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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2016 OFFICIAL COMPETITION JURY

Sydney Film Festival announces the 2016 Official Competition jury, who will judge the 12 titles in the Official Competition and award the Sydney Film Prize and \$60,000 cash to the winner.

The 2016 Official Competition jury members are: Jury President, international programmer and producer **Simon Field** (UK), prolific writer, director and producer **Robert Connolly** (Australia), Dublin International Film Festival's Director **Grainne Humphreys** (Ireland), acclaimed producer **Bridget Ikin** (Australia), and innovative documentarian **Kazuhiro Soda** (Japan).

The internationally recognised Official Competition, now in its ninth year, recognises courageous, audacious and cutting-edge film. The winner of the Sydney Film Prize is announced at the Festival's Closing Night ceremony at the State Theatre on Sunday 19 June.

"The 2016 jury is made up of five Australian and international film professionals of exceptional talent and vision, led by Simon Field," says **Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley**. "The Official Competition features some of the most exciting films and filmmakers in the world right now, so the jury is in for some tough decisions."

"I'm honoured and very happy to have been invited to lead this Sydney Film Festival jury," said **Simon Field**. "It's a delightful and very intriguing group and I'm sure we are going to have a very rewarding and enjoyable experience stimulated by a strong selection of films and the challenge of making a choice."

The jury members for the 2016 Sydney Film Festival Official Competition:

The 2016 **Jury President Simon Field** (UK) began his career as a lecturer, writer and film programmer. In 1988 he became Director of Cinema at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts. Then from 1996 until 2004 he was Director of the International Film Festival Rotterdam in the Netherlands. From 2006 to 2007 he was Artistic Director of International Programming at the Dubai International Film Festival. Since 2004 he has been with UK based production company Illuminations Films and recently has mainly produced, with Keith Griffiths, the recent features of the Thai director Apichatpong Weerasethakul. These include *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (SFF 2010), which won the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or in 2010 and Apichatpong's latest feature *Cemetery of Splendour* (SFF 2015), which also premiered at Cannes.

Robert Connolly (Australia) is the writer and director of the feature films *The Bank*, *Three Dollars*, *Balibo* and *Paper Planes*. In television his credits include *The Slap*, *Underground: The Julian Assange Story* and *Barracuda*. He has screened at many film festivals including international festivals in Toronto, Berlin, San Sebastian and Busan. Robert also produced the award-winning films *The Boys* (the restored version of this film is premiering at SFF 2016), *Romulus*, *My Father* and created the innovative cinema event *The Turning*.

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Grainne Humphreys (Ireland) was born in Dublin and has worked in film programming for over twenty years. She started her career working with young audiences with the Junior Dublin Film Festival in 1994. In 1995, she joined the Irish Film Institute as Education Officer and expanded her role to include programming seasons on Andy Warhol, Agnes Varda and Harold Pinter. She became Assistant Director in 2001 and programmed both the Stranger Than Fiction Documentary Festival and the Dublin French Film Festival from 2002 to 2007. Among other projects, she co-edited *Ireland into Film*, a series of publications on a number of key Irish films. She has served on the jury member at several international film festivals and has coordinated a number of Irish film seasons at events all around the world. She is a Board Member of the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris and has been Festival Director of the Dublin International Film Festival since 2007. An acclaimed and popular showcase of world cinema, the Dublin International Film Festival is dedicated to presenting and supporting the very best in Irish and international film. Held annually each February since 2003, the eleven-day event showcases 140 feature films, alongside public interviews, industry workshops and master classes.

Bridget Ikin (Australia) has worked as an independent producer in Australia and New Zealand for many years. Her productions include Jane Campion's *An Angel At My Table*, Sarah Watt's two features *Look Both Ways* and *My Year Without Sex*, and Alison Maclean's beloved short *Kitchen Sink* and *Crush*. Recent works include the Grierson award winning documentary *Sherpa* (which premiered at SFF in Competition 2015) and *The Rehearsal*, reuniting Bridget with director Alison Maclean. She produced two series of the landmark documentary on Aboriginal art, *ART + SOUL*, with curator Hetti Perkins. Bridget Ikin and partner John Maynard have also established Felix Media, to collaborate with artists on exceptional projects for cinema and gallery presentation. Hossein Valamanesh's *Char Soo*, a 4-screen work shot in Iran, is being presented at Carriageworks during SFF 2016, in association with the Festival. She has also produced various moving image projects for Angelica Mesiti, including *Citizens Band* and *The Calling*.

Kazuhiro Soda (Japan) is a Japanese filmmaker living in New York. He practices an observational method of documentary filmmaking in which he strictly prohibits himself from doing pre-shoot research or writing a synopsis. His debut feature documentary *Campaign* (2007, SFF 2007) was invited to film festivals such as the Berlinale and was aired in nearly 200 countries and territories around the world. It won the Peabody Award in the USA. *Mental* (2008) won the Best Documentary Award at the Busan International Film Festival and the Dubai International Film Festival. *Peace* (2010), the opening film of DMZ Documentary Festival, won the Best Documentary Award at the Hong Kong International Film Festival and the Audience Award at the Tokyo Filmex. *Theatre 1 and 2* (2012) won the young juries prize at the Festival des 3 Continents. His latest work, *Oyster Factory* (SFF 2016), premiered at the Locarno International Film Festival. He is also the author of four books published in Japan including "*The reasons why I make documentaries*". He is the president of the production company Laboratory X, Inc in New York. Soda holds a BFA in Filmmaking from the School of Visual Arts with honors, and a BA in Religious Studies from Tokyo University.

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2016 Official Competition titles:

- **APPRENTICE**
Singapore, Germany, France, Hong Kong, Qatar | 2016 | 96 mins | In English and Bahasa Malaysian with English subtitles | Australian Premiere
Director, Screenwriter: Boo Junfeng | Producer: Raymond Phathanavirangoon | Cast: Fir Rahman, Wan Hanafi Su, Mastura Ahmad | World Sales: Luxbox
- **AQUARIUS**
France, Brazil | 2016 | 141 mins | In Portuguese with English subtitles | Australian Premiere
Director, Screenwriter: Kleber Mendonça Filho | Producers: Saïd Ben Saïd, Emilie Lesclaux, Michel Merkt | Cast: Sonia Braga, Maeve Jinkings, Irandhir Santos | World Sales: SBS International
- **CERTAIN WOMEN**
USA | 2016 | 107 mins | In English | Australian Premiere
Director, Screenwriter: Kelly Reichardt | Producer: Neil Kopp | Cast: Kristen Stewart, Michelle Williams, Laura Dern | Distributor: Sony Pictures
- **THE CHILDHOOD OF A LEADER**
UK, Hungary, France | 2015 | 116 mins | In English and French with English subtitles | Australian Premiere
Director: Brady Corbet | Screenwriters: Brady Corbet, Mona Fastvold | Producers: Chris Coen, Ron Curtis, Antoine de Clermont-Tonnerre, Helena Daneilsson, Istvan Major | Cast: Liam Cunningham, Bérénice Bejo, Robert Pattinson | World Sales: Protagonist Pictures
- **THE ENDLESS RIVER**
South Africa, France | 2015 | 110 mins | In English | Australian Premiere
Director, Screenwriter: Oliver Hermanus | Producers: Didier Costet, Marvin Saven, Genevieve Hofmeyr | Cast: Nicolas Duvauchelle, Crystal-Donna Roberts, Clayton Evertson | World Sales: Urban Distribution International
- **GOLDSTONE**
Australia | 2016 | 109 mins | In English | World Premiere
Director, Screenwriter: Ivan Sen | Producers: Greer Simpkin, David Jowsey | Cast: Aaron Pedersen, Alex Russell, Jacki Weaver | Distributor: Transmission Films
- **IT'S ONLY THE END OF THE WORLD**
France, Canada | 2016 | 97 mins | In French with English subtitles | Australian Premiere
Director, Screenwriter: Xavier Dolan | Producers: Xavier Dolan, Nancy Grant, Nathanaël Karmitz, Sylvain Corbeil | Cast: Gaspard Ulliel, Vincent Cassel, Marion Cotillard | Distributor: Transmission Films
- **LAND OF MINE**
Denmark, Germany | 2015 | 101 mins | In English, German and Danish with English subtitles | Australian Premiere
Director, Screenwriter: Martin Zandvliet | Producers: Mikael Chr. Rieks, Malte Grunert | Cast: Roland Møller, Louis Hofmann, Joel Basman | Distributor: Palace Film

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- **LETTERS FROM WAR**
Portugal | 2016 | 105 mins | In Portuguese with English subtitles | Australian Premiere
Director: Ivo M. Ferreira | Screenwriters: Ivo M. Ferreira, Edgar Medina | Producers: Luís Urbano, Sandro Aguilar | Cast: Miguel Nunes, Margarida Vila-Nova, Ricardo Pereira | World Sales: The Match Factory
- **NOTES ON BLINDNESS**
UK | 2016 | 87 mins | In English | Australian Premiere
Directors, Screenwriters: Peter Middleton, James Spinney | Producers: Mike Brett, Jo-Jo Ellison, Steve Jamison, Peter Middleton, James Spinney, Alex Usborne | Cast: Dan Skinner, Simone Kirby, | World Sales: Cinephil
- **PSYCHO RAMAN**
India | 2016 | 128 mins | In Hindi with English subtitles | Australian Premiere
Director: Anurag Kashyap | Screenwriters: Vasan Bala, Anurag Kashyap | Producer: Madhu Mantena | Cast: Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Sobhita Dhulipala, Vicky Kaushal | World Sales: Stray Dogs
- **VIVA**
Ireland | 2015 | 100 mins | In Spanish with English subtitles | Australian Premiere
Director: Paddy Breathnach | Screenwriter: Mark O'Halloran | Producers: Rebecca O'Flanagan, Robert Walpole | Cast: Jorge Perugorria, Luis Alberto Garcia, Héctor Medina | Festivals: Pascale Ramonda

Guests attending from Official Competition films:

Boo Junfeng, director of Singaporean psychological drama ***Apprentice***, included in the Cannes Official Selection. Junfeng trained in film schools in Singapore and Spain and made a series of celebrated short films before graduating to feature directing. His feature length debut *Sandcastle* premiered at the International Critics' Week at Cannes in 2010. *Apprentice* producer **Raymond Phathनावirangoon** will also attend and introduce the film.

Kleber Mendonça Filho, Brazilian director of ***Aquarius*** will introduce his Australian premiere at the Festival. His narrative feature debut *Neighbouring Sounds* screened in the Sydney Film Festival Official Competition in 2012 and won the FIPRESCI Award at Rotterdam. His second feature *Aquarius* is in competition for the Palme d'Or at Cannes.

Oliver Hermanus, director of South African feature ***The Endless River***, will attend the Festival. His graduation film *Shirley Adams* (SFF 2010), played at the Locarno International Film Festival and collected numerous prizes around the world. His second feature, *Beauty* (SFF 2012), was the first Afrikaans film to compete at Cannes. It won the Queer Palm and was South Africa's official entry to the Academy Awards in 2012.

Ivan Sen, director of Australian outback noir ***Goldstone***, will introduce the World Premiere of his film on Opening Night. His debut feature *Beneath Clouds* won a Silver Bear at the 2002 Berlinale and Best Director at the 2002 AFI Awards. *Toomelah* (SFF 2011) screened in Un Certain Regard at Cannes, Official Competition at SFF and won the UNESCO award at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards. *Mystery Road* opened Sydney Film Festival in 2013. *Goldstone* producers **Greer Simpkin** and **David Jowsey**

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will also attend and introduce the film. Sen and Jowsey will appear at a free Meet the Filmmakers Talk at the Apple Store on Saturday 11 June, 5-6pm.

Ivo M. Ferreira, director of Portuguese wartime love story *Letters From War*, will introduce the Australian Premiere of his film. Born in Lisbon, he turned from documentaries to feature films, directing *Em Volta* in 2002, and *April Showers*, which premiered at Rotterdam, in 2009.

Peter Middleton, British director of *Notes on Blindness*, is known for his adaptation of Australian John Hull's diary materials, first in his short film *Rainfall*, and secondly in his Emmy award-winning short film, *Notes on Blindness* (SFF 2013), which screened at Sundance. Middleton will appear at a free Meet the Filmmakers Talk at the Apple Store on Sunday 19 June, 11:30am-12:30pm.

Anurag Kashyap, director of Indian thriller *Psycho Raman*, selected for the Cannes Directors' Fortnight is a leading figure of independent Indian cinema. Kashyap has directed landmark films such as *Dev D*, *Black Friday* and *Gangs of Wasseypur* (SFF 2012 Official Competition) and produced *Monsoon Shootout* (SFF 2013) and *The Lunchbox* (SFF 2014).

Paddy Breathnach, Irish director of *Viva* will attend the Festival and introduce each screening of his film. His first feature, *Alisa*, was a prize-winner at the San Sebastian Film Festival, as was his second feature, 1997's *I Went Down* starring Brendan Gleeson. His filmography has since diversified to include 2001's *Blow Dry*, the box-office hit *Man About Dog*, and the horror film *Shrooms* (2006). *Viva Cuba Party*, a free Cuban-themed party will follow the premiere of the film at The Hub at Town Hall.

Sydney Film Festival runs 8 – 19 June 2016.

Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2016 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit sff.org.au for more information.

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

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From **Wednesday 8 June to Sunday 19 June 2016**, the 63rd 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. Each year the Festival's programming team curates 12 days of cinema sourced from world-famous film festivals, including Cannes, Sundance, Toronto and the Berlinale; as well as Australia's finest productions.

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

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winners are: *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, Casula Powerhouse, the Festival Hub at Sydney Town Hall and SFF Outdoor Screen.

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.

The 63rd 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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