



MEDIA RELEASE

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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2015 COMPETITION FOR SYDNEY FILM PRIZE

The 62nd Sydney Film Festival announces the 12 films selected to compete for the Sydney Film Prize this 3-14 June.

The internationally recognised Sydney Film Festival Official Competition, now in its eighth year, awards the **Sydney Film Prize** and **\$60,000 cash** in recognition of the most courageous, audacious and cutting-edge film in the competition. The 12 films selected by Festival Director **Nashen Moodley** are judged by a panel of industry luminaries, with the winning film announced at the end of the Festival on Sunday 14 June.

“Sydney Film Festival’s Official Competition is where audiences can experience some of the most daring, riveting and compelling films in the world right now,” said **Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley**. “The competition is an exciting program of films that demonstrates artistry and innovation in filmmaking,” he said.

The SFF 2015 Official Competition selection includes:

Arabian Nights, from director **Miguel Gomes’** (*Tabu*, SFF 2012); ambitious, indignant and filled with offbeat humour, this extraordinary new three-volume film paints a vivid portrait of a Portugal under strict austerity measures.

Black Souls, Italian director **Francesco Munzi’s** drama about Calabrian mafia clans; the film won multiple awards at the Venice Film Festival.

The World Premiere of **The Daughter**, Australian theatre director **Simon Stone’s** debut feature, a family drama starring **Geoffrey Rush, Ewen Leslie, Sam Neill, Miranda Otto** and **Odessa Young**.

Me and Earl and the Dying Girl, winner of the Grand Jury Prize for Dramatic Film and the Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival, directed by **Alfonso Gomez-Rejon** and based on a bestselling young-adult novel. The film is a bittersweet comedy about friendship, mortality and the love of film.

A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence, the great Swedish filmmaker Roy Andersson’s surreal pitch-black comedy about the human condition. The film won the Golden Lion at Venice.

Sherpa, a documentary from Australian director **Jennifer Peedom** chronicling the uneasy relationship between Sherpa labourers and foreign mountain climbers on Mount Everest; shot by adventure cinematographer **Renan Ozturk**, the film includes stunning footage of the aftermath of the fatal 2014 avalanche.

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Strangerland, Australian director **Kim Farrant**'s debut feature; an outback-set thriller about two parents searching for their missing children, the film stars **Nicole Kidman, Joseph Fiennes** and **Hugo Weaving**.

Tales, the long-in-the-making new feature from **Rakhshan Bani-Etemad**, Iran's most highly regarded woman filmmaker. A multifaceted look at life in Tehran, the film features an ensemble of top Iranian talent, including Peiman Moaadi (**A Separation**).

Tangerine, director **Sean Baker**'s offbeat adventure following two transgender sex workers through the streets of Los Angeles. One of the most talked-about films at Sundance, the film was shot entirely on an iPhone 5s.

Tehran Taxi, the third film made in secret from the great Iranian filmmaker and dissident **Jafar Panahi** since he was banned from filmmaking. Winner of the Golden Bear at the Berlinale, the film follows a taxi driver, played by Panahi himself, on a revealing and comedic ride.

Victoria, a spectacular one-shot film detailing a Berlin bank robbery and the aftermath created by German director **Sebastian Schipper**.

Vincent, French director **Thomas Salvador**'s refreshing and romantic new take on the superhero genre, about a young man who discovers he has special powers when he comes into contact with water.

Previous Sydney Film Prize winners include: *Two Days, One Night* (2014); *Only God Forgives* (2013); *Alps* (2012); *A Separation* (2011), which went on to win an Academy Award; *Heartbeats* (2010); *Bronson* (2009); and *Hunger* (2008).

The Festival also presents a number of awards to recognise excellence in local filmmaking, including; the **Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films** (which are Academy Award eligible), **Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentary** and **Event Cinemas Australian Short Screenplay Award**. The winners are announced at the Festival's Closing Night.

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

2015 Official Competition titles:

- **ARABIAN NIGHTS** Portugal, France, Germany, Switzerland | 2015 | Total 383 mins (Vol. 1: 125 mins, Vol. 2 132 mins, Vol. 3 126 mins) | In English, Portuguese, French and German with English subtitles | Feature
Director: Miguel Gomes | Screenwriters: Miguel Gomes, Mariana Ricardo, Telmo Churro | Producers: Sandro Aguilar, Luis Urbano | Cast: Crista Alfaiate, Adriano Luz, Américo Silva, Carlotto Cotta, Crista Alfaiate, Chico Chapas, Luísa Cruz
- **BLACK SOULS** Italy | 2014 | 108 mins | In Italian with English Subtitles | Feature
Director: Francesco Munzi | Screenwriters: Francesco Munzi, Fabrizio Ruggirello, Maurizio Braucci | Producers: Gianluca Arcopinto, Luigi Musini, Olivia Musini | Cast: Marco Leonardi, Peppino Mazzotta, Fabrizio Ferracane
- **THE DAUGHTER** Australia | 2015 | 96 mins | In English | Feature
Director, Screenwriter: Simon Stone | Producers: Jan Chapman, Nicole O'Donohue | Cast: Geoffrey Rush, Ewen Leslie, Paul Schneider

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- **ME AND EARL AND THE DYING GIRL** USA | 2014 | 105 mins | In English | Feature
Director: Alfonso Gomez-Rejon | Screenwriter: Jesse Andrews | Producers: Jeremy Dawson, Steven Rales, Dan Fogelman | Cast: Thomas Mann, Olivia Cooke, RJ Kyler
- **A PIGEON SAT ON A BRANCH REFLECTING ON EXISTENCE** Sweden, Norway, France, Germany | 2014 | 100 mins | In English and Swedish with English subtitles | Feature
Director, Screenwriter: Roy Andersson | Producer: Pernilla Sandström | Cast: Holger Andersson, Nils Westblom, Charlotta Larsson
- **SHERPA** Australia, Nepal | 2015 | 96 mins | In English, Nepali and Sherpa with English subtitles | Documentary
Director, Screenwriter: Jennifer Peedom | Producers: Bridget Ikin, John Smithson
- **STRANGERLAND** Australia, Ireland | 2014 | 112 mins | In English | Feature
Director: Kim Farrant | Screenwriters: Fiona Seres, Michael Kinirons | Producers: Naomi Wenck, Macdara Kelleher | Cast: Nicole Kidman, Joseph Fiennes, Hugo Weaving
- **TALES** Iran | 2014 | 88 mins | In Persian with English Subtitles | Feature
Director, Producer: Rakhshan Bani-Etemad | Screenwriters: Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Farid Mostafavi | Cast: Golab Adineh, Saber Abar, Farhad Aslani
- **TANGERINE** USA | 88 mins | In English | Feature
Director: Sean Baker | Screenwriters: Sean Baker, Chris Bergoch | Producers: Sean Baker, Karrie Cox, Marcus Cox, Darren Dean, Shih-Ching Tsou | Cast: Kiki Kitana Rodriguez, Mya Taylor, Karren Karagulian
- **TEHRAN TAXI** Iran | 2014 | 82 mins | In Farsi with English subtitles | Feature
Director, Screenwriter, Producer: Jafar Panahi | Cast: Jafar Panahi
- **VICTORIA** Germany | 2015 | 140 mins | In English, German and Spanish with English Subtitles | Feature
Director: Sebastian Schipper | Screenwriters: Sebastian Schipper, Olivia Neergaard-Holm, Elke Schulz | Producers: Jan Dressler, Sebastian Schipper, David Keitsch, Anatol Nitschke, Catherine Baikousis | Cast: Laia Costa, Frederick Lau, Franz Rogowski
- **VINCENT** France | 2014 | 77 mins | In French with English subtitles | Feature
Director, Screenwriter: Thomas Salvador | Producer: Julie Salvador | Cast: Thomas Salvador, Vimala Pons, Youssef Hajdi

Sydney Film Festival runs 3 – 14 June 2015.

Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2015 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit sff.org.au for more information.

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From **Wednesday 3 June to Sunday 14 June 2015**, the 62nd Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, panel 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 local 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 winners are: *Two Days, One Night* (2014); *Only God Forgives* (2013); *Alps* (2012); *A Separation* (2011), which went on to win an Academy Award; *Heartbeats* (2010); and *Bronson* (2009).

The Festival takes place across greater Sydney: at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, Dendy Newtown, 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 62nd Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW and

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Destination NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the City of Sydney.

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