



## MEDIA RELEASE

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 7.00PM TUESDAY 12 JUNE 2018**

## **2018 LEXUS AUSTRALIA SHORT FILM FELLOWS ANNOUNCED**

Lexus Australia and Sydney Film Festival have announced **Melissa Anastasi, Sunday Emerson Gullifer, Jamieson Pearce, and duo Curtis Taylor and Nathan Mewett** as the recipients of the **2018 Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship**.

Each filmmaker party will receive a \$50,000 grant, the largest cash fellowship for short film in Australia, to make a film which will premiere at the 2019 Sydney Film Festival. The Fellows were selected by a jury of industry luminaries from a shortlist of 20 emerging filmmakers.

The announcement was made at the world premiere of the 2017 Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship films tonight. Thomas Baricevic, Emily Avila, Lara Köse and Goran Stolevski had their films *The Coin*, *Fitting*, *Kaya*, and *My Boy Oleg* screened for the first time to a packed cinema at the Dendy Opera Quays as part of the Sydney Film Festival.

Leading Australian actress **Marta Dusseldorp** presided over the 2018 selection process as Jury Chair, alongside Sydney Film Festival Director **Nashen Moodley**, Lexus Australia Senior Manager, Sales & Marketing, **Vin Naidoo**, Australian producer **Greer Simpkin** and President of the Australian Directors' Guild **Samantha Lang**.

"What an honour it has been to read and indulge myself with great short Australian films. The four finalists showed a holistic understanding of their craft and vision. We believe these filmmakers have truly embraced all that was asked for by the Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship and Sydney Film Festival," said **Jury Chair Marta Dusseldorp**.

"These are strong, unique stories investigating identity, love, family, relationships and the human experience. We cannot wait to see them at the Sydney Film Festival in 2019," she said.

"The Festival is very excited to announce the 2018 Lexus Australia Short Film Fellows," said **Nashen Moodley, Sydney Film Festival Director**. "The Fellowship recipients are among the highest calibre of rising Australian talent, having screened at Festivals around the world. They impressed us with their passion for filmmaking and their fantastic projects."

"The jury looks forward to these filmmakers taking their careers to the next level, as they navigate a \$50,000 filmmaking project, working alongside industry mentors as well as their chosen teams. The Festival is proud to provide a platform for these films when they premiere in 2019," he said.

"We were extremely impressed by the creativity of these impressive young filmmakers, and we are delighted to support them as they embark on this exciting next chapter," said **Vin Naidoo, Senior Manager, Sales & Marketing, Lexus Australia**.

"Lexus greatly appreciates the contribution of Sydney Film Festival and the illustrious industry figures who have played such an important role in developing next generation talent."



## Meet the Lexus Australia Short Film Fellows:

- **Melissa Anastasi** (Arncliffe, NSW) is a filmmaker committed to telling intimate character-driven stories that challenge and provoke audiences. Melissa's short films have screened worldwide at over 40 international film festivals. As a writer, Melissa's feature film screenplays have been shortlisted for the Sundance Lab, and previously selected for the Binger FilmLab in Amsterdam. She is currently developing the feature screenplay *Bluebirds* with support from Screen Australia and Screen NSW.

"My passion is telling stories of outsiders trying to find their place within relationships, and society at large. The Fellowship is a wonderful launching pad for my next film; an opportunity to make it with high level professional support and services, and to then share it with a Sydney Film Festival audience."

- **Sunday Emerson Gullifer** (Waterloo, NSW) is an award-winning filmmaker based in Sydney. A graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, her short film, *Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow*, had its world premiere at Sydney Film Festival in 2017, where it was Highly Commended in the Dendy Awards, and went on to premiere internationally at Telluride Film Festival. Her work is internationally acclaimed, having won a slew of awards and two Australian Directors' Guild Award nominations. Originally hailing from a background in theatre, she is drawn to bold stories told with heart.

"I am absolutely thrilled to be selected by such an esteemed jury for the Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship, and am grateful to Sydney Film Festival and Lexus for their commitment to fostering the next generation of Australian film directors. At a time when funding for emerging filmmakers is increasingly rare, the Fellowship represents an incredible opportunity and an important next step in my career."

- **Jamieson Pearce** (Brunswick, VIC) is a freelance director and editor. His award-winning short films have screened at festivals around the world. Most notably, his most recent film *Adult*, adapted from a story by Christos Tsiolkas, screened at South by Southwest 2017. He likes stories about the stranger manifestations of human desire.

"The Fellowship is a unique opportunity for young directors in Australia. I'm so thrilled and grateful to be receiving it because it gives me the freedom and support to make my film the best it can be. I can't wait to share it with audiences at Sydney Film Festival 2019."

- **Nathan Mewett** (Paddington, NSW) is a writer/director from Western Australia who has produced numerous short films, documentaries and music videos. As a young child he grew up in a remote gold mine Telfer, which resides in the Great Western Desert and has helped build his creative partnership with Martu Director Curtis Taylor with whom he co-directed *Yulubidy – Until The End*, screening at Sydney Film Festival 2018. Nathan's previous short film *Sol Bunker* has won over 9 awards across Australia and is a 'proof of concept' for a feature film of the same name. He is also currently in development of the feature film *Baby* which focuses on extending Nathan's interest in working with characters and actors with disability.

"To be part of the Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship is a great honour, and great opportunity to continue my working partnership with Curtis Taylor. With this support, we will be able to advance our skill sets in creating action whilst also improve our storytelling techniques and co-authorship creation model."

- **Curtis Taylor** (Subiaco, WA) is a filmmaker, screen artist, actor and a young Martu leader. Growing up in remote Martu desert communities and in the city, Curtis has both traditional Martu knowledge and a non-Aboriginal education. After finishing school in 2008, Curtis worked as Community Coordinator and Youth Development Officer at Martu Media (a division of Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa), where he also spent 18 months working on the major Yiwarra Kuju: The Canning Stock Route project as a filmmaker and youth ambassador. Curtis was the recipient of the 2011 Western Australian Youth Art Award and Wesfarmers Youth Scholarship. His screen work, including the acclaimed short film *Mamu*, has been shown in international film festivals from Brazil to Nepal. Curtis was the Director's Attachment and is the Narrator of Emmy Award winning VR documentary *Collisions*.

"The Fellowship is a great opportunity and honour for us both, to continue our collaboration of stories, ideas, and Mira - bringing hidden stories to light. We look forward to advancing our skills in many aspects of filmmaking."

**Sydney Film Festival runs 6 – 17 June 2018.**

**Tickets for the 65<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival 2018 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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#### **MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

**Amber Forrest-Bisley, Publicity Manager**

E: [amber@cardinalspin.com.au](mailto:amber@cardinalspin.com.au) P: 02 8065 7363 M: 0405 363 817

**Amy Owen, Communications Advisor**

E: [amy@cardinalspin.com.au](mailto:amy@cardinalspin.com.au) M: 0404 977 338

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

#### **EDITOR'S NOTES**

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##### **ABOUT THE LEXUS AUSTRALIA SHORT FILM FELLOWSHIP**

The Lexus Australia Short Films Fellowship is a \$200,000 investment by Lexus Australia, presented by Sydney Film Festival, to support future generations of emerging filmmakers. The Fellowship is the largest cash Fellowship for short film in Australia. Up to four Fellowship winners will receive \$50,000 each to produce their next short film in 2018, to premiere at the 66<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival in 2019.

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

From **Wednesday 6 June to Sunday 17 June 2018**, the 65<sup>th</sup> 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](http://sff.org.au).

The 65<sup>th</sup> Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW, via its tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW, and by City of Sydney. Federal Government support is provided through Screen Australia.

