

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

**2017 SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS**

**The 64th Sydney Film Festival (7-18 June) has announced the return of eight industry accolades to be awarded at the 2017 Festival, and a celebration of the Festival’s Official Competition - the Sydney Film Prize – now in its 10th year.**

**OFFICIAL COMPETITION**

“The Festival is very proud that this year the Official Competition marks a decade of awarding the **$60,000 Sydney Film Prize** for audacious, cutting-edge and courageous cinema,” said **Festival Director Nashen Moodley**.

“Among the 12 films selected to compete are Warwick Thornton’s ***We Don’t Need a Map*** and celebrated Australian theatre director Benedict Andrews’ debut feature ***Una***,starring Emmy-winning actor Ben Mendelsohn.

“Exciting new works from acclaimed directors Sofia Coppola (***The Beguiled***), Michael Haneke (***Happy End***), Raoul Peck (***I Am Not Your Negro***), Amat Escalante (***The Untamed***) and groundbreaking Afghan woman director Shahrbanoo Sadat (***Wolf and Sheep***) are also among the contenders.

“Awarded at the Festival’s Closing Night Gala on Sunday 18 June, the calibre for the Sydney Film Prize couldn’t be higher,” he said.

The winner will join the ranks of celebrated films: *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).

Judging the 12 films is an international jury led by Australian film critic **Margaret Pomeranz**. Also joining the jury are critically acclaimed Nepali director **Deepak Rauniyar**, former senior film executive of South Korean powerhouse CJ Entertainment **Kini Kim**, independent Asian-Canadian animator **Ann Marie Fleming**, and Australian film producer **Rosemary Blight** of smash-hit *The Sapphires* and acclaimed television series *Cleverman*.

“The Festival is thrilled to have such a prestigious jury of industry luminaries,” said Moodley.

**DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION AWARD**

10 finalists have been announced for the **Documentary Australia Foundation Award** **for Australian Documentary**. The Foundation will award $10,000 to the winning film.

The ten films in competition are: ***Blue***; ***Barbecue***, ***Connection to Country***, ***Defiant Lives***, ***Hope Road***, ***In My Own Words***, ***The Last Goldfish***, ***PACmen***, ***The Pink House*** and ***Roller Dreams***.

“Since its inception in 1954, Sydney Film Festival has showcased Australian documentary filmmaking,” said **Documentary Australia Foundation CEO Dr Mitzi Goldman**. “The Documentary Australia Foundation is proud to support that tradition for the fourth year. There has never been a more important time for documentary storytelling in our world of today. Authentic and genuine voices from a diversity of perspectives, told with the fine art and expertise of Australian filmmakers are uniquely powerful. These stories matter, they make our lives more meaningful and inspire understanding and engagement in ways that unite us. We are proud to honour the passion and commitment of our documentary filmmakers with this annual award.

Previous winners of the Australian documentary prize at Sydney Film Festival are: *In the Shadow of the Hill* (2016); *Only the Dead* (2015); *35 Letters* (2014); *Buckskin* (2013); *Killing Anna* (2012); *Life in Movement* (2011); and *The Snowman* (2010). In 2009 the inaugural prize was shared between *Contact* and *A Good Man* (each film received a $10,000 cash prize).

**THE DENDY AWARDS FOR AUSTRALIAN SHORT FILMS**

Ten finalists in the **Dendy Awards**, Australia’s longest running short film competition, now in its 48th year, will screen over two sessions on 17 and 18 June. Three prize winners – **The Dendy Live Action Short Award**, **The Rouben Mamoulian Award** and the **Yoram Gross Animation Award** – will each receive a cash prize to be announced at the Festival’s Closing Night.

“It is once again a privilege and honour for Dendy to be part of The Sydney Film Festival in supporting new and exciting film talent with the Dendy Awards,” said **Dendy Cinemas National Film, Content and Programming Manager, Claire Gandy.** It is such a great platform and can lead to so many unique experiences, connections and career opportunities for film makers to develop, grow and hone their talents. We can't wait for audiences to see the finalists visions this year.”

These ground-breaking awards have kick-started the careers of many prominent filmmakers, with acclaimed filmmakers like Warwick Thornton, Ariel Kleiman, Cate Shortland, Jane Campion, Phillip Noyce and Ivan Sen among the Dendy Awards alumni.

The competition for Australian Short Films was established by the Festival in 1970. Winners of the Best Live Action Short Film award and the **Yoram Gross Animation Award** (sponsored by Yoram Gross Films) are **Academy Award-eligible**, opening new pathways for many Australian filmmakers.

**EVENT CINEMAS AUSTRALIAN SHORT SCREENPLAY AWARD**

25 finalists have been announced for the **Event Cinemas Australian Short Screenplay Award**. The Award provides a $5000 cash prize for the best screenplay in one of the short fiction films selected for the Sydney Film Festival program. All Australian short fiction films screening at the Festival are eligible, and the winner is announced at the Closing Night Gala.

“Event Cinemas is proud to support the Sydney Film Festival within its award program, to discover emerging talent in the Australian film industry is exciting especially in the search for screenwriters, who begin the threads of our film stories," said **Event Cinemas Area General Manager, Anthony Kierann**.“We hope the award will help establish and develop talented individuals to advance and present their unique film tapestry on the national and international film landscape".

**LEXUS AUSTRALIA SHORT FILM FELLOWSHIP**

For the second year, the Festival’s **Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship** will award four filmmakers the largest cash fellowship (AU$200,000 annually) for short film in Australia. On Tuesday 13 June, the four fellows will be announced, selected from 20 shortlisted Australian filmmakers by a jury chaired by actor **David Wenham**. Once announced the fellows will commence production of their films, which will premiere at the 65th Sydney Film Festival in 2018. The Fellowship is a partnership between Lexus Australia and Sydney Film Festival.

The Festival will also host the world premieres of the 2016 **Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship** Fellows: Anya Beyersdorf *(****How the Light Gets In***), Brooke Goldfinch (***Outbreak Generation***), Alex Murawski (***Snow***) and Alex Ryan (***Red Ink***).

“Lexus Australia is deeply committed to investment in innovation, and through our partnership in the Fellowship with Sydney Film Festival we aim to encourage young Australian filmmakers to evolve their craft,” **Vin Naidoo, Corporate Manager Marketing Operations and Sales, Lexus Australia** said.

“We are proud to present the world premieres of the first four films resulting from the inaugural Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship, at the Festival this year.  They are courageous and original, and we are thrilled to have played a part in bringing them to life.”

**THE SYDNEY–UNESCO CITY OF FILM AWARD**

Presented by Create NSW, this annual award recognises a trailblazing NSW-based screen practitioner whose work stands for innovation, imagination and high impact. A filmmaker will be awarded a $10,000 cash prize at the Closing Night Gala. Last year’s inaugural winner was Lynette Wallworth.

**FOXTEL MOVIES AUDIENCE AWARDS**

**The Foxtel Movies Audience Awards**, returning for the fifth year, are the Festival’s people’s choice awards where the winners reflect the most popular films at the Festival. Awarded for best narrative feature and best documentary, after audience members vote in the winner after screenings, previous winners for narrative and documentary have included: *Mustang* and *Zach’s Ceremony* (2016); *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* and *Wide Open Sky*(2015); *Winter Sleep* and *Love Marriage in Kabul* (2014); and *Mystery Road* and *Big Name No Blanket* (2013).

**AWARDS**

Winners of all Sydney Film Festival awards are presented with the Festival’s signature mesmeric swirl award, designed and handmade in Sydney by our partners **Dinosaur Designs**.

**SFF 2017 Official Competition finalists:**

* ***The Beguiled***

Saturday 17 June, 8.40pm, State Theatre

Sunday 18 June, 11.55am, State Theatre

* ***Félicité*** | Introduced by Senegalese filmmaker **Alain Gomis**

Thursday 15 June, 6.45pm, State Theatre

Friday 16 June, 11.45am, State Theatre

* ***Happy End***

Saturday 10 June, 6.40pm, State Theatre

Sunday 11 June, 11.15am, State Theatre

Sunday 18 June, 8.00pm, Hayden Orpheum

* ***I Am Not Your Negro*** | Introduced by Haitian producer **Hébert Peck**

Monday 12 June, 6.25pm, State Theatre

Tuesday 13 June, 12.10pm, State Theatre

Saturday 17 June, 6.00pm, The Ritz Cinema

* ***My Happy Family*** | Introduced by Hungarian filmaker**Ildikó Enyedi**

Tuesday 13 June, 6.30pm, State Theatre

Wednesday 14 June, 12.00pm, State Theatre

* ***On Body And Soul***

Wednesday 14 June, 6.35pm, State Theatre

Thursday 15 June, 12.10pm, State Theatre

* ***The Other Side Of Hope*** |Introduced by Finnish-Syrian actor**Sherwan Haji**

Sunday 11 June, 6.05pm, State Theatre

Monday 12 June, 11.35am, State Theatre

Sunday 18 June, 5.55pm, Hayden Orpheum

* ***Pop Aye***

Friday 16 June, 6.35pm, State Theatre

Saturday 17 June, 9.30am, State Theatre

Sunday 18 June, 4.25pm, The Ritz Cinema

* ***Una*** |Introduced by Australian actor**Ben Mendelsohn**

Friday 9 June, 7.00pm, State Theatre

Saturday 10 June, 11.50am, State Theatre

Thursday 15 June, 8.35pm, Hayden Orpheum

* ***The Untamed*** |Introduced by Mexican filmmaker**Amat Escalante**

Thursday 8 June, 8.00pm, State Theatre

Friday 8 June, 12.20pm, State Theatre

Saturday 10 June, 8.00pm, Dendy Newtown

* ***We Don’t Need A Map*** |Introduced by Australian filmmaker**Warwick Thornton**

Wednesday 7 June, 7.30pm, State Theatre

Sunday 11 June 1.35pm, State Theatre

Tuesday 13 June, 4.35pm, State Theatre

* ***Wolf And Sheep*** |Introduced by Australian filmmaker**Shahrbanoo Sadat**

Sunday 11 June 3.50pm, State Theatre

Monday 12 June, 9.30am, State Theatre

**Related Official Competition talks:**

* **In Conversation With Ben Mendelsohn** ***(Una)***

Saturday 10 June, 2.00pm, Festival Hub Town Hall

* **In Conversation With Warwick Thornton** ***(We Don’t Need A Map)***

Sunday 11 June, 3.45pm, Festival Hub Town Hall

* **In Extended Q&A: I Am Not Your Negro**  **(with producer** **Hébert Peck)**

Tuesday 13 June, 2.30pm, Festival Hub Town Hall

**SFF 2017 Australian Documentary finalists:**

* ***Barbecue*** | Introduced by Australian filmmaker **Jeffrey Walker**

Wednesday 14 June, 6:00pm, Dendy Opera Quays **(Gourmet Cinema screening/ event)**

Saturday 17 June, 3:00pm, Casula Powerhouse **(Gourmet Cinema screening/ event)**

Sunday 18 June, 6:10pm, Dendy Newtown

* ***Blue*** | Introduced by Australian filmmaker **Karina Holden**

Sunday 11 June, 8:30pm, State Theatre

Monday 12 June, 4:05pm, The Ritz Cinema

Tuesday 13 June, 6:15pm, Dendy Newtown

* ***Connection To Country*** | Introduced by Australian filmmaker **Tyson Mowarin**

Tuesday 13 June, 6:30pm, Event Cinemas George St

* ***Defiant Lives*** | Introduced by Australian filmmaker **Sarah Barton**

Monday 12 June, 4:05pm, Event Cinemas George St

* ***Hope Road*** | Introduced by Australian filmmaker **Tom Zubrycki**

Wednesday 14 June, 6:15pm, Event Cinemas George St

* ***In My Own Words*** | Introduced by Australian filmmaker **Erica Glynn**

Friday 9 June, 6:30pm, Event Cinemas George St

* ***The Last Goldfish*** | Introduced by Australian filmmaker **Su Goldfish**

Thursday 8 June, 6:15pm, Event Cinemas George St

* ***PACmen*** | Introduced by Australia-based UK filmmaker **Luke Walker**

Saturday 17 June, 1:25pm, Event Cinemas George St

* ***The Pink House*** | Introduced by Australian filmmaker **Sascha Ettinger-Epstein**

Thursday 15 June, 6:15pm, Event Cinemas George St

* ***Roller Dreams*** | Introduced by Australian filmmaker **Kate Hickey**

Sunday 11 June, 7:15pm, Event Cinemas George St

**Related Australian Documentary parties:**

* **Roller Dreams****(following the screening of *Roller Dreams*)**

Sunday 11 June, 9:00pm, Festival Hub Town Hall

**SFF 2017 Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films finalists:**

* ***Adele***
* ***After All***
* ***A Birthday Party***
* ***Brown Lips***
* ***The Eleven O’clock***
* ***Into The Black Water***
* ***Lost Property Office***
* ***Melon Grab***
* ***Tomorrow, And Tomorrow, And Tomorrow***
* ***The Wall***

**All finalists screen together with guest filmmakers in attendance:**

* Saturday 17 June, 2.30pm, Event Cinemas George St
* Sunday 18 June, 1.45pm, Event Cinemas George St

**SFF 2017 Event Cinemas Australian Short Screenplay finalists:**

* ***A Birthday Party***
* ***A Crab Story***
* ***Adele***
* ***After All***
* ***Beyond the Bubble***
* ***Blight***
* ***Brown Lips***
* ***Double King***
* ***Family Happiness***
* ***How the Light Gets In***
* ***Into the Black Water***
* ***Last Drinks at Frida's***
* ***Lost Property Office***
* ***Melon Grab***
* ***Outbreak Generation***
* ***Red***
* ***Red Ink***
* ***Smashed***
* ***Snow***
* ***Superheroes***
* ***The Eleven O'Clock***
* ***The Future***
* ***The Milky Pop Kid***
* ***The Wall***
* ***Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow***

**SFF Lexus 2016 Fellowship screenings:**

* ***How The Light Gets In* (screens with *A Ghost Story*)**

Tuesday 13 June, 9:10pm, State Theatre

* ***Outbreak Generation* (screens with *Wind River*)**

Wednesday 14 June, 9:15pm, State Theatre

* ***Red Ink* (screens with *Final Portrait)***

Sunday 18 June, 2.05pm, State Theatre

* ***Snow* (screens with *In The Fade*)**

Saturday 17 June, 6.00pm, State Theatre

**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://www.sff.org.au) **for more information.**

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**\*\*\*Sydney Film Festival Press Pack and Images Available** [**HERE**](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B35iPnB9hv3UZ29GY3dpSW9CMGc?usp=sharing)



**ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL**

From **Wednesday 7 June** to **Sunday 18 June 2017**, the 64th 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 64th 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.

**OFFICIAL COMPETITION**

***THE BEGUILED***

Director, Screenwriter: Sofia Coppola | USA | 91mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Fresh from its Cannes Competition berth, Sofia Coppola’s new film is a seductive thriller set in the Civil War era starring Colin Farrell, Nicole Kidman, Kirsten Dunst and Elle Fanning. Employing her distinctive aesthetic and sensual style, Coppola adapts Thomas Cullinan’s novel into a tale of desire, jealousy and revenge. It’s set in 1864, three years into the Civil War, at a Southern girls’ boarding school. Those left at the school are those with nowhere else to go, and they are under the care of Martha Farnsworth (Kidman). When one of the girls discovers an injured enemy soldier, it’s decided the ‘Christian thing to do’ would be to take him in until he recovers. As the soldier, John McBurney (Farrell), recovers he becomes the subject of fascination for the girls and women of the house. The prim and proper environment is taken over with sexual tension and rivalries. In this society of virtually no men, the ‘real Southern hospitality’ meted out to McBurney is of a quite unusual kind. Coppola and the excellent cast deal with this material with relish, creating a film filled with eerie tension and flashes of mischievous humour.

***FÉLICITÉ***

Director: Alain Gomis | France, Belgium, Senegal, Germany, Lebanon | 124mins | In Lingala and French with English Subtitles | Australian Premiere

Winner of the Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize at the Berlinale, this is a surprising, music-infused drama about a proud and spirited woman working as a singer in Kinshasa. Alain Gomis last appeared in the SFF Official Competition with *Today* (SFF 2012), a magical realist look at a man’s last day on earth. In his vibrant new film, the eponymous Félicité (Véro Tshanda Beya, wonderful) sings at a dingy bar but has a voice and a spirit that transcends the setting. When her son is injured, Félicité faces a race against the clock to raise enough money to save him. It’s here that the film takes a surprising turn and explores Félicité’s burgeoning romance with Tabu, a frequent drinker at the bar where she sings. A vivid portrait of the Congolese capital is created through music ranging from traditional to African rock to a Kinshasa symphonic orchestra playing Arvo Pärt. It’s a tough, chaotic city, but one with strong, resilient people like Félicité. Confounding expectations of African cinema, Gomis has made a film filled with music, magic and hope.

***HAPPY END***

Director, Screenwriter: Michael Haneke | France, Austria, Germany | 110mins | In French with English Subtitles | Australian Premiere

Master Austrian director Michael Haneke has won the Cannes Palme d’Or with his last two films, *The White Ribbon* (2009) and *Amour* (SFF 2012). His latest, *Happy End*, also In Competition at Cannes, focuses on the wealthy Laurent family living in Calais. With a top cast, including Isabelle Huppert, Jean-Louis Trintignant and Mathieu Kassovitz, Haneke looks at three generations of this clan, and explores the generational difference in attitudes towards life and the world. The family seems to be living a comfortable existence, largely unaffected by the crises that surround them – they are, after all, not far from the Calais Jungle migrant camp. The genteel veneer however hides deep problems related to business dealings, illicit sexual desires, online bullying and suicidal tendencies. Each member of this family is, in some way, troubled. Haneke lays out the pieces of the puzzle before us, and the picture they form as they gradually come together is one of malaise. In *Happy End*, Haneke revisits some of the themes of his most memorable films, and once again gives us his incisive view of a disturbed world. The master is in very fine form.

***I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO***

Director: Raoul Peck| France, USA, Belgium, Switzerland | 93mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Narrated by Samuel L Jackson, this mesmerising Oscar-nominated film channels the impassioned words of writer James Baldwin, one of the most incisive commentators on race in America. People’s Choice Documentary Award-winner at Toronto and a box office success in the USA, *I Am Not Your Negro* is based on notes for a book Baldwin planned about the lives and assassinations of his friends Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. and Medgar Evers. That unwritten book finds life in this film, which melds Baldwin’s unpublished writing with archival footage of his eloquent analysis on 1960s TV and contemporary Black Lives Matter protests. “Today James Baldwin’s words still catch us unprepared and with the same violent truth,” director Peck said. “An irrefutable uppercut. A body blow… He understood all: politics, history, and most of all, the human factor.” Haitian Peck (*Lumumba*; *Moloch Tropical*, SFF 2010) is a stridently political filmmaker and here his profound and poetic cine-essay is, as *The New York Times* describes it, “life-altering”.

***MY HAPPY FAMILY***

Director: Nana & Simon | Germany, Georgia, France | 119mins | In Georgian with English Subtitles | Australian Premiere

Married for 30 years and living with her husband, parents and two adult children, it seems all is just fine for literature teacher Manana. So when she packs her suitcase and announces she’s moving into her own apartment, her decision is met with disbelief. Who or what has caused this decision? Manana maintains her silence and enjoys her new independent life, but can’t remain untouched by Georgia’s orthodox values. “In a patriarchal society like Georgia, many people are of the opinion that women are in a worse situation without men – they have less money, less protection, and less respect,” say Nana & Simon (*In Bloom*, SFF 2013). “For the most part that is true, but not because a woman is worth less than a man, but because the people around her think that she is.” In their quietly provocative film, Nana & Simon create something that challenges the norm. Anchored by Ia Shugliashvili’s lead performance, *My Happy Family* is a touching, gently humorous look at a quest for personal freedom at a stage in life when it’s least expected.

***ON BODY AND SOUL***

Director, Screenwriter: Ildikó Enyedi | Hungary | 116mins | In Hungarian with English Subtitles | Australian Premiere

Winner of the Berlinale Golden Bear, *On Body and Soul* is about the unconventional romance between two co-workers who discover that each night they have exactly the same dreams. Following an 18-year break in feature filmmaking, Ildikó Enyedi has returned with this visually ravishing love story. Endre is the director of a Budapest abattoir. Slightly grizzled, he seems to have lived an eventful life that has come to a stage of solitude. When Maria begins working as a quality controller at his company, Endre is clearly attracted to her. Their interactions, however, are extremely awkward. By chance, the two discover that each night they share exactly the same beautiful dream of a pair of deer frolicking in the woods. Despite their incredulity, they feel compelled to attempt a romance to match their shared visions, but real life proves more difficult. Enyedi contrasts idyllic dream sequences with gory images in the slaughterhouse, creating a compelling metaphor for the struggle for human connection. Spellbinding and mysterious, *On Body and Soul* touchingly shows love emerging out of the darkness.

***THE OTHER SIDE OF HOPE***

Director, Screenwriter: Aki Kaurismäki | Finland, Germany | 98mins | In Finnish, English, and Arabic with English Subtitles | Australian Premiere

Winner of the Silver Bear for Best Director at the Berlinale, Aki Kaurismäki’s new film is a heart-warming, funny and moving tale of the friendship between a Syrian refugee and a restaurant-owner. A great humanist filmmaker, Kaurismäki’s amusing, thoughtful films depict difficult situations in society and people helping each other. It is just such a community of people he portrays in his marvellous new film. Khaled, a young refugee, arrives in Helsinki as travelling salesman Wikström decides to change his life, and invests in an unprofitable restaurant. When the authorities deny Khaled’s application for asylum, he decides to stay on illegally and is hired to work in the restaurant where he finally finds some refuge, but it’s far from permanent. Kaurismäki says the film aims to shatter the “way of only seeing refugees as either pitiful victims or arrogant economic immigrants invading our societies.” With his unique sense of humour and fundamentally optimistic vision of the world, he achieves a great deal more than that.

 ***POP AYE***

Director, Screenwriter: Kirsten Tan | Sinapore, Thailand | 102mins | In Thai with English Subtitles | Australian Premiere

A downtrodden architect and his long-lost elephant take a road trip across Thailand to find their childhood home in this offbeat and very funny Sundance screenwriting award-winner. Once a cutting edge architect renowned for his progressive designs, Thana finds himself marginalised at work and treated with indifference by his wife. Wandering the streets of Bangkok, he comes across Pop Aye, the elephant he grew up with in rural Thailand. He promptly buys the elephant and sets off on a long journey back to the idyll of their youth. In a trip filled with complications, they come across tragic and comical figures and situations. “In my films, this inadvertent mixing of tragedy and comedy is important, because that is the truth of life,” director Kirsten Tan says. In her debut feature, Tan has consummate control over the various elements, taking advantage of the beautiful scenery, wonderful actors, and of course that charismatic elephant. They all combine in a film that is unsentimental but genuinely moving.

***UNA***

Director: Benedict Andrews | UK | 94mins | In English | Australian Premiere

In 2009, Warwick Thornton’s *Samson and Delilah* won the Camera d’Or at Cannes and he was nominated for Australian of the Year. When asked at a press conference what his main concern would be if he received Australia’s highest honour, he replied, “that the Southern Cross is becoming the new Swastika”. Seven years later, Thornton takes us on a journey through this five-star constellation’s astronomical, colonial and Indigenous history to the present day. For Aboriginal people the meaning of this heavenly body is deeply spiritual. By contrast, the star-adorned Eureka Flag was emblematic of protest and defiance from its first appearance, a quality that caused it to be adopted by activists, and lately, the darker side of Australian nationalism. *We Don’t Need a Map* doesn’t shy away from the tough questions about the place of the Southern Cross in the Australian psyche, but Thornton’s cavalier spirit and inventive filmmaking skilfully balances the provocative and the pleasurable.

***THE UNTAMED***

Director: Amat Escalante | Mexico, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Switzerland | 98mins | In Spanish with English Subtitles | Australian Premiere

A creature of another world unleashes people’s base sexual impulses in this imaginative meld of social realism and erotic sci-fi, which won the Venice Silver Lion for Best Director. Following on from his harrowing 2013 crime drama *Heli*, Amat Escalante changes tack completely in this unique, category-defying film. At its centre is young mother Alejandra, who is raising two boys with her boorish husband Angel. All is not well with this family, but the arrival of the mysterious Veronica brings promise of a solution to all their problems: in an isolated cabin there is something not of this world, something that’s able to provide both pleasure and pain. “The creature in my film is just pure sex for humans”, director Escalante says. “They experience the pleasure purely and more intensely than ever before because with the creature it is not only physical but also mental surrender.” Escalante is brilliantly in control of every moment as the film moves towards a shocking climax.

***WE DON’T NEED A MAP***

Director: Warwick Thornton | Australia | 85mins | In English, Warlpiri, Wardaman, Dhuwala, Dhuwaya with English Subtitles | World Premiere

In 2009, Warwick Thornton’s *Samson and Delilah* won the Camera d’Or at Cannes and he was nominated for Australian of the Year. When asked at a press conference what his main concern would be if he received Australia’s highest honour, he replied, “that the Southern Cross is becoming the new Swastika”. Seven years later, Thornton takes us on a journey through this five-star constellation’s astronomical, colonial and Indigenous history to the present day. For Aboriginal people the meaning of this heavenly body is deeply spiritual. By contrast, the star-adorned Eureka Flag was emblematic of protest and defiance from its first appearance, a quality that caused it to be adopted by activists, and lately, the darker side of Australian nationalism. *We Don’t Need a Map* doesn’t shy away from the tough questions about the place of the Southern Cross in the Australian psyche, but Thornton’s cavalier spirit and inventive filmmaking skilfully balances the provocative and the pleasurable.

***WOLF AND SHEEP***

Director, Screenwriter: Shahrbanoo Sadat | Denmark, France, Sweden, Afghanistan | 86mins | 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.

**OFFICIAL COMPETITION ASSOCIATED TALKS:**

* **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 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.

* **Extended Q&A: *I Am Not Your Negro***Tuesday 13 June, 2.30pm

Join producer Hebért Peck in discussion with Documentary Australia Foundation’s Mitzi Goldman after the screening of this most topical film.

**DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION AWARD**

***BARBECUE***Director: Matthew Salleh | Australia | 101mins | In Swedish, Visayan, Mongolian, Afrikaans, Zulu, Armenian, Arabic, Japanese, Maori, English, Spanish and Zapotec with English Subtitles | Australian Premiere

Australian filmmakers Matthew Saleh and Rose Tucker (*Central Texas Barbecue* SFF 2014) travelled the globe to document barbecues in a diverse range of communities. There’s the Afrikaans tradition that encompasses good conversation first and good meat second; and the Mongolian ancestral approach, *boodog*, which involves goats and hot stones. From the Swedish *engangsgrill* (ideal after a long winter), to refugees opening a *sharwarma* shop in a camp on the Syrian-Jordan border. It’s obvious that barbecuing isn’t just about the food: it’s an event, it’s community.

***BLUE***

Director, Screenwriter: Karina Holden | Australia | 70mins | In English | World Premiere

As marine biologist and activist Lucas Handley explains, our oceans are in trouble and it’s time we stopped thinking of them both as a place of limitless resources and a dumping ground. His call for action is echoed by passionate advocates for marine preservation, including a shark activist, an FNQ ranger, seabird specialist, sustainability promoter, Greenpeace SE Asia’s Mark Dia and long-time campaigner Valerie Taylor. Filmed over two years in Indonesia, the Philippines, Hawaii and Australia, this cinematic, galvanizing documentary comes at a time when we are making critical decisions that will decide the legacy we leave for generations to come.

***CONNECTION TO COUNTRY***

Director: Tyson Mowarin | Australia | 57mins | In English and Ngarluma with English Subtitles | World Premiere

In the heart of Western Australia’s Pilbara region sits the Burrup Peninsula (or Murujuga). It is host to the largest concentration of rock art in the world, dating back over 40,000 years. It’s a dramatic and ancient landscape so sacred that some parts shouldn’t be looked upon at all, except by Traditional Owners. Waves of industrialisation and development threaten sites all over the region, but the people of the Pilbara - forever connected to country, forever responsible – are fighting back. Documenting the rock art, recording sacred sites and battling to get their unique cultural heritage recognised, ‘digitised’ and celebrated.

 ***DEFIANT LIVES***

Director, Screenwriter: Sarah Barton | Australia, USA, UK | 84mins | In English | World Premiere

The story of the rise and triumph of the disability rights movement, featuring some of the most impressive activists you’ve never heard of. The film uses exclusive interviews with movement leaders from the past five decades, combined with rarely seen archival footage sourced from Australia, USA and the UK. The story begins in the big institutions where people with disability were routinely imprisoned for life. From the 1960s onward, small numbers began to escape, only to end up battling a brutal and dehumanising system. *Defiant Lives* is full of extraordinary characters determined to create a better world.

 ***HOPE ROAD***

Director, Screenwriter, Producer: Tom Zubrycki | Australia | 103mins | In English | World Premiere

A refugee from the Sudanese civil war, Zacharia (one of the ‘Lost Boys’ of Sudan) lives in Sydney with his wife and daughter. He desperately wants to do something for his former village, now in the newly created nation of South Sudan. His dream is to build a much-needed school, enlisting the backing of numerous Australians. Janet, a dedicated supporter, joins him on a 40-day fundraising walk from Tweed Heads to Sydney along with filmmaker Tom Zubrycki. But will this strategy raise the funds they need? Thwarted by escalating conflict back in South Sudan, and shocked by a broken relationship, Zac must decide what’s important in his life. ***IN MY OWN WORDS***

Director, Screenwriter: Erica Glynn | Australia | 63mins | In English | World Premiere

Raw, heartfelt, sometimes painstaking but often funny, *In My Own Words* follows the journey of adult Aboriginal students and their teachers as they discover the transformative power of reading and writing for the first time in their lives. “They don’t think they can do it, but I know they can”, says indefatigable class organiser Mary. Erica Glynn’s documentary focuses on a classroom in Brewarrina, a rural northwest NSW town with a majority Aboriginal population. Research reveals that 45-65% of Aboriginal adults are functionally illiterate. Filming every day of the 13-week course, Glynn captures the woman and men, the poverty and hardship, behind this sobering statistic.

***THE LAST GOLDFISH***

Director, Screenwriter: Su Goldfish | Australia | 80mins | In English | World Premiere

Manfred Goldfish tried to suppress the trauma that made him a refugee in 1939. When his filmmaker daughter unearths her father’s extraordinary story, she also discovers where she belongs. Su Goldfish was raised in Trinidad, but moved to Australia when she was thirteen, following an attempted military coup. As a child, Su didn't realise she was white. As an adult, she finds a new family in Sydney’s queer community, learns she is Jewish and that she has half-siblings on the other side of the world. Told through a personal archive stretching across a century, this search for one lost family echoes through all those touched by forced migration.

 ***PACMEN***

Director, Screenwriter, Producer: Luke Walker | Australia, USA | 83mins | In English |Australian Premiere

*PACmen* takes us inside the workings of a Super-PAC, to answer one of the lingering questions of America’s strangest election... why did Ben Carson run for president? This observational documentary follows the men behind the committee that persuaded Dr Carson to run as they raise millions of dollars and catapult him to the top of the polls. However, Carson’s political inexperience soon shows and he makes constant media gaffes. As their candidate’s poll numbers nosedive they watch in horror as Trump inexplicably hijacks their anti-establishment movement. A fascinating look at the landscape that lead to Trump’s rise through the eyes of the men who backed ‘the other guy’. ***THE PINK HOUSE***

Director: Sascha Ettinger Epstein | Australia | 75mins | In English | World Premiere

The story of Kalgoorlie's last original gold rush brothel, told through the eyes of the whimsical Madam Carmel, 70, and its longest-serving lady of the night, BJ. Although prostitution is technically illegal in WA, the pink tin shed has been servicing the miners of this remote frontier town since 1904. But with the advent of fly-in-fly-out mining, and a deluge of cheap internet escorts, it could be the end for the historic icon and its staff. Filmed over several years and with unprecedented access to the inner workings of this unique brothel, *The Pink House* is an intimate portrait of two women bound together by the past and their precarious future.

***ROLLER DREAMS***

Director: Kate Hickey | Australia | 80mins | In English | World Premiere

It’s 1984 and California’s Venice Beach is the epicentre of a pop culture explosion – a “do what you wanna do, be who you wanna be” kinda place. Young people of colour seeking refuge from the turmoil of inner city life flock to the eclectic ocean community to create a brand new phenomenon: roller dancing! The talent and vibrant personality of this multicultural roller ‘family’ draws massive crowds and influences Hollywood. Check out fancy-footed Larry, hip Terrell, smooth Sally, crazy-legged Dural, Jimmy ‘the skating tornado’ and poetry in motion Mads. But politics, money and gentrification conspire to end the dream just as it flourishes.

**AUSTRALIAN DOCUMENTARY ASSOCIATED PARTIES:**

**ROLLER DREAMS**

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 theBoogie Monster) joining Soul-of-Sydney DJ Phil Toke, skate-dancers and more.

**THE DENDY AWARDS FOR AUSTRALIAN SHORT FILMS**

***ADELE***

Director, Screenwriter: Mirene Igwabi | Australia | 14mins | In English | World Premiere

14-year-old Adele is torn between high school and her African family tradition, imposed on her in Australia.

***AFTER ALL***

Director, Screenwriter: Michael Cusack | Australia | 13mins | In English

After all is said and done... all that is left are memories. A man cleans out his childhood home, remembering past conversations.

***A BIRTHDAY PARTY***

Director, Screenwriter: W.A.M. Bleakley | Australia | 2017 | 13mins | In English | World Premiere

A teenager’s loyalty is tested when he witnesses his mates commit a heinous act.

***BROWN LIPS***

Director, Screenwriter: Nakkiah Lui | Australia | 2017 | 12mins | In English | World Premiere

Two cousins from Sydney’s outer suburbs decide that the only way to feel loved is to turn their back on family for good.

***THE ELEVEN O’CLOCK***

Director: Derin Seale | Australia | 2016 | 13mins | In English

The delusional patient of a psychiatrist believes he is actually the psychiatrist. As they each attempt to treat each other, the session gets out of control.

***INTO THE BLACK WATER***

Director, Screenwriter: Jonathan Burton | Australia | 2016 | 11mins | In English

Through a chance encounter, a young girl finds clarity and freedom in an unlikely place. A story unfolding over the course of one night.

***LOST PROPERTY OFFICE***

Director, Screenwriter: Daniel Agdag | Australia | 2017 | 9mins | In English | World Premiere

Sometimes people can get lost in their work…

***MELON GRAB***

Director, Screenwriter: Andrew Lee | Australia | 2016 | 9mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Dysfunctional truth, rap and suspended youth: the final skateboard session between two best friends.

***TOMORROW, AND TOMORROW, AND TOMORROW***

Director, Screenwriter: Sunday Emerson Gullifer | Australia | 2017 | 24mins | In English | World Premiere

An actor playing Lady Macduff in a production of Shakespeare’s Macbeth by an internationally celebrated director, questions her calling.

***THE WALL***

Director, Producer: Nick Baker, Tristan Klein | Australia | 2016 | 6mins | In English

Life as they knew it was ending, darkness begins to descend. Fleeing their city, a grandmother and her grandson reach a tall, endless wall.

**EVENT CINEMAS AUSTRALIAN SHORT SCREENPLAY AWARD**

***A BIRTHDAY PARTY* (Dendy Award)**

Director, Screenwriter: W.A.M. Bleakley | Australia | 2017 | 13mins | In English | World Premiere

A teenager’s loyalty is tested when he witnesses his mates commit a heinous act.

***A CRAB STORY* (Short Animation)**

Directors: Filippo Rivetti, Tatiana Poliektova | Australia | 2016

***ADELE* (Dendy Award)**

Director, Screenwriter: Mirene Igwabi | Australia | 14mins | In English | World Premiere

14-year-old Adele is torn between high school and her African family tradition, imposed on her in Australia.

***AFTER ALL* (Short Animation)**

Director, Screenwriter: Michael Cusack | Australia | 13mins | In English

After all is said and done... all that is left are memories. A man cleans out his childhood home, remembering past conversations.

***BEYOND THE BUBBLE* (screens with *ELLIPSIS)***

Director: Anne Hildebrandt | Australia | 2017 | 8mins | In English | World Premiere

Three flat-sharing friends are priced out of Sydney and forced to consider the unthinkable... moving to the western suburbs!

***BLIGHT (*screens with *MALIGLUTIT)***

Director, Screenwriter: Perun Bonser | Australia | 2017 | 13mins | In English

Aided by a female Aboriginal tracker, a constable hunts a band of dangerous criminals on Australia’s western frontier in the early 1900s.

***BROWN LIPS* (Dendy Award)**

Director, Screenwriter: Nakkiah Lui | Australia | 2017 | 12mins | In English | World Premiere

Two cousins from Sydney’s outer suburbs decide that the only way to feel loved is to turn their back on family for good.

***DOUBLE KING* (Short Animation)**

Director, Screenwriter, Producer: Felix Golgrave | Australia | 2017

***FAMILY HAPPINESS* (screens with *ANA, MON AMOUR*)**

Director, Screenwriter: Alice Englert | Australia | 2016 | 15mins | In English | World Premiere

A story about small cruelties, bullying and the power of a brother’s unconditional love for his complex little sister.

***HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN* (2016 Lexus premiere, also screens with *A Ghost Story*)**

Director: Anya Beyersdorf | Australia | 2017 | 15mins | In English | World Premiere

A single mother living on the fringes of society wakes in the night with a unique problem - a shining light from within spreads, taking over her entire body.

***INTO THE BLACK WATER* (Dendy Award)**

Director, Screenwriter: Jonathan Burton | Australia | 2016 | 11mins | In English

Through a chance encounter, a young girl finds clarity and freedom in an unlikely place. A story unfolding over the course of one night.

***LAST DRINKS AT FRIDA’S* (screens with *PORTO*)**

Director: Bjorn Stewart | Australia | 2017 | 13mins | In English | World Premiere

A lonely jazz singer and a troubled Indigenous soldier find solace in an underground speakeasy where rules don’t apply.

***LOST PROPERTY OFFICE* (Short Animation)**

Director, Screenwriter: Daniel Agdag | Australia | 2017 | 9mins | In English | World Premiere

Sometimes people can get lost in their work…

***MELON GRAB* (Dendy Award)**

Director, Screenwriter: Andrew Lee | Australia | 2016 | 9mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Dysfunctional truth, rap and suspended youth: the final skateboard session between two best friends.

***OUTBREAK GENERATION* (2016 Lexus premiere, also screens with *WIND RIVER*)**

Director: Brooke Goldfinch | Australia | 2017 | 20mins | In English | World Premiere

Amid a global epidemic Annie Spence becomes the sole carer of her eight-year-old nephew, left wanting answers only a mother can give.

***RED* (Dendy Award)**

Director: Del Kathryn Barton | Australia | 2017 | 16mins | In English | World Premiere

Artist Del Kathryn Barton explores the unusual sexual cannibalism of the Australian Redback spider. With Cate Blanchett.

***RED INK* (2016 Lexus premiere, also screens with *FINAL PORTRAIT)***

Director: Alex Ryan | Australia | 2017 | 13mins | In English | World Premiere

When a delusional man tries to buy crackers in a supermarket his unusual behaviour leads to a serious misunderstanding and an unimaginable tragedy.

***SMASHED* (screens with *THE WALL*)**

Director: Sean Lahiff | Australia | 2017 | 13mins | In English | Australian Premiere

An unsettling thriller about passion, power and an attempt to turn back time. Selected for 2017 Berlin Film Festival.

***SNOW* (2016 Lexus premiere, also screens with *IN THE FADE*)**

Director: Alex Murawski | Australia | 2017 | 20mins | In English | World Premiere

A grieving young boy accidentally injures and abandons a girl in the snow, and sets out to repair the damage of his mistake before it’s too late.

***SUPERHEROES* (screens with *OTHERLIFE*)**

Director, Screenwriter: Chris Busuttil | Australia | 2017 | 12mins | In English | World Premiere

Young James uses the immense power of his imagination as a sanctuary from violence for himself and his family.

***THE ELEVEN O’CLOCK* (Dendy Award)**

Director: Derin Seale | Australia | 2016 | 13mins | In English

The delusional patient of a psychiatrist believes he is actually the psychiatrist. As they each attempt to treat each other, the session gets out of control.

***THE FUTURE* (Short Animation)**

Directors: Greg Sharp, Nina Knezevic | Australia | 2016 | Australian Premiere

***THE MILKY POP KID* (part of Screenability, screens with *MY NAME IS EMILY*)**

Director: Johanna Garvin | Australia | 2017 | 7mins | In English | World Premiere

With a twinkle in her eye, actor and disability consultant Jules attempts to share with actor Craig what life is like living with a disability.

***TOMORROW, AND TOMORROW, AND TOMORROW* (Dendy Award)**

Director, Screenwriter: Sunday Emerson Gullifer | Australia | 2017 | 24mins | In English | World Premiere

An actor playing Lady Macduff in a production of Shakespeare’s Macbeth by an internationally celebrated director, questions her calling.

**2016 LEXUS FELLOWSHIP PREMIERES**

***HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN* (screens with *A GHOST STORY*)**

Director: Anya Beyersdorf | Australia | 2017 | 15mins | In English | World Premiere

A single mother living on the fringes of society wakes in the night with a unique problem - a shining light from within spreads, taking over her entire body.

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