

# SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

05-16 JUNE 2019

MEDIA RELEASE

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## SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCE FULL PROGRAM FOR THE 5-16 JUNE FESTIVAL

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The 66<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival program was officially launched today by Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley.

“This year celebrates a resurgent year of Australian cinema, with an exceptional selection of contemporary Australian stories including 23 World Premieres,” said **Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley**. “From Mirrah Foulkes’ feminist revenge tale *Judy & Punch*, to Partho Sen-Gupta’s politically provocative drama *Slam*, to Ben Lawrence’s deeply moving *Hearts and Bones* starring Hugo Weaving, great Australian storytellers join globally renowned filmmakers to share crucial perspectives on our world.”

“This year’s program holds a mirror to titanic shifts culturally and politically, with films that will challenge and excite us. Shining a light on subjects that are often little explored or seen, these films are an invitation for us to collectively reflect on who we are, and what may lay ahead,” he said.

“The Festival also stands with talented women filmmakers, in an industry still struggling with equality. With the Europe! Voices of Women in Film strand, and retrospective programs celebrating pioneering women including our tribute to the late Agnès Varda, the Festival this year has signed the 5050x2020 pledge, committing to working towards gender parity and inclusion in film festivals,” he said.

**Minister for the Arts Don Harwin** said “Each year the Sydney Film Festival showcases the light and joy of our Australian film industry, with talent from new and established film makers, opening the wealth of cinematic potential that is in this country. Whether you’re looking for home-grown talent, documentaries or stories that strike to the heart, the 66<sup>th</sup> Festival will take you there. I look forward to seeing Sydney’s cinemas bustling in June as we enjoy another year of this brilliant festival.”

In 2019 the Festival will present **307** films from over **55** countries including **33** World Premieres, bringing together hundreds of international and local stories. There are **112 feature films**, including prize-winners from prestigious festivals around the world; and **79 documentaries** tackling crucial contemporary issues, from established and upcoming documentarians.

The program also includes two retrospectives on influential women directors: Viva Varda: A Retrospective of Agnès Varda and in Essential Australian Women Directors – 10 Trailblazers Selected by David Stratton.

### OPENING AND CLOSING NIGHTS

The 2019 Festival opens with the World Premiere of *Palm Beach*, an uplifting drama/comedy from Australian director Rachel Ward. Opening Night is presented by **Distinguished Partner, Lexus Australia**.



*Palm Beach* features an all-star cast of Australian screen legends including Golden Globe-nominated icons **Bryan Brown** (*Australia Day*, SFF 2017), **Sam Neill** (*The Daughter*, SFF 2015), Oscar nominee **Richard E. Grant** (*Gosford Park*), **Greta Scacchi** (*The Player*, SFF 1992), **Jacqueline McKenzie** (*Romper Stomper*) and **Heather Mitchell** (*Rogue*), as well as Brown and Ward's daughter **Matilda Brown**, playing Ella – the daughter of Bryan Brown's character Frank.

Rachel Ward, along with key cast members, will be in attendance to present their film on Opening Night. Ward will also take part in the annual **Ian McPherson Memorial Lecture** at the Festival Hub as part of Vivid Ideas, hosted by film critic David Stratton (Monday 10 June, 6:30pm).

In conjunction with the Australian Screen Editors, the film's producer **Nick Meyers** will join **Dany Cooper** (*Judy & Punch*) to discuss the role of editing in storytelling with Andrea Lang at **Talking Editing** at the Festival Hub (Saturday 15 June, 4:15pm), as part of Vivid Ideas.

Closing the Festival will be the Australian Premiere of a buzzy new title – soon to be announced!

## **OFFICIAL COMPETITION**

For the 12<sup>th</sup> year, the Official Competition will award the **\$60,000 cash Sydney Film Prize** for audacious, cutting-edge and courageous cinema.

Among the 12 competing films are three debut features. From Australia, Mirrah Foulkes' feminist revenge tale **Judy & Punch**, starring Mia Wasikowska and Damon Herriman; Ben Lawrence's (*Ghosthunter*, 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.

Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's double Oscar-nominated epic **Never Look Away** draws inspiration from the life of revered German artist Gerhard Richter: from childhood in Nazi Germany, to struggling to find his artistic vision in West Germany.

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 Closing Night Film); and searing political parable **Bacurau** by Kleber Mendonça Filho (*Aquarius* – Sydney Film Prize 2016 winner) and Juliano Dornelles.

International festival winners include Nadav Lapid's **Synonyms**, winner of the Berlinale Golden Bear; and from Sundance, Joanna Hogg's Grand Jury Prize winner **The Souvenir**, with Tilda Swinton alongside her daughter Honor Swinton Byrne; and winner of the Special Jury Award **Monos**, Alejandro Landes' incendiary allegory about child soldiers.

Also in Competition are **Dirty God** by Sacha Polak (*Hemel*, SFF 2012), an intimate portrait of a young mother scarred by an acid attack; and feminist satire **God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya**, based on the true story of a woman who participates in a men-only contest – and wins, to the ire of the community.

The winner of the Sydney Film Prize is announced at the Festival's Closing Night Gala on Sunday 16 June. Previous winners include: *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 competition is endorsed by FIAPF, the regulating body for international film festivals, and is judged by a jury of five international and Australian filmmakers and industry professionals.



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).

Attending the Festival to present the premiere of their films in competition will be: Australian director **Mirrah Foulkes** and lead stars **Mia Wasikowska** and **Damon Herriman** (*Judy & Punch*); Australian director **Ben Lawrence** and cast members including **Hugo Weaving** (*Hearts and Bones*); New Zealand director **Hamish Bennett** (*Bellbird*); Oscar-winning director **Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck** (*Never Look Away*); Korean director **Bong Joon-ho** (*Parasite*); Brazilian co-directors **Kleber Mendonça Filho** and **Juliano Dornelles** (*Bacurau*); Dutch director **Sacha Polak** (*Dirty God*); and Macedonian director **Teona Strugar Mitevska** (*God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya*).

Foulkes, Wasikowska and Herriman, alongside *Judy & Punch* producers **Nash Edgerton** and **Michele Bennett** will also take part in a **Meet the Filmmakers** talk discussing their new film (Sunday 9 June, 1:30pm). Joon-ho will also participate in a **Meet the Filmmaker** talk (Sunday 16 June, 2:15pm) with Festival Director Nashen Moodley after the screening of *Parasite*.

Henckel von Donnersmarck will engage in an **Extended Q&A** with film critic David Stratton discussing his approach to making *Never Look Away* (Tuesday, 11 June, 6:15pm).

Lawrence and Weaving will also discuss *Hearts and Bones* at a post-screening **Meet the Filmmakers** talk (Sunday 16 June, 11:30am), as part of Vivid Ideas.

## WORLD PREMIERES

World Premieres at the Festival include several Australian stories, like renowned documentarian Ian Darling's *The Final Quarter*, following AFL champion footballer and Indigenous leader Adam Goodes' public call-out of racism.

Festivalgoers will also be the first in the world to see charming Australian rom-com *Standing Up for Sunny*, with *Breaking Bad*'s RJ Mitte playing a loner with cerebral palsy, using his withering wit to help an up-and-coming comedian; and queer coming-of-age tale *Sequin in a Blue Room*, about a teenager boy with a hook-up app obsession.

Rachel Ward's *Palm Beach*, Ben Lawrence's *Hearts and Bones* and Hamish Bennett's *Bellbird* will also have their World Premieres at the Festival.

All World Premiere films will have guests attending to introduce their screenings, including **Ian Darling** (*The Final Quarter*) and US actor **RJ Mitte** (*Standing Up for Sunny*).

Darling will also take part in a panel on *The Final Quarter* (Sunday 9 June, 11:30am) as part of Vivid Ideas, hosted by Marngrook Footy Show's Shelley Ware. Joined by Indigenous and non-Indigenous media, political and sporting commentators, Darling will discuss the implications of this powerful film.

Mitte will also join Australian filmmakers from the Screenability program for a **Meet the Filmmakers** talk as part of Vivid Ideas, along with guest programmer Sofya Gollan at HOYTS Entertainment Quarter (Saturday 15 June, 4:00pm), discussing the importance of authentic representation in film.

The **Meet the Filmmakers: Suburban Wildlife & Sequin in a Blue Room** party (Saturday 8 June, 1pm) will be an opportunity for under-25s to meet the emerging Australian filmmakers behind *Suburban Wildlife* and *Sequin in a Blue Room*, find out how these young filmmakers got their first features off the ground, and hang around afterwards for a chat and a snack.



## SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS AT THE STATE

Celebrating its 90<sup>th</sup> birthday during the Festival (7 June), the iconic State Theatre provides the ultimate Sydney Film Festival experience, screening everything from hard-hitting documentaries to indie hits.

Straight from screening as Opening Night film at Cannes, and competing for the Palme d'Or, ***The Dead Don't Die*** is Jim Jarmusch's hilarious zombie film with an all-star cast of film and cultural icons: Bill Murray, Adam Driver, Chloë Sevigny, alongside Tilda Swinton, Danny Glover, Selena Gomez, Luka Sabbat, Iggy Pop, RZA and Tom Waits.

Two films explore the influence of iconic US musicians: ***Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese***, a thrilling film about Bob Dylan's 1975 tour, featuring new interviews and incredible concert footage; and Gurinder Chadha's (*Bend It Like Beckham*) ***Blinded By the Light***, about the music of Bruce Springsteen, and its influence on the life of a British-Pakistani teenager.

***Skin*** is the true story of a white supremacist who transforms for love, starring up-and-coming Australian actress Danielle Macdonald (*Patti Cake\$, SFF 2017*) alongside Jamie Bell (*Billy Elliot*); and the directorial debut of Wagner Moura (*Narcos*), ***Marighella*** is a thrilling biopic of the Brazilian revolutionary Carlos Marighella played by acclaimed actor/musician Seu Jorge.

Australian stories include: ***Mystify: Michael Hutchence***, directed by Richard Lowenstein, about INXS lead singer, with a cornucopia of rarely-seen footage; ***Slam***, a tense mystery set in Western Sydney tackling Islamophobia by Partho Sen-Gupta (*Sunrise, SFF 2015*); plus Ian Darling's ***The Final Quarter***.

International award winners include acclaimed French director Claire Denis' sci-fi thriller ***High Life***, starring Robert Pattinson, Juliette Binoche and André 3000; and epic Chinese drama ***So Long, My Son***, winner of both Best Actor and Actress at Berlinale.

***Varda by Agnès***, the final film by the iconic filmmaker, in which Agnès looks back at her remarkable life and exceptional career, a fine complement to the Festival's Viva Varda retrospective.

Guests include: *Narcos* star **Wagner Moura** (*Marighella*), who will also participate in a post-screening **Extended Q&A** (Sunday 9 June, 5:00pm) at the Festival Hub; Australian filmmaker **Richard Lowenstein** and producer **Sue Murray** (*Mystify: Michael Hutchence*); and Sydney-based French director **Partho Sen-Gupta** (*Slam*). Following the screening of *Slam* will be **Poetry Slam in the Hub** (Saturday 15 June, 4:45pm), a thrilling slam showcase featuring poets from across Sydney.

**Jim Jarmusch's Zombie Jam** (Friday 14 June, 8:30pm) at the Festival Hub will celebrate the music-filled world of indie legend Jim Jarmusch's films, including *The Dead Don't Die*, from spooky bops to Wu-Tang Clan.

**Spinning Springsteen** (Saturday 8 June, 7:30pm) will be a gloriously blue-collar celebration of Bruce Springsteen's back catalogue at the Hub, before the screening of *Blinded By the Light*. Pull out your finest cut-off denim vest or flannel and expect back-to-back Boss tunes.

## DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION AWARDS

10 documentaries (including six World Premieres) will contest the **Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentary**.

***The Leunig Fragments*** is a portrait of playful Australian provocateur cartoonist Michael Leunig; ***It All Started With a Stale Sandwich*** reflects on artworks created for Kaldor Public Art Projects- from Jeff Koons to Abramović, celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year; and ***She Who Must Be Obeyed Loved*** is about the trailblazing Indigenous filmmaker Alfreda Glynn, directed by her daughter Erica Glynn, and produced by her granddaughter Tanith Glynn-Maloney.



Documentaries on pertinent social issues include: ***In My Blood It Runs*** by Maya Newell (*Gayby Baby*, SFF 2015), a rare insight into a young Arrernte/Garrwa child-healer ‘failing’ in the western school system; ***Life After The Oasis***, the follow-up to 2008’s *The Oasis* on Sydney’s homeless teens directed by Sasha Ettinger Epstein (*The Pink House*, SFF 2017); and ***White Light***, about a Chicago suburb with higher gun violence statistics than any war zone of the last two decades, by artist and filmmaker George Gittoes (*Snow Monkey*, SFF 2016).

Stories from beyond our borders are ***Martha: A Picture Story***, about an unexpected icon of New York’s graffiti movement; ***Sanctuary***, chronicling a young refugee’s cross-continental search for freedom; ***I Am No Bird***, following four women’s wedding days across Australia, India, Mexico and Turkey; and ***Lili***, an investigation into an Australian-Hungarian family’s history.

Filmmaker guests for all Documentary Australia Foundation films will attend the Festival to introduce their films.

### **FEATURES Supported By UNSW Arts and Social Sciences**

From award-winning hits across the international festival circuit, to exciting new works by emerging filmmaking talent, the Festival will present captivating stories showcasing great cinematic storytellers from both Australia and around the world.

Features by Australian storytellers include: winner of the Special Jury Prize at Venice, ***The Nightingale*** by Jennifer Kent (*The Babadook*, screening in Essential Australian Women Directors – 10 Trailblazers Selected by David Stratton); Grant Sputore’s debut feature ***I Am Mother*** starring Hilary Swank and Clara Rugaard, about a child raised by a robot (voiced by Rose Byrne) in a post-apocalyptic future; and ***Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan***, a visceral exploration of a key ANZAC battle in the Vietnam war by Kriv Stenders (*Australia Day*, SFF 2017).

Elisabeth Moss, Cara Delevingne, Agyness Deyn, Dan Stevens and Amber Heard all star in ***Her Smell***, about a rock star spiralling into self-destruction; and Sienna Miller, Christina Hendricks and Aaron Paul star in captivating drama ***American Woman***.

Jeff Goldblum is a smooth-talking brain doctor in eerie spine tingler ***The Mountain***; Emilio Estevez stars alongside Alec Baldwin in his latest directorial offering, ***The Public***, about officials trying to evict homeless people occupying a library; and Colin Firth joins Matthias Schoenaerts and Léa Seydoux in ***Kursk***, a gripping account of the Russian submarine disaster.

Stories from the political world stage are: winner of the Special Jury Prize at San Sebastian, ***Alpha, the Right to Kill***, set during Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte’s controversial war on drugs; ***Saturday Afternoon***, which is banned in Bangladesh, and based on the Holey Artisan Bakery terrorist attack by Islamist extremists; and ***Akasha***, satirising the grim realities of the South Sudanese civil war.

Women are the focus in South African feminist western ***Flatland*** by Jenna Bass (*Rafiki*, SFF 2018); ***Ladyworld***, a stylish update to *Lord of the Flies*; ***Sibel***, about a mute young woman fighting back against her Turkish village’s conventions; and ***Cold Sweat***, about an Iranian women’s futsal team captain fighting patriarchal laws that prevent them from competing overseas.

From Sundance is Audience Award winner ***Brittany Runs a Marathon***, starring Jillian Bell, and winner of the World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award ***Dolce Fine Giornata***, following a poet who makes a controversial speech on terrorism; and from Venice, winner of the Horizon Prize, ***Manta Ray***.

Australian director Kriv Stenders (*Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan*) and Bangladeshi director **Mostofa Sarwar Farooki** (*Saturday Afternoon*) will attend the Festival as guests.

After the screening of *Her Smell*, festivalgoers can hurl themselves headfirst into the **Grrrl’s Punk Riot** party (Sunday 9 June, 9:30pm), featuring a live performance from Sydney band Good Pash.



## INTERNATIONAL DOCS Supported by The University of Sydney

True stories diving into contemporary topics: **Untouchable**, on the rise and public fall of Harvey Weinstein; and **Apollo 11**, chronicling the epic story of Neil Armstrong's first steps on the moon using never-before-seen footage, arriving on the mission's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

US stories from the Trump era are explored in **The Brink**, following the controversial former Chief Strategist for Trump, Steve Bannon; and Frederick Wiseman's (*Ex Libris: The New York Public Library*, SFF 2018) **Monrovia, Indiana**, capturing life in a small Midwestern town that voted 76% in favour of Trump. **XY Chelsea** is the on-going story of US military whistle-blower Chelsea Manning and her release from jail in 2017 [finished just before Manning was re-imprisoned in March this year].

Political films from around the globe include: winner of the Sundance World Cinema Documentary Special Jury Award, **Midnight Traveler**, documenting a family's search for safety as they flee from the Taliban; Werner Herzog's (*Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, SFF 2011) **Meeting Gorbachev**, featuring fascinating conversations with the last leader of the Soviet Union; and **The Edge of Democracy**, examining Brazil's tumultuous recent political history from a personal perspective.

Also from Sundance: Audience Award winner **Sea of Shadows**, about the battle to save the vaquita whale from extinction; and winner of the World Cinema Grand Jury Prize **Honeyland**, a portrait of a female beekeeper in the Macedonian countryside; and from SXSW, Special Jury Award winner **Nothing Fancy: Diana Kennedy**, about the doyenne of Mexican cooking Dianna Kennedy, and her sustainable cooking practices.

Tales of modern China include: winner of the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance **One Child Nation**, about the underreported consequences of China's One-Child Policy and **Leftover Women**, about three women on their quest to find a life partner before they're considered 'leftover' at age 27.

Fun flicks include **Trixie Mattel: Moving Parts**, going behind the scenes with RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars season three winner Trixie Mattel; **Picture Character**, a thought-provoking look at the evolution of emojis; and **Hail Satan?**, observing the rise of Satanism in the US.

**Jialing Zhang**, co-director of *One Child Nation*, will attend the Festival as a guest to introduce her award-winning documentary. She will also take part in a post-screening discussion, hosted by The University of Sydney (Friday 7 June, 4:00pm).

## FOCUS ON NEW ZEALAND

The Festival presents **Focus on New Zealand**, showcasing seven features and documentaries, and six creative shorts celebrating New Zealand's history and community, as well as its rich Māori and Pacific Island culture, in partnership with the New Zealand Film Commission.

Screening will be **The Chills: The Triumph & Tragedy of Martin Phillipps**, following the ups and downs of one of New Zealand's most beloved bands; **Daffodils**, a musical romance brimming with New Zealand hits from Crowded House to Bic Runga; and **The Heart Dances**, about the re-imagining of Jane Campion's *The Piano*, by Czech choreographers working with the Royal New Zealand Ballet.

**Merata: How Mum Decolonised the Screen** is a portrait of trailblazing Māori filmmaker Merata Mita, reportedly the first Indigenous woman to direct a feature film; eight-part portmanteau film **Vai** follows an imaginary figure encompassing every woman of every age, by nine women filmmakers from the South Pacific; and **Capital in the Twenty-First Century** is an stirring adaptation of French economist Thomas Piketty's global bestseller.

Attending the Festival to introduce their films will be: director **Julia Parnell** and *The Chills* frontman **Martin Phillipps** (*The Chills: The Triumph & Tragedy of Martin Phillipps*); director **David Stubbs** (*Daffodils*); director **Rebecca Tansley** (*The Heart Dances*); director and son of Merata Mita, **Heperi**



**Mita**, and producer **Chelsea Winstanley** (*Merata: How Mum Decolonised the Screen*); filmmaker **Justin Pemberton** (*Capital in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*); and five of the nine directors of *Vai*: **Becs Arahanga, Matasila Freshwater, Marina Alofagia McCartney, Nicole Whippy** and **Sharon Whippy**.

Hosted by UNSW Arts & Social Sciences, public talk **The Work of Freda Glynn and Merata Mita** will feature filmmakers behind *She Who Must Be Obeyed* and *Merata: How Mum Decolonised the Screen* discussing the ground breaking work of these two trailblazers at the Festival Hub (Friday 14 June, 8:15pm).

## **FIRST NATIONS**

The Festival together with Screen Australia's Indigenous Department continues its support of First Nation storytelling in 2019, showcasing important films by First Nation filmmakers from across Australia and around the world.

Australian films screening are: Erica Glynn's *She Who Must Be Obeyed*; the World Premiere of two short documentaries from Screen Australia's State of Alarm initiative highlighting traditional Indigenous practices in environmental protection, *Warburdar Bununu: Water Shield* and *Saving Seagrass*; and, another World Premiere, *Dark Place*, an Indigenous horror anthology, with twisted short tales from five Indigenous filmmakers.

First Nation stories from around the world include *Merata: How Mum Decolonised the Screen*; eight-part portmanteau film *Vai*; and *The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open* about a chance encounter between two Indigenous women on a Vancouver street.

Attending as guests will be Indigenous director **Erica Glynn** (*In My Own Words*, SFF 2017) with her mother and film subject **Freda Glynn** (*She Who Must Be Obeyed*), and the five *Dark Place* short film directors: **Björn Stewart, Perun Bonser, Kodie Bedford, Liam Phillips**, and **Rob Braslin**.

## **EUROPE! VOICES OF WOMEN IN FILM Supported by European Film Promotion**

In partnership with European Film Promotion, and media partners *Screen International* and *Fade to Her*, Sydney Film Festival presents the fourth annual **Europe! Voices of Women in Film**: a program of 10 new films from vital European women filmmakers.

From Austria to Cyprus, and Denmark to Scotland, the program shines a spotlight on talented women filmmakers.

Filmmaker guests from across the continent will introduce their films and take part in a public talk: **In Conversation: Europe! Voices of Women in Film** at The Hub (Sunday 9 June, 3:00pm), examining what steps towards gender parity have been made in recent years with Screen International's Sarah Ward.

In attendance to present their films at the Festival will be: German filmmaker Carolina Hellsgård (*Endzeit - Ever After*), Greek director Marianna Economou (*When Tomatoes Met Wagner*), Icelandic director Asthildur Kjartansdóttir (*The Deposit*), Cypriot filmmaker Tonia Mishiali (*Pause*), Dutch director Esther Rots (*Retrospekt*), and Austrian director Elina Tikhonova (*Caviar*).

## **SOUNDS ON SCREEN**

**Sounds on Screen** highlights six inspiring musical stories from legendary singer Aretha Franklin's spine-tingling 1972 concert, to the fierce creativity of jazz icon Miles Davis.

Stories include *The Chills: The Triumph & Tragedy of Martin Phillipps*; rousing concert film *Amazing Grace; Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool*, an insightful bio-doc of the legendary musician with new archival footage; and *Marianne & Leonard: Words of Love*, about the love affair between Leonard Cohen and his muse Marianne, by Nick Broomfield (*Whitney: Can I Be Me*, SFF 2017).



Also screening are **David Crosby: Remember My Name**, examining the influential singer-songwriter's drug-fuelled years with frankness and fervour; PJ Harvey documentary **A Dog Called Money**; and **Inna de Yard: The Soul of Jamaica** – Jamaican music's own version of *The Buena Vista Social Club*.

## **FREAK ME OUT**

Sydney Film Festival's weird, wonderful and completely whacked-out Freak Me Out program, curated by **Richard Kuipers**, returns with seven films from the wild side of contemporary cinema to Event Cinemas George Street and Dendy Newtown.

Elijah Wood stars in **Come to Daddy**, the directorial debut of Kiwi genre producer Ant Timpson (*Deathgasm*, SFF 2015); **Dark Place** is an Indigenous horror anthology; and psycho-horror **Daniel Isn't Real** stars Patrick Schwarzenegger, the son of film legend Arnold Schwarzenegger.

**The Wind** is a spine-tingling feminist tale of a lonely frontier-woman that reverses traditional Western narratives; **Why Don't You Just Die!** combines gallons of gore with super-stylish visuals and a wicked sense of humour; **Depraved** brings the Frankenstein story to life in 21<sup>st</sup> century New York; and **Here Comes Hell** is a comic horror pastiche unfolding in a classic Old Dark House.

**Ant Timpson** (*Come to Daddy*) will attend the Festival as a guest to introduce the Australian Premiere of his film.

## **SCREENABILITY**

Returning to the Festival is **Screenability**, an exciting platform for screen practitioners with disability in partnership with Create NSW.

Curated by Guest Programmer **Sofya Gollan**, seven cutting edge works by filmmakers with disability will be showcased: documentaries **Vision Portraits**, **My Name is Daniel**, and **Sandgirl**, and New Zealand short film *A Matter of Time*, as well as three Australian short films selected as part of the Screenability Filmmakers Fund from Create NSW: *Deluge*, *Magnetic*, and *Prone to the Drone*.

Filmmakers from the Screenability program will be joined by *Breaking Bad*'s **RJ Mitte** (*Standing Up for Sunny*, screening as part of Special Presentations in the State), for a **Meet the Filmmakers** talk along guest programmer Sofya Gollan at HOYTS Entertainment Quarter (Saturday 15 June, 4:00pm).

The Festival maintains its inclusion policy with audio described and open captioned screenings, and over 90 English-subtitled films in the program.

## **FLUX: ART + FILM**

**FLUX: Art+Film** returns for a second year, with six titles from artists who challenge and transform the cinema experience, selected by Guest Curator **Bridget Ikin**.

The program includes an experimental Australian film, **Witkacy & Malinowski** – a docudrama recreating a real-life argument between two great Polish thinkers on a train to Toowoomba during the first World War, by Australian artist and filmmaker John Gillies.

Radical films from around the globe include **Present.Perfect.**, created from 800 hours of live stream footage from 422 million Chinese live streamers, and New York-based artist Asad Raza's **Minor History**, turning the camera on his eccentric 90-year-old uncle.





## LEXUS AUSTRALIA SHORT FILM FELLOWSHIP

The Festival will host the World Premieres of the 2018 **Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship** Fellows: Melissa Anastasi (*Chlorine*), Sunday Emerson Gullifer (*Broken Line North*), Jamieson Pearce (*Strangers*), and duo Curtis Taylor and Nathan Mewett (*Jadai: The Broome Brawler*), supported by Lexus Australia.

Each filmmaker party received a \$50,000 grant, the largest cash fellowship for short film in Australia, to make a film to premiere at the 2019 Festival. The Fellows were selected by a jury of industry luminaries led by Australian actress Marta Dusseldorp (Jury Chair), alongside Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley, Lexus Australia Senior Manager, Marketing, Vin Naidoo, Australian producer Greer Simpkin and President of the Australian Directors' Guild Samantha Lang.

## SHORT FILM AWARDS

Ten finalists in the Dendy Awards, Australia's longest running short film competition, celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year, will also screen over two sessions on 15 and 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 be announced at the Festival's Closing Night, together with the **Event Cinemas Australian Short Screenplay Award**.

## YOUTH

Sydney Film Festival's Youth Pass provides cheaper tickets for film lovers aged 18-24. Festival films now cost young people just \$75 for a bundle of six-tickets, and tickets for under 18s are just \$14. The Festival's partnership with membership platform for teens aged 15–19, Playwave ([playwave.com.au](http://playwave.com.au)) provides additional access to discounted tickets.

## FAMILY

The **Family Films** program returns with seven family-friendly films screening in daytime sessions at HOYTS Entertainment Quarter.

Kids, tweens and teens can look forward to *The Secret Life of Pets 2*, voiced by an all-star cast including Kevin Hart, Tiffany Haddish, Harrison Ford, and Patton Oswalt; and *The Elephant Queen*, narrated by Oscar-nominated actor Chiwetel Ejiofor, about an elephant mother leading her family on an epic journey across the African plains.

*Emu Runner* follows an Indigenous girl who forms a special bond with a wild emu; *Ringside* shines a light on two young aspiring boxers from South Side Chicago; and *Stupid Young Heart* tackles first love and politics in Northern Europe.

Other animated hits include *Children of the Sea*, a gorgeous anime adaptation of Daisuke Igarashi's manga of the same name; *Tito and the Birds*, about 10-year-old Tito and his feathered friends as they save the world; and *Minuscule – Mandibles From Far Away*, diving into the delightful world of insects.

Internationally renowned comedy stars **Kevin Hart** and **Tiffany Haddish** (*The Secret Life of Pets 2*), as well as Australian filmmaker **Imogen Thomas** (*Emu Runner*) and filmmaker **Victoria Stone** (*The Elephant Queen*) will all attend the Festival to present their films.



## THE BOX SET

The entire season (four episodes) of Australian director Jeffrey Walker's (*Ali's Wedding*, winner of Audience Award for Best Feature at SFF 2017) highly anticipated series **Lambs of God** will have their Australian Premiere at the Festival. Sam Reid (*Standing Up for Sunny*, SFF 2019), Ann Dowd (*The Handmaid's Tale*), Essie Davis (*Game of Thrones*) and Jessica Barden (*The Lobster*) all-star in the gothic, twistedly-erotic mini-series. Walker, and members of the film team, will attend as Festival guests.

## ESSENTIAL AUSTRALIAN WOMEN DIRECTORS

The Sydney Film Festival's retrospective program **Essential Australian Women Directors – 10 Trailblazers Selected by David Stratton** features 10 essential films directed by pioneering Australian women filmmakers, each marking a great milestone in Australian film history.

The 10 films in the program are:

*NFSA Restores: The Cheaters* (1930)  
– Paulette McDonagh  
*Malcolm* (1986) – Nadia Tass  
*High Tide* (1987) – Gillian Armstrong  
*Sweetie* (1989) – Jane Campion  
*Waiting* (1991) – Jackie McKimmie

*Bedevil* (1993) – Tracey Moffatt  
*Love Serenade* (1996) – Shirley Barrett  
*Blessed* (2009) – Ana Kokkinos  
*Beautiful Kate* (2009) – Rachel Ward  
*The Babadook* (2014) – Jennifer Kent

The Essential Australian Women Directors films will have filmmaker guests attending the Festival.

## CLASSICS RESTORED

Three restored films will give audiences the opportunity to see cinema classics the way they were intended, including pioneering Expressionist filmmaker Paul Wegener's ***The Golem: How He Came Into the World***, featuring a new live score performed by Berlin-based electronic composer Lucrecia Dalt; and Béla Tarr's seven-hour black-and-white masterpiece ***Sátántangó***.

Screening as part of the Festival's Screen Day Out program is a brand-new National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) digital restoration of Lawrence Johnston's 1994 film ***Eternity*** about Arthur Stace, a Sydneysider who famously chalked the word 'Eternity' on his hometown's streets. Director **Lawrence Johnston** and producer **Susan Mackinnon** (*Eternity*) will attend the Festival as a guest.

Four classic titles will screen in the Festival's All Night Cine-Love In, screening from 10pm on Saturday 8 June at Dendy Newtown: ***Eraserhead*** (David Lynch); ***Female Trouble*** (John Waters); ***In the Realm of the Senses*** (Nagisa Oshima); and ***O Lucky Man!*** (Lindsay Anderson).

## VIVA VARDA: A RETROSPECTIVE OF AGNÈS VARDA

This year's Festival will include a retrospective of 10 innovative and genre-defying works by legendary auteur Agnès Varda, co-presented with the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) and the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA). From her feature debut ***La Pointe Courte***, described as the first nouvelle vague film, to inventive cinematic memoir ***The Beaches of Agnès***, the retrospective examines her vital presence in the cinematic landscape during her lifetime and beyond.

The Festival will host **An Audience Guide to Varda** with ACMI's **Kristy Matheson**, curator of the retrospective, at the Festival Hub (Saturday 8 June, 4:30pm).

The Festival will also screen Varda's final film ***Varda by Agnès*** in this year's International Documentaries and Special Presentations sections, looking back at her remarkable life and exceptional career.



## **THE HUB**

The Festival Hub at Town Hall will be an immersive Festival experience, with FREE filmmaker talks, panels, and themed parties.

Open to the public all nights, and select days from 6-16 June, The Hub will feature a Happy Hour special at its pop up bar between 4:30pm and 6:00pm on weekdays, with drinks from Archie Rose Distilling Co., Handpicked Wines and Young Henrys. Discount tickets to Festival films (\$10) can also be snapped up to selected screenings at the Hub Box Office daily.

For the first time, The Hub will screen shortlisted films from the inaugural IGTV Film Festival, presented by Instagram, Sydney Film Festival and VICE. Shot in an innovative vertical format, the films offer insight into the world of young Australians, and what the future of Australia may hold. The public are invited to attend the Instagram Lounge, where they can view finalist films and vote for a People's Choice Award. Entries are open until May 28 at [igtvfilmfestival.com.au](http://igtvfilmfestival.com.au)

The Hub will also host photo exhibition **FRAME: How Asia Pacific Feminist Filmmakers and Artists are Confronting Inequalities**, recently shown at the Australian Embassy during Berlinale. A collaboration between Jane Sloane, director of The Asia Foundation's Women's Empowerment Program, US-based photographers Ariel and Sam Soto-Suver, and artistic advisor Maxine Williamson, the exhibition showcases eight Asia Pacific feminist screen creatives challenging the pervasive influence of patriarchy. Filmmakers include Sydney Film Festival Board Member **Jan Chapman** (*Love Serenade*, SFF 2019), Indigenous Australian filmmaker **Erica Glynn** (*She Who Must Be Obeyed Loved*, SFF 2019), and Thai director **Anocha Suwichakornpong** (*By the Time It Gets Dark*, SFF 2018).

## **TALKS**

The **FREE Festival Talks** at the Festival Hub create a space for audiences, filmmakers and industry professionals to progress a dialogue about the important topics and issues of the year, addressed in Festival films.

*Judy & Punch* director **Mirrah Foulkes**, film stars **Mia Wasikowska** and **Damon Herriman**, and producers **Nash Edgerton** and **Michele Bennett** will take part in a **Meet the Filmmakers** talk discussing their new feminist revenge tale (Sunday 9 June, 1:30pm).

Following the screening of his debut feature *Marighella*, *Narcos* star **Wagner Moura** will participate in a post-screening **Extended Q&A** (Sunday 9 June, 5:00pm) with film journalist Sandy George.

Korean director Bong Joon-ho (*Okja*, SFF 2017 Closing Night Film) will participate in a **Meet the Filmmaker** talk (Sunday 16 June, 2:15pm) with Festival Director Nashen Moodley after the screening of his satire on income inequality *Parasite*.

Oscar-winning director **Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck** will engage in an **Extended Q&A** with film critic David Stratton discussing his approach to making his double Oscar-nominated epic *Never Look Away* (Tuesday 11 June, 6:15pm).

Hosted by UNSW Arts & Social Sciences, **The Work of Freda Glynn and Merata Mita** (Friday 14 June, 8:15pm) will feature filmmakers behind *She Who Must Be Obeyed Loved* and *Merata: How Mum Decolonised the Screen* discussing the groundbreaking work of these two trailblazers.

Six emerging women directors from Europe will participate in the public talk **In Conversation: Europe! Voices of Women in Film** (Sunday 9 June, 3:00pm) at the Festival Hub, discussing their experiences, and what steps towards gender parity have been made in recent years with Screen International's Sarah Ward.



The Festival will host **An Audience Guide to Varda** with ACMI's **Kristy Matheson**, curator of the Viva Varda retrospective, at the Festival Hub (Saturday 8 June, 4:30pm).

Hosted by The University of Sydney and following the screening of *One Child Nation*, co-director **Jialing Zhang** will discuss the making of her Sundance Grand Jury Prize-winning documentary (Friday 7 June, 4:00pm).

Following the Australian Premiere of Sydney-based French director Partho Sen-Gupta's *Slam* will be **Poetry Slam in the Hub** (Saturday 15 June, 4:45pm), a thrilling slam poetry showcase featuring poets from across Sydney.

**Blake Howard** returns to the Festival for another live episode of **One Heat Minute @ Sydney Film Festival**, examining Michael Mann's 1995 crime opus *Heat*, minute by minute (Tuesday 11 June, 8:00pm). The podcast was included in New York Magazine/Vulture's "Top 100 Podcasts."

### **FILMMAKER TALKS WITH VIVID IDEAS**

As part of Vivid Sydney, the largest festival of light, music and ideas in the Southern Hemisphere, Vivid Ideas and Sydney Film Festival present five free Filmmaker Talks.

"It is fantastic to see two of the Sydney's most loved events join forces to provide guests from around NSW, the country and the globe with the chance to hear from some of the industry's thought leaders," said **Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney Stuart Ayres**.

"Both Vivid Sydney and Sydney Film Festival reinforce the Harbour City's position as the creative industries hub of Asia and the Pacific, and these free Filmmaker Talks offer unique insight into the making of masterpieces such as NSW's own *Palm Beach*. As part of Vivid Sydney, Vivid Ideas inspires guests to think beyond the status quo and exchange thoughts about everything from tech and design to culture," he said.

Renowned Australian director **Rachel Ward** will take part in the annual **Ian McPherson Memorial Lecture** at the Festival Hub, hosted by film critic David Stratton (Monday 10 June, 6:30pm). Ward will discuss her long and diverse career to date, including Opening Night film *Palm Beach*.

Australian director **Ian Darling** will take part in a panel on **The Final Quarter** (Sunday 9 June, 11:30am), hosted by Marngrook Footy Show's Shelley Ware. Darling will be joined by Indigenous and non-Indigenous media, and political and sporting commentators, to discuss the implications of this powerful film.

Following the screening of *Hearts and Bones*, director **Ben Lawrence** will discuss his debut feature alongside **Hugo Weaving** at a **Meet the Filmmakers** talk (Sunday 16 June, 11:30am) with Sydney Morning Herald's Garry Maddox.

US actor **RJ Mitte** (*Standing Up for Sunny*) and filmmakers from the Screenability Program will participate in a **Meet the Filmmakers** talk with Screenability Programmer Sofya Gollan at HOYTS Entertainment Quarter (Saturday 15 June, 4:00pm), discussing the importance of authentic representation in film.

In conjunction with the Australian Screen Editors, Nick Meyers (*Palm Beach*, SFF 2019) and Dany Cooper (*Judy & Punch*, SFF 2019) will discuss the role of editing in storytelling with Andrea Lang at **Talking Editing** at the Festival Hub (Saturday 15 June, 4:15pm).



## **FREE PARTIES AT THE HUB**

**Jim Jarmusch's Zombie Jam** (Friday 14 June, 8:30pm) will celebrate the music-filled world of indie legend Jim Jarmusch's films, including his latest *The Dead Don't Die*, from spooky bops to Wu-Tang Clan.

Festivalgoers can hurl themselves headfirst into the **Grrrl's Punk Riot** party (Sunday 9 June, 9:30pm) after the screening of *Her Smell*, featuring a live performance from Sydney band Good Pash.

**Spinning Springsteen** (Saturday 8 June, 7:30pm) will be a gloriously blue-collar celebration of Bruce Springsteen's back catalogue, before the screening of *Blinded By the Light*. Pull out your finest cut-off denim vest or flannel and expect back-to-back Boss tunes.

The **IGTV Film Festival Party** (Tuesday 11 June, 8pm) will announce the winner of the People's Choice award, a \$5000 prize for the best film shot using Instagram's vertical format. Visit [igtvfilmfestival.com.au](http://igtvfilmfestival.com.au) for competition details.

The **Meet the Filmmakers: Suburban Wildlife & Sequin in a Blue Room** party (Saturday 8 June, 1pm) will be an opportunity for under-25s to meet the emerging Australian filmmakers behind *Suburban Wildlife* and *Sequin in a Blue Room*. Find out how these young filmmakers got their first features off the ground, and hang around afterwards for a chat and a snack.

## **FESTIVAL VENUES**

The **State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, Dendy Newtown, Randwick Ritz, Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, HOYTS Entertainment Quarter, Art Gallery of NSW, and Casula Powerhouse** return as official Festival screening venues.

The Festival's outdoor screen, **SFFT@ Pitt St** returns to Pitt St Mall between 8am and 10pm during the Festival. Audiences can catch trailers for must-see Festival films and red carpet footage on the giant, double-sided screen.

Nine Festival feature-length films will screen at Hoyts Entertainment Quarter Cinemas, 26 at Randwick's Ritz Cinema, 7 at Casula Powerhouse in Sydney's south west, and 28 at the Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne for audiences on Sydney's North Shore.

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 to 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.

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### ABOUT VIVID SYDNEY

Vivid Sydney is the largest festival of light, music and ideas in the Southern Hemisphere. Celebrating its eleventh anniversary in 2019, Vivid Sydney is continually setting the benchmark for world class events, creativity and innovation. It will transform the Harbour City into a colourful creative canvas from the 24 May to 15 June, 2019. The Festival features spectacular large-scale light installations and projections; contemporary and cutting-edge music performances and collaborations; public talks by renowned thought leaders, industry seminars, conferences and creativity workshops, all celebrating Sydney's place as the creative industries hub of the Asia-Pacific. Vivid Sydney is owned, managed and produced by Destination NSW, the NSW Government's tourism and major events agency, and in 2018 attracted 2.25 million attendees. For more information visit [vividssydney.com](http://vividssydney.com)

