

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

JUNE 08–19 2022

MEDIA RELEASE

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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE OF CANNES HIT *BROKER* TO CLOSE THE 2022 FESTIVAL AS WELL AS EXCITING NEW FILMS FROM CANNES, ON SALE NOW!

The 69th Sydney Film Festival (8-19 June), opening Wednesday, announces its Closing Night Film as well as ten fantastic new feature films coming direct from the recent Cannes Film Festival, including Palme d'Or winner *Triangle of Sadness* and an outstanding documentary from this year's Sundance and CPH:DOX, all making their Australian premiere at the Festival.

CLOSING NIGHT

Sydney Film Festival will host the Australian Premiere of *Broker*, direct from the Cannes Competition, a tender drama by Japanese filmmaker Hirokazu Kore-eda (*Shoplifters*, SFF 2018) as the Closing Night Film at the State Theatre on Sunday 19 June.

Broker features 2022 Cannes Best Actor winner Song Kang-ho (*Parasite*, SFF 2019) in a delightful and heart-breaking tale of a pair who illegally take an abandoned infant from a 'baby box' facility (a place where mothers can safely abandon newborns) with the intention of finding the child a good home themselves. When the mother unexpectedly returns, they form a trio and embark on a journey to seek new parents for the baby.

Written and directed by Palme d'Or winning filmmaker Hirokazu Kore-eda, in his first Korean language feature, starring some of Korea's biggest stars, including singer-actress IU (Lee Ji Eun), Bae Doona, Gang Dong-won and Lee Joo-young.

"*Broker* is a film about family and connection so we are delighted to present it as our Closing Night Film. After the past two trying years, it's the perfect film to celebrate finally being able to gather together, in person and with our loved ones," **Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley** said. "We are excited to welcome back the work of Hirokazu Kore-eda, and his feature that is brimming with international talent, as part of our full-fledged return to the in-cinema spectacle of our Closing Night Gala."

The Closing Night Gala will include an awards ceremony announcing the winners of the Sydney Film Prize, the Documentary Australia Award, the Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films, the Sustainable Future Award, the Deutsche Bank Fellowship for First Nations Film Creatives, the Sydney UNESCO City of Film Award and the inaugural AFTRS Craft Award.



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NEW FILMS

Sydney Film Festival has announced new films added to its program including ten of the best films direct from Cannes, alongside one exciting documentary from Sundance and CPH:DOX.

“Festival audiences will be the first in the country to see Cannes Palme d’Or winner *Triangle of Sadness*, Swedish director Ruben Östlund’s hilarious, biting, stomach-churning satire on the mega-rich, set on a luxury cruise captained by an alcoholic Marxist, played by Woody Harrelson. Grand Prix recipient *Stars at Noon* also joins the program - an erotic, slow-burn espionage drama from acclaimed director Claire Denis, starring Margaret Qualley and Joe Alwyn,” said **Festival Director Nashen Moodley**.

“Un Certain Regard prize-winners will light up the Festival including the FIPRESCI Award-winning *The Blue Caftan* from Moroccan writer-director Maryam Touzani which will stir Festival goers with a love triangle between a young gay man and a middle-aged couple in a small Moroccan town alongside Best Screenplay Award-winning *Mediterranean Fever*, Palestinian filmmaker Maha Haj’s unpredictable comedy-drama about male friendship. Saim Sadiq’s daring love story *Joyland*, the first Pakistani film to make the Cannes Official Selection, is about a married man falling for a transgender dancer that took home the Jury Prize and Queer Palm.”

“*Boy From Heaven* is Tarik Saleh’s Best Screenplay-winning political thriller set in Cairo’s Al-Alzhar University examining Egypt’s religious and political institutions and *Holy Spider* is a provocative true-crime serial killer film set in the Iranian holy city of Mashhad starring Zar Amir Ebrahimi who won the Best Actress Award at Cannes for her role,” he said.

“The Cannes 75th Anniversary Prize winner, *Tori and Lokita*, directed by SFF Official Competition 2014 winners Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne depicts two young African refugees as they try to make a life in Belgium. From the Cannes Director’s Fortnight comes *Will-O’-The-Wisp*, a randy musical romp about a queer prince who wants to become a firefighter by Portuguese writer-director João Pedro Rodrigues.”

“Also from Cannes is *The Night of the 12th*, a perfectly crafted, atmospheric police procedural set in Southern France, based on true events and reminiscent of *Zodiac* and *Memories of Murder*,” he said.

“An intimate documentary direct from Sundance and CPH:DOX is *Nothing Compares*, charting Sinéad O’Connor’s stunning rise to fame and startling rejection of the spotlight, voiced by the determinedly non-conformist Irish singer herself.”

More 2022 Cannes Highlights already announced in the program:

- ***All That Breathes*** | 2022 | Director: Shaunak Sen
An intimate portrait of two brothers who devote their lives to rescuing New Delhi’s black kites. Winner of Sundance 2022 Grand Jury Prize and 2022 Cannes Golden Eye winner.



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- **Burning Days** | 2022 | Director: Emin Alper
Emin Alper's (*A Tale of Three Sisters*, SFF 2019) riveting political thriller revolves around a prosecutor who moves to a small Turkish town and is embroiled in a political scandal. 2022 Cannes Un Certain Regard.
- **Close** | 2022 | Director: Lukas Dhont
Belgian filmmaker Lukas Dhont's (*Girl*, SFF 2018) stunningly beautiful examination of an intense teen friendship torn asunder. 2022 Cannes Winner Grand Prix.
- **Elvis** | 2022 | Director: Baz Luhrmann
An epic rock and roll spectacular from beloved Australian filmmaker Baz Luhrmann exploring the life and music of Elvis Presley with his distinctive dynamism, starring Austin Butler and Tom Hanks. Cannes 2022 selected.
- **Godland** | 2022 | Director: Hlynur Pálmason
Icelandic filmmaker Hlynur Pálmason's stunning historical drama inspired by true events, following a young Danish priest who travels to a largely unexplored part of Iceland in the late 19th century. 2022 Cannes Un Certain Regard.
- **MumLife** | 2022 | Directed: Ruby Challenger
A first time mother struggles to connect with her newborn baby and is pushed to her limits when she discovers her Insta famous bestie has organised a surprise birthday party for her. Cannes 2022 selected.
- **One Fine Morning** | 2022 | Director: Mia Hansen-Løve
Léa Seydoux stars in the sensitive, deeply personal new drama from director Mia Hansen-Løve (*Things to Come*, *Bergman Island*, SFF 2021). 2022 Cannes Directors' Fortnight.
- **Return to Seoul** | 2022 | Director: Davy Chou
Davy Chou's (*Golden Slumbers*, SFF 2012; *Diamond Island*, SFF 2017) moving, delightful film follows a young French woman's quest to discover her Korean roots. Previously known as *All the People I'll Never Be*. 2022 Cannes Un Certain Regard.
- **Strictly Ballroom** | 1992 | Directed: Baz Luhrmann
Baz Luhrmann's sensational debut is one of the most beloved Australian films of all time, with this new restoration allowing audiences a chance to revisit the glittering Pan-Pacific Grand Prix Championship. 2022 Cannes Classics.
- **Tchaikovsky's Wife** | 2022 | Director: Kirill Serebrennikov
Kirill Serebrennikov's historical drama focuses on an obsessive, one-sided love affair between the revered composer and his devoted wife. Cannes 2022 selected.

The full Sydney Film Festival 2022 program can be found online at sff.org.au.



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Sydney Film Festival runs in cinemas 8-19 June 2022. Tickets and flexipasses to Sydney Film Festival 2022 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit sff.org.au for more information or to book.

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

EDITOR'S NOTES

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From Wednesday 8 June to Sunday 19 June 2022, the 69th Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, in-depth discussions, film guests and more.

Sydney Film 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 sff.org.au.

The 69th Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the RISE fund and the City of Sydney.

NEW FILMS

DOCUMENTARY:

NOTHING COMPARES

This intimate doco charts Sinéad O'Connor's stunning rise to fame and startling rejection of the spotlight, voiced by the determinedly non-conformist Irish singer herself.

In the late 80s and early 90s, Sinéad O'Connor topped the charts globally, with hits like 'Nothing Compares 2 U' and 'Mandinka'. Five years later, still in her twenties, she was on the outer. O'Connor grew up in a tough Catholic environment; a cruel childhood that informed her music and fuelled her determination. When a music executive asked her to stop wearing her hair short, she shaved her head. She refused to perform if the US national anthem was played first. Death threats followed when she spoke out about abuse in the Catholic church and infamously ripped up a photo of the Pope on *Saturday Night Live*. Kathryn Ferguson's portrait of this outspoken artist, selected for Sundance 2022, is packed with revealing footage, her great performances, controversies and tragedies.



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FILMS:

BOY FROM HEAVEN

Winner of the Best Screenplay award at Cannes, Swedish-Egyptian director Tarek Saleh's (*The Nile Hilton Incident*, SFF 2017) new film is a riveting political thriller set in Cairo's Al-Azhar University.

Adam, the son of a fisherman, is offered the ultimate privilege to study at the Al-Azhar University in Cairo - the epicentre of power of Sunni Islam in Egypt. Shortly after his arrival, the university's highest ranking religious leader, the Grand Imam, suddenly dies. The university, whose influence poses a threat to the political system, has long resisted outside interference. But now, intrigue ensues as shady government figures hatch a plan to ensure the next Grand Imam is of their choosing, and a murder is committed. Adam becomes a pawn in a ruthless power struggle between Egypt's religious and political elites. Hitting the key notes of a classic political thriller, *Boy from Heaven* brings a freshness and vitality to the genre that makes for essential viewing.

BROKER

Direct from the Cannes Competition, where Song Kang-ho (*Parasite*, SFF 2019) won the Best Actor Award, *Broker* is a tender drama from Kore-eda Hirokazu (*Shoplifters*, SFF 2018).

A film at once delightful, funny and heart-breaking from a master filmmaker at the height of his powers. Sang-hyun (Song Kang-ho) runs a laundry shop but is constantly saddled with debt. Dong-soo (Gang Dong-won) works at a 'baby box' facility where mothers can safely abandon their new-borns. One night in the pouring rain, the pair illegally take an abandoned infant with a plan to find it a good home. When the mother So-young (Lee Ji Eun) unexpectedly returns for her son, the men instead convince her to join their plan. The three of them then embark on a journey to find new parents for the baby. Meanwhile, police detective Su-jin (Bae Doona) and her younger colleague Detective Lee (Lee Joo young) silently tail the group, hoping to catch them in the act. So begins an unusual and unexpected journey for five people, and a baby, brought together by chance. As he did with his Cannes Palme d'Or winner *Shoplifters* and much of his work – and for the first time in Korean and with some of Korea's biggest stars – Kore-eda focuses on family and connection. Your heart will break, then soar at this warming film.

HOLY SPIDER

Ali Abbasi (*Border*) returns with a provocative true-crime serial killer thriller set in the Iranian holy city of Mashhad. Zar Amir Ebrahimi won the Best Actress Award at Cannes for her starring role.

Abbasi, who created a stir with his meticulous body-horror romance *Border* (2018), leads us on a terrifying ride into the underworld of Mashhad, a site of pilgrimage for millions each year. Alongside the religious practices and rituals, there is an underbelly of drug addiction and sex work. Family man and war veteran Saeed (Mehdi Bajestani) believes he is on a holy mission to cleanse the city of immorality. He lures women to his apartment, murders them and calls the press to announce each brutal act. Outraged by the lack of police interest or action, journalist Rahimi (Zar Amir Ebrahimi) begins to investigate, and gets far closer to the killer than she could ever have imagined. Not for sensitive viewers, *Holy Spider* is gruesome in its depiction of violence, and perhaps even more so in its portrayal of how that violence is excused and even glorified.

JOYLAND

The first Pakistani film to make the Cannes Official Selection, *Joyland* is a daring love story in which a



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married man falls for an ambitious transgender dancer. Winner, Un Certain Regard Jury Prize and Queer Palm.

The Ranas are a patriarchal joint family in Lahore, and long for the birth of a boy to continue the family line. Expectation falls on unemployed Haider (Ali Junejo) and his wife Mumtaz (Rasti Farooq) to make more of a contribution to the family. When Haider, despite his ineptitude, lands a job as a backing dancer in an erotic dance theatre, he meets glamorous trans dancer Biba (Alina Khan). Her reaction when she first sees him is: “Who’s this cutie?” And Haider is smitten. So begins a complex love story, tenderly told. Director Saim Sadiq, in his feature debut, insightfully analyses several members of the Rana clan who each contemplate a sexual rebellion of their own. Beautifully made and acted, *Joyland* is an intense emotional experience, and marks the emergence of a major new talent on the international cinema scene.

MEDITERRANEAN FEVER

This bittersweet and unpredictable comedy-drama about male friendship by Palestinian filmmaker Maha Haj won Best Screenplay in Un Certain Regard at Cannes 2022.

Middle-aged, melancholic and married with two kids, Waleed has abandoned a steady job in banking to pursue his dream of becoming a writer. But his novel and his life in the seaside city of Haifa seem to be going nowhere. That’s until he meets Jalal, a fellow Palestinian and the laid-back father of a family that’s just moved in next door. An initially tense meeting develops into a friendship that might just help Waleed get his writing and his life back on track. But Jamal has criminal connections which take both men in dark directions. Haj’s perceptive and wryly humorous screenplay keeps politics simmering in the background as the complicated bond between Waleed and Jalal is put to the ultimate test.

STARS AT NOON

Grand Prix winner, Cannes 2022. A steamy, erotic feature from acclaimed director Claire Denis (*High Life*), starring Margaret Qualley (*Maid*) and Joe Alwyn (*In Conversation with Friends*).

Adapted from a Nicaraguan-set novel by Denis Johnson (*Tree of Smoke, Jesus’ Son*), but shifted to the present pandemic-times, *Stars at Noon* is an erotic slow-burn espionage drama. Trish (Qualley, excellent), notionally an American journalist, drifts through the streets and bars of a steamy Central American city. Low on dollars, she sells sexual favours to an elderly politician and a local cop. One night she encounters Daniel, a handsome Englishman (Alwyn), and before long he becomes one of her lovers. Could he be Trish’s way out? Or is Daniel duplicitous, like everyone else? Denis adds fuel to this inflamed scenario with Benny Safdie (*Uncut Gems*) as a dubious smiling American, John C. Reilly (*Stan & Ollie*) as a less-than-impressed editor, all captured with seductive cinematography from Eric Gauter (*Ash is the Purest White*) and an atmospheric soundtrack from British band Tindersticks.

THE BLUE CAFTAN

Woven with exquisite care, Maryam Touzani’s Cannes Un Certain Regard-selected drama reveals a love triangle between a young gay man and a middle-aged couple in a small Moroccan town.

Mina (Lubna Azabal, *Incendies, Paradise Now*) and her husband Halim (Saleh Bakri, who also stars in *Costa Brava, Lebanon*, SFF 2022) run a small business making and selling bespoke caftans. Halim is a master of his trade, and Mina a canny saleswoman, though their wares don’t come cheap and traditional dress is falling out of favour. Despite this, their business remains just brisk enough to allow



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them to take on a new tailor, Youssef (Ayoub Missiou). Youssef – who is gay – and Mina become fast friends and the young man’s skills soon prove essential to the business. But as Halim is increasingly drawn to the younger man, too, unspoken marital tensions and issues bubble to the surface. Touzani explores a complex marriage with tenderness and grace in a sincere and superbly performed film that unfolds in unexpected and heartening ways.

THE NIGHT OF THE 12TH

Direct from Cannes, a perfectly crafted, atmospheric police procedural set in southern France, based on true events and reminiscent of *Zodiac* and *Memories of Murder*.

Dominik Moll’s latest feature (*Harry, He’s Here to Help; Only the Animals*) stars Bastien Bouillon (*The Mystery of Henri Pick*) and Bouli Lanners (*Love Songs for Tough Guys*, SFF 2021) as two case-hardened detectives trying to solve a grisly homicide. As the months tick by without a result, the duo become increasingly disheartened, haunted by the young woman’s senseless death and her family’s grief. At the same time, the all-male investigation squad make judgements about the murdered woman’s social life, failing to recognise that their behaviour isn’t so very different. And they’re prone to jump to conclusions about suspects as well. Moll based this smart thriller on an actual murder but transplanted the events to a small municipality at the foot of the French Alps, where towering slopes loom ominously over the crime scene.

TORI AND LOKITA

Winner of the Cannes 75th Anniversary Prize, this powerful new drama by Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne (*Two Days, One Night*, SFF winner 2014) follows two young African refugees as they try to make a life in Belgium.

Twelve-year-old Tori (Pablo Schils) and teenager Lokita (Joely Mbundu) are extremely close. Both from West Africa and without other family in Belgium, they depend on each other as they struggle to get by and make some money. Claiming they are brother and sister, they sing beautifully together at a restaurant - while serving as drug couriers for the chef. Despite the hardship, there is great joy in their relationship but when Lokita’s right to remain in Belgium is threatened, and the financial demands of her family grow and loan sharks loom, she’s compelled into a pivotal decision that will separate her from Tori. With brilliant performances by two non-professional leads, *Tori and Lokita* is a gripping, searing look at economic injustice and societal indifference.

TRIANGLE OF SADNESS

Winner of the Cannes Palme d’Or 2022, Ruben Östlund’s (*Force Majeure, The Square*, SFF 2017) hilarious, biting, stomach-churning satire on the mega-rich presents a motley crew on a luxury cruise captained by an alcoholic Marxist.

Models/influencers Carl (Harris Dickinson) and Yaya (Charlbi Dean) are invited for a luxury cruise with a rogues’ gallery of super-rich passengers: a Russian oligarch, British arms dealers, and an idiosyncratic, alcoholic, Marx-quoting captain (Woody Harrelson). At first, all appears perfectly Instagrammable. But a storm is brewing, and heavy seasickness hits the passengers during the seven-course captain’s dinner – an extended, hysterical scene that will go down in cinematic history. The cruise ends catastrophically, hierarchy is suddenly flipped upside down, and Carl and Yaya find themselves in a desperate fight for



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survival. Ambitious, wild and absolutely free of restraint, *Triangle of Sadness* deservedly grants Östlund entry into that hallowed group of two-time Palme d'Or winners.

WILL-O'-THE-WISP

João Pedro Rodrigues (*The Ornithologist*, SFF 2017) returns with a randy musical romp about a queer prince who wants to be a firefighter. Cannes Directors Fortnight 2022.

Portuguese master Rodrigues packs more clever ideas and delightfully rude fun into this 67-minute quickie than most movies can muster in twice the time. In an altered version of the present narrated from the strange future of 2069, we follow the life of Prince Alfredo. This sensitive, environmentally aware royal doesn't want to be the next king. He wants to hold the firefighter's hose and save the forests! So begins his career with a fire brigade whose gay members excel in classical art knowledge and homo-erotic dance routines. Alfredo's fairy-tale romance with hunky colleague Alfonso provides the perfect platform for Rodrigues' sharp and funny commentary on race, class, imperialism and the future of our fragile planet.

