

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

JUNE 08–19 2022

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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT CLOSING NIGHT GALA

The 69th Sydney Film Festival tonight awarded *Close* by Belgian filmmaker Lukas Dhont, a stunningly beautiful examination of boyhood friendship, the prestigious Sydney Film Prize. The winner of the \$60,000 cash prize for 'audacious, cutting-edge and courageous' film was selected by a prestigious international jury headed by David Wenham.

The announcement was made at the State Theatre ahead of the Australian Premiere screening of the 2022 Cannes-award winning South Korean drama *Broker*.

Dhont said: "I want to express my incredible gratitude for the recognition that our film CLOSE receives at this year's Sydney Film Festival. Thank you to the festival for expressing its love for the film, the jury for choosing it among all these outstanding pieces, and its first Australian audience for opening hearts and spirits to a film that comes from deep within. We wanted to make a film about friendship and connection after a moment in time where we all understood its necessity and power. I decided to use cinema as my way to connect to the world. And tonight I feel incredibly close and connected to all of you. All my love, Lukas."

Australian filmmaker **Luke Cornish** was presented with the [Documentary Australia Award's](#) \$10,000 cash prize for *Keep Stepping*, about two remarkable female performers training for Australia's biggest street dance competition.

The Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films saw the inaugural AFTRS Craft Award (a \$7,000 cash prize) presented to the character artists behind *Donkey*; Tjunkaya Tapaya OAM; Carolyn Kenta; Imuna Kenta; Elizabeth Dunn; Stacia Yvonne Lewis; Atipalku Intjalki; Lynette Lewis; and Cynthia Burke.

The \$5,000 Yoram Gross Animation Award was also awarded to *Donkey*, directed by **Jonathan Daw** and **Tjunkaya Tapaya OAM**.

Both the \$7,000 Dendy Live Action Short Award and \$7,000 Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Director were presented to **Luisa Martiri** and **Tanya Modini** for *The Moths Will Eat Them Up*.

The 2022 recipient of the \$10,000 [Sustainable Future Award](#), made possible by a syndicate of passionate climate activists led by Award sponsor Amanda Maple-Brown, is Australian documentary *Delikado* directed by **Karl Malakunas**, which reveals the tribulations of environmental crusaders on the Filipino island of Palawan.



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Filmmaker and performer **Kylie Bracknell** was awarded the 2022 [Deutsche Bank Fellowship for First Nations Film Creatives](#). The Fellowship provides a \$20,000 grant to an Australian First Nations film creative to further develop their skills through international placement or other professional development.

The \$10,000 Sydney-UNESCO City of Film Award, bestowed by Create NSW to a trail-blazing NSW-based screen practitioner, was presented to film composer **Caitlin Yeo**.

“Year after year the Sydney Film Festival continues to show why NSW is the premier destination for world-class arts and cultural events,” said **Minister for the Arts The Hon. Benjamin Franklin MLC**. “This year, the Festival graced audiences with a number of outstanding films from emerging and acclaimed filmmakers from our shores and abroad.”

“The NSW Government is proud to show its continued support for this magnificent event and we are delighted that the Travelling Film Festival will now begin its tour throughout regional NSW, making the arts accessible for all in our state,” he said.

“Congratulations to all the winners, your efforts have shown to audiences everywhere that Sydney is roaring back to life.”

“The Sydney Film Festival is one of the highlights of the city’s cultural calendar, and we are proud to support this wonderful festival,” said **Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore**. “It’s no secret that the Arts industry has suffered terribly during the pandemic, and it is a delight to have had the festival running as normal again this year, bringing people back into our city.”

“Congratulations to all the artists and producers for their work on another successful Sydney Film Festival,” she said.

Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley said: “This year, the Festival has been proud to feature and award incredible films by lauded filmmakers, including **Close**. Our juries have been impressed by the wonderful and perceptive storytelling presented on our screens. It’s a testament to the Festival’s ethos of advocating powerful and thought provoking stories that stay with audiences long after leaving the cinema.”

“From fervent standing ovations to glittering red carpets, graced with iconic film talents, the past 12 days have been an extraordinary and exciting reintroduction back into our wonderful in-cinema, in-person Sydney Film Festival, celebrating the stories that deserve to be told,” he said.

THE SYDNEY FILM PRIZE

On awarding the Sydney Film Prize to Belgian filmmaker **Lukas Dhont’s *Close***, Jury President David Wenham said:



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“The jury were enthralled, provoked, moved, uplifted and entertained by 12 distinct pieces of cinema. There was one film however that was a standout. This film displayed a mastery of restraint, subtle handling of story, astute observations and delicate attention to finer details. A film whose power was felt in things unsaid, the moments between the lines of dialogue. A film with inspired cinematography and flawless performances. A tender, moving, powerful film. A mature film about innocence. The winner of the 69th Sydney Film Festival Prize is **Close**.”

Close, which recently won the Grand Prix at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival, powerfully depicts young male friendship torn asunder when their genuine closeness is picked on by their classmates as they begin high school.

The Festival Jury was comprised of acclaimed Australian actor and director **David Wenham** (Jury President); Australian BAFTA-nominated writer and director **Jennifer Peedom** (*Mountain*, SFF 2018); Bangladeshi writer-director-producer **Mostofa Sarwar Farooki** (*No Land's Man*, SFF 2022); Golden Berlin Bear winning Turkish writer-director-producer **Semih Kaplanoğlu** (*Commitment Hasan*, SFF 2022); and Executive Director at the Kawakita Memorial Film Institute, Tokyo, **Yuka Sakano**.

Previous winners are: *There Is No Evil* (2021), *Parasite* (2019), *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 selection of films in Competition for the 2022 Sydney Film Prize are listed [HERE](#).

THE DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA AWARD

The **Documentary Australia Award** was awarded to **Keep Stepping** from filmmaker **Luke Cornish**. The Jury comprising Documentary Australia CEO **Mitzi Goldman**, filmmaker **Tosca Looby** (*Strong Female Lead*, SFF 2021), and filmmaker **Kamar Ahmad Simon** (*Day After...*, SFF 2022) in a joint statement said:

“Tonight's winner is a film that takes us deep into a subculture to reveal far more than appears on the surface. The filmmaker has established remarkable rapport and trust, challenging our preconceptions and delivering a story that touched and transported us far into another world. The community showcased in the film have much to tell us about family, identity, belonging, hard work, testing our limits, love and acceptance. The film is sensitively crafted, beautifully shot and edited and its characters mesmerising. This is a generation that have something to say and are asking us to listen. It is far more than a film about the dynamic subculture of street dance.”

2022 marks the sixth year the prize has been supported by the Foundation.



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Previous winners are: *I'm Wanita* (2021), *Descent* (2020), *She Who Must Be Obeyed* (2019), *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*, and each film received a \$10,000 cash prize.

The nine finalists for the 2022 Documentary Australia Award are listed [HERE](#).

THE DENDY AWARDS FOR AUSTRALIAN SHORT FILMS

The **Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films** were awarded to **Jonathan Daw** and **Tjunkaya Tapaya OAM** for *Donkey* (AFTRS Craft Award and Yoram Gross Animation Award) and **Luisa Martiri** and **Tanya Modini** for *The Moths Will Eat Them Up* (Dendy Live Action Short Award and Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Director).

The Jury comprised filmmaker **Kylie Bracknell** (*Fist of Fury Noongar Daa*, SFF 2021), actor-director **Taylor Ferguson** (*tough*, SFF 2021) and Stan's Director of Programming **Ben Nguyen**.

The Festival's short-film competition celebrates its 53rd year in 2022; and has been sponsored by **Dendy Cinemas** for over 30 years. Winners of the Best Live Action Short Film award and the Yoram Gross Animation award, sponsored by Yoram Gross Films, are **Academy Award-eligible**, opening new pathways for many Australian filmmakers.

These ground-breaking awards have kick-started the careers of many prominent filmmakers, with past competitors Warwick Thornton, Ariel Kleiman, Cate Shortland, Jane Campion, Phillip Noyce and Ivan Sen among Dendy Awards alumni.

The 10 finalists for the 2022 Dendy Award for Australian Short Film are listed [HERE](#).

DEUTSCHE BANK FELLOWSHIP FOR FIRST NATIONS FILM CREATIVES

Filmmaker **Kylie Bracknell** was awarded the 2022 **Deutsche Bank Fellowship for First Nations Film Creatives**. The Fellowship is an important investment in developing and nurturing the talents of local creatives and enhancing global awareness of Australia's vibrant First Nations filmmaking talent.

Glenn Morgan, Deutsche Bank Australia's CEO, said "Congratulations to Kylie for winning the Fellowship for 2022. Watching Darlene use the 2021 Fellowship to get valuable director/producer attachment experience on the mini-series *Savage River* and start to plan a feature-film version of her short-film "Bluey" has been wonderful. We can't wait to see Kylie further develop her remarkable artistic craft and continue to be a role model for First Nations Creatives."



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Deutsche Bank's partnership with SFF brings together the bank's commitment to Indigenous people through its longstanding global focus on excellence in the arts, and its partnership with the Clontarf Foundation.

SUSTAINABLE FUTURE AWARD

The 2022 recipient of the Sustainable Future Award was presented to the Australian documentary *Delikado*, directed by filmmaker **Karl Malakunas**.

Delikado follows three environmental crusaders who confront murder, betrayal and their own demons in a battle to save the island of Palawan in the Philippines.

The 2022 jury included the 2021 inaugural winner filmmaker Eva Orner (*Burning*, SFF 2021) and philanthropist and activist Amanda Maple-Brown.

The UNESCO Sydney City Of Film Award

The \$10,000 Sydney-UNESCO City of Film Award, bestowed by Create NSW to a trail-blazing NSW-based screen practitioner, went to film composer **Caitlin Yeo**.

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

***Sydney Film Festival Closing Night Red Carpet Images Available [HERE](#)

EDITOR'S NOTES

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From Wednesday 8 June to Sunday 19 June 2022, the 69th Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, in-depth discussions, film guests and more.

Sydney Film 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.

The 69th Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the RISE fund and the City of Sydney.

