



MEDIA RELEASE

WEDNESDAY 22 JUNE 2016

## 63<sup>RD</sup> SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL COMPLETE FOXTEL MOVIES AUDIENCE AWARD ANNOUNCED

The 63<sup>rd</sup> Sydney Film Festival wrapped on Sunday 19 June with the Australian premiere screening of Whit Stillman's *Love & Friendship* to a sold out audience at the State Theatre.

Today the Festival announced the **Foxtel Movies Audience Awards**; the list of the people's top five film favourites. Winner for best narrative feature went to *Mustang* directed by **Deniz Gamze Ergüven**; and winner for best documentary went to *Zach's Ceremony* directed by **Aaron Petersen**.

**Sydney Film Festival CEO Leigh Small** said, "Cinemas were full again this year with an average of 73% capacity across all sessions and more sell-outs than ever before. Final attendance figures will exceed last year and reach almost 180,000. We were particularly proud to present even more filmmaker and curator hosted screenings; and to see the introduction of the Lexus Short Film Fellowships."

**Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley** said: "The Festival has been bolstered with an incredible line up of important films and filmmakers from around the world, with a strong selection direct from Cannes, including the winning film Kleber Mendonça Filho's *Aquarius*, Xavier Dolan's *It's Only the End of the World*, Oscar winning Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar's *Julieta*, Singaporean Boo Junfeng's *Apprentice*, and American filmmaker Matt Ross's *Captain Fantastic*, French director Jean-François Richet's *Blood Father* starring Oscar-winning filmmaker and actor Mel Gibson; American filmmaker Jim Jarmusch's *Gimme Danger*, Oscar-winning filmmaker Steven Spielberg's fantasy adventure *The BFG*; prolific contemporary Indian director Anurag Kashyap's *Psycho Raman*; Korean director Park Chan-wook's sensual, twist-filled tale *The Handmaiden* and Jim Jarmusch's popular Cannes hit *Paterson*.

"Important voices for Australian cinema also received their world premieres at the Festival including Ivan Sen with *Goldstone*, Abe Forsythe's *Down Under*, Stephen Sewell's *Embedded* and Craig Boreham's *Teenage Kicks* which screened to critical acclaim."

"Other highlights included hosting multi Academy Award winning documentarian **Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy** who presented the Australian premiere of her most recent films *A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness*, and *A Journey of a Thousand Miles: Peacekeepers* with co-director Geeta Gandbhir, to a standing ovation. On the final weekend, the festival hosted another Oscar winner, **Morgan Neville** (*20 Feet from Stardom*), with his latest music-inspired documentary *The Music of Strangers – Yo Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble*."

"The Festival also announced the inaugural four **Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship** fellows: **Anya Beyersdorf**, **Brooke Goldfinch**, **Alex Murawski** and **Alex Ryan** at the world premiere of Australian actor and filmmaker Damian Walshe-Howling's short film *MESSIAH*, at the State Theatre, followed by the Australian Premiere of *Blood Father*, where **Mel Gibson** introduced his film, and the next day was in-conversation at a free public talk at the Festival Hub," he said.

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The Festival's footprint grew, with more venues than ever this year. The **State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, Dendy Newtown, Skyline Drive-In Blacktown, Art Gallery of NSW, Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, Casula Powerhouse, SFF Outdoor Screen** at Pitt Street Mall, the **Festival Hub** at Sydney Town Hall, and the **Apple Store Sydney** returned; with new venues **University of New South Wales** and **Carriageworks** added to the program.

**NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for the Arts Troy Grant** said, "The NSW Government has been proud to support the 63<sup>rd</sup> Sydney Film Festival, with its ninth continuous year of growth. The Festival's footprint grows each year, and with the Travelling Film Festival taking highlights across the state, it is more accessible than ever."

**Lord Mayor Clover Moore** said, "The festival was a triumph this year, profiling powerful stories from Australia and around the world. I was particularly moved by Fredrick Wiseman's glimpse into Jackson Heights NYC, one of the USA's most culturally diverse communities, where 167 different languages are spoken. Without interviews or commentary, Wiseman let the voices of the community through conversations and public meetings tell their story."

"We were thrilled to see 36 Australian works featured in this year's Festival, 20 of which received Screen Australia funds, led by feature film *Goldstone*. Not only did *Goldstone* open the Festival, but it was the second time Director Ivan Sen was given this honour," said **Graeme Mason, CEO of Screen Australia**. "Beyond critical acclaim, it was also heartening to see the Australian film sessions so well attended, including sell-outs for documentaries *The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe*, *Constance on the Edge*, *Night Parrot Stories*, *Zach's Ceremony*, *Winter at Westbeth* and feature *Down Under*."

Nine feature films and four shorts from this year's Festival will premiere in Newcastle this weekend when the Travelling Film Festival brings ***Goldstone* (SFF Opening Night 2016), *Wednesday, 9 May, Mahana, Mustang, Teenage Kicks, Life, Animated, A War, The Olive Tree*, and *Love & Friendship* (SFF Closing Night 2016)** to Tower Cinemas from Friday 24 – Sunday 26 June.

**What:** Travelling Film Festival Newcastle

**When:** 24- 26 June 2016

**Where:** Tower Cinemas, 183-185 King Street, Newcastle NSW 2300 PH: (02) 4926 2233

**Full program details and ticketing information can be found at:**

<http://www.sff.org.au/2016-film-guide/travelling-film-festival-newcastle/>

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### EDITOR'S NOTES

#### THE FOXTEL MOVIES AUDIENCE AWARDS

The **Foxtel Movies Audience Awards** are Sydney Film Festival's people's choice awards, and reflect the most popular films at the Festival. After each screening, audience members are invited to rate the film on our website or via the SFF 2016 App. Two audience awards are presented: one for best narrative feature and one for best documentary.

The **Foxtel Movies Audience Awards**, Sydney Film Festival's people's choice awards, were today announced. Winner of the **Foxtel Movies Audience Award** for best narrative feature went to ***Mustang*** directed by **Deniz Gamze Ergüven**. The **Foxtel Movies Audience Award** for best documentary went to ***Zach's Ceremony*** directed by **Aaron Petersen**.

#### **Foxtel Movies Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature Top Five:**

1. ***Mustang***, directed by **Deniz Gamze Ergüven**
2. ***Land of Mine***, directed by **Martin Zandvliet**
3. ***Teenage Kicks***, directed by **Craig Boreham**
4. ***Being 17***, directed by **André Téchiné**
5. ***Closet Monster***, directed by **Stephen Dunn**

#### **Foxtel Movies Audience Award for Best Documentary Top Five:**

1. ***Zach's Ceremony***, directed by **Aaron Petersen**
2. ***Constance on the Edge***, directed by **Belinda Mason**
3. ***The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and The Silk Road Ensemble***, directed by **Morgan Neville**
4. ***American Epic: Out of the Many, The One***, directed by **Bernard MacMahon**
5. ***The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe***, directed by **Ros Horin**

#### OTHER 2016 SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL AWARD WINNERS INCLUDE:

***Aquarius***, directed by **Kleber Mendonça Filho**, was awarded **Sydney Film Festival's** prestigious **Sydney Film Prize**, from a selection of **12 Official Competition** films, at the Festival's Closing Night Gala.

Sydney filmmaker **Dan Jackson** was awarded the **Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentary**, a \$15,000 cash prize, for ***In the Shadow of the Hill***; with a special mention going to ***Destination Arnold*** directed by **Sascha Ettinger Epstein**.

The **Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films** were announced; awarding ***Slapper***, directed and written by **Luci Schroder**, **The Dendy Live Action Short Award**; ***The Crossing***, directed and written by **Marieka Walsh**, **The Yoram Gross Animation Award**; and **Goran Stolevski**, the **Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Director**, for ***You Deserve Everything***.

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The **Event Cinema Australian Short Screenplay Award** was awarded to *Spice Sisters*, written and directed by **Sheila Jayadev**, who received a \$5,000 cash prize, with a special mention to **Matthew Vesely** for *My Best Friend Is Stuck On The Ceiling*.

The new annual **Sydney UNESCO City of Film Prize** was awarded to **Ms Lynette Wallworth**, who received \$10,000 prize awarded by Screen NSW, presented by **Margaret Pomeranz AM**.

## MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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\*\*\*Sydney Film Festival Press Pack and Images Available [HERE](#)

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## ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From **Wednesday 8 June to Sunday 19 June 2016**, the 63<sup>rd</sup> Sydney Film Festival offers audiences another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, in-depth discussions, international guests and more. Each year the Festival's programming team curates 12 days of cinema sourced from world-famous film festivals, including Cannes, Sundance, Toronto and the Berlinale; as well as Australia's finest productions.

Sydney Film Festival also presents an Official Competition of 12 films that vie for the Sydney Film Prize, a highly respected honour that awards a \$60,000 cash prize based on the decision of a jury of international and Australian filmmakers and industry professionals. Previous Sydney Film Prize winners are: *Arabian Nights* (2015); *Two Days, One Night* (2014); *Only God Forgives* (2013); *Alps* (2012); *A Separation* (2011); *Heartbeats* (2010); *Bronson* (2009); and *Hunger* (2008).

The Festival takes place across greater Sydney: at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, Dendy Newtown, Skyline Drive-In Blacktown, Art Gallery of NSW, Hayden

Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, Casula Powerhouse, the Festival Hub at Sydney Town Hall and SFF Outdoor Screen.

The Festival is a major event on the New South Wales cultural calendar and is one of the world's longest-running film festivals. For more information visit: [www.sff.org.au](http://www.sff.org.au).

The 63<sup>rd</sup> Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW and Destination NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the City of Sydney. The Festival's Strategic Partner is the NSW Government through Destination NSW.

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