

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

6–17 JUNE 2018

MEDIA RELEASE

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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL PREVIEWS 2018 GUEST LINE-UP

The 65th Sydney Film Festival announces the first list of stars and filmmaker guests to attend the Festival 6-17 June.

These distinguished industry guests will attend the Australian and world premieres of their films, walk the Festival's red carpets, introduce their films and participate in talks, panels and Q&A sessions. Please note: for the most up-to-date list of festival guests, visit sff.org.au.

The Festival, together with **Vivid Ideas** – part of the world's largest festival of light, music and ideas, Vivid Sydney – will present five FREE **Meet the Filmmaker** talks at the Festival Hub and Treasury Room at Town Hall, and the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Altogether, the 2018 Sydney Film Festival will present a vast array of free talks, panel discussions and events, traversing a huge range of topics.

Highlights include:

New Zealand writer-directors-stars **Jackie van Beek** and **Madeleine Sami** and Australian actress **Celia Pacquola** will present the Australian Premiere of their side-splittingly funny film ***The Breaker Upperers*** on Opening Night at the Festival. Van Beek and Sami will be part of a Meet the Filmmakers talk at The Festival Hub (Saturday, 9 June, 4:00pm) to discuss their film, in which almost all creative roles are held by women.

Australian director **Benjamin Gilmour**, lead actor **Sam Smith** and producer **John Maynard** will present the World Premiere of their film ***Jirga***, and will engage in an extended Festival Q&A at The Hub with **Garry Maddox** (*Sydney Morning Herald*) to discuss the extraordinary story of how the film was made in war-torn Afghanistan (Saturday, 9 June, 2:00pm).

Presented as part of Vivid Ideas, Los Angeles-based Australian genre maestro **Leigh Whannell** (*Saw*, *Insidious*) will introduce a special sneak peak of his new cyberpunk-horror action thriller ***Upgrade*** at the Randwick Ritz, and discuss his career – from the legendary *Saw* franchise to *Insidious* – at a free talk at The Hub (Saturday, 9 June, 2:00pm).

Leading Australian actress **Marta Dusseldorp** (*A Place to Call Home*) will attend the Festival as Jury Chair of the 2018 Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship. The jury also includes Australian producer **Greer Simpkin** (*Sweet Country*), President of the Australian Directors' Guild, **Samantha Lang**, Lexus Australia's **Vin Naidoo**, and Sydney Film Festival Director **Nashen Moodley**.

Australian director **Robert Connolly** will introduce the screening of the first two episodes of his highly anticipated series ***Deep State***, with a stellar cast including Mark Strong (*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*), Joe Dempsie (*Game of Thrones*), and Karima McAdams (*Vikings*). Connolly will also join film critic, author, and former director of the Sydney Film Festival (1966 – 1983) **David Stratton** for this year's Ian McPherson Memorial Lecture (Saturday, 16 June, 2:00pm) at the Festival Hub.



Guests associated with Official Competition titles are: Bulgarian director **Milko Lazarov** and producer **Veselka Goreczka** (*Ága*), Italian director **Laura Bispuri** (*Daughter of Mine*), Paraguayan director **Marcelo Martinessi** (*The Heiresses*), Hungarian director **Zsófia Szilágyi** (*One Day*), and Indonesian producer **Gita Fara** (*The Seen and Unseen*).

Thai auteur **Pen-ek Ratanaruang** (*Samui Song*) is also a Festival guest, introducing his film noir **Samui Song**, as well as joining a cast of Australian film writers to shed insight on the worldwide obsession with cinema at a free talk in the Treasury Room (Thursday 14 June, 6:00pm).

The Festival will also host a Masterclass for filmmakers with British experimental artist **Andrew Kötting** (*Lek and the Dogs*) at Carriageworks (Sunday 17 June, 10am), discussing his creative process that integrates innovative and forward-thinking techniques.

Award-winning NZ director **Pietra Brettkelly** (*A Flickering Truth*, SFF 2016) will introduce her documentary **Yellow is Forbidden**, which focuses on Chinese designer Guo Pei, best known for Rihanna's iconic 27kg Met Gala dress.

US director and curator **Cameron Yates** will attend the Festival to introduce **Chef Flynn**, which follows teenage culinary sensation Flynn McGarry's rapid ascent from home kitchen to the cover of *New York Times Magazine*.

Australian director **Stephen McCallum** and actor/screenwriter **Matt Nable** (*Hacksaw Ridge*) will introduce the screening of McCallum's debut feature, **1%** – a high-octane thriller following an outlaw biker's power struggle.

Presented as part of Vivid Ideas, highly political Australian artist duo **Soda_Jerk** will attend the Festival to introduce their blistering cinema mash-up film *Terror Nullius*, with an extended Festival Q&A (Thursday 7 June, 8.30pm) following the film's screening.

Indigenous Australian filmmakers **Dylan River** (*Finke: There & Back*), **Grant Saunders** (*Teach a Man to Fish*), and **Dean Gibson** (*Wik vs Queensland*) will introduce the screenings of their films. Presented as part of Vivid Ideas, former funders and filmmakers from the **From Little Things Big Things Grow** Retrospective will also discuss 25 years of industry change at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (Sunday 17 June, 3:45pm).

Australian director **Richard Todd** will present the World Premiere of **Dying to Live**, examining why Australia is lagging behind the Western world in organ and tissue donor rates. Todd will be joined by transplant recipient **Holly Ralph** for a post-screening Extended Q&A in the Treasury Room (Friday 8 June, 8:30pm), to further discuss the complex issues and policies explored in their documentary.

Freak Me Out Guest Programmer **Richard Kuipers** will discuss all things freaky alongside Freak Me Out filmmakers at a free Talk at Dendy Newtown (Saturday 16 June, 7:30pm), presented by the University of Sydney.

New Zealand actress-turned-director **Miranda Harcourt** and lead actress **Erana James** of supernatural thriller **The Changeover** will also attend the Festival to present their film's Australian Premiere.

Emerging women directors and industry trailblazers from Europe join **Europe! Voices of Women in Film**. Presented as part of Vivid Ideas, industry guests from across the Continent will come to Sydney to introduce their films and take part in a public talk: In conversation with European Women Filmmakers (Sunday 10 June, 1:30pm).

In attendance to present their films to Festival audiences are: Swedish filmmaker Isabella Eklöf (with Danish production *Holiday*), acclaimed Dutch director Nanouk Leopold and producer Stienette Bosklopper (*Cobain*), Swedish actress-director Fanni Metelius (*The Heart*), Austrian filmmaker Katharina Muckstein (*L'Animale*), Finnish filmmaker Virpi Suutari (*Entrepreneur*), Georgia's Ana Urushadze (*Scary Mother*), Kosovar filmmaker Blerta Zeqiri (*The Marriage*), and Polish director **Jagoda Szalc** (*Tower. A Bright Day.*).

Screenability guests attending the Festival to introduce their film will be: Australian filmmakers with disability **Stevie Cruz-Martin** (*Broken*), **Dieter Knierim** (*Intimate Encounters 20 Years On*), and **Samia Halabi** (*Tip Of My Tongue*), and Israeli filmmakers with disability **Elad Cohen** and **Iris Ben Moshe** (*The Sign for Love*), and Austria's **Birgit Gohlke** and **Petra Nickel** (*Stuttering – My Constant Companion*).

These guests will also discuss opportunities for filmmakers with disability at a Meet the Filmmakers session at AFTRS (Saturday, 16 June, 4:15pm). All Screenability filmmaker introductions and Q&As will be Auslan interpreted.

From the **Focus on Italy** showcase, screenwriter **Alessandro Valenti** (*The Ark of Disperata*), and multihyphenate creative director **Giorgio Ferrero** and producer-cinematographer **Federico Biasin** (*Beautiful Things*) will introduce their film's screenings.

The full line-up of Sydney Film Festival 2018 guests can be found on sff.org.au.

Sydney Film Festival runs 6 – 17 June 2018.

Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2018 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit sff.org.au for more information.

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

EDITOR'S NOTES

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From Wednesday 6 June to Sunday 17 June 2018, the 65th 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: *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.

The 65th 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.

ABOUT VIVID IDEAS

Vivid Ideas brings together the world's greatest minds, innovators and creatives for a program of public talks, industry seminars, conferences, workshops and debates exploring creativity as a catalyst for change and celebrating Sydney as a creative industries hub of Asia Pacific. Vivid Ideas is presented as part of Vivid Sydney, which is owned, managed and produced by Destination NSW, the NSW Government's tourism and major events agency and runs from 25 May to 16 June 2018. For more information visit www.vividsydney.com/ideas

