM

HOLYWATERFILM.COM

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Holy Water is about what we sacrifice in the search for something real. Through Javi's story, we explore an experience familiar to many young queer people: the longing to be desired, and the difficulty of distinguishing that desire from care.

Like a lullaby, Javi surrenders without the trust that would make him safe. He retreats into his underwater refuge, where water becomes both an escape from reality and an expression of the intimacy he longs for.

I wanted the film's languid, sensual imagery to draw us into Javi's fantasy, while making us increasingly uneasy as its cost becomes clear. That tension asks us to examine what we overlook when something feels beautiful—and how pain can become an accepted price of queer belonging.

Javi's homecoming is an act of defiance. He returns without a revelation that resolves everything. Instead, he turns toward the love that can anchor him and remind him of his worth beyond another person's desire.

With Holy Water, I hope to encourage honest conversations about queer intimacy that leaves room for pleasure, vulnerability, and contradiction. I want to question the hurt we have learned to accept without losing sight of the longing that makes us reach for one another.

DIRECTOR

OLIVER ZEL

Oliver Zel (born 2001) is a Brooklyn-based director and photographer, and a graduate of NYU Tisch's Film & Television program. Across portraiture and narrative film, his work explores queerness, masculinity, and taboo through an intimate visual language that blurs the boundaries between realism and fantasy.

CAST

JAVI	CYLE WINTERS
ADONIS	WILLIAM BURNS
MOM	GRETTEL JIMENEZ
STRANGER	ROB GLAUZ
BRUTE	LUIS VILLABON

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

RUNTIME	15 MIN
LANGUAGE	ENGLISH / SPANISH
SOUND	5.1 SURROUND
ASPECT RATIO	2:1
CAMERA	ARRI ALEXA 35
LENSES	ARRI DNA LF
UNDERWATER	RED
COLOR	DAVINCI RESOLVE
DELIVERY	PRORES 422 HQ / DCP

SELECTED CREW

WRITER / DIRECTOR / PRODUCER	OLIVER ZEL
PRODUCERS	OLIVER ZEL, CARLEY LOVITO MATAN HAMAM
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS	RACHEL AVENI, AVERY GARIG
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	EVAN MILLER
UNDERWATER CAMERA OPERATOR	CHRISTIAN HABBERSTAAD
PRODUCTION DESIGNER	JOSHUA VEASEY
COMPOSER	HENRY GIEBLER
EDITORS	ZACH GENTRY, OLIVER ZEL
SOUND DESIGN / MIX	FRANK RINELLA, DYLAN XU
COLORIST	ALEXIA SALINGAROS
MAKEUP & HAIR	RORY ALVAREZ

PRESS MATERIALS

TEASER	POSTER ARTWORK	CAST / CREW PORTRAITS
PRODUCTION STILLS	BEHIND THE SCENES	CONTACT HOLYWATER@OLIVERZEL.COM FOR ACCESS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CONTACT

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