



MEDIA RELEASE

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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 20 FINALISTS

AND DISTINGUISHED JURY FOR LEXUS AUSTRALIAN SHORT FILM FELLOWSHIP

The Sydney Film Festival and Lexus Australia today announced 21 filmmakers have been shortlisted by producers at The Weinstein Company, to compete for the largest cash fellowship for short film in Australia.

Presiding over the selection process as Jury Chair is renowned Australian actress **Judy Davis**. The other jury members are Sydney Film Festival Director **Nashen Moodley**, Lexus Australia's **Adrian Weimers**, and Australian producers **Jan Chapman AO** and **Darren Dale**.

The industry luminaries will assess each finalist's proposed short film projects to select up to four filmmakers, each of whom will receive a \$50,000 Fellowship grant. The four successful candidates will be announced at the Sydney Film Festival (8-19 June 2016).

The shortlisted filmmakers are:

Alex Murawski (NSW)
Alex Ryan (NSW)
Anya Beyersdorf (NSW)
Billie Pleffer (NSW)
Brooke Goldfinch (NSW)
Genevieve Clay-Smith (NSW)
Hazel Annikki Savolainen (NSW)
Jacobie Gray (NSW)
Lucy Gaffy (NSW)
Tim Russell (NSW)
Venetia Taylor (NSW)

Dave Redman (VIC)
David Hansen (VIC)
James Vinson (VIC)
Victoria Thaine (VIC)
Mikey Hill (VIC)
Thomas Baricevic (VIC)
Erin Coates (WA)
Anna Nazzari (WA)
Eddie White (SA)
Stephen de Villiers (SA)

The Weinstein Company chose 10 female and 11 male filmmakers from over 355 Australians who last year entered Lexus's international short film competition, the **Lexus Short Film Series**. The Series was recently won by Australian actor and filmmaker **Damian Walshe-Howling**, alongside three other filmmakers from France, South Korea and the USA.

Jury Chair Judy Davis said, "It's an honour to be chosen as the first Jury Chair of the Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship. I'm very much looking forward to being part of the selection process and exploring the work of this new generation of Australian filmmakers."

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Nashen Moodley, Sydney Film Festival Director said, “The Fellowship is delighted with the strong representation from Australian female filmmakers in this selection, as well as filmmakers from Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria.”

“These finalists are the highest calibre of emerging Australian talent. Many have screened at the world’s top film festivals including Cannes, Sundance and the Berlinale. Others have worked with prolific filmmakers Baz Luhrmann, Spike Lee, and Emmy nominated producers Pamela Koffler (*Boys Don’t Cry, Alice*) and Christine Vachon (*Boys Don’t Cry, Carol*).”

“Among the finalists are also winners of many awards including the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts Award, Australian Screen Editors Guild and Australian Writer’s Guild Awards, a NSW Young Australian of the Year, and winners of Sydney Film Festival’s own Dendy Awards,” he said.

Adrian Weimers, Corporate Manager, Lexus Australia said, “Lexus Australia is deeply committed to elevating emerging talent in Australia. We believe new voices and new ideas keep art forms moving forward. The Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship, developed in partnership with Sydney Film Festival, is an important local initiative. One that builds on our legacy of international investments in emerging talent such as the Lexus Design Award and the Lexus Short Film Series,” he said.

Once announced at the Sydney Film Festival in June, the four Fellows will commence production of their films, to premiere at the 64th Sydney Film Festival in 2017.

ABOUT THE LEXUS AUSTRALIA SHORT FILM FELLOWSHIP

The Lexus Australia Short Films Fellowship is a new \$200,000 investment by Lexus Australia, presented by Sydney Film Festival, to support future generations of emerging filmmakers. The Fellowship is the largest cash fellowship for short film in Australia. Up to four Fellowship winners will receive \$50,000 each to produce their next short film in 2016, to premiere at the 64th Sydney Film Festival in 2017.

ABOUT LEXUS SHORT FILMS

In 2013, Lexus Short Films was launched with the goal of supporting and nurturing a new generation of emerging filmmakers. These aspiring directors and writers have received a unique opportunity supported by Lexus to collaborate with acclaimed film studio The Weinstein Company to produce and showcase their work on an international stage. For more information, visit www.lexusshortfilms.com.

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

Sydney Film Festival screens feature films, documentaries, short films and animation across greater Sydney. 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.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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