

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

6-17 JUNE 2018

MEDIA RELEASE

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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL HUB: WORLD CLASS VR, TALKS, & PARTIES

The 65th Sydney Film Festival (June 6-17) announces that the Festival Hub at Town Hall will be a 360 degree Festival experience, with filmmaker talks, panels, parties, and an expanded virtual reality (VR) program featuring world-class experiences from prestigious film festivals around the globe, curated by content collective BADFAITH.

Open to the public all nights, and select days from 7-17 June, The Hub will feature a Happy Hour special for the first time at its pop up bar between 4:30pm and 6pm on weekdays, with drinks from Archie Rose Distilling Co., Eden Road Wines and Young Henrys.

“Selected from the likes of Sundance, Venice, and Tribeca Film Festivals, content collective BADFAITH’s curation is a diverse selection of mind-bending, incredible experiences,” said **Festival Director Nashen Moodley**. “Along with provocative talks and panels, and outstanding parties, The Hub at Town Hall is the beating heart of the Festival.”

“We’re thrilled to bringing such a strong line up of Australian premieres to the VR program for 2018, exhibiting seventeen works from some of the top immersive storytellers from across the globe,” said VR program curator **Leo Faber, from BADFAITH**.

“This year we have innovated our curation process to create a series of distinct viewing experiences – amazing Australian work in Home Grown, the boundless imaginations of Asia’s top creators in Asia Immersed, one of a kind experiences only possible via VR in Unseen Worlds, mind-blowing interactive works in the Planet Immersive program, cutting edge shared interactive experiences like *Lambchild Superstar*, plus the world premiere of the moving and powerful *Storm Riders*, an immersive feature documentary by acclaimed artist Shaun Gladwell,” he said.

“We’ve moved beyond just the wow factor in VR and are now seeing the language of cinematic VR starting to evolve and take shape. It is truly an honour to have a front row seat in the emergence of a new artform in its own right, and to give Festival-goers the opportunity to bear witness to the genesis of this new cultural force,” he said.

VIRTUAL REALITY AT THE HUB

Artist Shaun Gladwell and producer Leo Faber from VR content collective **BADFAITH** have curated a VR program of 17 highly immersive, world-class VR films, from incredible Australian experiences to favourites from the world’s most prestigious film festivals.

Program highlights include *Isle of Dogs VR*, a step inside the miniature world of Wes Anderson’s new stop-motion film, from Sundance Film Festival’s New Frontier program; and the World Premiere of *Storm Riders*, a boundary-breaking film from BADFAITH for SBS, featuring two female Muslim skateboarders on Bondi Beach, harking back to Shaun Gladwell’s iconic artwork *Storm Sequence*.



Other Sundance hits are astral space adventure ***Space Explorers: A New Dawn***; compelling documentary ***The Sun Ladies***, bringing audiences face-to-face with Yazidi women troops at war with ISIS; moonlit backyard cricket showdown ***Summation of Force***; and ***Your Spiritual Temple Sucks***, a Taiwanese temple adventure featuring the Thunder God.

From SXSW is the deeply moving ***ParraGirls***, unlocking disturbing stories from a former Australian child welfare institution; ***Rone***, a stunning 360-degree examination of works by the internationally renowned Australian street artist; and ***Everything Flows***, a surreal visit to director Yumeng Du's hometown of Wuhan, blending painting, video, and dreams.

In the Pictures is a spectacular animated experience from Venice Film Festival, following a boy transported to a spectacular fantasy world.

Two experiences will allow audiences to tailor their own captivating VR experiences: from Tribeca Film Festival, ***Lambchild Superstar: Making Music in the Menagerie of the Holy Cow***, a collaboration with OK Go frontman Damian Kulash featuring music-making robots; and a free VR experience at the Hub - ***TerraChi***, a joint work between UTS students and production powerhouse Animal Logic allowing users to grow trees, create fireballs and shape the earth.

Confronting environmental films include: the World Premiere of Australian VR animation ***Coral and I***, examining the impact of humans on the environment; and ***Greenland Melting***, allowing users to witness climate change devastation first-hand.

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. Local and international guests will feature across two FREE programs of **Talks**, including five selections presented by **Vivid Ideas**, part of the world's largest festival of light, music and ideas, Vivid Sydney.

FREE Talks

The **FREE Festival Talks** create a space for audiences, filmmakers and industry professionals to progress a dialogue about the important topics and issues of the year, addressed in Festival films.

Rising New Zealand stars **Jackie van Beek** and **Madeleine Sami** (*The Breaker Upperers*) will be part of a Meet the Filmmakers talk in the Treasury Room at Town Hall (Saturday, 9 June, 4:00pm) to discuss their film, where almost all creative roles are held by women.

Australian director **Benjamin Gilmour**, lead actor **Sam Smith** and producer **John Maynard** (*Jirga*) will participate in an Extended Q&A in the Treasury Room (Saturday, 9 June, 2:00pm) discussing the extraordinary story of how the film was made on-the-fly in war-torn Afghanistan.

Thai auteur **Pen-ek Ratanaruang** (*Samui Song*) will join a cast of Australian film writers to discuss the worldwide obsession with cinema, in the context of the festival's 65th anniversary, in the Treasury Room (Thursday, 14 June, 6:00pm).

Following the premiere of his film, Australian director **Richard Todd** and transplant recipient **Holly Ralph** (*Dying to Live*) will participate in an extended Festival Q&A in the Treasury Room (Friday 8 June 8:30pm) discussing issues surrounding their film, examining why Australia is lagging behind in organ and tissue donation.

Following the premiere of *Half the Picture*, a panel of Australian women filmmakers will discuss gender discrimination in the Australian film industry in the Treasury Room (Sunday, 10 June, 4:15pm).

Free Talks taking place around town include a Masterclass with British experimental artist **Andrew Kötting** (*Lek and the Dogs*) at Carriageworks (Sunday, 17 June, 10am), discussing his creative process.

Before the screening of *The Field Guide to Evil* at Dendy Newtown, Guest Programmer Richard Kuipers will discuss all things freaky at a free Talk (Saturday, 16 June, 7:30pm) presented by the University of Sydney.

Taking place at AFTRS will be an Auslan interpreted Meet the Filmmakers session (Saturday, 16 June, 4:15pm) with Screenability guests discussing opportunities for filmmakers with disability featuring: Stevie Cruz-Martin (*Broken*), Dieter Knierim (*Intimate Encounters 20 Years On*), and Samia Halabi (*Tip Of My Tongue*), and Israeli filmmakers with disability **Elad Cohen** and **Iris Ben Moshe** (*The Sign for Love*), and Austria's **Birgit Gohlke** and **Petra Nickel** (*Stuttering – My Constant Companion*).

FREE FILMMAKER TALKS WITH VIVID IDEAS

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

Talks with Australian guests include genre maestro **Leigh Whannell** discussing his latest project *Upgrade*, screening in the program's Freak Me Out strand, as well as his career to date, from the *Saw* franchise to *Insidious* (Saturday 9 June 2:00pm, SFF Hub); and highly political artist duo **Soda_Jerk**, who will engage in an extended Q&A following the screening of their blistering cinema mash-up film *Terror Nullius* (Thursday 7 June 8:30pm, SFF Hub).

Emerging women directors and industry trailblazers from Europe will participate in public talk **In Conversation with European Women Filmmakers** (Sunday 10 June 10:30am, SFF Hub), a vital discussion on the industry gender gap. Participating will be: Swedish director Isabella Eklöf (of Danish feature *Holiday*), acclaimed Dutch director Nanouk Leopold and producer Stienette Bosklopper (*Cobain*), Swedish actress-director Fanni Metelius (*The Heart*), Austrian filmmaker Katharina Muckstein (*L'Animale*), Finnish filmmaker Virpi Suutari (*Entrepreneur*), Georgia's Ana Urushadze (*Scary Mother*), Kosovar filmmaker Blerta Zeqiri (*The Marriage*), and Polish director Jagoda Szalc (*Tower. A Bright Day.*).

Screen Producers Australia's **Matthew Deaner** and **Sandy George** will lead a panel of industry specialists in discussing the impacts of pirating and streaming, and how audiences can keep up (Friday 8 June 4:00pm, SFF Hub).

Following the screening of the final program in the Festival's celebration of films funded by Screen Australia's Indigenous Department, a panel of former funders and filmmakers will discuss 25 years of industry change and Indigenous Australian filmmaking (Sunday 17 June 3:45pm, Art Gallery of NSW Theatre).

FREE PARTIES AT THE HUB

Following the Australian Premiere of art collective Soda_Jerk's cinematic mash-up film *Terror Nullius*, a **Mad Mix Party** will kick on at The Hub (Thursday, 7 June, 8:30pm), with DJs and VJs churning out mashed up tunes and remixed found footage.

The **Boys II Girlz Party** (Saturday, 9 June, 2018) will pump classic pop hits across generations following the Australian premiere of *I Used To Be Normal: A Boyband Fangirl Story*, with a karaoke selector

offering everything from The Jackson 5 to One Direction, Take That to NSYNC.

To celebrate Spike Lee's new film *BlackKkKansman*, Sydney's best DJs will fire up the dancefloor at **Spike's Juke Joint** (Saturday, 16 June, 8:30pm), drawing from five decades of the much-loved filmmaker's soundtracks, from funk to soul and disco to Blaxploitation music for a post-film boogie.

The full Sydney Film Festival 2018 program can be found online at sff.org.au.

Sydney Film Festival runs 6 – 17 June 2018.

Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2018 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](#)

EDITOR'S NOTES

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From Wednesday 6 June to Sunday 17 June 2018, the 65th 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: *On Body and Soul* (2017); *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 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 65th Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW and Destination NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the City of Sydney. The Festival's Strategic Partner is the NSW Government via its tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW.

ABOUT VIVID IDEAS

Vivid Ideas brings together the world's greatest minds, innovators and creatives for a program of public talks, industry seminars, conferences, workshops and debates exploring creativity as a catalyst for change and celebrating Sydney as a creative industries hub of Asia Pacific. Vivid Ideas is presented as part of Vivid Sydney, which is owned, managed and produced by Destination NSW, the NSW Government's tourism and major events agency and runs from 25 May to 16 June 2018. For more information visit www.vividsydney.com/ideas

