

**SYDNEY  
FILM  
FESTIVAL**

**70**

**7-18  
JUNE  
2023**

MEDIA RELEASE: TUESDAY 6 JUNE 2023

## **SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES NINE NEW SPECIAL SCREENINGS, ON SALE NOW!**

The 70<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival (7-18 June), which opens tomorrow, announces nine new films will have their Australian premiere at the Festival, including: 2023 Palme d'Or award winner *Anatomy of a Fall*, Sundance 2023 winner *The Persian Version*, and direct from Cannes Competition 2023 *Club Zero* starring Mia Wasikowska, and Todd Haynes' *May December*, starring Natalie Portman and Julianne Moore.

"We've secured a remarkable line-up of nine new Special Screenings, featuring seven compelling features and two thought-provoking documentaries, all receiving acclaim and in many cases trophies from prestigious film festivals across the globe," said **Festival Director Nashen Moodley**.

"Festival audiences will be the first in the country to see Cannes Palme d'Or winner *Anatomy of a Fall*, French director Justine Triet's tense drama featuring Sandra Hüller as an author accused of her husband's murder.

"From Cannes Competition 2023, SFF will screen two standout films. *Club Zero* features Mia Wasikowska as a teacher leading a conscious eating movement at a boarding school and Todd Haynes' *May December* stars Natalie Portman and Julianne Moore in a playful exploration of an American scandal.

"Two Cannes Critics' Week 2023 award-winners will also light up the Festival including Grand Prize winner *Tiger Stripes*, a unique body horror film, and *Inshallah a Boy* about a Jordanian woman who fakes a pregnancy to secure her inheritance in a patriarchal society.

"Showcased in Cannes Directors' Fortnight 2023 *Blackbird Blackbird Blackberry*, is a charming Georgian feature about an independent woman navigating an unexpected, passionate autumn romance. And from Sundance 2023, Audience Award winner *The Persian Version* is a joyous crowd-pleaser that follows an Iranian-American woman as she explores love, sex, pregnancy and family.

"The Festival will also premiere two outstanding documentaries from Cannes 2023. The Cannes top documentary prize winning *Four Daughters*, is a genre-defying and courageous film about a Tunisian mother whose daughters have gone missing and Wim Wender's paints a stunning portrait of life, work and methodology of artist Anselm Kiefer in *Anselm*," said Moodley.

The full Sydney Film Festival 2023 program can be found online at [sff.org.au](https://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](https://sff.org.au) for more information or to book.



**SYDNEY  
FILM  
FESTIVAL**

**70**

**7-18  
JUNE  
2023**

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

**Isabelle Brown, Communications Advisor**

E: [isabelle@originalspin.com.au](mailto:isabelle@originalspin.com.au) M: 0401 576 024

**Sanika Karnik, Communications Advisor**

E: [sanika@originalspin.com.au](mailto:sanika@originalspin.com.au) M: 0466 635 010

**Matt Fraser, Director of Communications**

E: [matt@originalspin.com.au](mailto:matt@originalspin.com.au) M: 0401 326 007

**Amber Forrest-Bisley, Publicity Manager, Sydney Film Festival**

E: [amber@originalspin.com.au](mailto:amber@originalspin.com.au) P: 8065 7363 M: 0405 363 817

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

**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](http://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.

Stay up to date with Sydney Film Festival:  
[eNews](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

**FILMS**

***ANATOMY OF A FALL***

**Winner of the Cannes Palme d'Or 2023, Justine Triet's tense psychological drama stars a brilliant Sandra Hüller (*Toni Erdmann*, SFF 2016) as an author accused of murdering her husband.**

Hüller plays Sandra, a successful German writer who has spent the last year living with her French husband Samuel (Samuel Theis) and 11-year-old son Daniel (Milo Machado Graner) in a chalet in the idyllic French Alps. When Samuel is found dead by young Daniel, lying in the snow with a severe head injury, the police begin investigations that gradually reveal a fractious relationship. A year later, Sandra is on trial for murder, with her son's testimony crucial to the outcome. As concerned with ideas around sexuality, art and marriage as with the twists and turns of the investigation and trial, *Anatomy of a Fall* is a searingly intelligent film that lingers in the mind long after the closing credits.



***BLACKBIRD BLACKBIRD BLACKBERRY***

**An independent woman embarks on a bittersweet autumn romance, in this endearing Georgian feature that's chock full of passion, charm and wry humour. Cannes Directors' Fortnight, 2023.**

Eka Chavleishvili delivers a standout performance in the central role of Etero, a 40-something woman who relishes her freedom as much as her cakes. She chooses to live alone, running a small store and enjoying her independence. Her fellow villagers find this incomprehensible, but Etero isn't fazed by their pity or gossip – she's seen how the local wives are treated by their husbands and she's not impressed. Then, unexpectedly, she falls passionately in love, and suddenly her life is full of lusty clandestine sex. Etero is faced with a difficult choice: a room of one's own or perhaps her one last chance of a relationship? *Blackbird Blackbird Blackberry* is a winning combination of eroticism, sly digs at societal norms, and melancholic charm.

***CLUB ZERO***

**Mia Wasikowska stars in an edgy and absurdist film direct from the Cannes Competition 2023, as a teacher who whips up a cult like following from her students as they practice "conscious eating".**

When Miss Novak (Wasikowska, superb) joins an elite international boarding school to teach "conscious eating" to the well-heeled students, it seems very much in keeping with the institution's progressive values. Eating more "mindfully" is, after all, good for the environment and an act of rebellion against over-consumption. Soon Miss Novak has a committed cohort who eat less and less, and before their parents have any idea, the extremist "Club Zero" has become a reality. Director Jessica Hausner (*Lovely Rita*, *Lourdes* SFF 2010) deploys both humour and horror in depicting this developing cult in a portrait of a generation experiencing parental ambivalence, existential despair and a great fear of the future. *Club Zero* is an audacious exercise in both form and message.

***INSHALLAH A BOY***

**An award-winner at Cannes Critics' Week 2023, this rare film from Jordan is the gripping story of a woman who fabricates a pregnancy to fight for her inheritance in a society pitted against her.**

Nawal (Mouna Hawa) lives a happy life with her husband, Adnan, and young daughter, Nora, in their modest apartment in Amman. When Adnan unexpectedly passes away, Nawal is thrown into grief. She is confronted almost immediately by Adnan's brother, Rifqi, who demands not only repayments on a loan Nawal had no idea about, but a substantial share of the inheritance, including the family's apartment. As Nawal has no son, inheritance laws dictate that Adnan's relatives are equal beneficiaries to his estate. Faced with losing her home, Nawal is forced to use every tactic available to her as a court battle looms, raising the question: what if she were pregnant with a boy? With a beautiful and layered central performance by Hawa (also in *A Gaza Weekend*, SFF 2023), *Inshallah a Boy* powerfully depicts an admirable struggle against tradition and patriarchy.

**SYDNEY  
FILM  
FESTIVAL**

**70**

**7-18  
JUNE  
2023**

**MAY DECEMBER**

**Natalie Portman and Julianne Moore are customarily brilliant, and biting, in Todd Haynes' (*Carol, Far from Heaven*) playful exploration of an American scandal, direct from the Cannes Competition.** Twenty years ago Grace (Moore) and Joe (Charles Melton) were the subject of a notorious tabloid relationship – he was thirteen, and she 23 years his senior. Grace served a prison sentence for her crime. Now, with the couple seemingly happily married and still in love, their twins are about to graduate from high school and leave the family home. Simultaneously, Hollywood actress Elizabeth Berry (Portman) arrives on the scene to conduct research for a new film on the scandal in which she will portray Grace. She is welcomed by Grace who hopes that the film will set the record straight. But Elizabeth appears to be going a bit too “method” in her preparation, and her presence punctures the happy family scenario that Grace has so meticulously maintained. With Portman and Moore at the top of their game, Haynes is perfectly poised to extract both the drama and humour from this very American story.

**TIGER STRIPES**

**Winner of the Cannes Critics' Week Grand Prize 2023, *Tiger Stripes* is a feisty body horror, set in the Malaysian jungle, in which a rebellious girl experiences a strange metamorphosis.**

*Tiger Stripes* opens with 12-year-old Zaffan discarding her conservative clothing as she dances wildly in the school bathroom, all documented on a mobile phone. This type of behaviour is not tolerated in her religious school, and her attitude also gets her into trouble with her mother. As Zaffan reaches puberty, her independence starts manifesting in a disturbing bodily transformation. As her claws and whiskers grow, so does her ostracism from the community, and Zaffan decides to fight back. An excellent young cast, and a daring dive into the supernatural, make this an auspicious debut for Amanda Nell Eu and a unique addition to contemporary Malaysian cinema.

**THE PERSIAN VERSION**

**Winner of the Audience Award at Sundance, this joyous crowd-pleaser follows an Iranian-American woman as she explores love, sex, pregnancy... and what her family vocally thinks about all three.**

We meet filmmaker Leila (Layla Mohammadi) – “too Iranian in America, too American in Iran” – wearing a conservative naqib and revealing tankini as she attends a Halloween party in New York. Recently split from her wife, she hooks up with actor Max at the party, and soon enough discovers that she’s pregnant. The only daughter in a family of an extraordinary number of sons, Leila now has to take on her disapproving mother Shireen (Niousha Noor) and contemplate motherhood. But this unusual turn of events leads Leila to a new understanding of her mother’s singular journey from Iran to America. A decades-spanning epic, inspired by true events, *The Persian Version* is an inventive, hilarious and moving tribute to Iranian women.



**SYDNEY  
FILM  
FESTIVAL**

**70**

**7-18  
JUNE  
2023**

***ANSELM***

**Wim Wenders' portrait of the artist Anselm Kiefer is a mesmerising cinematic experience in 3D and a stunning exploration of Kiefer's life, work and methodology. Cannes 2023 Special Screening.** One of the most innovative and important painters and sculptors of our time, Kiefer is revered around the world, but has always had a more complicated reception in his native Germany. Wenders traces Kiefer's emergence as a major international artist – even while his determination to confront Germany's past leads to controversy in his homeland – through to the present day. As with his 2011 documentary *Pina*, Wenders makes full use of the 3D technology at his disposal. He showcases Kiefer's monumental works and catalogues their creation – cue remarkable footage of Kiefer wielding a flamethrower. One of Wenders' exceptional duo of films at Cannes 2023 – the other, *Perfect Days*, also plays at SFF – *Anselm* is a riveting and rigorous depiction of an artist and his philosophy.

***FOUR DAUGHTERS***

**This documentary prize winner at Cannes 2023 follows a Tunisian mother whose daughters have gone missing... or willingly joined the Islamic State. A genre-defying and courageous film not to be missed.**

Olfa is a tough woman. She's a solo mother who's had more than her share of tribulations, leaving her with little liking for girls and even less of men. Lacking a reliable partner, she's forced to work outside of Tunisia, leaving her four daughters largely to their own devices. When she returns, the daughters have changed and the relationship is fractured. Resulting tensions take an unanticipated turn and before long her two eldest daughters, who have been radicalised in her absence, are missing – and even may have joined the Islamic State. In director Kaouther Ben Hania's unique cinema hybrid the absent women are played by actors, as is Olfa – when her emotions become too hard to handle. The actors, their involvement and responses, become part of the story. Ben Hania, who filmed the family over several years, tells a powerful story of hope, rebellion, violence and sisterhood, against the background of a patriarchal society and swelling religious tensions. Winner of L'Oeil d'or (the Documentary Award), The Positive Cinema Award, The Citizenship Award, and Special Mention François Chalais Award (dedicated to the values of journalism) at Cannes 2023.

