



## MEDIA RELEASE

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 11.00am WEDNESDAY 10 MAY 2017**

# SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL HUB: VR, TALKS, PARTIES & ART

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The 64<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival (June 7-18) announces that the Festival Hub at Town Hall will be a 360 degree Festival experience, with filmmaker talks, panels, parties, contemporary art, and now a forward-looking daily virtual reality (VR) program, curated by the VR collective **BADFAITH**.

“The Hub is a pop up bar the Festival has created to provide a space for talks, conversations and ideas to percolate,” said **Festival Director Nashen Moodley**. “Now adding the creative genius of artist **Shaun Gladwell** and producer **Leo Faber** from edgy VR content collective **BADFAITH**, The Hub will be overflowing with mind-bending, next-level experiences for film and festival lovers.”

“Something unique we’re bringing to the Sydney Film Festival VR program, which we haven’t seen elsewhere, is this crafting of a mind blowing VR experience that’s still a cohesive curated journey of works you watch in a row,” said VR program curator **Leo Faber, from BADFAITH**.

“Every work has been selected in relation to how the audience will feel about the works that precede and follow it. The curated programs of around 40 minutes can contain up to six works: you strap on a headset and go on this 40 minute journey into a wonderland of global creativity.”

“Some of the works are experimental and others are just really cool experiences that you’d likely never be able to do without the aid of VR, like going diving under the frozen ice sheets of Antarctica to see how much life actually exists down there.”

“One of the programs was curated to be more family friendly and the other programs are a little more adult in content and delivery. The works selected were chosen because they just resonated as really amazing pieces of art,” Faber said.

The Hub is open to the public evenings and select daytimes from 8-18 June and events are FREE, except the VR sessions. Discount tickets (\$10) to select Festival screenings can also be snapped up at the Hub Box Office daily, and film-goers can get papped at the **Foxtel Movies Film Screen Interactive Photobooth**.

## VIRTUAL REALITY AT THE HUB

Artist Shaun Gladwell and producer Leo Faber from VR creative studio **BADFAITH** have curated a VR program of 13 unflinchingly raw and highly immersive VR experiences across four packages for Sydney Film Festival fans.

Playful, imaginative and intimate, these works will open minds and expand imaginations, from Japanese robots (*Miyubi*) to dance battles on the streets of Sydney (*Once Upon a Time in the Western Suburbs*), an Antarctic dive (*Under a Cracked Sky*), floating around a giant skull in space (*Orbital Vanitas*), and the story of evolution itself (*Life of Us*).

International and national premieres from the world’s top visual artists and directors including the hit



of Sundance and first feature length narrative VR *Miyubi* from Canada, and Australia's *Orbital Vanitas*, will transport audiences to the cutting edge of this new medium.

Other international works include: **Extravaganza** (US), a psychedelic puppet show with a big question about technology; a sinister bedtime tale from France **Sergeant James; I, Philip**, a meeting with the first android in human form; from Senegal, a look at the hidden face of its capital in **The Other Dakar**; and an 11-minute one-shot surreal tragicomedy from the Netherlands in **Ashes to Ashes**.

Other Australian works include: an exploration of the Bates Motel from Hitchcock's *Psycho* in **Only at the Air, Only at Each Other**; a real-time magical CG VR experience in **The Turning Forest**; and the whimsically chaotic **Server Room Symphony**.

VR curators Shaun Gladwell and Leo Faber will also talk about this cutting edge new medium (Tuesday 13 June, 5.00pm).

### **SYDNEY CONTEMPORARY AT THE HUB**

Sydney Contemporary's Barry Keldoulis has curated the works of four painters – **Sam Holt, Jess MacNeil, Rochelle Haley and Ron Adams** – to juxtapose their exploration of space on the canvas with the use of space in art's newest experimental medium, virtual reality.

### **TALKS**

The heart and soul of the Festival are the filmmakers and guests, who bring their wide range of skills, talents, knowledge and points of view to open a window for Festival attendees into other worlds and experiences at the **FREE Festival Talks**.

### **FREE In Conversations at the Festival Hub**

Together with **Vivid Ideas**, part of the world's largest festival of light, music and ideas, Vivid Sydney, Sydney Film Festival presents five talks and panels.

Hollywood based Emmy-winning Australian actor **Ben Mendelsohn** will discuss his extraordinary career and his latest film *Una*, in Competition for the Sydney Film Prize (Saturday 10 June, 2.00pm).

Activist and Oscar-winning actor **Vanessa Redgrave** will join Margaret Pomeranz in conversation following the screening of her directorial debut, documentary **Sea Sorrow** about the global refugee crisis (Saturday 17 June, 2.00pm).

Cannes-winning Indigenous director **Warwick Thornton** will join the conversation with Sandy George following the screening of his Official Competition contender *We Don't Need a Map*. The talk (Sunday 11 June, 3.45pm) will further the themes in his film, which investigates Australia's relationship with the Southern Cross, from its place in astronomy and Indigenous spirituality to colonial history and the present day.

Emerging women directors and industry trailblazers from Europe join **Europe! Voices of Women in Film**, the Festival's program of 10 new feature films from vital European women filmmakers, to take on topical subjects like the industry gender gap. Moderated by *Screen International's* Sarah Ward. (Sunday 11 June, 12.00pm).

Virtual reality pioneers **Shaun Gladwell** and **Leo Faber** will talk experience engineering, creativity and their ground-breaking new collective BADFAITH, at the Hub. A mash-up of art, film and experimental experiences, this is a chance to find out what is at the cutting edge of the new medium (Tuesday 13 June, 5.00pm).



## **FREE After the Movie Discussions in the Treasury Room**

The Festival has arranged for extended Q&As to take place with visiting directors after highly topical films have screened. Don't miss Dutch co-director **Arash Kamali Sarvestani** speaking about his extraordinary project *Chauka Please Tell Us the Time* (also screening at ACMI), in conjunction with The Refugee Advice and Casework Service (Sunday 11 June, 2.00pm).

Kamali Sarvestani's film documents the day to day life of detainees on Manus Island, using footage captured secretly on a mobile phone by co-creator Behrouz Boochani, a Manus Island detainee and Iranian-Kurdish journalist.

Producer **Hébert Peck** will discuss his Oscar-nominated cine-essay on race in America *I Am Not Your Negro*, narrated by Samuel L Jackson, with Documentary Australia Foundation's Mitzi Goldman (Tuesday 13 June, 2.30pm).

New Zealand filmmaker **Gaylene Preston** will discuss her year-long project *My Year with Helen* (Saturday 10 June 6:30pm) about former NZ Prime Minister and UN Secretary-General candidate Helen Clarke; and **Tusi Tamasese**, director of *One Thousand Ropes* and of the first-ever Samoan feature (*The Orator*, 2011), will talk about his approach to storytelling with Sydney Morning Herald's Garry Maddox (Monday 12 June, 4:15pm).

## **FREE Talking Movies in the Treasury Room**

The Australian filmmakers of *Australia Day* and *Ali's Wedding* will discuss the realities of multiculturalism in Australian cinema in '**Diversity on Australian Screens**' (Friday 16 June, 6.00pm).

The Australian filmmakers behind *That's Not Me* and *OtherLife* will provide an insiders' guide to low budget filmmaking in '**Low Budget? No Worries**' (Monday 12 June, 6.00pm).

Author of new book *Miller and Max: George Miller and the Making of a Film Legend*, Luke Buckmaster will spill secrets in '**Things You Never Knew About Mad Max**' (Wednesday 14 June, 6.00pm).

The Australian punk phenomena will get a revival in '**Smash it Up: A Queen's Birthday Conversation**', taking place after the screening of Derek Jarman's iconoclastic genre-buster *Jubilee* (Monday 12 June, 8.00pm).

And Sydney Film Festival Animation programmer **Malcolm Turner** will have '**An Animated Conversation**' with an icon: **Ann Marie Fleming**, the world-renowned animator of *Window Horses* (Saturday 17 June, 6.00pm).

## **FREE PARTIES AT THE HUB**

To celebrate the Australian premiere of Kate Hickey's *Roller Dreams* documentary about California's skate-dance scene, the Festival will bring Venice Beach vibes to The Hub with the **Roller Boogie Party** featuring Alex Dimitriades (aka the Boogie Monster) and Soul-of-Sydney DJ Phil Toke, complete with skate-dancers (Sunday 11 June 9:00pm).

A crash and burn **punk party** featuring Australian band Nancy Vandal alongside former roadie for The Damned, DJ Richard Kuipers, will mark the Queen's birthday (Monday 12 June 9:00pm), following the screening of Derek Jarman's 1978 cult classic *Jubilee*.

And Australian indie-icons **The Go-Betweens** will be venerated in a party, following the World Premiere of Kriv Stenders' documentary *The Go-Betweens: Right Here*, that celebrates their indelible music, with DJs covering everything from enduring early singles to the band's final ARIA-winning album



Oceans Apart (Thursday 15 June 9:00pm).

## The Festival Hub at Town Hall:

### VIRTUAL REALITY AT THE HUB

#### VR Experience 1:

- **LIFE OF US** | 2017 | USA | Chris Milk

#### VR Experience 2:

- **MIYUBI** | USA | 2017 | Australian Premiere | Felix Lajeunesse, Paul Raphael

#### VR Experience 3:

- **ORBITAL VANITAS** | Australia | 2017 | Australian Premiere | Shaun Gladwell, Leo Faber
- **EXTRAVAGANZA** | USA | 2017 | Australian Premiere | Ethan Shaftel
- **SERGEANT JAMES** | France | 2017 | Australian Premiere | Alexandre Perez
- **I, PHILIP** | France | 2016 | Pierre Zandrowicz
- **THE OTHER DAKAR** | Senegal | 2017 | Australian Premiere | Selly Rabe Kane
- **ONLY AT THE AIR, ONLY AT EACH OTHER** | Australia | 2017 | World Premiere | Greg Ferris

#### VR Experience 4:

- **ASHES TO ASHES** | Netherlands | 2016 | Australian Premiere | Ingejan Ligthart Schenk, Jamille Van Wijngaarde, Steye Hallema
- **ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WESTERN SUBURBS** | Australia | 2017 | Matthew Bate
- **THE TURNING FOREST** | Australia | 2016 | Oscar Raby
- **UNDER A CRACKED SKY** | USA | 2017 | Australian Premiere
- **SERVER ROOM SYMPHONY** | Australia | 2016 | Australian Premiere | Alex Smith

### SYDNEY CONTEMPORARY EXHIBITION

- **Sam Holt** | Arterreal Gallery, Rozelle
- **Jess MacNeil** | Arterreal Gallery, Rozelle
- **Rochelle Haley** | Galerie Pompom, Chippendale
- **Ron Adams** | Galerie Pompom, Chippendale

### TALKS

#### In Conversation at the Festival Hub:

- **In Conversation With Ben Mendelsohn** Saturday 10 June, 2.00pm  
Following the screening of *Una*, Ben Mendelsohn will discuss the film and his extraordinary career from the beginnings in Australia to his more recent international successes.
- **In Conversation With European Women Filmmakers** Sunday 11 June, 12.00pm  
Meet emerging women directors in town for our Europe! Voices of Women in Film program and hear what they have to say about the industry gender gap. Moderated by *Screen International's* Sarah Ward.
- **In Conversation With Warwick Thornton** Sunday 11 June, 3.45pm  
Following the screening of *We Don't Need A Map*, join filmmaker and artist Warwick Thornton in conversation with film writer Sandy George.
- **In Conversation With Vanessa Redgrave** Saturday 17 June, 2.00pm  
Following the screening of her directorial debut, the documentary *Sea Sorrow*, join activist and actor Vanessa Redgrave in conversation with film commentator Margaret Pomeranz.
- **In Conversation With Virtual reality pioneers Shaun Gladwell and Leo Faber** Tuesday 13 June, 5.00pm  
The punks of VR will talk experience engineering, creativity and their ground-breaking new collective BADFAITH, at the Hub. A mash-up of art, film and experimental experiences, this is a chance to find out what is at the cutting edge of the new medium.



### After the Movie Discussions in the Treasury Room:

- **Extended Q&A: *My Year With Helen*** Saturday 10 June, 6.30pm  
New Zealand filmmaker Gaylene Preston will discuss her year-long project with former NZ Prime Minister and UN Secretary-General candidate Helen Clark.
- **Extended Q&A: *Chauka Please Tell Us The Time*** Sunday 11 June, 2.00pm  
Join Dutch co-director Arash Kamali Sarvestani to hear more about this extraordinary project. Presented in conjunction with The Refugee Advice and Casework Service.
- **Extended Q&A: *One Thousand Ropes*** Monday 12 June, 4.15pm  
Tusi Tamasese, the director of *One Thousand Ropes* and of the first-ever Samoan feature (*The Orator*, 2011) will chat about his approach to storytelling with *SMH*'s Garry Maddox.
- **Extended Q&A: *I Am Not Your Negro*** Tuesday 13 June, 2.30pm  
Join producer Hebert Peck in discussion with Documentary Australia Foundation's Mitzi Goldman after the screening of this most topical film.

### Talking Movies in the Treasury Room:

- **Low Budget? No Worries** Monday 12 June, 6.00pm  
Join the Australian filmmakers behind *That's Not Me* and *OtherLife* to get the insiders' guide to low budget filmmaking.
- **Smash It Up: A Queen's Birthday Conversation** Monday 12 June, 8.00pm  
*The Music* presents an inside look at Derek Jarman's iconoclastic genre-buster *Jubilee*, and the punk phenomena in Australia, from the UK's safety pin-stylin' and Johnny Rotten swagger to the sweaty pub-rock masses of Sydney that defined a generation.
- **Things You Never Knew About Mad Max** Wednesday 14 June, 6.00pm  
With his new book 'Miller and Max: George Miller and the Making of a Film Legend', *Guardian Australia* film critic Luke Buckmaster discusses some of the revelations uncovered, explores the legacy of *Mad Max* in detail, and reflects on the experience of writing 'Miller and Max'.
- **Diversity On Australian Screens** Friday 16 June, 6.00pm  
Are we diverse enough and do we like what we see on the screen? The filmmakers of *Australia Day* and *Ali's Wedding* discuss the realities of multiculturalism in Australian cinema.
- **An Animated Conversation** Saturday 17 June, 6.00pm  
Sydney Film Festival Animation programmer, Malcolm Turner, in conversation with Ann Marie Fleming, the world renowned animator of *Window Horses – The Poetic Persian Epiphany of Rosie Ming*.

### PARTIES AT THE HUB

#### **Roller Dreams** Sunday 11 June, 9.00pm

To celebrate the Australian premiere of Kate Hickey's *Roller Dreams* documentary about California's skate-dance scene, Sydney Film Festival brings those Venice Beach vibes to The Hub with a Roller Boogie Party that will have you bouncing and busting all your best disco moves. Good Times are guaranteed with serious roller-jam collector-selector Alex Dimitriades (aka the Boogie Monster) joining Soul-of-Sydney DJ Phil Toke, skate-dancers and more.

#### **Jubilee** Monday 12 June, 9.00pm

What better way to mark the Queen's birthday than with a crash and burn punk party featuring Aussie band Nancy Vandal alongside former roadie for The Damned, DJ Richard Kuipers. Following the screening of Derek Jarman's 1978 cult classic *Jubilee*, we'll turn up the volume at The Hub where Frenzal Rhomb's Jason Walley will rejoin his Nancy Vandal bandmates to cough up a storm with classics like 'God Save The Queen', while Richard Kuipers spins all your other favourite punk 45s from '77 and beyond. Be sure to check out the rest of our punk film program including the new John Lydon doco.



**The Go-Betweens** Thursday 15 June, 9.00pm

Join us and some very special guests for a night that celebrates the indelible music of Australian indie-icons *The Go-Betweens*. Right after the World Premiere of Kriv Stenders' documentary *The Go-Betweens: Right Here*, friends, fans and the famous will gather to re-live and re-love a remarkable back catalogue. Hear DJs covering everything from enduring early singles 'Lee Remick', 'Cattle and Cane' and 'Streets Of Your Town', to the band's final ARIA-winning album *Oceans Apart* and crowning tune 'Darlinghurst Nights', they'll all be right here.

**Sydney Film Festival runs 7 – 18 June 2017.**

**Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2017 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit [sff.org.au](http://sff.org.au) for more information.**

#### **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 7 June to Sunday 18 June 2017**, the 64<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, in-depth discussions, international guests and more.

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: *Aquarius* (2016); *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, Randwick Ritz, Casula Powerhouse, the Festival Hub at Sydney Town Hall and SFF Outdoor Screen in Pitt Street Mall.

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 64<sup>th</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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#### **ABOUT VIVID IDEAS**

Vivid Ideas is Asia Pacific's annual celebration of innovation and creativity, and is held as part of Vivid Sydney, the world's largest festival of light, music and ideas. Vivid Ideas brings the world's greatest minds, innovators and industry leaders to Sydney to build engagement between the creative industries and the broader economy, exploring trends, movements and opportunities that shape society and business through public talks, industry seminars, conferences, workshops and debates. Vivid Sydney is owned, managed and produced by Destination NSW, the NSW Government's tourism and major events agency and runs from 26 May to 17 June 2017. For more information visit [www.vividsydney.com/ideas](http://www.vividsydney.com/ideas)

