

# SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

05-16 JUNE 2019

## MEDIA RELEASE

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## SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FAMILY-FRIENDLY FILMS

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The 66<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival (5 – 16 June) announces seven family-friendly films will screen at HOYTS Entertainment Quarter as part of the Family Program.

“Kids, tweens and teens have an excellent selection of wonderful family-friendly films to look forward to, including *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*, a stunning documentary narrated by Oscar-nominated actor Chiwetel Ejiofor, about an elephant mother leading her family on an epic journey across the African plains,” **Family Films Programmer Clare Sawyer** said.

“*Emu Runner* follows a young Indigenous girl who forms a very special bond with a wild emu, made in collaboration with the Indigenous community of Brewarrina; *Ringside* shines a light on the travails and triumphs of two young aspiring professional boxers from Chicago’s impoverished South Side; and *Stupid Young Heart* is a fresh, edgy drama tackling first love and politics in Northern Europe,” she said.

“Other animated hits include *Tito and the Birds*, about 10-year-old Tito and his feathered friends as they save the world from an epidemic of fear; and *Minuscule: Mandibles From Far Away*, diving into the delightful world of insects,” she said.

Since 2016, changes to classification restrictions have made over 50% of the Festival program accessible to audiences 15+. The return of the Youth Pass provides cheaper tickets to film lovers aged 18-24. Festival films now cost young people just \$75 for a bundle of six-tickets. Tickets for under 18s are just \$14.

**The full Sydney Film Festival program is announced on Wednesday 8 May 2019.**

**Flexipasses and subscriptions to Sydney Film Festival 2019 are on sale now.  
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.

### DOCUMENTARIES

#### **RINGSIDE**

**Shot over eight years, *Ringside* captures the travails and triumphs of two young would-be professional boxers from Chicago's volatile and impoverished South Side.**

Recalling basketball documentary *Hoop Dreams* (SFF 1994), over eight years *Ringside* director André Hörmann follows two young African American men – Destyne Jr. and Kenny Jr. – and their trainer/fathers as they fight to make boxing their way out of a life of poverty, crime and violence. Both boxers are remarkably gifted but their paths take radically different directions. The film focuses in on the emotional relationships between the young men and their families – especially their fathers, who do their best to make sure their sons have better opportunities than they did. *Ringside*, which premiered this year in the prestigious Berlinale Generation 14plus strand, is an affecting exploration of family, life choices and hurdles in a volatile world, recommended for ages 12 and above.

#### **THE ELEPHANT QUEEN**

**Join elephant mother Athena as she leads her family on an epic journey across the African plains in search of a new home. Narrated by Chiwetel Ejiofor (*12 Years a Slave*).**

This stunningly shot documentary by Emmy award-winning filmmakers Victoria Stone and Mark Deeble has all the character development and narrative twists and turns of a fictional feature. The elephant matriarch must save her family, including a bunch of boisterous youngsters, from drought and famine, by leading them on a long and perilous quest through the dry savannah. Athena's knowledge of the complex ecosystem is the only thing ensuring the family's survival, but some challenges are beyond even the mighty matriarch. A timeless tale of a caring family united by loss and endurance, *The Elephant Queen* will enrapture audiences aged 7 and older.

## **FEATURES**

### ***EMU RUNNER***

**In an outback NSW town a young Indigenous girl forms a very special bond with a wild emu, in a unique Australian story of love and loss.**

Director Imogen Thomas's debut was made over 15 years, in close collaboration with the Indigenous community of Brewarrina in western NSW. Newcomer Rhae Kae-Waites shines as Gem, a nine-year-old girl who deals with the grief of her mother's death by secretly befriendng a wild emu. However, her need to source tasty snacks for her new friend, and her absence from school, attract the attention of family and authorities. Gem's loving father (played by Wayne Blair, *The Sapphires*) is at a loss to know how to handle his wayward daughter. A lyrical and poetic film grounded in social realism and emphasising the importance of Country, community and storytelling, *Emu Runner* is recommended for ages 8 and up.

### ***MINUSCULE: MANDIBLES FROM FAR AWAY***

**Be transported into the hilarious and delightful world of animated insects with the second *Minuscule* feature; hugely popular tales of bug derring-do with millions of fans.**

An adventurous young ladybird is accidentally shipped around the world to an unspoilt tropical island a long way from his snowy forest home. His dad sets out to bring him home, with a little help from some googly-eyed insects and a music-loving spider. Beautifully animated and dialogue-free, *Minuscule: Mandibles from Far Away* is crafted with love by the same duo (French animators Thomas Szabo and Hélène Giraud) that brought you the award-winning television series and debut *Minuscule* feature. Be guided by the smallest of creatures including ants, spiders, praying mantis and ladybirds as they take you on an adventure into a great, big, wilder world. Brimming with gentle humour, this enchanting animation will delight adults and kids aged three and up.

### ***STUPID YOUNG HEART***

**A fresh and edgy drama tackling first love and politics in Northern Europe. Winner of best film in the Berlinale's Generation 14+ program.**

15-year-old skateboarder Lenni is just a wisp of a boy, but he's about to become a father with his on-again, off-again girlfriend Kirra – a popular girl with a chaotic home life. But the bond between the young lovers is tested when Lenni starts looking for a father figure in all the wrong places, and falls in with a far right group and its charismatic leader. With insight and self-assurance, director Selma Vilhunen (*Little Wing*) charts Lenni's rollercoaster ride through xenophobia and racism to a place of love and tolerance. This kitchen-sink portrait of families stuck in a cycle of poverty, making dodgy decisions and searching for love and intimacy, is recommended for ages 12 and above.

### ***THE SECRET LIFE OF PETS 2***

**The sassy, furry friends of 2016's animated smash hit return for new adventures while their owners are away, voiced by an all-star cast of comedians.**

The highly-anticipated sequel to the record-breaking family hit brings writer Brian Lynch (*Minions*) back together with director Chris Renaud (*Despicable Me* series, *Dr. Seuss' The Lorax*) and an all-star cast of voice talent, including Kevin Hart, Tiffany Haddish, Harrison Ford, Patton Oswalt, Eric Stonestreet, Jenny Slate and more. Terrier Max (Oswalt) is battling separation anxiety, while Pomeranian Gidget (Slate) is on a mission to rescue a toy from a posse of cliquey cats, and adorably wacky bunny Snowball (Hart) becomes convinced he's a superhero. Packed with subversive and irreverent humour that will delight both kids and adults, *The Secret Life of Pets 2* is a hilarious visit back to the world of Max, Snowball and the gang.



## ***TITO AND THE BIRDS***

**In the tradition of Roald Dahl and Tim Burton, this colourful Brazilian animation tells the magical story of 10-year-old Tito and his feathered friends as they save the world from fear.**

This unique Brazilian film brings together oil paintings, digital drawings and graphic animation with an equally singular storyline.

Tito's homeland is in dark times: when people get scared, they suddenly fall sick. Wicked forces are exploiting this epidemic, but courageous 10-year-old Tito and his friends think they've found a cure, involving a strange contraption built by Tito's exiled father that allows people to understand bird song. Can Tito and his crew rebuild this improbable machine and free the masses, not just from fear but also from the shackles of their minds? *Tito and the Birds* is a lively and funny animated romp suitable for ages six and above.

