



MEDIA RELEASE

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL HUB: TALKS, PARTIES, VR & ART

The 63rd Sydney Film Festival announces the Festival Hub will return to Sydney Town Hall, bringing an expanded program of virtual reality films, talks, parties, and screen based art, to enrich the Festival experience.

“An expanded and evolved Festival Hub returns to Sydney’s Town Hall for a fifth year,” said **Festival Director Nashen Moodley**. “The Festival’s extraordinary virtual reality film collection further augments the multisensory experience we want audiences to experience. It adds another layer of depth to the Hub; which is at once a contemporary screen-based gallery, a bar, a designer lounge, and a Festival meeting place for filmmakers, industry and festivalgoers alike,” he said.

BEYOND CINEMA

Open to the public all nights, and select days from 9-19 June; the multi-disciplinary pop up is home to the Festival’s **Beyond Cinema** program headline act: **Down the Rabbit Hole – Virtual Reality at the Hub**.

Nine virtual reality films, from four Australian and five international filmmakers, programmed by **Mathieu Ravier** and presented in association with **Jumpgate VR** will screen for FREE. Designed to enchant, inspire, thrill and ultimately change viewpoints, audiences will put a variety of virtual reality headsets to the test including **Samsung Gear VR** and Facebook’s new **Oculus Rift**.

VR experiences include a stroll along the streets of Havana (**A History of Cuban Dance**), jumping onstage with Sydney Dance Company dancers (**Stuck in the Middle with You**), entering the world of a cattle farmer and one of Australia’s top saddle bronco riders (**Warwick Gold - Australian Rodeo**), falling down the rabbit hole and into a Lewis Carroll-inspired music video (**Fabulous Wonder.Land**), finding out what it’s like to lose your sight (**Notes On Blindness: Into Darkness**), haunting an asylum (**Madeleine**), walking in the footsteps of a filmmaker’s army officer father in Chile’s Caravan of Death (**Assent**), experiencing the first-ever fully hand-drawn VR experience (**Drawing Room**), and stepping into an animated encounter with a lonely rose (**The Rose and I**).

A VR panel dealing with immersive storytelling hosted by writer **Mike Jones**, and a selection of VR filmmakers who have works screening at The Hub, will push the boundaries of film vs. visual art in Panel Discussion: Driving Down The VR Rabbit Hole.

PARTIES

Open to all, the Hub is also a Festival party space with free entry. Curated by **Mathieu Ravier**, parties include: **Strike a Pose Silent Disco**, following the screening of **Strike a Pose**, a film about Madonna’s Blond Ambition tour dancers who became ’90s poster boys for gay rights; the **Cuban-themed Viva Cuba Party**, featuring a live performance by Armandito & Trovason Quartet, following the premiere of **Viva**, a film about a troubled Cuban drag queen; and **Sing Street 1985 School Disco**, following the premiere of the Irish musical comedy set in ’80s Dublin, complete with stone-washed denim, and a soundtrack to match.

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HERMAN MILLER LOUNGE

The chic **Herman Miller Lounge** returns brighter and more sophisticated than ever. Premiering some fantastic new Herman Miller furniture, including the first presentation in the southern hemisphere of the Carafe Table by Australian designer Charles Wilson, as well as re-released classics including Nelson Bubble Lamps and Daybeds – designed by George Nelson in the '50s; the Chadwick Modular seating showstopper by Don Chadwick, of Aeron office chair fame; Public Office landscape by Yves Behar's Fuse Project; Eames Rockers; and much more.

SYDNEY CONTEMPORARY

Sydney Contemporary returns to the Hub for the second year with an exciting new exhibition, **SYDNEY CONTEMPORARY: AUSTRALIA IN FOCUS**. 13 Australian artists feature in this free video art exhibition exploring the different ways in which moving image techniques, such as super-slow motion, can be adopted and adapted by visual artists.

TALKS

As always, the Hub offers a vast array of FREE talks, panel discussions and events, traversing a huge range of topics. Together with **Vivid Ideas**, part of the world's largest festival of light, music and ideas, Vivid Sydney, Sydney Film Festival presents seven talks and panels. Oscar-winning filmmaker-actor **Mel Gibson** will discuss his role in the Cannes selected film *Blood Father* and his latest directorial offering *Hacksaw Ridge* (In Conversation With Mel Gibson). Academy Award-winning **Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy** shares her experiences as a woman making films in Pakistan, following the screening of her feature *A Journey of A Thousand Miles* (Meet The Filmmaker: Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy) hosted by Macquarie University's Kathryn Millard.

Following a screening of her film *A Flickering Truth*, **Pietra Brettkelly** joins the National Film and Sound Archive's **Gayle Lake** and Golden Age's **Kate Jinx** to examine the cultural and heritage value of film in the discussion: Are Films Really Worth Keeping? And after a screening of the newly restored chilling thriller *The Boys*, the creative team reunites to discuss the film and its impact on their careers (The Boys Reunion).

Sydney Film Festival's animation programmer **Malcolm Turner** gives an overview of the indie and alternative animation scene in Not So Black And White. And renowned film critic and guest programmer **Tony Rayns** interprets the Korean indie cinema scene in Korea on the Verge: Social Faultlines in Korean Cinema.

AFTRS Black Talk comes to the Hub with *A Double Bill: Indigeneity And Australian Screen Storytelling*. The first showcases leading creative voices: producers **David Jowsey**, **Kylie Du Fresne** and **Ned Lander**; the second features leading Indigenous auteurs and filmmakers **Ivan Sen**, **Sterlin Harjo** and **Dylan River**.

Foxtel Movies Film Screen interactive Photobooth will be in action for Festival snaps using clever technology, and the **Program Gurus** will be on hand to consult on Festival films and activities.

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Visit sff.org.au or the Sydney Film Festival Hub Facebook Event Page for scheduling details.

Sydney Film Festival runs 8 – 19 June 2016.

Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2016 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit sff.org.au for more information.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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

EDITORS NOTES

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE – VIRTUAL REALITY AT THE HUB

Programmed by Mathieu Ravier and presented in association with Jumpgate VR.

Dive into the brave new world of immersive cinema. Don a virtual reality headset and transport yourself to the streets of Cuba, to an outback rodeo or on stage with the some of the best dancers in the world.

A HISTORY OF CUBAN DANCE

UK, US, Cuba | Lead artist: Lucy Walker

Oscar-nominated documentarian Lucy Walker (*Waste Land*, SFF 2010) invites you to the streets of Havana to discover the exuberant and spontaneous dances that embody Cuba's rich cultural heritage.

ASSENT

Australia | Lead artists: Oscar Raby and Katy Morrison

Media artist Oscar Raby puts the viewer in the footsteps of his army officer father, in the aftermath of the 1973 coup in Chile.

DRAWING ROOM

The Netherlands | Lead artists: Jan Rothuizen and Sara Kolster

Step into a small room on the roof of a department store in the centre of Amsterdam, in the first ever fully hand-drawn VR experience.

FABULOUS WONDER.LAND

UK | Lead artists: Toby Coffey, Lysander Ashton and Ollie Lindsey

Fall down the rabbit hole and into this VR music video inspired by wonder.land, Damon Albarn's National Theatre musical and Lewis Carroll.

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MADELEINE

Australia | Lead artist: Piers Mussared

A ghostly character takes you through the Asylum that she haunts and on a journey through her troubling history in this vivid VR experience. Not for the faint-hearted.

NOTES ON BLINDNESS: INTO DARKNESS

UK, France | Lead artists: Arnaud Colinart, Amaury La Burthe, Peter Middleton and James Spinney
Inspired by the documentary *Notes On Blindness*, this is an exploration of one man's cognitive and emotional experience of blindness.

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH YOU

Australia | Lead artists: Matthew Bate, Gideon Obarzanek

Find yourself on stage with the Sydney Dance Company dancers, interrupting a frenetic performance and challenge your concept of what it means to be a performer.

THE ROSE AND I

US | Lead artists: Eugene Chung, Jimmy Maidens and Alex Woo

Inspired by Saint-Exupery's classic *The Little Prince*, *The Rose And I* is an animated encounter with a lonely rose living in the unlikeliest of places.

WARWICK GOLD - AUSTRALIAN RODEO

Australia | Lead artists: ABC R+D, ABC Regional and Pixelcase

Go inside the world of cattle farmer Michael Maher and one of Australia's top saddle bronco riders, as he prepares to contest the National Rodeo Championships in Warwick, Queensland.

PANEL DISCUSSION: DIVING DOWN THE VR RABBIT HOLE

SFF HUB (Lower Town Hall) – Saturday 11 June at 12:00pm – FREE

2016 is the year Virtual Reality goes mainstream – and comes of age as a creative medium. As everyone jumps on the bandwagon and technology catches up with content (or is it the other way around?), it's a good time to ask: 'what makes good VR?' Meet the virtual reality experts and sample their work at this free panel for creatives, industry professionals and anyone curious about immersive storytelling.

Moderated by writer Mike Jones

Speakers include Matthew Bate (Closer Productions, *Stuck In The Middle With You*), Amy Nelson (ABC R&D, *Warwick Gold – Australian Rodeo*), and Piers Mussared (Jumpgate VR, *Madeleine*).

SYDNEY CONTEMPORARY: AUSTRALIA IN FOCUS

This year we investigate some of the ways in which film and video art are similar and yet very different. Similar in that both are mediums for an artist or group of artists to express themselves; dissimilar in the way the audience experiences the work. Super-slow motion can be employed in a movie to great effect, but usually not for a lengthy period, as this would disrupt the storytelling and the suspension of disbelief. However one of the works in this year's hub explores the experience of super-slow mo and how it affects our sensory perception and experience of time over a period of

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five hours. Indeed, it can make us question our modern day experience of time outside of the context of the work – who has time to watch a 5 hour video!

“Once again I invite you to enjoy the ways in which artists use the moving image to create new insights and ways of seeing.” Barry Keldoulis, CEO and Group Fairs Director, Art Fairs Australia Pty Ltd

Participating artists: Liam Benson, Tim Bruniges, Shoufay Derz, Caroline Garcia, Jess MacNeil, Emily Parsons-Lord, Simon Pericich, Hannah Raisin, Elvis Richardson, Sylvia Schwenk, Soda_Jerk and Brie Trenerry.

HUB TALKS AND PANELS AT TOWN HALL

Vivid Ideas and Sydney Film Festival present a series of talks upstairs at the SFF Hub @ Town Hall.

- **Not So Black And White** Saturday 11 June, 1:30pm
Sydney Film Festival’s animation programmer, Malcolm Turner, will present an overview of the indie and alternative black and white animation scene, drawn from his most recent global travels.
- **AFTRS Black Talk - A Double Bill: Indigeneity And Australian Screen** Sunday 12 June, 4:00pm
The first panel will showcase leading creative voices: producers David Jowsey, Kylie Du Fresne and Ned Lander. The second panel features leading Indigenous auteurs and filmmakers discussing their craft and storytelling approach: filmmakers Ivan Sen, Sterlin Harjo and Dylan River.
- **The Boys Reunion** Monday 13 June, 6:30pm
Join us after the screening of the newly restored film to hear how this celebrated production informed the careers of the creative team behind it.
- **Meet The Filmmaker: Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy** Monday 13 June, 12pm
Academy Award winning director Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy will discuss her personal experiences as a woman making films in Pakistan. Hosted by Macquarie University’s Kathryn Millard.
- **Are Films Really Worth Keeping?** Wednesday 15 June, 4:30pm
Following the screening of *A Flickering Truth*, join director Pietra Brett Kelly, NFSA’s Gayle Lake and Golden Age’s Kate Jinx as they examine the cultural value of film as part of our heritage.
- **Korea On The Verge: Social Faultlines In Korean Cinema - Tony Rayns** Wednesday 15 June, 8pm
Renowned film critic and programmer Tony Rayns, who curated SFF’s **Korea on the Verge: Social Faultlines in Korean Cinema** program takes us on a journey through provocative Korean indie cinema where filmmakers have stepped up to scratch the itches in Korean society: political scandals, social injustices, sexual deviances, re-examined traditions.
- **In Conversation With Mel Gibson** Wednesday 15 June, 5pm
Actor and director Mel Gibson discusses his role in the Cannes selected film *Blood Father* and his latest directorial offering *Hacksaw Ridge*.

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ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From **Wednesday 8 June** to **Sunday 19 June 2016**, the 63rd Sydney Film Festival offers audiences another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, in-depth 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 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: *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 takes place across greater Sydney: at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, Dendy Newtown, Skyline Drive-In Blacktown, 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.

The 63rd 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. The Festival's Strategic Partner is the NSW Government through Destination NSW.

ABOUT VIVID IDEAS

Vivid Ideas is Asia Pacific's annual celebration of innovation, creativity and community, and is held as part of Vivid Sydney. Vivid Ideas brings the world's greatest minds, innovators and industry leaders to Sydney to build engagement between the creative industries and the broader economy, exploring trends, movements and opportunities that shape society and business through public talks, industry seminars, conferences, workshops and debates. Vivid Sydney is owned, managed and produced by Destination NSW, the NSW Government's tourism and major events agency and runs from 27 May to 18 June 2016. For more information visit www.vividsydney.com/ideas

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