



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Monday 28 May, 2012**

## **Sydney Film Festival, 6-17 June, announces full list of Festival Guests**

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The 59<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival is proud to announce the full line up of Australian and International guests attending this year's event. This prestigious list includes over **150** filmmakers from **22** countries, who have won over **45** International awards between them, including four Academy Awards®, four Sundance Awards® and three Logie Awards®.

"We are really excited to have so many distinguished guests attending Sydney Film Festival this year," said SFF Festival Director, Nashen Moodley. "The Festival provides an opportunity for the public to interact with both new and established filmmakers through a series of Q&As and talks at several venues, while giving our international guests a chance to interact with the Australian film industry and experience the hospitality of this beautiful city."

This year's SFF guests will attend over **75** screenings and give **85** talks and Q&As, which will take place at the Apple Store, Festival Hub @ Lower Town Hall and post-screening across all venues.

### **Highlights include:**

**Billy Connolly** will be at the Sydney Film Festival to introduce the Australian premiere of Disney•Pixar's **Brave**, an epic fantasy adventure, on **Monday 11 June at 6.30pm**, at Event Cinemas George Street (red carpet arrivals from 6pm).

**Sarah Snook** and **Ryan Corr** will attend the **World Premiere** SFF Opening Night film ***Not Suitable for Children*** together with the director of this Australian romantic comedy, **Peter Templeman**, producer **Jodi Matterson** and screenwriter **Michael Lucas**, at the State Theatre on Wednesday June 6 at 7.30pm.

**Deborah Mailman** and **Jimi Bani** will accompany filmmaker **Rachel Perkins**, producers **Darren Dale** and **Miranda Dear** as well as the real-life protagonists from this historic turning point in Australia's relationship with its Indigenous peoples, for the **World Premiere** of ***Mabo*** on Thursday 7 June at 8.35pm, at the State Theatre.

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Director **Colin Trevorrow** will attend the Australian Premiere of SFF Closing Night film, the sci-fi comedy ***Safety Not Guaranteed*** at the State Theatre on Sunday June 17 at 8.00 pm.

**Bryan Brown** and **David Stratton** will be presenting the Ian McPherson Memorial Lecture. They will be in conversation about movies and moviemaking at Event Cinemas, George St, on 11 June at 2pm (free).

**Fabrizio Maltese**, the renowned European photographer known for his film-related work will grace the Sydney Film Festival in 2012. Fabrizio's exhibition, ***Role/Play***, is on exclusively at the SFF Festival Hub. The Italian-born photographer's work has been published in *Elle*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, *StudioCinéLive*, *Cinéaste*, *Männer*, *Winq*, *Style*, *Grazia* and *De Filmkrant* amongst others.

### **Official Competition Jury:**

Australian filmmaker and actor **Rachel Ward** is **Jury President** for the 2012 Official Competition. This year's jury also features award-winning filmmakers **Amiel Courtin-Wilson** (Australia), **Mahamat-Saleh Haroun** (Chad), *Variety* critic **Boyd van Hoeij** (The Netherlands) and acclaimed producer **Lorna Tee** (Malaysia, Hong Kong).

In her former life as an actress, **Rachel Ward** was the recipient of several international drama awards and three Golden Globe nominations. She has starred in a number of major international films, but is probably most well known for her role in the TV mini-series, *The Thorn Birds*. Today Rachel focuses on writing and directing. Her first feature, *Beautiful Kate* (2009) premiered in the Sydney Film Festival's Official Competition, and won an IF Award for Cinematography.

Australian writer/director, **Amiel Courtin-Wilson** has 15 short and 3 documentary credits. His debut documentary, *Chasing Buddha* premiered at Sundance in 2000, and won Best Documentary at the Dendy Awards and the IF Awards. Wilson's feature film *HAIL* (SFF 2011) was selected for the Venice Film Festival 2011. It will also have an Australian theatrical release later this year

**Mahamat-Saleh Haroun** has written and directed shorts, documentaries and feature films, several of which been honoured at Venice and Cannes: *Bye-Bye Africa* (1999) won Best First Film at Venice, *Daratt* (2006) won the Special Jury Prize at Venice and *A Screaming Man* (2010) won the Jury Prize at Cannes. Haroun was himself a member of the Festival de Cannes Jury in 2011.

**Boyd van Hoeij** is a film critic for the US trade paper *Variety* and a freelance film writer, regularly contributing to *Indiewire*, *Cineuropa* and Dutch film monthly *Filmkrant*, and is the film editor of Dutch magazine *Winq* and its English-language twin, *Mate*. He also teaches short courses in film reviewing for aspiring critics at festivals around the world.

The producer **Lorna Tee** is a well-known personality in the Asian film scene. She is the new Festival Director of The International Film Festival of Malaysia and also works with leading production company October Pictures (Hong Kong) while managing her own production company Paperheart (Malaysia). Her producing credits include *My Beautiful Washing Machine*, *The Shoe Fairy*, *Rain Dogs*, *Crazy Stone*, *My Mother is a Bellydancer*, *At the End of Daybreak*, *Lover's Discourse*, *Come Rain, Come Shine* and *Postcards from the Zoo* (SFF 2012).

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### Official Competition Guests:

Director **Cate Shortland** will present the Australian Premiere of her feature film **Lore**. Her previous work includes the acclaimed *Somersault* (SFF 2004) which premiered at Cannes and won several AFI and IF Awards. Also present will be the producers of **Lore**, **Paul Welsh** (UK) and **Liz Watts** (AUS). Liz is also one of the producers of **Dead Europe** and has previously produced stellar offerings such as *Animal Kingdom* (2010) and *Little Fish* (2005).

**Philippe Falardeau** follows up his three prior award-winning features with **Monsieur Lazhar**, a drama which received an Academy Award® nomination for Best Foreign Language Film of the Year.

**Tony Krawitz**, most noted for his short feature film *Jewboy* (SFF 2005) which premiered at Cannes and won three AFI Awards and the acclaimed documentary *The Tall Man* (2011), will present his latest feature **Dead Europe**, a feature film adaptation of Christos Tsiolkas's novel of the same name. The producers of the film, Academy Award Winner **Emile Sherman** and **Liz Watts** will also be at the festival.

Brazilian **Kleber Mendonça Filho** will present the Australian premiere of his first fiction feature film, **Neighbouring Sounds**. Over the last decade, his short films *The Little Cotton Girl* (2003), *Green Vinyl* (2004), *Eletrodoméstica* (2005), *Friday Night Saturday Morning* (2006) and *Cold Tropics* (2009) have won over 100 awards in Brazil and abroad.

Director and screenwriter **Miguel Gomes** will be in Sydney for the Australian premiere of his third feature film, the lyrical and expressionistic **Tabu**. His 2008 feature *Our Beloved Month of August* screened in the Directors' Fortnight at the Festival de Cannes, and was subsequently selected for more than 40 international festivals in which it won over a dozen prizes.

**Yuen Sang-ho** will be in Sydney to present his first feature, which also appeared at the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes, **The King of Pigs**. The South Korean director will showcase his daring, disturbing and violent animated film about bullying, social status and class difference. Following its screening at the Busan International Film Festival it was hailed as marking a brave new direction for Korean animation.

### Feature Film Guests:

The Australian production **Being Venice**, will have its **World Premiere** here at SFF 2012 and will be graced by director **Miro Bilbrough**, producers **Michael Wrenn** and **Karen Radzyner**, and stars **Alice McConnell** and **Garry McDonald**.

From South Africa, **Oliver Hermanus**, director of **Beauty**, will be here to present this film, the first Afrikaans-language motion picture ever to screen at Cannes.

To present **Maori Boy Genius** are director, **Pietra Brett Kelly** and the subject of this fascinating documentary, **Ngaa Rauuira Puumanawawhiti**.

US Director **Richard Bates Jr.** created the short *Excision* in 2008, which went on to win 24 awards and to screen at nearly 50 festivals worldwide. Together with producer **Dylan Lewis**, he presents at SFF 2012, the feature film version, **Excision**.

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Thai director **Pen-ek Ratanaruang** will be in Sydney to present his new feature **Headshot**. He is considered one of the handful of directors who have helped to reinvent the Thai film industry and has pioneered the trend of looking back at retro Thai pop culture for inspiration.

**Lian Lunson** the Australian director of **Sing Me The Songs That Say I Love You: A Concert for Kate McGarrigle** is returning home to present her new concert documentary. Lunson previously produced numerous music videos and commercials working with Dwight Yoakam, Neil Young, Pearl Jam and U2. In 2006 Lunson directed the documentary *Leonard Cohen: I'm Your Man* which went on to become one of the top ten grossing documentaries world-wide that year.

French director and actress **Maiwenn** will present her latest film **Polisse** which won the Jury Prize at the 2011 Cannes Film festival. This follows on from her 2006 feature, the semi-autobiographical *Pardonnez-moi*.

Australian husband and wife team **Unjoo Moon** and **Dion Beebe** will attend the Australian premiere of their film, **The Zen of Bennett**. Former ABC journalist **Unjoo Moon** directed the Tony Bennett documentary, while Academy Award winning cinematographer (*Memoirs of a Geisha*) **Dion Beebe** is responsible for the footage behind this musical and philosophical exploration of Bennett's craft.

**Other SFF 2012 festival guests who will be here to present their films are:**

Cambodian-French director **Davy Chou** will support his first feature-length film, the documentary **Golden Slumbers**, which chronicles the glory years of the Cambodian film industry in the '60s and '70s before it was brutally wiped out by the Khmer Rouge. Chou is the founder of Kon Khmer Koun Khmer, an arts group for young Cambodians.

Up-and-coming Dutch director **Sacha Polak** brings her debut feature **Hemel** to SFF. The acclaimed film about a troubled young woman's search for love in her sexual escapades won the FIPRESCI Prize at the Berlinale.

Stephen Maing, an award-winning Korean-American filmmaker based in New York, will be on hand for SFF's screening of his documentary **High Tech, Low Life**, which follows the courageous bloggers who are pitted against the "Great Firewall of China." Stephen's attendance is made possible by the Australian International Documentary Conference (AIDC).

UK theatre and television director **Barnaby Southcombe** will present his feature-film debut **I, Anna** along with producer **Christopher Simon**. The film, a *noir*-influenced adaptation of Elsa Lewin's 1984 mystery novel of the same name, stars Southcombe's mother, Charlotte Rampling, along with Gabriel Byrne.

Veteran Indian documentarian **Anand Patwardhan** will be a guest for the screening of his award-winning film **Jai Bhim Comrade** in SFF's Focus on India section. The film is an epic study, 14 years in the making, of the 1997 police killing of unarmed Dalit ('untouchable') protesters in Mumbai.

Writer-director **Aurora Guerrero**, who was named one of *Filmmaker* magazine's '25 New Faces of Independent Film', will appear at SFF's screening of her feature debut, the East LA-set coming-of-age drama **Mosquita y Mari**. The film is one of one of eight titles from indigenous filmmakers presented in collaboration with programming partner Blackfella Films.

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London-based Welsh-Egyptian filmmaker **Sally El Hosaini** will visit SFF with her acclaimed debut feature ***My Brother the Devil***, which tells the story of the love and tension between two brothers coping with life on the mean streets of Hackney. The film won the Europa Cinema Label Award for Best European Film at the Berlinale and also won Best Cinematography (World Dramatic) at Sundance.

Veteran New Zealand filmmaker **Costa Botes**, onetime collaborator with Peter Jackson and director of the acclaimed documentaries on the making of *The Lord of the Rings*, will be present for the screening of his film ***The Last Dogs of Winter***. The film, which premiered at Toronto, covers the efforts of an eccentric breeder and activist to save the rare Canadian Eskimo Dog in frozen Churchill, Manitoba, with the help of maverick New Zealand TV star Caleb Ross (*The Tribe*).

Indian independent filmmaker and writer **Musa Syeed** will introduce his first narrative feature, ***Valley of Saints***. The film, which combines drama, romance, environmentalist overtones and commentary on war, is was shot on location on Lake Dal in India's Kashmir region. It won the World Cinema Audience Award as well as the Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Award at Sundance.

### **FOXTEL Australian Documentary Guests:**

Filmmakers of Australian documentaries will introduce and participate in Q&As. They include:

***Croker Island Exodus*** – Director, Screenwriter: **Steven McGregor** | Producers: **Anna Grieve, Danielle MacLean** | Actors: **Alice Briston, Netta Cahill, Jessie Lyons**

**Steven McGregor** is an Indigenous writer/director from Darwin and a graduate of AFTRS. His films include *My Brother Vinnie*, *5 Seasons*, *In a League of Their Own* and *Cold Turkey*.

***Coniston***– Directors: **Francis Jupurrurla Kelly, David Batty** | Producer: **Jeni McMahon** | Actors: **Jack Cook, Elijah Jones, Fiona Kitson**

Directors **Francis Jupurrurla Kelly** and **David Batty** (*Bush Mechanics*) re-ignite their unique filmmaking collaboration that began over 25 years ago in the early days of Warlpiri Media Association and CAAMA.

***Despite the Gods*** – Director: **Penny Vozniak**

Penny Vozniak shoots and directs documentary films and music videos. She is currently working on two documentary projects. *Despite the Gods* is her feature-length debut.

***Dr. Sarmast's Music School*** – Director: **Polly Watkins** | Producer: **Beth Frey** | Protagonist: **Dr Ahmad Sarmast**

Polly Watkins has directed short films and documentaries including *Swimming in the Backyard*, *Vietnam Nurses*, *Liquid Stone – Unlocking Gaudi's Secrets*. She also produced *Rollerboy* (a finalist in last year's FOXTEL Awards).

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***Killing Anna*** – Director, Producer: **Paul Gallasch**

Paul Gallasch grew up in Adelaide and briefly studied anthropology before completing a course in documentary filmmaking at the New York Film Academy.

***Missing in the Land of the Gods*** – Director: **Davor Drilic** | Producer: **Liz Burke**

Davor Dirlic graduated from Zagreb School for Film and TV, Croatia, and moved to Melbourne in 1989. His work includes the films: *Shooting Blanks*, *Passport to Parenthood* and the TV series *Do Not Resuscitate*.

***Paramedico*** – Director: **Ben Gilmour** | Producer: **Alison Croft**

Benjamin Gilmour's first feature was *Son of a Lion* (SFF 2007). The making of the film was the subject of his books *Warrior Poets: Guns, Movie-Making and the Wild West of Pakistan* (2008).

***Utopia*** – Director, Screenwriter: **Bruce Petty** | Producer: **Jenny Day**

Bruce Petty won an Oscar® for his animated film *Leisure* in 1976. He has made a number of other award-winning films including *Global Haywire*, which screened at SFF 2007.

#### **Dendy Awards Finalists:**

Finalist filmmakers for this year's Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films will also attend the Festival. They include:

***B I N O*** – Director: **Billie Pleffer** | Producer: **Rita Walsh**

***Dance Me to the End of Love*** – Director: **Martha Goddard** | Screenwriter: **Oliver Torr**

***Dave's Dead*** - Director: **Alethea Jones** | Producer: **Julian Vincent Costanzo** | Screenwriter: **Luke Ryan**

***Dumpy Goes to the Big Smoke*** – Director: **Mirrah Foulkes** | Producer: **Michael Cody**

***Julian*** – Director: **Matthew Moore** | Producer: **Robert Jago**

***Rippled*** – Director: **Darcy Prendergast** | Producer: **Nicky Pastore**

***The Hunter*** – Director: **Marieka Walsh** | Producer: **Donna Chang**

***The Wilding*** – Director: **Grant Scicluna** | Producer: **Jannine Barnes** | Actor: **Luke Mullins**

***Yardbird*** – Director: **Michael Spiccia** | Producer: **Jessica Mitchell** | Screenwriter: **Julius Avery**

#### **Short Film Guests:**

***Black Buster*** – Director: **Sio F. Tusa** | Producer: **Andrew Arbuthnot**

***Burning Hearts*** – Director: **James McFay**

***Cryo*** – Producer: **Drew Bailey**

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**Easy Come, Easy Go** – Director: **Peter Clifton**

**Letter Tape** – Producer: **Mitzi Goldman**

**Perished** – Director: **Aaron McCann** | Producer: **Stefan Androv Radanovich**

**She.Say** – Director: **Leah Purcell**

**Snow in Paradise** – Director: **Nikki Si'ulepa** | Executive Producer: **Ngairu Fuata** | Editor: **Debbie Mathews**

**Rauch Und Spiegel** – Director: **Nick Moore**

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## ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

Sydney Film Festival screens feature films, documentaries, short films and animations across the city at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays and the Art Gallery of NSW. 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 <http://www.sff.org.au>

The 59th Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Arts NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia, and the City of Sydney. The festival's Strategic partner is the NSW Government through Destination NSW.

**What:** Sydney Film Festival

**When:** 6-17 June, 2012

**Tickets & Info:** 1300 733 733 [www.sff.org.au](http://www.sff.org.au)

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