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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL REVEALS FIRST NATIONS FILMS

The 70th Sydney Film Festival, with the support of Screen Australia's First Nations Department, proudly continues its commitment to showcasing First Nations storytelling from Australia and around the world in 2023.

"Sydney Film Festival's 2023 program proudly presents 14 remarkable feature films by First Nations creatives," said **Festival Director Nashen Moodley**. "From Warwick Thornton's latest masterpiece to compelling local documentaries, shorts, and two gripping feature length films from abroad, this line-up shines a spotlight on the power and significance of Indigenous storytelling, amplifying diverse voices and sharing untold stories with our audience."

Angela Bates, Head of First Nations, Screen Australia said "We are delighted to continue our partnership with Sydney Film Festival supporting the First Nations Program. 2023 marks the 30th anniversary of the First Nations Department at Screen Australia, so it's incredibly exciting to see Warwick Thornton's *The New Boy*, announced to open the Festival - an impactful film featuring newcomer Aswan Reid, who lights up the screen.

There is so much to look forward to in the First Nations Program this year; from filmmakers Gillian Moody and Adrian Russell Wills, *Kindred* will take audiences on a visual journey into the complexities of family, self-love, isolation and belonging, bloodlines, and identity; and Torres Strait Islander short film *Katele*, a poetic cinematic story about the longing for and returning to home both physically and spiritually will give thought for reflection. The 2023 program is truly a statement of what is possible when First Nations storytellers are in control of their voice and stories."

The 2023 Festival opens with the Australian Premiere of *The New Boy*, from Cannes Caméra d'Or winning Australian filmmaker Warwick Thornton. The Cannes-selected feature tells a story of spirituality and survival set in 1940s Australia, starring Cate Blanchett, Deborah Mailman, Wayne Blair and newcomer Aswan Reid.

The Festival will also screen the World Premiere of *The Dark Emu Story*. This revelatory documentary explores the ground-breaking work of Bruce Pascoe, whose best-selling book challenged Australia's historical narrative and revolutionised our understanding of traditional Aboriginal life. Directed by Allan Clarke and produced by Blackfella Films, the documentary dives deep into the controversy surrounding Pascoe's claims, offering a platform for First Nations peoples to share their untold stories.

The New Boy and *The Dark Emu Story* will be featured in the Festival's Official Competition.

Three outstanding films will screen as a part of the Documentary Australia Award. In *Kindred*, filmmakers Gillian Moody and Adrian Russell Wills take a personal journey into the emotional landscape of family, love and loss. Indigenous actor Mark Coles Smith returns home to the Kimberley to interrogate alarming suicide rates in *Keeping Hope*; and *The Last Daughter* documents Wiradjuri

woman Brenda Matthews' search to uncover the truth about her government-ordered abduction as a child.

International First Nations films include: Best Director winner at the Golden Horse Awards 2022, **Gaga**, a film that tells the story of an Indigenous Taiwanese family caught between traditions and modern challenges from Atayal filmmaker Laha Mebow; and renowned Greenlandic Inuit lawyer and activist Aaju Peter tells the story of her peoples' struggles, as well as her own, in the Sundance and CPH:DOX selected documentary **Twice Colonized**.

First Nations shorts screening across the Festival include: **Babanil, Katele, Mamirnikuwi, Marungka Tjalatjunu, Nyarrpararla Malaju?, To Be Silent, and Power to Country**.

First Nations guests attending their film's screenings include: the filmmaking team of **The New Boy**, the filmmaking team from **The Dark Emu Story**, director Tyson Mowarin and actor Mark Coles-Smith (**Keeping Hope**), directors Gillian Moody and Adrian Russell Wills (**Kindred**), director Brenda Matthews (**The Last Daughter**), director Laha Mebow (**Gaga**). Danish director Lin Alluna who created **Twice Colonized** with Inuit lawyer and activist Aaju Peter will also attend.

Hosted at The Hub following the State Theatre screening of **The Dark Emu Story**, author Bruce Pascoe sits down for an in conversation talk as a part of the free **Festival Talks Program** (18 June, 2:30pm).

The full Sydney Film Festival 2023 program can be found online at sff.org.au.

Sydney Film Festival runs in cinemas 7-18 June 2023. Tickets and Flexipasses to Sydney Film Festival 2023 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit sff.org.au for more information or to book.

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**Images are available to download [here](#).

**SYDNEY
FILM
FESTIVAL**

70

**7-18
JUNE
2023**



EDITOR'S NOTES:

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

Sydney Film Festival will celebrate its 70th edition from Wednesday 7 June to Sunday 18 June 2023, offering 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 70th Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the City of Sydney.

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