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## **SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES RETURN OF SCREENABILITY FOR A SIXTH YEAR**

The 69<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival today announced the sixth year of its Screenability Program.

Curated by **Screenability Programmer Rebecca McCormack**, a total of six works will screen in the program including Directing Award-winning documentary at Sundance *I Didn't See You There* and deeply personal feature *Straighten Up and Fly Right* from Slamdance, alongside homegrown SXSW Audience Award winning drama *Shadow*. Also appearing in the selection are three Australian short films selected as part of the Screenability Filmmakers Fund for Screen NSW: *Inspire Me*, *Voice Activated* and *All Silent Dogs*.

For the sixth year, the Festival also maintains its inclusion policy with audio described and open-captioned screenings, alongside a wide offering of English-subtitled films.

Screenability at Sydney Film Festival is part of a suite of initiatives designed to boost the participation of underrepresented groups in the screen industry. The focus of Screenability is to showcase films by filmmakers with disability in a festival context.

**Rebecca McCormack** said, "Screenability places screen practitioners with disability at the centre of the narrative, bringing new ideas to audiences by sharing their authentic stories. The 2022 Screenability program showcases powerful and provocative films from local and international storytellers and will premier three innovative new shorts from our home state."

**Acting Head of Screen NSW David Gordon** said, "Screenability returns in full force this year providing poignant and insightful perspectives from exciting new talents with disability including NSW filmmakers Madeleine Stewart, Steve Anthopoulos and Natalia Stawyskyj. *Shadow* features the acclaimed ensemble from Back to Back Theatre and associate producer Meret Hassanen, and the program includes international filmmakers Steven Tanenbaum and Reid Davenport."

The first 22 titles from Sydney Film Festival's 2022 program can be found online at [sff.org.au](http://sff.org.au).

Sydney Film Festival runs in cinemas 8-19 June 2022. Tickets to Sydney Film Festival 2022 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit [sff.org.au](http://sff.org.au) for more information.

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# SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

JUNE 08–19 2022

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\*\*\*Sydney Film Festival Press Pack and 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](http://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.

### SCREENABILITY FILMS

#### **I DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE**

**Sundance Award-winner Reid Davenport's feature length debut is a reflective, powerfully personal exploration of the history of freakdom, vision and (in)visibility.**

Sparked by the appearance of a circus tent near his home in Oakland, California, Davenport examines the legacy of the freak show and the ableism people with disability continue to experience today. Originally from Bethel, Connecticut, the hometown of P.T. Barnum, 'The Greatest Showman', Davenport reflects on a time when people with disability were displayed as spectacle. He then draws a line to our approach to disability today. Filmed entirely from Davenport's viewpoint, the film brings audiences face to face with the (in)visibility he experiences as a wheelchair-user, capturing candid moments within the spaces he navigates, while offering a glimpse at the richness of his daily life.

#### **SHADOW**

**In its provocative film debut, Geelong's Back to Back Theatre states "There is nowhere darker than the future." Winner, SXSW.**

A group of activists hold a public meeting, desperate to save the world. As the meeting unravels, they discover the greatest threat to their future is already in the room. Adapted from Back to Back's internationally acclaimed stage production *The Shadow Whose Prey the Hunter Becomes* ('an extraordinary play' – New York Times), *Shadow* explores an unsettling and uncomfortable past many would like to ignore, while casting a piercing gaze towards the future. Directed by Bruce Gladwin and co-authored by Back to Back's core acting ensemble, *Shadow* won an Audience Award at SXSW 2022.



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## STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT

**An intimate study of a woman with disability staring down a brutal New York winter and seeking the warmth of human connection. Winner, Slamdance Grand Jury Prize.**

Twenty-something New Yorker Kristen (Kristen Abate) lives alone and dreams of being a writer. Meanwhile, she walks dogs for a living, and smokes weed to dull the relentless pain of her Ankylosing Spondylitis, a severe form of arthritis that leaves her permanently bent over. But, when faced with eviction, Kristen's world begins to unravel, forcing her to make choices and cross new thresholds – some with an older man (Steven Tanenbaum) who is in some ways her mirror image. A deeply personal story starring its writer-directors, *Straighten Up and Fly Right* draws into focus the importance of connection, community and the bonds we make.

## SCREENABILITY SHORTS

### INSPIRE ME

Award winning comedian Madeleine Stewart explores the phenomenon of "inspiration porn" in this comedic host-driven documentary.

*Inspire Me* screens with *I Didn't See You There*.

### VOICE ACTIVATED

Passionate florist and deliveryman Trent (Aleks Mikic, *Secret City*) finds his voice when he is forced to cooperate with a voice activated car. With the voices of Becky Lucas and Sam Neill.

*Voice Activated* screens with *Shadow*.

### ALL SILENT DOGS

Ylva (Julia Savage), a teenage girl must make a choice: give up her ability to transform into a dog or face the societal consequences of keeping it.

*All Silent Dogs* screens with *Straighten Up and Fly Right*.

