

# SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

# 5-16 JUNE 2024

## SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FULL PROGRAM FOR 5-16 JUNE FESTIVAL

The 71st Sydney Film Festival program was officially launched today by Festival Director Nashen Moodley, featuring an exceptional line-up including Yorgos Lanthimos' latest *Kinds of Kindness*, starring Emma Stone, fresh from the Cannes Competition, the World Premiere of Aussie boxing drama *Kid Snow*, the first Indian film to appear in the Cannes Competition in 30 years, Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light*, Lee Tamahori's intense drama *The Convert* with Guy Pearce, *The Bikeriders* starring Jodie Comer, Austin Butler and Tom Hardy, and recent top award-winners: Berlinale Golden Bear *Dahomey*, and Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner *Sujo*.

"The 71st Sydney Film Festival unfurls a canvas of bold narratives and remarkable visions, mirroring the evolving dynamics of our world," said **Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley**. "This year, we are proud to present films that challenge, entertain, and provoke dialogue, from the sweeping landscapes of Australian dramas to the complex human stories from global cinema."

"The 2024 selection reinforces our commitment to fostering a diverse cinematic experience, spotlighting works that engage with pressing social issues, personal stories, and transformative historical moments," he said. "These films invite the audience to journey through myriad cultures and experiences, reflecting the rich complexity of the human condition."

"We invite everyone to join us in exploring this year's exceptional films, participate in vibrant discussions at The Hub, and share in the joy of cinema that unites us all," said Moodley.

**Minister for the Arts John Graham** said the Sydney Film Festival is one of the most anticipated events in the city's cultural calendar. "The Sydney Film Festival is an important moment in our city's cultural calendar. One of the reasons the festival continues to go from strength to strength is the power of going to the cinema - coming together in a shared experience of escaping day to day life, sitting down in a theatre, and looking into this kaleidoscope of human stories. There's something special about sharing that experience with hundreds other people that I believe will keep this festival going for another 71 years."

In 2024, the Festival will present **197** films from **69** countries including **28** World Premieres and **133** Australian Premieres, bringing together hundreds of new international and local stories, with more to be announced. The program is made up of **92** narrative feature films, including prestigious international festival prize-winners and **54** documentaries tackling crucial contemporary issues, from established and upcoming documentarians.

### OPENING NIGHT

The 71<sup>st</sup> Sydney Film Festival will open with the World Premiere of *Midnight Oil: The Hardest Line*. Featuring unheard interviews with every band member, unseen live and studio footage, alongside signature moments like the outback tour with Warumpi Band, their Exxon protest gig in New York



and those famous “Sorry” suits at the Sydney Olympics, this film traces the singular journey of Australia’s quintessential rock band across their 45-year career.

Director Paul Clarke and members of Midnight Oil will attend opening night to present the film.

### **OFFICIAL COMPETITION**

For the 16<sup>th</sup> year, the Official Competition will award the \$60,000 cash Sydney Film Prize to a film that demonstrates audacious, cutting-edge and courageous cinema.

Direct from the 2024 Cannes Film Festival competition will be: ***Kinds of Kindness***, a darkly hilarious fable starring Emma Stone, Jesse Plemons and Willem Dafoe from Yorgos Lanthimos (*Alps*, Sydney Film Prize 2012; *Poor Things*); ***Grand Tour***, the latest from Miguel Gomes (*Tabu*, SFF 2012; *Arabian Nights*, Sydney Film Prize, SFF 2015) about a romantic pursuit across Asia; and Christophe Honoré’s ***Marcello Mio*** where an all-star French cast play themselves in a meta comedy paying homage to the great Marcello Mastroianni. Payal Kapadia’s romantic drama ***All We Imagine as Light*** is the first Indian film to appear in the Cannes Competition in 30 years and follows two women in Mumbai who are thwarted in their quests for love.

Also screening straight from Cannes is acclaimed actor Ariane Labed’s (*Attenberg*, SFF 2011; *Alps*, SFF 2012) directorial debut ***September Says***, a Gothic psychological drama in which the closeness of two sisters becomes increasingly disruptive; and Cannes Un Certain Regard contender ***Việt And Nam***, which tells the love story of two gay mineworkers.

Internationally awarded films in competition at SFF include Berlin Film Festival Silver Bear winning feature ***Dying***, a multi-generational epic about a conductor and his turbulent family; and the Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner ***Sujo***, a moving Mexican cartel drama that follows a cartel-born child from infancy to manhood. Rich Peppiatt’s raucous and rude comedy ***Kneecap*** stars three real-life Belfast rappers as themselves and took out the Audience Award in the Sundance NEXT strand.

Outperforming *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer* at the box office in its native Italy, ***There’s Still Tomorrow*** is a melodrama directed and starring Paola Cortellesi about an industrious woman in post-WWII Rome. It screens in competition at SFF alongside ***Puan***, an incisive comedy about a philosophy professor at a Buenos Aires university who is threatened by a charismatic rival.

Opening Night Film ***Midnight Oil: The Hardest Line*** will also screen in competition at the 2024 Festival.

The winner of the Sydney Film Prize is announced at the Festival’s Closing Night Gala on Sunday 16 June. Previous winners include *The Mother of All Lies* (2023), *Close* (2022), *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 the only film competition in Australia endorsed by FIAPF, the regulating body for international film festivals, and is judged by a jury of international and Australian filmmakers and industry professionals.

The 2024 Official Competition Jury is led by Bosnian writer and director Danis Tanović as Jury President, joined by Indonesian director Kamila Andini, Australian producer Sheila Jayadev, US producer Jay Van Hoy, and Australian director Tony Krawitz.

### **DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA AWARD**



Ten documentaries (including seven World Premieres) will contest the 2024 Documentary Australia Prize. As well as receiving a \$20,000 cash prize courtesy of Documentary Australia, the winning film becomes Academy Award eligible.

World Premieres: **Dale Frank – Nobody's Sweetie**, an intimate portrait of artist Dale Frank; **Aquarius**, documenting a 1973 gathering embraced by activists, hippies, and radicals that changed the town of Nimbin forever; **The Blind Sea**, following professional athlete Matt Formston as he takes on the challenge of surfing the biggest wave ever tackled by a blind surfer; **Welcome to Yiddishland**, about a global community of artists on a quest to rediscover and revitalise the endangered Yiddish language; **Mozart's Sister**, the story of the other Mozart, Maria-Anna, a child prodigy forgotten to time; **Skategoat**, about a young boy's dream to become a pro skateboarder by renegade graffiti artist and acclaimed music video director Van Alpert; Stan Originals **Revealed: Otto by Otto**, where Gracie Otto (*Under the Volcano*, SFF 2021; *The Last Impresario*, SFF 2014) attempts to capture the memories of her father, iconic Australian actor and artist Barry Otto; and **Welcome to Babel**, which charts Chinese-Australian artist Jiawei Shen's plans to create an epic work.

Also in the running: Sally Aitken's Sundance Selected **Every Little Thing**, a story of a woman finding herself as she cares for injured hummingbirds; **You Should Have Been Here Yesterday**, a cinematic ode to Australia's early surfing culture featuring the likes of Tim Winton and Wayne Lynch.

### SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS AT THE STATE

Home to Festival favourites, red carpet events and world premieres, the State Theatre will once again screen a spectacular selection of films this year.

Star-studded features will premiere at the iconic State Theatre with Jodie Comer, Austin Butler and Tom Hardy leading **The Bikeriders**, Jeff Nichols' (*Take Shelter*, SFF 2011) take on the rise and menacing transformation of an iconic American motorcycle club. In **Lee**, Oscar winner Kate Winslet stars alongside Alexander Skarsgård in the true story of model turned WWII correspondent Lee Miller. **My Old Ass** is a comedy love story starring Aubrey Plaza and Maisy Stella produced by Margot Robbie; and Viggo Mortensen directs and stars opposite Vicky Krieps in **The Dead Don't Hurt**, a feminist western about a romance in a time of corruption and war.

Fresh from screenings at Sundance and Berlinale, **The Outrun**, is a moving adaptation of Amy Liptrot's 2017 bestseller, starring Saoirse Ronan (*Brooklyn*, *Little Women*) as a recovering addict; and a highlight of the 2024 Berlinale competition, **A Different Man** features Sebastian Stan in a meta dramedy about a man who undergoes radical surgery to become handsome.

Australian films will have their World Premiere at the State Theatre. **Kid Snow** is an Aussie drama about a travelling tent boxing show set in '70s outback WA, starring Phoebe Tonkin (*Boy Swallows Universe*) and Billy Howle (*The Serpent*); and Ian Darling's (*The Final Quarter*, SFF 2019) newest documentary **The Pool**, charts a year in the life of the iconic Bondi Icebergs, the pool and the people who cherish it.

Award winning films include: Winner of the Special Jury Prize at Venice **Green Border**, legendary filmmaker Agnieszka Holland's (*Europa, Europa*, SFF 1991; *Spoor*, SFF 2017) refugee thriller; and **Porcelain War**, which won the Documentary Grand Jury Prize at Sundance 2024 and follows three Ukrainian artists who choose to stay behind and fight.

Trailblazing filmmaker Mati Diop (*Atlantics*) won the Golden Bear at Berlinale 2024 for **Dahomey**, documenting the repatriation of royal treasures to present-day Benin in West Africa.

Also screening: **Touch**, Baltasar Kormákur's epic romantic story that spans decades and continents as it follows a man's emotional journey to find his first love; Oscar-nominated Pawo Choyning



Dorji's ***The Monk and The Gun***, which takes place in rural Bhutan during the lead-up to his country's first-ever election; and the non-stop animated actioner ***Despicable Me 4***.

## **FEATURES**

Australian feature productions will have their World Premiere at SFF. ***He Ain't Heavy***, sees Leila George star alongside her mother Greta Scacchi, as a young woman so determined to save her drug-addicted brother, played by Sam Corlett (*Vikings: Valhalla*). ***In Vitro*** is the highly anticipated feature from directors Will Howarth and Tom McKeith (*Beast*, SFF 2016) and stars Ashley Zukerman (*Succession*) in an Australian sci-fi mystery thriller set on a remote cattle farm in the near future.

Combining social realism and an immersive documentary feel, Jaydon Martin's directorial debut ***Flathead***, tells the story of an elderly man returning home to Bundaberg on a spiritual quest – with the cast playing themselves.

The Festival presents an exceptional line-up of award-winning films that showcase diverse talent and compelling storytelling. In ***Crossing***, a Berlinale Teddy Jury Award winner by Levan Akin (*And Then We Danced*), retired Georgian teacher Lia embarks on a quest through Istanbul to find her transgender niece, Tekla. ***Paradise*** by director Prasanna Vithanage examines a strained marriage amid Sri Lanka's 2022 economic and political turmoil, and won the prestigious Kim Jiseok Award at Busan, 2023.

***All Shall Be Well*** is this year's Berlinale Teddy Award winner and Hong Kong Film Festival opener from Ray Yeung (*Suk Suk*). It tells the story of Hong Kong lesbian couple Angie and Pat, and the legal battle over inheritance after Pat's sudden death.

Cannes Un Certain Regard selected films include: ***Armand***, starring Renate Reinsve (*The Worst Person in the World*, SFF 2021) as a mother called into her six-year-old son's school where mayhem ensues; and ***My Sunshine***, a Japanese charmer about a boy learning to figure-skate to impress his crush by SFF alumni Hiroshi Okuyama (*Jesus*, SFF 2019).

Premiering in the Cannes Competition, Karim Aïnouz (*Praia Do Futuro*, SFF 2014) delivers a blend of crime thriller and eroticism in ***Motel Destino***, a lush tropical noir. Straight from Cannes Directors' Fortnight, ***Eephus*** is a debut feature and slice of Americana about a valedictory game of baseball, narrated by the great Frederick Wiseman.

***Pepe*** won the Silver Bear at Berlinale 2024. The film tells the true-ish story of Pepe the hippo who broke free of Pablo Escobar's private zoo, featuring narration from the multilingual hippo himself.

***Explanation for Everything*** is a Hungarian satire about the culture wars where a student accidentally becomes a figurehead for the right when he is embroiled in a national scandal. The film won the Orizzonti Award for Best Film at the Venice International Film Festival.

Winner of the Golden Shell for Best Film at San Sebastián, ***The Rye Horn***, is a story of a rural Galician midwife who flees after an illegal abortion goes awry. ***Cottontail***, took out Rome's Best First Film award. The film is a road trip drama about a Japanese widower who travels to England with his estranged son to scatter the ashes of his Beatrix Potter-obsessed wife.

Films popular at international festivals will also screen. Josh Margolin's ***Thelma*** features June Squibb as a spirited nonagenarian on a comedic chase through L.A. to confront scammers, premiering to delight at Sundance 2024.

In ***I Saw the TV Glow*** Jane Schoenbrun (*We're All Going to the World's Fair*) merges cryptic horror with teen angst as two misfits face an identity crisis post their favourite show's cancellation. The film was a sensation at Sundance and Berlinale.



A breakout critical hit from Sundance 2024, Lin Jianjie's **Brief History of a Family**, captures a teenager manipulating familial dynamics to impress his friend's affluent parents.

Theda Hammel's debut film **Stress Positions** premiered at Sundance and features John Early (*Search Party*) in a comedic take on queer life and identity politics during New York's COVID-19 lockdowns.

In **Ghostlight**, a construction worker discovers acting in a community theatre's Romeo and Juliet, finding unexpected solace. Dolly De Leon (*Triangle of Sadness*, SFF 2022) shines in this Sundance hit celebrating art's healing power.

Selected for Busan Film Festival, SFF regular Mostofa Sarwar Farooki (*Television*, SFF 2013) stars alongside his wife, Nusrat Imrose Tisha, in **Something Like an Autobiography**, a romantic thriller and exploration of power that is his most personal film to date.

**House of the Seasons** is an intergenerational family saga set in a tofu factory in Daegu, Korea. The film was an award-winning highlight of the Busan International Film Festival.

In the Berlinale-selected **Shambhala**, a Nepalese woman's quest across the Himalayas for her husband becomes a spiritual journey, beautifully capturing traditional life and personal enlightenment.

The Zellner brothers' **Sasquatch Sunset** was a jaw-dropping hit at Sundance 2024. The film explores a year in the life of a Sasquatch family in the Pacific Northwest, performed by an unrecognisable Riley Keough and Jesse Eisenberg.

Exciting features with big names include: Michel Franco's **Memory**, starring Peter Sarsgaard and Jessica Chastain in a complex New York romance tinged with trauma and redemption; **Ezra**, directed by Tony Goldwyn, stars Rose Byrne and Bobby Cannavale as divorced parents navigating life with their autistic son across the U.S.; and **La Cocina** sees Rooney Mara and Raúl Briones in a comedic drama set during the hectic lunch rush at a New York restaurant.

The line-up features LGBTQIA+ films that spotlight a diverse array of queer narratives. In **Unicorns**, directed by Sally El Hosaini and James Krishna Floyd, a mechanic and a drag queen find love in London's Gaysian scene. An uplifting queer romance set against a vibrant cultural backdrop.

One of the hits of Berlinale 2024, **Sex** follows two married and ostensibly heterosexual chimneysweeps who are unmoored when one of them sleeps with a man and the other begins to question the recurring dreams he's been having about David Bowie.

Julio Torres' (*Los Espookys*) **Problemista** is a quirky, queer comedy about a Salvadoran toy designer, played by Torres, navigating New York's art scene and immigration hurdles, featuring Tilda Swinton.

In Carolina Markowicz's **Toll**, a Brazilian tollbooth worker and her criminal accomplices raise funds for her son's controversial conversion therapy.

Filmmakers screening debut features include: **Achilles**, Farhad Delaram's film about an Iranian hospital worker and a mysterious patient who embark on a fugitive road trip; **City of Wind**, directed by Lkhagvadulam Purev-Ochir, follows a young Mongolian shaman torn between ancient traditions and modern temptations; and New Zealand filmmaker Loren Taylor's **The Moon is Upside Down**, intertwines the lives of three women in Wellington.

Auteurs of the silver screen will show new films: Radu Jude's (*Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn*, SFF 2021) latest dark comedy **Do Not Expect Too Much from the End of the World** blends social critique with absurdist humour as a woman casts injured workers in a corporate safety video; Andre Téchiné's (*Being 17*, SFF 2016) **My New Friends**, sees a grieving police officer discover her new





neighbour is an anti-police activist; and Olivier Assayas' (*Irma Vep*, SFF 1997; *Personal Shopper* SFF 2016) most personal film yet, ***Suspended Time***, is about art, memory, and love in the time of COVID.

Lav Diaz's ***Essential Truths of the Lake*** is a police procedural that delves deep into the Philippines' political history through the lens of a cold case investigation. Filipino superstar John Lloyd Cruz reprises his role as Lt. Hermes Papauran from Diaz's previous *When the Waves Are Gone* (SFF 2023), this time investigating a different crime.

The pursuit of justice is explored in ***Death of a Whistleblower***, Ian Gabriel's thriller that follows a journalist investigating a colleague's murder linked to government corruption in South Africa; and ***Hesitation Wound***, Selman Nacar's legal drama where an attorney juggles a pivotal case, a family crisis, and a moral dilemma over a tense 24-hour period.

Explore social issues through fascinating features. In ***Veni Vidi Vici*** by Daniel Hoesl and Julia Niemann critiques wealth's excesses with a game of human hunting. ***More Than Strangers***, blends humour and drama in a road trip from Berlin to Paris, where passengers inadvertently become involved in smuggling a refugee. ***About Dry Grasses*** by Nuri Bilge Ceylan (*Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*, SFF 2012) probes the complexities of human motives through an art teacher entangled in a scandalous accusation by a student.

Experience the extraordinary with a double feature of Choi Dong-hoon's ***Alienoid*** and ***Alienoid: Return to the Future***. This mind-bending sci-fi and time-traveling fantasy thriller masterfully intertwines the fates of alien prisoners trapped in human bodies with 15th-century magicians, all brought to life by an all-star Korean cast.

#### **INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARIES**

From the inspiring to the illuminating, the remarkable true stories in the International Documentary line-up must be seen to be believed, representing the very best of non-fiction filmmaking from around the world.

Sundance Grand Jury Prize Winner ***A New Kind of Wilderness*** was filmed over years, capturing the poignant story of a family's sustainable life in Norway disrupted by sudden tragedy.

Winner of Sundance's Directing Award for US Documentary 2024, ***Sugarcane*** is a gripping investigation into the Canadian Indigenous residential school system, igniting a reckoning in the lives of survivors and descendants.

Sundance World Cinema Documentary Directing and Audience Awards winning film, ***The Remarkable Life of Ibelin***, blends video games and real life to tell the story of a discovery of a life lived online.

Other titles that screened at Sundance 2024: Arun Bhattarai and Dorottya Zurbó's ***Agent of Happiness*** explores a Bhutanese agent measuring national happiness while seeking his own, set against the nation's unique cultural landscape; ***Black Box Diaries***, a powerful first-person documentary by Shiori Itō, chronicles her harrowing fight for justice after being assaulted by a high-profile media figure in Japan; and ***Skywalkers: A Love Story*** follows two hardcore daredevils as they scale the world's highest buildings to capture footage for social media and ignite passion in the process - which audiences can also experience at a stomach-dropping screening at IMAX.

***Flickering Lights***, captures life before and after electricity in a small village in today's India. A vivid winning film from Amsterdam's International Documentary Festival.



In ***My Stolen Planet***, top prize winner at the prestigious Thessaloniki Film Festival, filmmaker Farahnaz Sharifi traces how the Islamic Revolution changed life for women in Iran, documenting public defiance and private joy.

A critically acclaimed major-prize winner at CPH:DOX 2024, ***The Flats*** follows the residents of a Belfast housing estate grappling with the unresolved legacy of the Troubles by staging re-enactments.

Two CPH:DOX selected titles include: ***The Bones*** a prehistoric plunge into the high-stakes fossil trade, where dinosaur bones are in big demand and palaeontology is losing out to deep-pocket private collectors; and ***Balomania***, which delves into the secret world of *baloeiros*, the *favela* men who build spectacular illegal hot air balloons and launch them into Brazil's skies.

Sports fans will cheer with the 2024 documentary selection. In ***Federer: Last Twelve Days***, Academy Award-winning director Asif Kapadia (*Senna*, *Amy* and *Diego Maradona*, SFF 2019) chronicles the final 12 days of Roger Federer's epic professional tennis career. ***The Home Game***, an Audience Award winner at Glasgow and New York, follows an Icelander determined to fulfil his father's soccer dreams and bring a home game to his tiny fishing village. ***COPA '71*** presents the untold story of the 1971 Women's Soccer World Cup and exposes systemic sexism with governing bodies determined to undermine women's soccer.

Go behind the scenes on set with ***Super/Man: The Christopher Reeve Story***, an intensely moving portrait of actor, father, and activist Christopher Reeve – before and after his accident – as recounted by family and friends. In ***Made in England: The Films of Powell and Pressburger***, Martin Scorsese welcomes viewers into the magical world of his cinematic heroes.

World Premiere stories from home include ***A Horse Named Winx***, the eagerly awaited documentary on arguably the greatest horse in Australian racing history, by award winning director Janine Hosking (*Mademoiselle and the Doctor*, SFF 2004; *35 Letters*, SFF 2014; *I'm Not Dead Yet*, SFF 2011); ***Charmian Clift – Life Burns High*** paints an intriguing portrait of one of Australia's finest writers from the 1960s.

In ***Rewards For The Tribe*** Australian director Rhys Graham (*Words from the City*, SFF 2007) documents the first collaboration between acclaimed contemporary dance companies Restless Dance Theatre – a troupe of dancers with disability – and genre-defying Chunky Move.

Films that explore the intricate relationship between humans and the natural world will screen at the Festival. ***Among the Wolves***, is set near the Finnish-Russian border, where a photographer and a painter wait, watch, and listen for an elusive wolf pack.

Kazuhiro Soda's (*Oyster Factory*, SFF 2016 and *Inland Sea*, SFF 2018) ***The Cats of Gokogu Shrine*** captures the lives of street cats at a historic Shinto shrine in Japan, and explores the delicate balance between human and animal residents.

Based on a bestseller by Isabella Tree, ***Wilding*** is the inspirational story of an English country estate that joins the rewilding revolution and thrives

In ***Nocturnes***, co-directors Anirban Dutta and Anupama Srinivasan explore the secretive world of moths in the Eastern Himalayas, highlighting their role in our ecological history.

Victor Kossakovsky's (*iVivan Las Antipodas!*, SFF 2012) ***Architecton***, selected for Berlinale 2024, is a striking follow-up to *Gunda* that focuses on the built environment and its shift from rock to concrete.

Experience the human impact of conflict and displacement at SFF. ***Life is Beautiful*** is a first-person account of filmmaker Mohamed Jabaly's seven-year fight to return to his home in Palestine



following a Norwegian study trip, which won him the Best Director Award at IDFA. A multi-award winner at Berlinale 2024 from a Palestinian-Israeli collective, **No Other Land** follows a community's forced expulsion through the eyes of a West Bank activist and an Israeli journalist.

**In the Rearview**, presents the Ukrainian conflict from a unique, authentic perspective – through the rearview of a volunteer driving Ukrainian civilians in the backseat to safety. Selected for Cannes 2023, **Occupied City** is Steve McQueen's contemplative film that looks for traces of Amsterdam's past, when the Dutch city was under Nazi occupation, in today's city.

Other titles, already announced, include: **The Battle for Laikipia** which explores the tensions in Kenya's Laikipia region among herders, landholders, and conservationists against a backdrop of drought, politics, and colonial history; **Menus-Plaisirs – Les Troisgros** sees Festival favourite Frederick Wiseman (*City Hall*, SFF 2021) return with a mouth-watering epic set in a three-Michelin-star French restaurant; and **The Contestant**, an incredible true story of a TV contestant left naked in a room, unaware his months-long challenge was being broadcast to millions via a Japanese television show.

### **THE BOX SET**

Sydney Film Festival presents the World Premiere of all six episodes of the new Australian mystery series **Exposure**. Alice Englert stars as a rising photographer haunted by her best friend's mysterious death in this thriller, executive produced by Justin Kurzel (*Snowtown*, *Nitram*).

This is a one-off opportunity to see this exceptional series on the big screen alongside cast and crew including producers Nicole O'Donohue (*The Daughter*, SFF 2015), Shaun Grant and Justin Kurzel, and actors Alice Englert, Sean Keenan, and Essie Davis. A Thirdborn production. A Stan Original Series.

### **SUSTAINABLE FUTURE AWARD**

The Sustainable Future Award, offering \$40,000, leads the world with the largest cash prize for a film tackling climate change and sustainability. The Sustainable Future Award is made possible by a syndicate of passionate climate activists.

The award will be presented to a film that explores the social, economic, political, and environmental consequences of climate change and highlights the urgent need for action to mitigate its effects.

The feature length films in the 2024 Sustainable Future Award are all documentaries: **Black Snow**, **The Battle for Laikipia** and **Wilding**.

Three shorts, **The Feast**, **The Waiting** and **Grove of Giants**, will also individually compete for the coveted award.

### **SOUNDS ON SCREEN presented by Mountain Goat**

Sounds on Screen showcases three uplifting musical narratives through one feature and two rhythm-driven documentaries included in the 2024 line-up.

Feature: **Head South** is director Jonathan Ogilvie's semi-autobiographical coming-of-age tale set in the upstart postpunk scene of late '70s Christchurch, featuring a killer soundtrack.

Documentaries: Witness a one-off live musical event at the State Library with **Resonance**, a hypnotic short documentary portrait of a classical quartet, to be followed with a live performance from the quartet after the screening. A movie so new it doesn't even have a title yet, **Untitled Blur Documentary**, captures the emotional return of Blur, with a new album and sold-out shows at Wembley Stadium.





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

EUROPE! Voices of Women in Film is a celebration of the diverse and powerful narratives brought to life by female filmmakers across Europe; with a program of 6 films, 4 features and 2 documentaries.

In 2024, Cineuropa partners with EFP to showcase a new class of talented directors, each bringing their unique perspectives and stories to the screen.

***A Postcard from Rome*** was crowned Latvia's Best Feature of the year and tells the story of married postal workers who win a trip to Rome by nefarious means; ***Excursion***, director Una Gunjak's exploration of youthful folly, where a Bosnian teen's white lie spirals out of control with dire social consequences.

In Belgian director Michèle Jacob's surreal horror ***The Lost Children***, four children are abandoned in a remote countryside house, where the boundary between reality and the paranormal becomes blurred. ***Je'Vida*** by award-winning director Katja Gauriloff is the first film shot entirely in the Skolt Sámi language, telling the story of a woman in Finland facing the past she struggled to hide.

The CPH:DOX and Thessaloniki selected documentary ***Immortals*** revisits two young Iraqis, Milo and Khalili, who risked everything during the 2019 uprising. Shot over 15 years, ***Afterwar*** documents the aftermath of war-torn 1990s Kosovo through the intimate stories of four survivors who experienced the conflict as children.

## FIRST NATIONS AWARD PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY TRUANT PICTURES

This year, Sydney Film Festival launches the inaugural First Nations Award, proudly supported by Truant Pictures. This Award establishes the world largest cash prize in global Indigenous filmmaking, rewarding \$35,000 to the winning First Nations filmmaker.

From homegrown First Nations voices to Māori and Sámi narratives – these films are brimming with diverse ideas and rich perspectives from Indigenous storytellers.

In a World Premiere screening, ***Once Were Warriors*** stars Temuera Morrison and Cliff Curtis reunite for ***Ka Whawhai Tonu***, a historical epic about Aotearoa's first land war, when vastly outnumbered Māori fought against colonial soldiers.

In ***The Convert***, Guy Pearce stars as a British preacher caught up in 1830s Māori wars in Lee Tamahori's (***Once Were Warriors***, 1993; ***Mahana***, SFF 2016) sweeping historical drama.

The haunting history of the Stolen Generations looms large in ***The Moogai*** when a malicious spirit enters the home of a young Indigenous couple with a newborn baby. Based on his SFF-winning short of the same name, writer-director Jon Bell's striking feature debut arrives direct from SXSW and Sundance.

From New Zealand comes the directorial debut of actor Rachel House (***Hunt for the Wilderpeople***), ***The Mountain***. Executive produced by Taika Waititi, the film centres on three children discovering friendship's healing power through the spirit of adventure as they trek through spectacular New Zealand landscapes.

Another New Zealand feature executive produced by Taika Waititi, ***We Were Dangerous*** by director Josephine Stewart-Te Whiu follows three defiant girls caught in New Zealand's history of eugenics.

In ***Ellogierdu – The Tundra Within Me***, an artist returns to her childhood home, reconnecting with her Sámi heritage and finding love with a reindeer herder. This debut feature from Sara Margrethe Oskal was screened at Toronto International Film Festival.



Three First Nations shorts, **First Horse**, **Tayal Forest Club** and **Lea Tupu'anga / Mother Tongue**, will also individually compete for the award.

## **FAMILY FILMS**

Introduce the magic of the movies to your little ones at this year's Sydney Film Festival with an enchanting line-up of five feature family films, including premieres of new Aussie animations.

Australian animation **200% Wolf**, from Sydney's very own Flying Bark Productions, makes its World Premiere, following Freddy Lupin's adventurous quest to prove his worth to his werewolf pack. The stellar voice cast includes Ilai Swindells (*Bay of Fires*, SFF 2023) Samara Weaving (*Chevalier*, SFF 2023), and comedians Jennifer Saunders and Akmal Saleh.

Another home-grown animation set for a premiere at the Festival is **The Sloth Lane**. A family of sloths realise they need to pick up the pace as they open a food truck in the fast-paced city. Featuring *Saturday Night Live*'s Leslie Jones and locals Dan Brumm (Uncle Stripe in *Bluey*) and Remy Hii (*Spider-Man: Far From Home*).

In the Australian Premiere of **Despicable Me 4**, non-stop action and laughter returns as Gru (voiced by Steve Carell) battles new villain Maxime Le Mal (Will Ferrell), with a screenplay co-written by Mike White (*The White Lotus*).

Winner of the Crystal Bear at Berlin, **It's Okay!** is a riveting and heart-warming Korean film set in the competitive world of a dance academy - which becomes a refuge when a newly homeless student secretly moves in.

**My Freaky Family** is a magical Australian-Irish animation based on the popular children's books *The Floods*. The story follows 12-year-old Betty who discovers her mystical powers just as a dark force kidnaps her family, with a voice cast including Evanna Lynch (*Harry Potter*), Richard Roxburgh and Miranda Otto.

## **FREAK ME OUT**

Sydney Film Festival's spine-tingling **Freak Me Out** Program, curated by **Richard Kuipers**, returns with 6 features, 6 shorts and a special live event.

Selected for both Berlinale and SXSW 2024, **Cuckoo** stars Hunter Schafer (*Euphoria*) as a troubled teen working at a holiday resort in the Bavarian Alps, where very strange goings-on start to take place.

Annick Blanc's debut, **Hunting Daze (Jour de Chasse)** was a SXSW Midnighters hit centred on a woman stranded at a buck's party in the Quebec wilderness.

Direct from its Tribeca World Premiere comes Yannis Veslemes' **She Loved Blossoms More**, a Greek Weird Wave fever dream about time travel and family ties.

New Zealand writer-director Michael Duignan's **The Paragon**, sees a tennis coach team up with a mysterious psychic tutor to seek revenge on a hit-and-run driver.

Genre giants RKSS (*Turbo Kid*, SFF 2015) return to FMO with slasher **Wake Up**, where Gen Z activists become the prey after breaking into a homeware megastore.

**Kill** captivated Toronto Midnight Madness with its relentless action aboard a train. Director Nikhil Nagesh Bhat and choreographer Oh Se-young deliver a ground-breaking spectacle.



A special film and live music event not to be missed, ***Hear My Eyes: Hellraiser*** will give audiences the opportunity to experience Clive Barker's 1987 extra-dimensional horror classic, re-scored live by EBM explorers Hieroglyphic Being and Robin Fox, and a synched laser-art show at City Recital Hall.

The six short films in the program are: ***Meat Puppet, Transylvanie, Lullaby, Dream Creep, It Will Find You*** and ***Earwax***.

### **SCREENABILITY**

For an eighth consecutive year, Sydney Film Festival presents its Screenability program – a program of outstanding films created by filmmakers living with disability.

Curated by **Screenability Programmer Rebecca McCormack**, a total of six works will screen in the program including ***Good Bad Things***, the Slamdance 2024 winner where a young man with muscular dystrophy ventures into the world of online dating. Also featured is ***The Stimming Pool***, which blends live action with animation as five filmmakers share their individual neurodiverse experiences, and the documentary ***The Ride Ahead***, a coming-of-age feature debut by Samuel Habib and Dan Habib that questions what the future holds for young people living with disabilities.

Also in the selection are three Australian short films – ***Unstoppable, Rehabilitating*** and ***Threshold***.

### **FLUX: ART+FILM**

FLUX: ART+FILM explores the fertile ground between art and cinema, with four radical and innovative films by artists who transform our experience of what cinema can be.

Set high in the Andean mountains, ***The Soldier's Lagoon*** is a documentary that navigates a dense fog that links Colombia's past with its present, tracing revolutionary leader Simón Bolívar's journey into the wetlands.

***Soundtrack to a Coup D'état***, is a Sundance winner that intertwines the story of jazz with the history of colonial machinations in the Congo, featuring Nina Simone and Louis Armstrong.

In ***The Ballad of Suzanne Césaire***, Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich pieces together the life of French-Martinican surrealist Suzanne Césaire. Short film ***Conspiracy*** screens alongside this documentary.

### **OUSMANE SEMBÈNE – A REVOLUTIONARY WITH A CAMERA**

Sydney Film Festival in association with ACMI will present OUSMANE SEMBÈNE – A REVOLUTIONARY WITH A CAMERA, a retrospective of the legendary African filmmaker.

Ousmane Sembène, often regarded as the "father of African cinema", was a pioneering Senegalese filmmaker whose impact on cinema globally is often cited by the greats, including Martin Scorsese, as their inspiration. His work spans over four decades, from the 1960s to the early 2000s, capturing the essence of African life and its post-colonial challenges. His films are celebrated for their historical depth, cultural significance, and social commentary, establishing him as a crucial figure in world cinema history. He is also regarded as the director of the first ever feature length film in an African language

This retrospective of Sembène's films offers a rare opportunity for cinephiles to experience the cinema of one of the world's greatest auteurs - one whose films are seldom available on streaming platforms or in regular cinema screenings.

The retrospective is curated by Keith Shiri, an international expert in African cinema who has advised numerous global film festivals. He will be in Sydney to present the retrospective.



Eight feature films will screen as a part of the retrospective: *Black Girl* (1966), *Mandabi* (1968), *Emitai* (1971), *Xala* (1975), *Ceddo* (1977), *Camp de Thiaroye* (1988), *Guelwaar* (1992) and *Moolaadé* (2004)

The program will also include three of Sembène's short films, *Borom Sarret* (1963), *Niaye* (1964) and *Tauw* (1970), screened ahead of select features in the retrospective.

### NANCY SAVOCA: TRUE LOVE STORIES

In celebration of the influential Nancy Savoca, Sydney Film Festival presents a captivating series of films exploring the Italian-American experience through a female lens.

This program features the Australian premieres of beautifully restored works, including Savoca's landmark films like *True Love*, *Dogfight* and *Household Saints*, as well as her early short films *Renata* and *Bad Timing*.

Each film, deeply rooted in Savoca's personal experiences and cultural heritage, delves into themes of love, heartbreak, and cultural identity, showcasing her unique ability to transform the ordinary into the magical. Savoca's work, praised for its authentic storytelling and evocative portrayal of Italian-American life, offers a fresh perspective on familiar narratives, making this series a must-see at this year's festival.

### CLASSICS RESTORED

This year, Sydney Film Festival's Classics Restored section offers a compelling cinematic journey with five films that deserve to be experienced on the big screen, including three Australian classics with their legendary filmmakers in attendance.

*Rabbit-Proof Fence*, Phillip Noyce's profound narrative on the Stolen Generations, returns in a stunning 4K restoration, bringing to life the poignant story of resilience and homecoming. Noyce will also deliver the annual Ian McPherson Memorial Lecture at The Hub following the screening.

*Ten Canoes* offers a fable-like exploration of Indigenous life and lore, filmed entirely in Indigenous languages and narrated by the iconic David Gulpili, and directed by Rolf De Heer and Peter Djiggir - both in attendance.

Lastly, Peter Weir's *The Cars That Ate Paris* revisits a quirky tale of a town with a sinister secret, celebrating its 50th anniversary with a pristine restoration presented with the National Film and Sound Archive and an intro from Weir himself.

From Mira Nair's vibrant 1991 drama *Mississippi Masala*, starring Denzel Washington and Sarita Choudhury as an interracial couple navigating love amid family disapproval and racial tensions, to Michael Powell's chilling *Peeping Tom*, a psychological thriller that examines the dark side of human curiosity and the act of filming, these films showcase the breadth of cinematic storytelling.

Together, these films not only entertain but invite audiences to reflect on rich, diverse cultural narratives and the power of restoration in preserving film heritage.

### THE DENDY AWARDS FOR AUSTRALIAN SHORT FILMS



Sydney Film Festival's short film competition has launched the careers of countless directors, writers, producers, cinematographers and other film creatives in its 55-year history.

The 10 finalists compete for five illustrious prizes: the **Dendy Live Action Short Award**; the **Yoram Gross Animation Award**; the **Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Director**; the **AFTRS Craft Award**; and the **Event Cinemas Rising Talent Award**.

The short films competing are: *Alone*, *Besharam! (Shameless)*, *Bong Xi Fai Cai*, *Darwin Story*, *Die Bully Die*, *The Disconnected*, *The Gay*, *The Meaningless Daydreams of Augie & Celeste*, *Say* and *This Will Never Last*.

### **THE HUB presented by Challenger**

The Hub at Town Hall puts the Festival in Sydney Film Festival. Drop in for a drink between films, grab a bite, and enjoy a swathe of special events, talks and parties.

Open to the public all nights, and select days from 5-16 June, The Hub will feature a daily Happy Hour special pop-up bar between 4:30pm and 6:00pm, with drinks from Mt Yengo Wines, Mountain Goat Beer, and Lyres served in the main bar and the Challenger Lounge.

The Hub will also feature a special display paying tribute to 50 years of taking world cinema to regional venues around Australia with the Travelling Film Festival.

### **EVENTS AT THE HUB**

This year's Sydney Film Festival invites you to keep the cinematic excitement alive with a series of engaging events at The Hub, designed to enrich your Festival experience. Here's what's happening:

#### **Queer Cinema Celebration**

Co-hosted with Queerscreen

Celebrate queer cinema with a night of music, drinks, and community spirit, perfectly paired with a screening prior of *Problemista* starring Tilda Swinton and Julio Torres next door at Event Cinemas at 6.30PM. (Fri 7 Jun, 8:00 PM | Free)

#### **Oils & 80s: A Celebration**

Continue the energy from the World Premiere of *Midnight Oil: The Hardest Line* with a night filled with iconic tunes. (Sun 9 Jun, 8:00 PM | Free)

#### **Ian McPherson Memorial Lecture with Phillip Noyce AO**

Celebrate the rich history and vibrant future of Australian cinema at the Ian McPherson Memorial Lecture, featuring the esteemed director Phillip Noyce. Following the 4K restoration screening of *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, join in for an illuminating conversation with Noyce as he discusses his impactful career and creative journey. This dialogue will be moderated by filmmaker Muralikrishna Thalluri, offering Festival-goers a unique opportunity to delve into the intricacies of filmmaking from one of Australia's cinematic legends. (Public Holiday Mon 10 JUN 4:30 PM | Free)

#### **SFF Film Trivia Night**

Test your film knowledge, compete for prizes, and enjoy an evening filled with trivia, drinks, and laughs. (Wed 12 Jun, 7:00 PM | Free)





### **Thirsty Thursday: Songs from the Silver Screen**

Co-presented with Darlinghurst Theatre Company

Enjoy a special evening of live music celebrating iconic film songs, featuring performances by Olivia Vásquez (star of SFF 2024 film *The Sloth Lane*) and emerging musical theatre guests. (Thu 13 Jun, 7:00 PM | \$46)

### **Korean Cinema Celebration: Nolja!**

Co-hosted with the Korean Cultural Centre Australia

With K-Pop music, photo booth, hands-on activities, and more, enjoy the night filled with Korean Culture. Celebrate Korean culture and cinema, whether you're a long time Korean film fan, or planning on enjoying *Alienoid*, *It's Okay*, or *House of the Seasons* at SFF this year. (Fri 14 Jun, 7:30 PM | Free)

### **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.

### **Gender Matters: Looking Back and Looking Forward**

Screen Australia's Gender Matters Taskforce was founded in 2016. Join Taskforce members Rosie Lourde, Nerida Moore and Lena Nahlous, for a deep dive into the state of Gender Parity in the industry, moderated by Grainne Brunson, Chief Operating Officer, Screen Australia, followed by a networking event. (Fri 7 Jun, 5:30 PM | The Hub)

### **AI: Brave New Work or Creative Graveyard?**

Explore the impact of AI on creativity in the film industry with leading Australian writers and academics from the Australian Writers' Guild. (Sat 8 Jun, 2:00 PM | The Hub)

### **First Nations Films – A Global Perspective**

Join First Nations producer, director and TIFF programmer Jason Ryle, *The Mountain* director Rachel House, and *The Moogai* producer, Mitchell Stanley, in conversation with the festival's First Nations Program Advisor Aaliyah Bradbury as they take a global perspective on First Nations storytelling. (Sun 9 Jun, 11:45 AM | The Hub)

### **Doing Development Differently**

Join Sophie Mathisen and international industry disruptors as they explore how global filmmakers are navigating project development when market and industry support is hard to find. (Thu 13 Jun, 5:30 PM | The Hub)

### **From Stageplay to Screenplay**

As part of Sydney Film Festival's partnership with Platform, and after a national callout, four emerging development creatives worked alongside Belvoir playwriting fellows to adapt their existing theatrical works to screenplay format. Overseen by leading international development professionals, the initiative will culminate in a live table read by some of Sydney's leading lights. (Fri 14 Jun, 4:00 PM | Belvoir St Theatre)

### **This Industry Is Not for Me: How Training Can Kick Down the Door**



In this conversation moderated by filmmaker Skye Leon, practitioners and educators from all backgrounds talk about what the industry is really like, the barriers to entry, and how training can help kick the door down. (Sat 15 Jun, 10:30 AM | The Hub)

### **Platform Pitch – For Film’s Sake Incubator**

Returns for the second year, after a successful launch in 2023. Mentored by SFF international film guests, 10 emerging filmmakers will be challenged to create new partnership and projects in just four days. The results of their efforts will be pitched live to an expert industry jury who will give immediate feedback with a live audience watching on. (Sat 15 Jun, 12:00 PM | The Hub)

The full Sydney Film Festival 2024 program can be found online at [sff.org.au](https://sff.org.au).

**Sydney Film Festival runs from 5-16 June 2024. Tickets and Flexipasses to Sydney Film Festival 2024 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit [sff.org.au](https://sff.org.au) for more information or to book.**

Stay up to date with Sydney Film Festival:  
[eNews](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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

### **EDITOR’S NOTES**

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

From Wednesday 5 to Sunday 16 June 2024, the 71<sup>st</sup> 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](https://sff.org.au).

The 71<sup>st</sup> Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW and Destination NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the City of Sydney.

