

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

POSITION DESCRIPTION

ARCHIVIST

JULY 2021

CONTRACT: Part-time (0.4 FTE)

PERIOD: Min. 12-month contract, period to be negotiated, commencement date depending on COVID restrictions

REPORTING TO: CEO and Archives Working Group

ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW

Sydney Film Festival (SFF) is an iconic public international film festival which supports Sydney's position as a leading creative global city and a UNESCO City of Film. It aspires to present the best new international and Australian films to expanding Sydney and regional audiences. SFF is the way we explore the world and our times – an annual event offering new discoveries, provoking the exchange of ideas and strengthening community through the collective experience of film.

Established in 1954, SFF is one of the longest continuously running film festivals in the world, renowned for its curatorial excellence. Taking place at flagship venue the State Theatre, as well as cinemas across greater Sydney, SFF gives audiences a chance to see over 200 films they normally wouldn't find at the multiplex. 12 films are selected for the Official Competition, which celebrates "courageous, audacious and cutting-edge" cinema with a \$60,000 cash prize. SFF presents seven other cash awards over the course of the festival.

SFF opens doors for Australian and international filmmakers to further their craft and careers by creating a strong community of possibility and opportunity. Successful engagement with the Australian film industry is achieved through a rich program of filmmaker networking events, industry masterclasses, internationally recognised awards, public talks and the short film program offering opportunities for emerging filmmakers.

SFF celebrates the diversity within our community through its focussed program streams including: Screenability, featuring the work of filmmakers who identify as having a disability; First Nations program, championing Indigenous filmmakers and their stories; and Europe! Voices of Women in Film, promoting the work of women in the film industry.

Since 1974, SFF has also been dedicated to contributing to a rich cultural life for regional communities through the Travelling Film Festival, which brings weekend festivals to 22 regional towns across NSW, NT and QLD.

SFF is run by a small, passionate team of about 16 core staff. Each year, the team swells with seasonal staff to over 40 for the delivery of the Festival. SFF is an inclusive workplace that is committed to equal opportunity and diversity. SFF welcomes and encourages applications from people of all backgrounds and abilities.

BACKGROUND: ARCHIVES RENEWAL PROJECT

Since its inception, Sydney Film Festival has captured the ideas, sensations, movements and stories that define our community and our times, embodied in a sprawling program of films, talks and events. SFF's Archives play a vital role in preserving these intense and fleeting affairs. Alongside program guides, photographs and Festival ephemera, the Archives hold the memories of a diverse community of film-lovers, the history of an evolving artform and burgeoning Australian industry, and the story of Sydney's cultural coming-of-age.

However, as an organisation primarily geared towards the production of a large-scale annual event, the maintenance and improvement of the Festival's archival systems has not previously been a priority. Materials have been lost, remain uncatalogued or are inaccessible both internally and externally; there are gaps and deficiencies in management process that must be addressed; and there is a pressing need to innovate the Archives so that they can better respond to the Festival's accelerating digital realignment.

With the Festival fast approaching its 70th anniversary, this year SFF has launched an Archives Renewal project to address these needs. The project includes:

- Major upgrades to the underlying architecture and a dramatic redesign to the user interface of SFF's pioneering, public-facing Living Archive
- Recording a new suite of oral histories, celebrating the Festival's more recent history, special projects and initiatives
- Establishing a volunteer program to support the ongoing management of SFF materials
- Developing new archival processes for both physical and digital materials and implementing these across the organisation.

The project ultimately aims to:

- Mitigate the risk of losing close to seven decades of film and cultural heritage
- Highlight the Festival's championing of diverse voices
- Find new ways of understanding and engaging audiences in the Festival's remarkable history
- Embed this potentially rich resource into the life of SFF and utilise it across the Festival's activities
- Strengthen ties between the Festival and its passionate community of supporters and long-time attendees.

SFF has successfully raised the majority of funds required for the project through philanthropic support and government grants. The fundraising campaign will recommence in early 2022.

THE ROLE

SFF is seeking a suitably qualified and experienced Archivist to lead the Festival's transformative Archives Renewal project. The successful candidate will take ownership of the project and draw on their expertise and experience to provide strategic direction and establish best practice processes for future management of archival materials.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Archivist will:

- Consult with the Archives Working Group, comprising representatives from across SFF Departments, to determine organisational priorities for the revitalised Archives

- Make strategic recommendations for the trajectory of the Archives Renewal project and develop a vision for the future role of the Archives in the life of the Festival
- Undertake a thorough audit of all SFF materials, physical and digital, across the Festival's Archives, internal systems and in external collections
- Implement an organisation-wide collection management system and explore opportunities for integration with the revitalised online Living Archive
- Develop robust management procedures for the assessment, cataloguing, storage and ongoing maintenance of SFF's physical and digital materials; ideally, this would take the form of an Archives policy / handbook
- Support the transition to the redesigned Living Archive and its integration into SFF's broader digital content / engagement strategy
- Contribute editorial concepts and content for the presentation of SFF materials on the Living Archive, driving audience engagement in line with SFF's strategic priorities and areas of focus
- Manage a new community submissions process via the Living Archive
- Play a key role in the production of a new suite of oral histories, including research, liaising with participants, supporting production and facilitating audience engagement
- Establish and facilitate a volunteer program to assist with the cataloguing and management of SFF materials
- Cultivate relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including SFF staff, volunteers, subscribers, alumni and donors
- Support staff across SFF departments to use archival materials strategically and effectively in their projects and activities.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- Relevant tertiary qualification and/or substantial professional experience
- Experience in the principles and practices of contemporary archiving and in the use and development of library / archive / collection management systems
- Experience designing and implementing unique solutions for effective management of archival materials
- Strong awareness and understanding of international standards and best practice for digital collecting and standards for the management of born digital material
- Highly developed project management skills
- Experience managing volunteers
- Strong track record of cultivating meaningful relationships with internal and external stakeholders
- A commitment to caring for and celebrating SFF's history, and to supporting the Festival's position as a vital industry platform and iconic cultural event in Sydney

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

- Ability to draw on national and international networks, knowledge and best practice methodologies, and to foster relationships and engagement with the broader sector
- Experience working in arts and/or cultural organisations
- Interest in film, film history and Sydney's cultural heritage

APPLICATION PROCESS

After carefully reviewing the information and criteria in this Position Description, please prepare the following documents:

1. A cover letter outlining your suitability for and interest in the role
2. A statement of no more than two pages detailing how your skills and experience address the selection criteria
3. Current CV.

Please compile these documents in a single PDF and email your application to joshua.taylor@sff.org.au with the subject line: *SFF Archivist Application*.

APPLICATIONS CLOSE: 5PM, FRIDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2021

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions about the position, please contact:

Joshua Taylor
SFF Philanthropy Executive
joshua.taylor@sff.org.au
(02) 8220 6631