



## MEDIA RELEASE

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 11:00 WEDNESDAY 6 MAY 2015**

## **SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL'S FOCUS ON SOUTH AFRICA**

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The 62<sup>nd</sup> Sydney Film Festival announces this year's country of focus will be South Africa. Four new films plus a rediscovered cult classic will be presented by the Festival.

"South Africa is my home country, and I am especially excited about programming this selection of films," said **Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley**. "Twenty-one years after the advent of democracy in South Africa, the nation's cinema continues to document and comment on the tremendous social transformations taking place. South Africa has one of the most exciting and emerging film industries in the world today," he said.

The Festival selection tells five important stories presenting a snapshot of South Africa's most vibrant film offerings. There is contrast: from the edgy black-and-white *Necktie Youth*, about a group of disaffected, debauched youth in contemporary Johannesburg, by 23 year old filmmaker Sibs Shongwe-La Mer, who will attend the Festival; to the ground-breaking *Joe Bullet*, which follows the adventures of an African-style James Bond, featuring South Africa's first all-African cast, independently released in Soweto in 1973 and banned after two screenings by the apartheid government.

There is creativity and humanity: from **Mark Dornford-May's** *Breathe Umphefumlo*, an adaptation of Puccini's opera *La Boheme*, exploring the ongoing issue of the fight against tuberculosis; to *The Dream of Shahrzad*, a striking documentary about contemporary political and social life in Egypt and Turkey by filmmaker Francois Verster, who will attend the Festival; to *The Shore Break*, an award-winning documentary in which a community is divided when government forces and entrepreneurial interests threaten their traditions, heritage and pristine environment.

### **SFF 2015 Focus on South Africa films:**

- **BREATHE UMPHEFUMLO** South Africa, Germany, UK | 2015 | 90 mins | In Xhosa with English subtitles | Australian Premiere
- **THE DREAM OF SHAHRAZAD** South Africa, Egypt, Jordan, France, Netherlands 2014 | 107 mins | In English, Arabic and Turkish with English subtitles | Australian Premiere
- **JOE BULLET** South Africa | 1973 | 85 mins | In English
- **NECKTIE YOUTH** Netherlands, South Africa | 2015 | 86 mins In Afrikaans, English and Zulu with English subtitles Australian Premiere
- **THE SHORE BREAK** South Africa | 2014 | 90 mins | In English and isiMpondo with English subtitles | Australian Premiere

**Sydney Film Festival runs 3 – 14 June 2015.**

**Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2015 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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## ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From **Wednesday 3 June** to **Sunday 14 June 2015**, the 62<sup>nd</sup> Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, panel discussions, international guests and more. Each year the Festival's programming team curates 12 days of cinema sourced from world-famous film festivals, including Cannes, Sundance, Toronto and the Berlinale; as well as Australia's finest local productions.

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 are: *Two Days, One Night* (2014); *Only God Forgives* (2013); *Alps* (2012); *A Separation* (2011), which went on to win an Academy Award; *Heartbeats* (2010); and *Bronson* (2009).

The Festival takes place across greater Sydney: at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, Dendy Newtown, Art Gallery of NSW, Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, Casula Powerhouse, the Festival Hub at Sydney Town Hall and SFF Outdoor Screen.

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: [www.sff.org.au](http://www.sff.org.au).

The 62nd 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.

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