

# SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

05–16 JUNE 2019

## MEDIA RELEASE

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 11.00am WEDNESDAY 8 MAY 2019**

## 2019 SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS

The 66<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival has announced the return of eight accolades to be awarded at the 2019 Festival, and the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the Festival's Official Competition awarding the Sydney Film Prize.

### OFFICIAL COMPETITION

"This year, the Official Competition celebrates 12 years of awarding the prestigious Sydney Film Prize to the most audacious, cutting-edge and courageous film," said **Festival Director Nashen Moodley**. "Innovative, provocative or controversial, these films broaden our understanding of the world, and say important things in original ways."

"Among the 12 films selected to compete are three debut features. From Australia, Mirrah Foulkes' feminist revenge tale **Judy & Punch**, starring Mia Wasikowska and Damon Herriman; Ben Lawrence's (*Ghosthunter* – DAF winner at SFF 2018) **Hearts and Bones**, starring Hugo Weaving (*Mystery Road*, SFF 2014); and from New Zealand, the warmly humorous **Bellbird**, about a community coming together after a tragic death," he said.

"Direct from competing for the Palme d'Or at Cannes will be: Pedro Almodóvar's **Pain and Glory** starring Antonio Banderas and Penelope Cruz; **Parasite**, a satire on income inequality by Bong Joon-ho (*Okja*, SFF 2017); and searing political parable **Bacurau** co-directed by Kleber Mendonça Filho - whose film *Aquarius* won the Sydney Film Prize in 2016," he said.

"Also in Competition are Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's double Oscar-nominated epic **Never Look Away**; Nadav Lapid's **Synonyms**, winner of the Berlinale Golden Bear; **Dirty God**, an intimate portrait of a young mother scarred by an acid attack; feminist satire **God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya**; and two films from Sundance: Joanna Hogg's Grand Jury Prize winner **The Souvenir**; and winner of the Special Jury Award **Monos**," he said.

The winner will join the ranks of celebrated prior winners of the Sydney Film Prize: *The Heiresses* (2018), *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 2019 Official Competition jury comprises: Australian producer **John Maynard** (Jury President); Australian filmmaker **Ana Kokkinos** (*Blessed*, SFF 2019); actor and director from Brazil, **Wagner Moura** (*Marighella*, SFF 2019); from New Zealand, filmmaker **Gaylene Preston** (*My Year with Helen*, SFF 2017); and Indian artist and filmmaker **Ritu Sarin** (*The Sweet Requiem*, SFF 2019).



## DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION AWARD

10 finalists have been announced for the **Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentary**. The Foundation awards a \$10,000 cash prize to the winning film.

The ten films in competition are: *I Am No Bird*, *In My Blood It Runs*, *It All Started With A Stale Sandwich*, *The Leunig Fragments*, *Life After The Oasis*, *Lili*, *Martha: A Picture Story*, *Sanctuary*, *She Who Must Be ~~Obe~~ Loved*, and *White Light*.

“Documentary Australia Foundation is very proud to continue our support of the Sydney Film Festival for a sixth year. The documentaries nominated in the Australian competition are of such a high standard, with distinctive stories covering a fascinating range of issues and styles,” said **Documentary Australia Foundation CEO Dr Mitzi Goldman**.

“They are only a snapshot of the breadth of talent and commitment in the Australian documentary sector, but provide a window into the profound work and commitment our filmmakers have to their subjects. We have great respect for our documentary filmmakers, and it is an honour to celebrate their excellence in a small way with this award,” she said.

Previous winners of the Australian documentary prize at Sydney Film Festival are: *Ghosthunter* (2018); *The Pink House* (2017); *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 50<sup>th</sup> year, will screen on 15 and again on 16 June. Three prize winners – **The Dendy Live Action Short Award**, **The Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Director** and the **Yoram Gross Animation Award** – will each receive a cash prize to be announced at the Festival’s Closing Night.

“Dendy Cinemas is honoured to continue our long standing partnership with the Sydney Film Festival and we look forward to discovering new Australian filmmakers with the 50th anniversary of the Dendy Awards,” said **Nick Hayes, Head of Theatrical Sales and Acquisitions, Dendy / Icon**.

These ground-breaking awards have kick-started the careers of many prominent filmmakers, with talent including 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 Sandra and Guy Gross in memory of the late Yoram Gross) are **Academy Award-eligible**, opening new pathways for many Australian filmmakers.

## EVENT CINEMAS AUSTRALIAN SHORT SCREENPLAY AWARD

24 finalists have been announced for the **Event Cinemas Australian Short Screenplay Award**. The Award provides a \$5,000 cash prize for the best screenplay in one of the short fiction films selected for the Sydney Film Festival program. All new Australian short fiction films screening at the Festival are eligible, and the winner is announced at the Closing Night Gala.

“Australian screen writers are the cornerstone of our films on screen. They begin the process of unique stories, presenting characters and landscapes that define Australian stories on film,” said **Event Cinema’s Film Festival’s General Manager, Anthony Kierann**.



“Event Cinemas is thrilled to contribute to the development of emerging writing talent, and congratulates all writers in the award program that begin the threads of Australian stories on our screens,” he said.

### **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. Previous winners include: **Warwick Thornton, Leah Purcell, and Lynette Wallworth.**

### **THE AUDIENCE AWARDS**

**The Audience Awards** are the Festival’s people’s choice awards, where Festival fans get to vote for the most popular films at the Festival. Using the SFF 2019 app, Festivalgoers are invited to rate films after each screening. Two awards are presented: one for best narrative feature and one for best documentary. Previous winners have included: *The Insult* and *Backtrack Boys* (2018), *Ali’s Wedding* and *Roller Dreams* (2017); *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).

### **SIGNATURE DINOSAUR DESIGNS AWARDS**

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

The full Sydney Film Festival 2019 program can be found online at [sff.org.au](http://sff.org.au).

Sydney Film Festival runs 5 – 16 June 2019. Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2019 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit [sff.org.au](http://sff.org.au) for more information.

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\*\*\*Sydney Film Festival Press Pack and Images Available [HERE](#)

#### **EDITOR’S NOTES**

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#### **ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL**

From Wednesday 5 June to Sunday 16 June 2019, the 66<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: *The Heiresses* (2018), *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](http://sff.org.au).

The 66<sup>th</sup> 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.

