

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

05-16 JUNE 2019

MEDIA RELEASE

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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL PREVIEWS 2019 GUEST LINE-UP

The 66th Sydney Film Festival announces the first slate of stars and filmmaker guests to attend the Festival 5-16 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 talks at the Festival Hub at Town Hall, and HOYTS Entertainment Quarter.

Highlights include:

Renowned Australian director **Rachel Ward**, along with key cast members, will be in attendance to present their uplifting drama/comedy *Palm Beach* on Opening Night. Ward will be interviewed by film critic David Stratton for the annual **Ian McPherson Memorial Lecture** (Monday 10 June, 6:30pm) at the Festival Hub.

Australian documentarian **Ian Darling** will introduce *The Final Quarter*, tracking the last three years of Adam Goodes' career. He will also take part in **The Final Quarter** panel on (Sunday 9 June, 11:30am) as part of Vivid Ideas. Hosted by Marngrook Footy Show's Shelley Ware, Darling will be joined by Indigenous and non-Indigenous media, political and sporting commentators, to discuss the implications of this powerful film.

Brazilian actor **Wagner Moura** (*Narcos*) will introduce his directorial debut *Marighella*, a thrilling biopic of the Brazilian revolutionary Carlos Marighella. He will also participate in a post-screening **Extended Q&A** (Sunday 9 June, 5:00pm) with film journalist Sandy George at the Festival Hub.

Internationally renowned US comedy stars **Kevin Hart** and **Tiffany Haddish** will attend the Festival to introduce the Australian premiere of *The Secret Life of Pets 2*, the highly-anticipated sequel to the record-breaking 2016 family smash hit.

Director **Steven Vidler** and *Breaking Bad* star **RJ Mitte** (*Standing Up for Sunny*) will attend as guests to introduce the World Premiere of their film. Mitte will also be joined by other Screenability filmmakers, including three Australian short filmmakers selected as part of the Screenability Filmmakers Fund from Create NSW, for a **Meet the Filmmakers** talk with Sofya Gollan at HOYTS Entertainment Quarter (Saturday 15 June, 4:00pm), discussing the importance of authentic representation in film.

Other guests associated with Official Competition titles are: Oscar-winning director **Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck** (*Never Look Away*); Korean director **Bong Joon-ho** (*Parasite*); Brazilian co-directors **Kleber Mendonça Filho** and **Juliano Dornelles** (*Bacurau*), New Zealand director **Hamish Bennett** (*Bellbird*), Dutch filmmaker **Sacha Polak** (*Dirty God*), and Macedonian director **Teona Strugar Mitevska** (*God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya*).

Henckel von Donnersmarck will discuss his approach to crafting his Oscar-nominated epic *Never Look Away* with film critic David Stratton in an **Extended Q&A** (Tuesday 11 June, 6:15pm); and Bong will also take part in a post-screening **Meet the Filmmaker** talk with Festival Director, Nashen Moodley (Sunday 16 June, 2:15pm).

Australian director **Mirrah Foulkes**, producers **Nash Edgerton** and **Michele Bennett**, and cast members **Mia Wasikowska** and **Damon Herriman** will introduce the Australian premiere of their film *Judy & Punch*, and participate in a **Meet the Filmmakers** talk at the Festival Hub (Sunday 9 June, 1:30pm).

Australian filmmaker **Ben Lawrence** (*Ghosthunter* – DAF winner at SFF 2018) and cast members including **Hugo Weaving** will attend the Festival to introduce the World Premiere of *Hearts and Bones*. Lawrence will also discuss his debut feature at a **Meet the Filmmakers** talk (Sunday 16 June, 11:30am) with *Sydney Morning Herald's* Garry Maddox.

Australian director **Kriv Stenders** (*Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan*) and members of the film team will attend the Festival to introduce their film, a visceral exploration of a key battle in the Vietnam war.

New Zealand director **Julia Parnell** and *The Chills* frontman **Martin Phillipps** (*The Chills: The Triumph & Tragedy of Martin Phillipps*) will attend as guests to introduce the screening of their documentary, about the ups and downs of one of New Zealand's most beloved bands.

Five of the nine directors from the South Pacific of *Vai* will attend as guests to introduce their eight-part portmanteau film: **Becs Arahanga**, **Matasila Freshwater**, **Marina Alofagia McCartney**, **Nicole Whippy** and **Sharon Whippy**.

Director and son of Merata Mita, **Heperi Mita** and producer **Chelsea Winstanley** will introduce *Merata: How Mum Decolonised the Screen*; and Indigenous director **Erica Glynn** (*In My Own Words*, SFF 2017) will attend with her mother and film subject **Freda Glynn** to introduce their documentary *She Who Must Be ~~Obe~~ Loved*.

Filmmakers from both films will also take part in **The Work of Freda Glynn and Merata Mita**. Hosted by UNSW Arts & Social Sciences, the talk will discuss the ground-breaking work of these two trailblazers at the Festival Hub (Friday 14 June, 8:15pm).

Other filmmakers from the Festival's Focus on New Zealand attending as guests are: director **David Stubbs** (*Daffodils*); **Rebecca Tansley** (*The Heart Dances*) and **Justin Pemberton** (*Capital in the 21st Century*).

New Zealand filmmaker **Ant Timpson** will also attend to introduce the Australian Premiere of his film *Come to Daddy* starring Elijah Wood, screening as part of Freak Me Out.

Jialing Zhang, US co-director of *One Child Nation*, will be in attendance at the Festival. Zhang will also participate in a post-screening discussion on the making of her award-winning documentary (Friday 7 June, 4:00pm), hosted by The University of Sydney.

Japanese director **Hiroshi Okuyama** and Tokyo-based Aussie comedian **Chad Mullane** will be guests of the Festival to introduce *Jesus*, Okuyama's strikingly original debut presenting Jesus Christ (played by Mullane) as the tiny friend of a young boy.

UK filmmaker **Victoria Stone** will attend to introduce *The Elephant Queen*, her stunning documentary narrated by Oscar-nominated actor Chiwetel Ejiofor, about an elephant mother leading her family on an epic journey across the African plains.

Bangladeshi director **Mostofa Sarwar Farooki** will attend the Festival as a guest to introduce the Australian Premiere of *Saturday Afternoon*, based on the Holy Artisan Bakery terrorist attack by Islamist extremists.

Australian filmmaker **Richard Lowenstein** and producer **Sue Murray** will be in attendance to introduce *Mystify: Michael Hutchence*, about INXS' lead singer, with a cornucopia of rarely-seen footage.

Sydney-based French director **Partho Sen-Gupta** will attend the Festival as a guest to introduce *Slam*, a tense mystery set in Western Sydney tackling Islamophobia. Following the film's screening will be **Poetry Slam in the Hub** (Saturday 15 June, 4:45pm), a thrilling slam poetry showcase featuring poets from across Sydney.

New Zealand director **Samuel Van Grinsven** and members of the film team will attend the Festival to introduce the World Premiere of their queer coming-of-age tale *Sequin in a Blue Room*, about a teenage boy with a hook-up app obsession.

Australian filmmaker **Imogen McCluskey** and her film team will attend as guests of the Festival to introduce the Australian Premiere of *Suburban Wildlife*, an authentic depiction of suburban angst among post-Uni Australians.

The **Meet the Filmmakers: Suburban Wildlife & Sequin in a Blue Room** party at the Festival Hub (Saturday 8 June, 1pm) will be an opportunity for under-25s to meet the emerging Australian filmmakers behind *Suburban Wildlife* and *Sequin in a Blue Room*. Find out how these young filmmakers got their first features off the ground, and hang around afterwards for a chat and a snack.

The five directors of *Dark Place* will attend to introduce the World Premiere of their Indigenous horror anthology: **Björn Stewart, Perun Bonser, Kodie Bedford, Liam Phillips, and Rob Braslin**.

Australian director **Sophie Hyde** and producer **Rebecca Summerton** will be guests of the Festival, introducing their hilarious film *Animals*, featuring Alia Shawkat (*Arrested Development*) and Holliday Grainger (*The Borgias*).

Melbourne director **Lawrence Johnston** and producer **Susan Mackinnon** will attend the Festival to introduce their documentary *Eternity* about Arthur Stace, a Sydneysider who famously chalked the word 'Eternity' on his hometown's streets.

Emu Runner director **Imogen Thomas** will attend as a guest to introduce her film about an Indigenous girl who forms a special bond with a wild emu along with cast members **Rhae-Kye Waites** and **Stella Carter**.

Filmmaker guests for all **10 Documentary Australia Foundation films** will attend the Festival to introduce their films, including: **Maya Newell** (*Gayby Baby*, SFF 2015), **Sascha Ettinger Epstein** (*The Pink House*, SFF 2017), and artist and filmmaker **George Gittoes**.

Filmmaker guests for the **Essential Australian Women Directors – 10 Trailblazers Selected by David Stratton** will attend the Festival to introduce their films: **Nadia Tass** (*Malcolm*), **Gillian Armstrong** (*High Tide*); cast member **Genevieve Lemon** (*Sweetie*); **Jackie McKimmie** (*Waiting*); **Shirley Barrett** (*Love Serenade*); **Ana Kokkinos** (*Blessed*); **Rachel Ward** (*Beautiful Kate*), and producer **Kristina Ceyton** (*The Babadook*).

Filmmakers from **Europe! Voices of Women in Film** presenting their films to Festival audiences are: Swedish filmmaker **Carolina Hellsgård** (*Endzeit - Ever After*), Greek director **Marianna Economou** (*When Tomatoes Met Wagner*), Icelandic director **Asthildur Kjartansdóttir** (*The Deposit*), Cypriot filmmaker **Tonia Mishiali** (*Pause*), Dutch director **Esther Rots** (*Retrospekt*), and Austrian director **Elina Tikhonova** (*Caviar*).

The six emerging women directors from Europe will also participate in the public talk **In Conversation: Europe! Voices of Women in Film** (Sunday 9 June, 3:00pm) at the Festival Hub, discussing their experiences, and what steps towards gender parity have been made in recent years with Screen International's Sarah Ward.

The full Sydney Film Festival 2019 program can be found online at sff.org.au.

Sydney Film Festival runs 5 – 16 June 2019. Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2019 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 5 June to Sunday 16 June 2019, the 66th 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: *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 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 66th 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 SYDNEY

Vivid Sydney is the largest festival of light, music and ideas in the Southern Hemisphere. Celebrating its eleventh anniversary in 2019, Vivid Sydney is continually setting the benchmark for world class events, creativity and innovation. It will transform the Harbour City into a colourful creative canvas from the 24 May to 15 June, 2019. The Festival features spectacular large-scale light installations and projections; contemporary and cutting-edge music performances and collaborations; public talks by renowned thought leaders, industry seminars, conferences and creativity workshops, all celebrating Sydney's place as the creative industries hub of the Asia-Pacific. Vivid Sydney is owned, managed and

produced by Destination NSW, the NSW Government's tourism and major events agency, and in 2018 attracted 2.25 million attendees. For more information visit vivid Sydney.com