

# SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

# 5-16 JUNE 2024

## SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2024 FAMILY AND SCREENABILITY PROGRAMS

With one week until the full program launch, the 71st Sydney Film Festival, 5-16 June, announces early the inclusion of five family-friendly films in the Family Program and six films set to premiere as a part of the Festival's Screenability selection.

Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley said, "In 2024, our Festival enriches the cinematic landscape with our Family and Screenability Programs. Our family-friendly films will enchant our youngest viewers with tales of adventure and wonder, while our Screenability films provide profound insights that challenge and expand perceptions. Together, these programs are designed to delight and captivate, welcoming filmgoers from all walks of life to a celebration of storytelling."

### 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 three Aussie World Premieres.

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 an Australian 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.



## **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 and Dan Habib that questions what the future holds for young people living with disabilities.

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

**Rebecca McCormack** said, “Screenability is dedicated to amplifying the talents of filmmakers with disabilities, offering them a stage to tell their true stories and bring new insights to viewers. This year’s Screenability line-up once again includes engaging and thought-provoking films from around the world and introduces three visionary shorts from our local artists.”

**The full 71st Sydney Film Festival program will be revealed on Wednesday 8 May 2024.**

**Flexipasses to Sydney Film Festival 2024 are on sale now, as well as single tickets for Screenability, Family Program, Ousmane Sembène Retrospective, and the Opening Night Gala screening of *Midnight Oil: The Hardest Line*. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit [sff.org.au](http://sff.org.au) for more information or to book.**

## **MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

**Matt Fraser, Director of Communications**

E: [matt@originalspin.com.au](mailto:matt@originalspin.com.au) M: 0401 326 007

**Sanika Karnik, Communications Advisor**

E: [sanika@originalspin.com.au](mailto:sanika@originalspin.com.au) M: 0466 635 010

**Amber Forrest-Bisley, OS Director**

E: [amber@originalspin.com.au](mailto:amber@originalspin.com.au) P: 8065 7363 M: 0405 363 817

**\*\*\*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](http://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.

## **FAMILY PROGRAM**

### **200% WOLF**

**Heroic were-poodle Freddy Lupin feels ready to lead the werewolf pack! If only he were more... wolfish. The latest gem from Sydney animation studio Flying Bark (*Maya the Bee*, SFF 2018).**



Freddy belongs to a werewolf family and needs to prove himself to his elders if he wants to be taken seriously. Stumbling upon some old runes, Freddy accidentally conjures powers from a cheeky moon sprite, Moopoo. Now Freddy must help Moopoo get back to the moon and restore the cosmic order. Enlisting the help of friends Batty and Hamish, Freddy must trick an outcast sorceress, exploiting her magical powers to get Moopoo home. A journey of self-discovery and friendship, this much anticipated sequel to *100% Wolf* is a World Premiere – featuring a voice cast of local Aussies Ilai Swindells (*Bay of Fires*, SFF 2023) and Samara Weaving (*Chevalier*, SFF 2023), plus comedians Jennifer Saunders and Akmal Saleh.

For ages 7+

#### **DESPICABLE ME 4**

**Gru (voiced by Steve Carell) faces a new nemesis (Will Ferrell) in Illumination's non-stop animated actioner *Despicable Me 4*, with a screenplay co-written by Mike White (*The White Lotus*).**

Following the 2022 blockbuster phenomenon of Illumination's *Minions: The Rise of Gru*, the biggest animated franchise in movie history is back. This time, Gru (Steve Carell), the world's favourite supervillain turned Anti-Villain League agent, has a new son, and the youngster is intent on tormenting his dad. Worse, Gru must face a new bad guy in Maxime Le Mal (Will Ferrell) and his femme fatale girlfriend Valentina (Sofia Vergara), and the whole family is forced to go on the run. Kristen Wiig and Steve Coogan are among the returning cast in this hilarious adventure from the best in the animation business.

#### **IT'S OKAY!**

**Winner of the Crystal Bear at Berlin, this riveting Korean film is set in the competitive world of a dance academy which becomes a refuge for a newly homeless student who secretly moves in.**

In her moving directorial debut, Kim Hye-young tells the story of teenager In-young (Lee Re), who finds herself alone and homeless after the death of her mother. In the midst of her grief, she must also fight to keep her scholarship at a competitive dance academy. Tensions rise as the year's final performance gets closer and their perfectionist teacher Seol-ah (Jin Seo-yeon) demands impossibly high standards from all the girls. When Seol-ah discovers In-young squatting at the dance academy one night, things take a surprising turn for both women. A joyous dance finale is bound to send you home happy!

Recommended for Ages 10+

#### **MY FREAKY FAMILY**

**A magical Australian-Irish animation, based on the popular children's books *The Floods*, in which 12-year-old Betty discovers her mystical powers just as a dark force kidnaps her family.**

From the opening chase sequence to the musical finale, this animated feature with a stand-out voice cast – including Evanna Lynch (*Harry Potter*), Richard Roxburgh and Miranda Otto – is full of thrills, spills, and spells. Betty Flood finds her wacky family embarrassing and wishes her magical mum could at least try to act more normal. But Betty is just realising that she has magical gifts of her own. When a dark power kidnaps her family, she must harness her magical abilities to rescue them. Will her newfound powers be strong enough to save the day? Magic, music, and marvellous adventures await.

Recommended for Ages 10+

#### **THE SLOTH LANE**

**When a fast-paced city demands fast food, a family of sloths set on opening a food truck might need to pick up the pace in this World Premiere home-grown animated charmer.**

12-year-old sloth Laura (voiced by Teo Vergara) is devastated when a storm destroys her family's restaurant and forces them to relocate from the peaceful countryside to the big city. The sloths take only their prized family recipe book with them – and an old van. They open a food truck, and soon



business is booming. There's just one problem. Famous entrepreneur Dotti Pace (Leslie Jones) – a cheetah with big ambitions and a failing fast-food chain – is determined to buy their family business. When the sloths decline to sell, Dotti resorts to nefarious tactics to steal their family legacy. Can Laura stop her before it's too late? Great Aussie voice talent including Dan Brumm (Uncle Stripe in *Bluey*) and Remy Hii (*Spider-Man: Far From Home*) bring this charmer to life!

## **SCREENABILITY PROGRAM**

### **GOOD BAD THINGS**

**When Danny, a young man with muscular dystrophy, steps out of his comfort zone and into the world of online dating, an unexpected match sparks a journey of self-discovery. Slamdance 2024 winner.**

Entrepreneur Danny (Danny Kurtzman, also co-writer) is feeling disillusioned with the world of online dating when he makes an unexpected connection with enigmatic photographer Madi (Jessica Parker Kennedy). Madi challenges him to step outside his comfort zone, taking Danny on a journey of self-acceptance and discovering the beauty of his unique body. Shane D. Stanger's debut – an extraordinary story of love, friendship and family – won an Audience Award and Unstoppable Grand Jury Prize at Slamdance 2024.

### **THE RIDE AHEAD**

**Samuel and Dan Habib's feature debut is a powerful coming-of-age story about holding onto dreams and exploring what the future holds for people living with disability.**

21-year-old Samuel is curious about dating, sex, college, and living away from home. Determined to avoid the statistical realities faced by many disabled adults (including unemployment and institutionalisation), Samuel enlists some of America's most well-known and rebellious disability advocates and asks their advice on how he can achieve his dreams. Produced by James Lebrecht and Sara Bolder (*Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution*), *The Ride Ahead* includes interviews with US author and pioneering disability rights advocate Judith Heumann, alongside human rights activist and Krip-Hop artist Keith Jones.

### **THE STIMMING POOL**

**Blending live action and animation, *The Stimming Pool* takes audiences on a visceral journey as five filmmakers share their individual neurodiverse experience. Lensed by *Aftersun* DOP Gregory Oke.**

What is everyday life like for the neurodivergent? *The Stimming Pool* weaves together the stories of a film buff, an office worker, and other people living with autism, brilliantly capturing the sensory experience of a neurodivergent person faced, say, with a raucous pub. Co-created by the Neurocultures Collective – made up of five neurodiverse filmmakers – this profoundly immersive film was shot on 16mm by *Aftersun* DOP Gregory Oke on the streets of the UK. The images exert a hypnotic pull, drawing us into the lives of people determined to thrive in a chaotic world that sees them as different.

## **Screenability Shorts:**

### **UNSTOPPABLE**

A paraplegic former defence contractor (played by Paralympian skier Sam Tait) must reclaim his strength and self-belief to survive in this high-octane cat-and-mouse action-thriller. Screens with *GOOD BAD THINGS*.



### **REHABILITATING**

A woman with chronic pain is stuck in a rehab hospital, unable to leave until she can find a way out of her fears and pain with the help of a new friend. Screens with *THE RIDE AHEAD*.

### **THRESHOLD**

A deeply personal exploration of what it means to have a little machine – a hearing aid – as part of your body, *Threshold* offers a vivid sensory portrait of the Deaf experience. Screens with *THE STIMMING POOL*.