



## MEDIA RELEASE

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

### SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL SPOTLIGHTS EUROPEAN WOMEN IN FILM

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The 64<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival (7-18 June), in partnership with European Film Promotion and *Screen International* today announced **Europe! Voices of Women in Film**: a program of 10 new feature films from vital European women filmmakers.

The program launched in 2016 will be enriched by **seven industry guests** from across the continent, who will introduce their films and take part in a public talk: **In Conversation with European Women Filmmakers**, Sunday 11 June, noon, at the Festival Hub, Sydney Town Hall.

“**Europe! Voices of Women in Film** is a fantastic platform for emerging female European talents to share their work and experiences with the Australian film industry and fans of cinema,” said **Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley**.

“Audiences can discover a huge range of engaging stories, both true and imagined. These tales told from uniquely female perspectives reveal incredible aspirations, realities, tragedies, histories, and friendships, which allow us to see the world differently,” he said.

“After a successful launch last year, EFP is delighted to again team up with the Sydney Film Festival to highlight the outstanding achievements of some of Europe's most promising women directors,” said **EFP Managing Director Sonja Heinen**.

“We have pleasure in raising awareness of their special and different cinematic voices and original themes. With the support of our members, EFP is very proud to welcome representatives of these exciting films to Sydney, to share their experience and visions with Australia's enthusiastic film community and the industry,” she said.

“The industry-wide underrepresentation of female filmmakers is a disparity that can't be ignored,” said **Sarah Ward, Screen International film critic**. “Indeed, shining a spotlight on the women attempting to redress the imbalance is what this showcase is all about, and why Screen International is honoured to join forces with European Film Promotion and the Sydney Film Festival.”

“The program highlights 10 stellar new features from vital European talents leading the charge for change,” she said.

#### **Europe! Voices of Women in film screenings, guests and talks include:**

##### **Films:**

- **Ama-San**  
Saturday 10 June, 10.15am, Event Cinemas George St  
Tuesday 13 June, 10.00am, State Theatre



- ***Axolotl Overkill***  
Friday 9 June, 8.10pm, Dendy Newtown  
Sunday 11 June, 8.00pm, Event Cinemas George St
- ***House of Others*** | Introduced by Georgian filmmaker **Rusudan Glurjidze**  
Saturday 10 June, 6.20pm, Dendy Opera Quays  
Monday 12 June, 1.55pm, Dendy Opera Quays
- ***Mister Universo***  
Saturday 10 June, 4.00pm, Dendy Opera Quays  
Sunday 11 June, 4.30pm, Dendy Newtown  
Monday 12 June, 3.35pm, Dendy Newtown
- ***Sami Blood***  
Friday 9 June, 4.45pm, State Theatre  
Sunday 11 June, 3.10pm, Event Cinemas George St
- ***School Life*** | Introduced by Irish filmmakers **Neasa Ní Chianáin and David Rane**  
Friday 9 June, 10.00am, State Theatre  
Saturday 10 June, 2.00pm, Dendy Opera Quays
- ***The Divine Order*** | Introduced by Swiss actress **Rachel Braunschweig**  
Friday 9 June, 6.15pm, Dendy Opera Quays  
Sunday 11 June, 6.00pm, Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne
- ***The Levelling*** | Introduced by UK filmmaker **Hope Dickson Leach**  
Thursday 8 June, 6.00pm, Event Cinemas George St  
Saturday 10 June, 1.50pm, Dendy Opera Quays
- ***When the Day Had No Name*** | Introduced by Macedonian filmmaker **Teona Strugar Mitevska**  
Thursday 8 June, 7.50pm, Dendy Opera Quays  
Sunday 11 June, 1.45pm, Dendy Opera Quays
- ***Wolf and Sheep*** | Introduced by Afghan filmmaker **Shahrbanoo Sadat**  
Sunday 11 June, 3.50pm, State Theatre  
Monday 12 June, 9.30am, State Theatre

#### Talks:

- **In Conversation at the Festival Hub: 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.

#### 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.

## **DOCUMENTARIES**

### ***SCHOOL LIFE***

Director: Neasa Ní Chianáin | Ireland, Spain | 2016 | 100 mins | In English | Australian Premiere  
A spirited documentary featuring two soon-to-retain teachers at a rambling Irish boarding school who view their charges with equal parts eccentricity and care. John and Amanda Leyden have taught there for over 40 years and no doubt they've seen it all, but their dedication (underlined in the film's original title, *In Loco Parentis*) is unwavering. Their approach is undoubtedly archaic, bringing to mind *Goodbye Mr Chips*, but nonetheless they forge a bond with 21st century teen rebels and homesick kids alike. Ní Chianáin's fly-on-the-wall camera reaches every nook and cranny, but is never intrusive. Rather it captures the lives of teachers and students with liberal poignancy and charm.

### ***AMA-SAN***

Director, Screenwriter: Cláudia Varejão | Portugal, Switzerland, Japan | 113 mins | In Japanese with English subtitles | Australian Premiere  
For centuries, the *ama* (literally 'women of the sea') of the Shima Peninsula have been diving for seafood. Portuguese director Cláudia Varejão's lyrical film captures three generations of divers (with an average age of 67) as they head into the Pacific, folding their traditional headdresses and adjusting their goggles. As the women plunge beneath the ocean, silence surrounds them and time slows – a fitting analogy for this enduring but endangered tradition. This spellbinding film is awash in hypnotic visuals and reflects on past and future, while questioning common concepts of femininity.

## **FEATURES**

### ***AXOLOTL OVERKILL***

Director, Screenwriter: Helene Hegemann | Germany | 94 mins | In English and German with English subtitles | Australian Premiere

The Sundance cinematography award-winner, directed by Helene Hegemann and based on the controversial novel she wrote at 17, is a wild ride through the Berlin party scene. 16-year-old Mifti is largely ignored by her wealthy father and struggles to connect with her peers, so she immerses herself in the world of adults and parties, drugs, love affairs and casual sex. With a great soundtrack of soul, R&B and hip hop, Hegemann tells a stylish, impressionistic tale about the difficulties of finally growing up.



### **THE DIVINE ORDER**

Director, Screenwriter: Petra Volpe | Switzerland | 2017 | In Swiss and German with English subtitles | Australian Premiere

In this rousing, inspirational film, a group of women in a small Swiss village band together and campaign for the women's right to vote ahead of a crucial ballot in 1971. A young wife and mother, Nora lives a quiet life, but she's encouraged by the actions of a formidable group of like-minded women to fight for her rights, undeterred by her conservative neighbours. With a fantastic ensemble cast, *The Divine Order* shines a light on a battle for justice and a historic, overdue victory.

### **HOUSE OF OTHERS**

Director: Rusudan Glurjidze | Georgia, Russia, Spain, Croatia | 2016 | In Georgian and Russian with English subtitles | Australian Premiere

A visually breathtaking drama about two families struggling to adjust in post-war Georgia of the 1990s. Following the Civil War, families on the victorious side are granted the homes of the defeated. Now in a time of peace, these families try to embrace their chance to start again, but are haunted by the sins of the past. Based in part on her own life story, Rusudan Glurjidze's remarkably assured debut is an atmospheric film that has earned comparisons to the works of Tarkovsky and Bergman. Winner of the East of the West Grand Prix at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival.

### **THE LEVELLING**

Director, Screenwriter: Hope Dickson Leach | UK | 83 mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Following her brother's apparent suicide, Clare (Ellie Kendrick, *Game of Thrones*) returns to the place she grew up to find the family home and dairy farm in Somerset in disrepair, on the verge of collapse. As Clare discovers the scale of the problem, and learns more about her brother's death, she is forced to confront her stubborn, uncommunicative father Aubrey (David Troughton). Perfectly acted and directed with complete control of the complex and emotional subject matter, *The Levelling* provides a rich and rewarding experience.

### **MISTER UNIVERSO**

Directors: Tizza Covi, Rainer Frimmel | Austria, Italy | 90 mins | In Italian with English subtitles | Australian Premiere

When Tairo loses his talisman, he loses his ability to perform with his lions. Bereft, he feels his only solution is to travel across Italy to replace his lucky charm, a bar of iron bent into the shape of a horseshoe, gifted to him by former Mister Universe strongman Arthur Robin. Through Tairo's journey to find 'Mister Universo' we meet a wonderful, engaging group of characters who remain committed to the disappearing world of the travelling circus. Filled with dry humour and beautifully shot on 35mm film, *Mister Universo* is a charming modern fable, made all the more powerful by the real circus personalities playing versions of themselves.

### **SAMI BLOOD**

Director, Screenwriter: Amanda Kernell | Ireland, Spain | 2016 | 100 mins | In English | Australian Premiere

A multiple award winner and hit at festivals including Toronto, Sundance and Venice, this is the moving story of a Sámi girl who severs ties with her family and her Arctic culture. Growing up in 1930s Sweden where the indigenous Sámi people were discriminated against, 14-year-old Elle is bright and ambitious but is stymied. When she is forced to endure race biology examinations, she decides to take on a new identity. Lene Cecilia Sparrok is astonishing as the conflicted young woman in this powerful debut by Amanda Kernell.

### **WHEN THE DAY HAD NO NAME**

Director, Screenwriter: Teona Strugar Mitevska | Macedonia, Belgium, Slovenia | 84 mins | In Macedonian with English subtitles | Australian Premiere

A devastating look at ethnic tensions and the effect of the cycle of violence on young Balkan men. Best mates Milan and Petar are planning a night out with their group of teenage friends. Over the course of this night, these young men get drunk, visit a sex worker and get involved in an ethnic



clash. *When the Day Had No Name* imagines the build-up to a real life tragedy in Macedonia from 2012, and in the process creates a portrait of a troubled generation.

### **WOLF AND SHEEP**

Director, Screenwriter: Shahrbanoo Sadat | Denmark, France, Sweden, Afghanistan | 86 mins | In Hazaragi with English subtitles | Australian Premiere

This debut feature by a ground breaking Afghan woman director is an extraordinarily daring and rare view of Afghan rural life and mythology. Winner of the top prize at Cannes Directors' Fortnight, *Wolf and Sheep* is set in an Afghan village, where the simple life is enriched with stories of mystery and imagination. Our view into this timeless community is through its children, who mimic the adults in their gossiping and lewd language. Boys and girls don't mix, but outsiders Qodrat and Sediqa defy the rules and develop a beautiful friendship. "I want to get rid of the clichés about this country which has such rich culture and create new imagery to portray it," says Sadat. Using a cast of non-actors, Sadat has created a unique view of Afghanistan replete with all the mundanities and difficulties of life, but also with myth and magic: tales are told of a wolf who walks on two legs, discarding its skin to emerge as a beautiful green fairy. Sadat's deft use of magic realism in creating a portrait of her nation marks her as an incredible talent to watch.

