

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

10-21 JUNE 2020

67TH SFF: VIRTUAL EDITION AND AWARDS



WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL THANKS M&C SAATCHI, FINCH AND INDUSTRY LUMINARIES

**WE CAN'T MOVE WITHOUT GROWING.
WE CAN'T THINK WITHOUT KNOWING.
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S COMING.
SO WE NEED STORIES TO KEEP GOING.**

Sydney Film Festival is Australia's pre-eminent platform for storytelling. SFF connects filmmakers, industry and audiences for 12 wonderful days to discover, learn, debate, exchange and celebrate excellence in film. Its physical absence this year is being felt far and wide across the community and has inspired a rallying cry from the industry.

Stories is the outcome of a rich collaboration with passionate SFF devotees – incredible thinkers, creatives, actors and filmmakers. They have all generously contributed their valuable time, skills and inimitable star power to generate support for the future survival of SFF, so that the Festival can continue to share the most important stories of our times.

SFF extends a heartfelt thanks to: Andy Flemming, writer of *Stories*; M&C Saatchi, for their inventive thinking and ongoing support of SFF; FINCH, for their outstanding production expertise; and the amazing actors and filmmakers who kindly offered us their powerful voices and artistry to bring this campaign to life: Gillian Armstrong AM, Rose Byrne, Marta Dusseldorp, Nash Edgerton, Damon Herriman, Nicole Kidman AC, Ewen Leslie, Heather Mitchell AM, Daniel Monks, Sam Neill DCNZM OBE, Miranda Tapsell, Jack Thompson AM, Lynette Wallworth, Rachel Ward AM, Hugo Weaving AO and David Wenham.

THANK YOU ALL!

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!

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Screenability is funded by the NSW Government through Screen NSW

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SPECIAL THANKS TO

Ena, Handpicked Wines, Hay, Lindt & Sprungli Australia, Otto & Spike, The Little Marionette

WELCOME

Sydney Film Festival is proud to present the Virtual Edition and Awards in 2020.

Albeit not shared together in the dark under the State Theatre chandelier, the Festival continues to be our lens on the world and our times, a trusted guide, a forum for ideas, conversations, community and change.

You have supported Sydney Film Festival in vibrant times – and we are extremely grateful that you are with us in uncertain times. Central to Sydney Film Festival's purpose is our support for Australian filmmakers. Not only feature filmmakers but those emerging through the short film format and the wonderful truth-tellers – our documentary makers.

Sydney Film Festival would like to give deep thanks to the Award partners who have continued their support in this virtual edition: Documentary Australia Foundation, Dendy Cinemas and Yoram Gross Films.

And a deep and sincere thanks to you all for your support. Alongside our government partners – Screen NSW, City of Sydney and Screen Australia – Sydney Film Festival stands strong in 2020, ready to return us all to cinemas in 2021.



DEANNE WEIR
FESTIVAL CHAIR

Welcome to the 67th Sydney Film Festival: Virtual Edition and Awards!

Back in early March, we had 50% of the program in place and were heading towards finalising the 2020 program to present to our audience. As COVID-19 spread at an alarming rate across the world, and film festival after film festival cancelled, it became increasingly clear that SFF, after an unbroken run of 66 years, would not take place in 2020. Even at the heartbreaking moment when we were forced to cancel, SFF was determined to look at ways in which we could continue to connect with our audience and, crucially, provide support to the filmmakers and film industry that so desperately need it.

We are truly delighted to bring you SFF's Virtual Edition and Awards, which celebrates Australian documentary and short filmmakers, alongside our Europe! Voices of Women in Film and Screenability programs. More than ever, we are so grateful to the filmmakers, awards sponsors, partners and to you, our valued Patrons and Supporting Cast donors, for making this unusual edition of Sydney Film Festival possible.

We long to be back in cinemas with you as soon as is safe and possible, but until that time, we invite you to enjoy our Virtual Edition and discover these provocative films and exciting filmmakers.



NASHEN MOODLEY
FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

67TH SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL: VIRTUAL EDITION AND AWARDS

This Program Guide, printed especially for SFF's donor community, marks a unique edition of Sydney Film Festival, curated in a most unusual year.

Without your support, this year's Festival would not have been possible. On behalf of everyone who will experience the 67th Sydney Film Festival: Virtual Edition and Awards, we thank you and hope you will enjoy 12 days of rich and diverse programming.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION AWARD FOR AUSTRALIAN DOCUMENTARY

This year's program assembles ten incisive Australian documentaries, from examinations of epoch-defining issues to moving profiles of extraordinary people.

DENDY AWARDS FOR AUSTRALIAN SHORT FILMS

Promising and daring new voices in Australian cinema come to the fore in SFF's prestigious short film program, which has launched the careers of countless Australian filmmakers in its 51-year-history.

SCREENABILITY

SFF proudly welcomes back the Screenability program, presented in partnership with Screen NSW. We're showcasing three Australian shorts created by filmmakers with disability.

EUROPE! VOICES OF WOMEN IN FILM

SFF continues to promote the important work of women in film. From Ireland to Estonia, encounter an eclectic mix of features and documentaries from boundary-pushing European filmmakers. Co-presented by European Film Promotion with media partners Screen International and Fade to Her.

EVENTS

Get an insider's understanding of films, filmmakers and the industry through our program of interviews, panels and special events. Head to sff.org.au/events to find the schedule and join the conversation.

OTHER INITIATIVES

WE ARE ONE: A GLOBAL FILM FESTIVAL

SFF is highlighting Indigenous stories for its contribution to We Are One – an unprecedented ten-day digital festival featuring programming from Berlin, Cannes, Tribeca, Venice and leading Festivals from around the world, streaming on YouTube from 29 May – 7 June.

SBS ON DEMAND PRESENTS SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL SELECTS

Log on to SBS On Demand from 10 June – 10 July to stream a bespoke catalogue of features and documentaries that have screened at the Festival over the years, alongside critic reviews and filmmaker interviews.

REVERSE SHOT

Take a nostalgic trip through SFF's archives in our new series, SFF Reverse Shot. Relive favourite filmmaker talks, hot-topic panels and thought-provoking Q&As recorded at the Festival in recent years.



AWARDS

SFF is proud to be celebrating great Australian filmmaking with its annual awards. Tune in to the Virtual Awards Ceremony at 6pm on Thursday 18 June at sff.org.au/2020awards

DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION AWARD FOR BEST AUSTRALIAN DOCUMENTARY

Supported by Documentary Australia Foundation, this \$10,000 cash prize acknowledges excellence in documentary production. Winners are Academy Award eligible.



DENDY AWARDS FOR AUSTRALIAN SHORT FILMS

SFF's Australian Short Film Awards were established in 1970 and have been sponsored by Dendy Cinemas since 1989.

The Dendy Live Action Short Award, sponsored by Dendy Cinemas, provides a \$7,000 cash prize to the best Australian short film. Winners are Academy Award eligible.

The Rouben Mamoulian Award, also sponsored by Dendy Cinemas and named after the director who first presented the award in 1974, provides a \$7,000 cash prize to the best Australian short film director.

The Yoram Gross Animation Award, sponsored by Sandra and Guy Gross in memory of the late Yoram Gross, provides a \$5,000 cash prize to the best Australian animated short film. Winners are Academy Award eligible.



DINOSAUR DESIGNS

All SFF award winners are presented with the Festival's signature mesmeric swirl award, designed and handmade in Sydney by our partners Louise Olsen and Stephen Ormandy of Dinosaur Designs.



Erica Glynn, winner of the 2019 Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentary for *She Who Must Be Loved*



Winner of the 2019 Dendy Live Action Short Award and 2019 Rouben Mamoulian Award, Charles Williams, with Dendy Cinema's Nick Hayes



2019 Awards Ceremony compère, Tim Minchin AM

DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION AWARD FOR AUSTRALIAN DOCUMENTARY

GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY
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“Sydney Film Festival has immense cultural value as a place where the community can get together and hear storytellers from Australia and also the world to get a really broad view of what’s actually happening and what’s at stake.”

– Malinda Wink, Executive Producer, *The Final Quarter* (SFF 2019), Global Director Good Pitch Australia

SFF is proud of its enduring partnership with Documentary Australia Foundation. Together, we share a commitment to ensuring that important stories are seen and celebrated. Documentary filmmakers illuminate difficult issues, enable us to see through the eyes of others and celebrate our similarities as well as our differences. SFF is delighted to present this year’s finalists for the 2020 Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Best Australian Documentary.

DESCENT

15+



Australia | 2020 | 60 mins | In English and Dutch with English subtitles
Director, Screenwriter: Nays Baghai | Producers: Eero Heinonen, Nays Baghai | Production Company: Running Cloud Productions

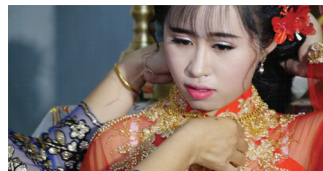
Thrilling, punishing, and beyond treacherous; freediving in freezing water is not for the faint of heart, but for Kiki Bosch, it was a life saver.

Kiki dives into the world’s coldest waters on one breath, without a wetsuit. She’s plunged into Finland’s frozen lakes and under Greenland’s icebergs. Her initiation into this sport began as a search for healing, following the debilitating trauma of a sexual assault. After discovering the immense release from ice freediving, Kiki has travelled far and wide, not only to push her physical and psychological limits, but also to inspire others to harness the power of the cold. This unique documentary features stunning underwater footage shot by Australian underwater cinematographers Stefan Andrews, Spencer Frost, Peter Lightowler, and debut director Nays Baghai.

Nays Baghai is a Sydney-based independent filmmaker. A graduate of AFTRS, his shorts have screened at numerous international festivals, and he has produced several videos for high profile businesses.

A HUNDRED YEARS OF HAPPINESS

ALL AGES



Australia | 2020 | 62 mins | In Vietnamese with English subtitles
Director: Jakeb Anhvu | Screenwriters: Jakeb Anhvu, David Cooley | Producers: C. Slater, Jakeb Anhvu, Kim Nguyen | Rights Holder: Jakeb Anhvu

A rural Vietnamese family prepares for their daughter’s marriage – an arrangement based on finances, not affection – in this remarkably poignant, observational documentary.

Tram is just 21 years old, but her choices in life have already narrowed. She had intended to study overseas, but when she failed the necessary tests, her plans fell apart. Her parents make a simple living farming longan, pineapple and other fruits. They are keen to secure their daughter’s future and thus enable her to fulfil her cultural obligation to care for them in old age. To realise her parents’ expectations, Tram’s marriage to a South Korean man and journey to his homeland as a migrant bride is fast-tracked. With skilful sensitivity, director Jakeb Anhvu captures Tram in the rush of planning, studying Korean and, finally, the haphazard ceremony. The bride-to-be has no time for hesitation and even less time for reflection.

Jakeb Anhvu is a graduate of Melbourne University (VCA). *Blush of Fruit*, his debut feature, premiered at IDFA in the First Appearance competition and won the Documentary Award at Adelaide Film Festival.

THE LEADERSHIP

CTC



Australia | 2020 | 97 mins | In English
Director, Screenwriter: Ili Baré | Producer: Greer Simpkin | Australian Distributor: Dark Matter Distribution

In 2016, a collection of international women scientists set sail for Antarctica under the guidance of Australian leadership expert Fabian Dattner; what transpired is both inspiring and revelatory.

If they are to have an impact on our besieged world, these talented science, technology, engineering and mathematics professionals need to find a place at the leadership table. Dattner’s goal is to “help them step into the leaders they want to be.” As they sail through the world’s last great wilderness, these inspirational women reveal the systemic and deeply personal challenges they face to maintain fulfilling careers in STEM. But the journey becomes a challenge for all on board, including Dattner, whose own leadership comes under unexpected scrutiny. How much do women need to change themselves in order to change the world? *The Leadership* is a potent, passionate documentary and is profoundly relevant in these #MeToo, Trump and COVID-19 times.

The Leadership is Ili Baré’s debut feature documentary after making award-winning factual programs including *Becoming Superhuman*, *The Secret Life of Breasts* and *The Silent Epidemic*.

MORGANA

18+



Australia | 2019 | 71 mins | In English
Directors, Screenwriters: Isabel Peppard, Josie Hess | Producer: Karina Astrup | Production Company: House of Gary

A lonely housewife’s plan to end it all takes an unexpected turn when her last hurrah begins a radical journey of sexual exploration, personal re-invention and feminist porn.

After 20 years as a dutiful homemaker stuck in a loveless, sexless marriage, Morgana has had enough of her dreary life. Desperately lonely and starved of intimacy, she books a male escort for one last flurry of passion before ending it all. Her final night takes an unexpected turn when her relationship with the escort opens up a new world of personal and sexual freedom. After hearing about a competition for first-time erotic filmmakers, Morgana directs and stars in a film, *Duty-Bound*, about her own story. Unexpectedly, her film wins, catapulting her into the international feminist porn community. Life merges with art as Morgana uses erotic filmmaking as a tool for creative catharsis, while struggling with demons from her past.

Isabel Peppard is a multi-award-winning director, animator and visual artist. Her short animation, *Butterflies*, screened at over 50 international festivals, including SFF. Josie Hess has worked extensively in film marketing as a social media manager, and shoots and edits indie erotica. She produced *The Grave of Saint Oran*, which premiered at SFF 2019.

OUR LAW

ALL AGES



Australia | 2020 | 27 mins | In English and Ngaanyatjarra with English subtitles
 Director, Screenwriter: Cornel Ozies | Producers: Taryne Laffar, Sam Bodhi Field | Rights Holder: Taryne Laffar | Our Law is proudly supported by Screenwest and NITV

At Western Australia's first Indigenous-run police station, two officers learn language and culture to help them police one of the most remote beats in the world.

The WA Police Force publicly admit they have a troubled past when it comes to policing Indigenous communities. They're taking a different approach in Warakurna, a town of around 200 inhabitants, 330 kilometres west of Uluru. Sergeant Wendy Kelly, a Noongar woman with over 20 years in the service, is trying to learn the local Ngaanyatjarra language, encouraging her colleague to do likewise. Senior Sergeant Revis Ryder, a Noongar man and one-time East Fremantle player, can only coach the local footy team by relying on local elders and community to translate his instructions. Cornel Ozies's inspiring documentary reveals their dogged attempts to understand language and the local lore, so they can police effectively, and replace the historical black and white enforcement approach of the past.

Cornel Ozies is an Indigenous man from the Kimberley region of Western Australia who started his career as a video editor at his local TV station Goolarri in Broome. An AFTRS graduate, he has also worked as a cinematographer.

THE PLASTIC HOUSE

ALL AGES



Australia | 2019 | 46 mins | In Khmer with English subtitles
 Director, Screenwriter: Allison Chhorn | Producers: Allison Chhorn, Chris Luscri | Cast: Allison Chhorn | Rights Holder: Chris Luscri

After her parents' death, a young Cambodian-Australian woman begins working in their greenhouse. A meditative, experimental take on memory and healing.

Cambodian-Australian filmmaker Allison Chhorn has made an exceptional hybrid film debut about memory that imagines the tender process of grief. In the aftermath of her parents' death, their daughter takes over their bean-growing greenhouse – once their livelihood – and gradually becomes absorbed in the work. The 'plastic house' is filled with shadow memories of her parents' presence, all captured on lo-fi camcorder. Foul weather buffets the fragile building, threatening to destroy the daughter's new life alone. But over time, as the seasons pass, her grief finds solace in the rituals of physical work. "In my case, working the 'plastic house' (as I like to call it) involved not just filmmaking but also manual labour, whether that be planting, pruning, picking, or editing. This work is laborious but it can also be meditative," Chhorn said. "As if the process itself was a way to heal, or at least temporarily forget."

Allison Chhorn holds an Honours Degree in Visual Arts from UniSA and works as a filmmaker and multi-disciplinary artist incorporating video, installation, photography, painting and musical composition.

ROSEMARY'S WAY

15+



Australia | 2020 | 78 mins | In English
 Director, Screenwriter: Ros Horin | Producer: Pat Fiske | Production Company: Bower Bird Films/Racing Pulse Productions

A powerful, inspirational story from Western Sydney following a group of migrant women and their remarkable champion, Rosemary Kariuki.

An effervescent facilitator and mother figure, Multicultural Liaison Officer Rosemary is undoubtedly a force of nature. Isolation in Auburn's migrant community is a huge obstacle, and cultural norms mean that women are often tied to the house or a limited locale. Rosemary, with her larger-than-life spirit and generosity, works tirelessly to draw the women out of their homes and into society. She hosts a lively African Women's Dinner Dance and takes them on a trip to the Blue Mountains and the NSW South Coast – introducing them to an Australia they've never seen before. In this heartfelt documentary, we hear the women's stories of abuse and estrangement, as we witness their profound courage and endurance.

Ros Horin has worked as a professional theatre director for more than 30 years, including as Artistic Director at Griffin Theatre Company. In 2016, SFF premiered her documentary *The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe*.

THE SKIN OF OTHERS

ALL AGES



Australia | 2020 | 91 mins | In English and Dyalbal with English subtitles
 Director, Screenwriter, Producer: Tom Murray | Cast: Balang Tom E. Lewis, Max Cullen, Archie Roach | Production Company: Tarpaulin Productions

A compelling portrait of an extraordinary figure, Aboriginal WWI soldier Douglas Grant, featuring acclaimed Indigenous actor Balang Tom E. Lewis (in his final performance).

Grant (c.1885-1951) was extraordinarily famous in his day, an intellectual, a journalist, a soldier, a reader of Shakespeare and a bagpipe player who could put on a fine Scottish accent. His life story connects Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Adolf Hitler, and Henry Lawson among other famous figures as he moved from Australia to Europe, the UK and back. Lewis's thoughtful and often playful reflections on Grant's life, along with guest appearances from Max Cullen and Archie Roach, connect to the larger story of Australia's tragic colonial history and its troubled relationship with First Australians.

Tom Murray is a writer, director and producer. His debut *Dhakiyarr vs the King* (SFF 2004) won a NSW Premier's History Award. Other films: *In My Father's Country* (2008); *Love in Our Own Time* (2013).

THE WEATHER DIARIES

15+



Australia | 2020 | 91 mins | In English
 Director, Screenwriter: Kathy Drayton | Producer: Tom Zubrycki | Production Company: Jotz Productions

Sydney filmmaker Kathy Drayton muses on what the future holds for her musician daughter amidst the threats of climate change and mass extinction.

The flying foxes that soar across Sydney each evening face many challenges: impacted by heatwaves, evicted from urban parklands, struggling to survive an ongoing loss of habitat. Bat carers save a handful here and there, and ecologists document their struggles, as threats escalate. Filmed over six years, *The Weather Diaries* reaches its climax in 2020, as temperatures soar, bushfires rage, and flying fox pups die in record numbers. Drayton ruminates on our failure to value these essential pollinators and the forests they sustain, and reflects on the implications for her daughter Imogen, a girl long inspired by Studio Ghibli's *Princess Mononoke*, who's emerging from the classical confines of the Conservatorium High School to embark on a career as an electronic pop artist.

Kathy Drayton came to filmmaking from a background in editing. Her documentary, *Girl in a Mirror: A Portrait of Carol Jerrems* (SFF 2005), was highly acclaimed both nationally and internationally.

WOMEN OF STEEL

ALL AGES



Australia | 2020 | 56 mins | In English and Turkish with English subtitles
 Director, Producer: Robynne Murphy | Film contact: Jobs for Women Film Producers Group

A rousing documentary, many years in the making, that follows a group of determined local women in their 14-year fight for the right to work in Wollongong's steel industry.

Forty years ago, Wollongong's Jobs for Women Campaign, with director Robynne Murphy among its leaders, took on Australia's most powerful company BHP – and won. But when the 1980s steel slump devastated the city's economy, the women were forced into the courtroom. Their struggle plays out against a background of societal changes: from anti-discrimination legislation, to the shifting roles of women in the home and workforce (particularly complex in Wollongong's migrant, non-English speaking households). This fascinating account of the largely forgotten history of Australia's Steel City was crafted over decades with support from local community volunteers and over 500 donors.

Robynne Murphy was selected for AFTRS's first intake. As other students moved into feature films, Murphy started a 30-year career at the Port Kembla steelworks before beginning this documentary.

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL THANKS ANDREW AND CATHY CAMERON

Their generous support of Sydney Film Festival's Employee Development Program invests in emerging talent – and the Festival's future.

Championing the careers of passionate, young arts workers is a cause close to the hearts of Sydney Film Festival Program Patrons Andrew and Cathy Cameron.

Through their Family Foundation, the Camerons have funded a three-year, full-time position in SFF's Development team.

"We wanted to make a meaningful philanthropic contribution to Sydney Film Festival in a way that created a full-time job for an emerging arts worker, and at the same time builds additional capability for SFF," Andrew Cameron says. "This wonderful young staffer now has a job at SFF, and over three years, we hope will really develop valuable skills."

The program's talented recipient is learning the business of building a sustainable arts sector through philanthropy and sponsorship, which in turn will help SFF grow a secure financial base.

Cameron is the chair and managing director of a group of privately owned businesses and is also a long-time advocate and supporter of the arts. He is currently the Chair of Artspace Visual Arts Centre, a Trustee at the Art Gallery of NSW, sits on the AGNSW Sydney Modern Capital campaign committee, and is a board member of the Sydney Festival. In 2017, Andrew and Cathy were awarded the Philanthropy Leadership Award by Creative Partnerships Australia. The Andrew Cameron Family Foundation currently supports emerging talent positions at the Sydney Opera House, Belvoir St Theatre, Artspace and Playwriting Australia.

Supporting Sydney Film Festival holds a special significance for the Camerons, both avid fans since their days at the University of Sydney.

"I started going to the Festival when I was at university in the late 1970s, and through the early 1980s," Cameron says. "Back then, as a uni student, it was like taking an overseas trip in the middle of the year. I would go into the State Theatre for two weeks each year and be transported around the world – by watching films telling stories from every corner."

"We love the whole sense of the film community coming together in the State Theatre each year. We appreciate that the Festival is so thoughtfully curated for us. Each film is different, and every film is included in the program for a reason."

The Camerons are now looking forward to exploring the 67th Sydney Film Festival: Virtual Edition and Awards from the comfort of their home in June. In the meantime, they have stayed entertained in isolation watching acclaimed TV series, from *Unorthodox* to *The Plot Against America*, and many music and history documentaries.



SFF Chair Deanne Weir, Cathy Cameron, Andrew Cameron AM

Andrew Cameron hopes that, through these challenging times, Sydneysiders will appreciate and value shared audience experiences like Sydney Film Festival more than ever.

"I'm sure lots of people will realise that their life now, alone and under isolation, is more bland and less interesting; that they don't have these experiences of going to see live theatre or going to the cinema or going to a film festival," he says. "Being part of an audience is a really significant, human thing."

DENDY AWARDS FOR AUSTRALIAN SHORT FILMS

SPONSORED BY DENDY CINEMAS AND YORAM GROSS FILMS

DENDY
C I N E M A S

Yoram Gross
FILMS

"Winning the Rouben Mamoulian Award at Sydney Film Festival in 2012 had such a huge impact on my early career. Not only was I able to invest the cash prize into future work, but more significantly, it generated great interest in my film and myself as a filmmaker. I'm very grateful to have had that experience."

– Mirrah Foulkes, Director, *Judy & Punch* (SFF 2019), Director's Lab Ambassador

DIRECTOR'S LAB

PATRONS support SFF's commitment to showcasing the work of talented and emerging filmmakers through the Short Film Program.

AYAAN

15+



Australia | 2020 | 18 mins | In English, Somali and Pitjantjatjara with English subtitles
Director, Screenwriter: Alies Sluiter | Producer: Meng Xiong | Cast: Babetida Sadjo, Trevor Jamieson, Gary Sweet | Rights Holder: Meng Xiong

An escaped asylum seeker (Babetida Sadjo) encounters an Aboriginal man (Trevor Jamieson) on a remote Australian beach. She must decide to trust him or journey on alone.

Before studying film at Columbia University, Alies Sluiter was well known as a violinist and Oscar-nominated composer. Her short films have screened at film festivals worldwide.

THE FALL

15+



Australia | 2019 | 15 mins | In Arabic with English subtitles
Director, Screenwriter, Producer: Mert Berdilek | Cast: Majid Shokor, Taj Aldeeb | Production Company: District Films

A young Syrian mother (Taj Aldeeb), who recently arrived in Australia as a refugee, faces an unforeseen tragedy in this poignant exploration of the nature of grief.

Mert Berdilek is a Melbourne-based Turkish writer-director. His award-winning debut *Crossfire* won Best Short Film and Best Cinematography at both the New York Cinematography Awards and Asian Cinematography Awards.

GNT

15+



Australia | 2019 | 4 mins | In English
Directors, Screenwriters, Producers: Sara Hirner, Rosemary Vasquez-Brown | Voice Cast: Isabelle Coury, Niamh Shipley, Regine Clarke | Production Company: University of Technology Sydney

Glenn is a woman on an unwholesome mission, but just how far will she go to conquer the clique – and social media at large?

Sara Hirner is an artist, 2D animator and graphic designer with a passion for vulgar curiosities. She has animated for clients such as Vivid Sydney, Societal and Freelancer. Rosemary Vasquez-Brown is a 2D animator, designer and illustrator. She has worked with clients such as *The Brag*, *Hag Mag*, *The Lifted Brow* and Vivid Sydney.

GREVILLEA

15+



Australia | 2019 | 13 mins | In English and Hebrew with English subtitles
Director, Screenwriter: Jordan Giusti | Producers: Chris Luscri, Jordan Giusti, Hayley Surgenor, Melanie Millado | Cast: Reuvi Kramer, Lucas Pittaway | Rights Holder: Jordan Giusti

An incarcerated Jewish teen encounters a mysterious tattooist with unclear intentions when he decides to get a tattoo, against the conventions of his religion.

Melbourne-based filmmaker Jordan Giusti has directed a number of short films to date, including *Tape* (St Kilda Film Festival, 2019), and produced *Three Stories Inside a Rental Van* (Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, 2019).

HER OWN MUSIC

15+



Australia | 2020 | 20 mins | In English
Director, Screenwriter: Olivia Aleksoski | Producers: Hew Sandison, Alexandra Morgan | Cast: Alexandra Morgan, Zoe Terakes | Production Company: Oddity Entertainment

On the cusp of graduation, Maddie's (Alexandra Morgan) blooming relationship with another student forces a choice: suppress her newfound self or throw out her life to date?

Olivia Aleksoski graduated from the University of Sydney and interned at theatres overseas, before directing *Anyone Can Whistle* (2014) and *It Doesn't Snow Here* (2018).

I WANT TO MAKE A FILM ABOUT WOMEN

15+



Australia | 2019 | 12 mins | In English, Russian
Director, Screenwriter: Karen Pearlman | Producers: Richard James Allen, Karen Pearlman | Cast: Liliya May, Inga Romantsova, Violette Ayad | Production Company: The Physical TV Company

A queer love letter to Russian revolutionary women artists of the 1920s, speculating on what they said, did and might have created had it not been for Stalin's suppression.

Karen Pearlman and Richard James Allen have developed, produced, directed or edited numerous acclaimed short films, online productions and the feature films *Thursday's Fictions* and *Text Messages from the Universe*.

IDOL 15+


Australia | 2019 | 19 mins | In Mandarin with English subtitles
 Director, Screenwriter: Alex Wu | Producer: Jiawei Wu | Cast: Nan Chen, Jiawei Wu | Rights Holder: Jiawei Wu

The things we do for love. A young Chinese celebrity, Wan Ran (Nan Chen), is called into an emergency meeting with his manager following a young fan's suicide.

Alex Wu was born and raised in Canberra. He studied at the VCA School of Film and Television. His short films have screened at festivals around the world.

MUKBANG 15+


Australia | 2020 | 14 mins | In English
 Director, Screenwriter: Eliza Scanlen | Producer: China White | Cast: Nadia Zwecker, Tessa De Josselin, Susan Prior | Production Company: Fat Salmon

A high school outsider's (Nadia Zwecker) obsession with internet culture mutates into a sexual awakening when she discovers the South Korean phenomenon 'mukbang'.

Eliza Scanlen is best known for her roles in HBO's acclaimed series *Sharp Objects*, Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* and Shannon Murphy's *Babyteeth*. *Mukbang* is her writing and directorial debut.

OBSCURA ALL AGES


Australia | 2019 | 9 mins | In English
 Directors, Screenwriters, Producers: Emily Jordan, Hannah Jordan | Cast: Nathan Salwowski, Theo Williams, Lindsay McDonald | Production Company: Same Same but Different Productions

An imaginative stop-motion animation that looks inside our cameras at the creatures within, who are living lives defined by what they see through the lens.

University of Newcastle communication graduates Emily Jordan and Hannah Jordan are currently working in media production houses. In their spare time, they work on stop-motion animation projects and short documentaries.

THE QUIET ALL AGES


Australia | 2019 | 10 mins | In English
 Director: Radheya Jegatheva | Screenwriters: Radheya Jegatheva, Jay Jay Jegathesan | Producer, Narrator: Jay Jay Jegathesan | Rights Holder: Jay Jay Jegathesan

Silence is the most beautiful thing that exists in the universe. When an astronaut ponders the quietude of space, he makes a startling self-realisation.

Perth-based filmmaker Radheya Jegatheva studied at Curtin University. His films have screened at multiple film festivals worldwide, winning numerous awards.

SCREENABILITY

FUNDED BY THE NSW GOVERNMENT THROUGH SCREEN NSW

"Screenability gives a voice to stories that usually wouldn't get any light in the mainstream media. Being a part of Screenability and Sydney Film Festival is a stamp of approval... and provides opportunities to make much larger projects."

– Llewellyn Michael Bates, Screenwriter, *Deluge* (SFF 2019)


DIVING IN ALL AGES


Australia | 2020 | 9 mins | In English
 Directors, Screenwriters: Adam Bowes, Nina Oyama | Producer: Jessica Murphy | Cast: Adam Bowes, Isaro Kayitesi, Belinda Jombwe | Rights Holder: Jessica Murphy

Will romance blossom for Alex? The competitive swimmer is madly in love with Jen, who works at the local pool. First, he needs to make a date, but his mischievous friends aren't helping.

Adam Bowes is a writer and actor who is making his directorial debut with *Diving In*. He has previously written the viral sketch NDIS Fails for *Tonightly* and has been seen in *Hacksaw Ridge*, *The Heights*, *Rostered On* and *The Angus Project*. Nina Oyama is a writer, director and comedian best known for her work on *The Angus Project*, *Tonightly* and *Squinters*. Nina was chosen for Screen Australia's Talent USA: LA delegation and is currently working on an animated comedy for *Adult Swim*.

GROUNDHOG NIGHT 15+


Australia | 2020 | 16 mins | In English
 Director: Genevieve Clay-Smith, Co-directed with Rawley Reynolds | Screenwriter: Emily Dash | Producer: Dianna La Grassa | Cast: John Batchelor, Emily Dash, Susan Prior | Rights Holder: Dianna La Grassa

For carer Gary, moving on and keeping his family together isn't always easy. Tensions run high when his late wife's parents arrive unannounced after he brings home a date.

Genevieve Clay-Smith is an award-winning filmmaker, creative director, social entrepreneur and advocate for inclusive filmmaking. She co-founded Bus Stop Films, which came to national attention with her Tropfest winner, *Be My Brother* (2009).

SAFETY NET 15+


Australia | 2020 | 13 mins | In English
 Director: Anthea Williams | Screenwriter: Julian Larnach | Producer: Naomi Just | Cast: William Best, Nikki Shiels, Steve Rodgers | Rights Holder: Naomi Just

12-year-old Terry is in emergency care with guardians after his mother's arrest. Cheeky and living with a disability, he outwits one guardian and connects with the other in a surprising way.

Anthea Williams is an award-winning theatre director (*Hir*, *Since Ali Died*) and *Safety Net* is her first film. She is an alumna of Screen NSW's #SheDirects, and Screen Australia's Developing the Developer and Talent+ with Causeway Films.

SFF 2020 ACCESSIBILITY

All films in the Dendy Short Film Awards and Screenability programs are available to view with closed captions and audio descriptions. See the HOW-TO VIRTUAL FESTIVAL guide for more info.





SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL DONOR COMMUNITY

Women's Giving Collective Launch (SFF 2019)

Since 2014, Sydney Film Festival has steadily gathered a community of passionate and generous donors. Their contributions have been vital to the growth of SFF, opening the Festival experience to a wider Sydney and regional audience, and have enabled SFF to present a diverse and inclusive Festival that truly represents our community.

SFF's **LIFE PATRON** and **PROGRAM PATRONS** fund specific projects that help the Festival manifest its core values. Their support gives SFF the means to offer diverse program strands, broaden its community reach, connect audiences with filmmaker guests across its travelling editions and strive for greater accessibility, as well as helping the organisation to build resilience and operate sustainably.

The **DIRECTOR'S PATRONS** enable SFF's extraordinary breadth of programming which celebrates excellence, creativity and diversity. They help sustain the Festival's reputation as Australia's most celebrated platform for filmmakers to premiere their work.

The **WOMEN'S GIVING COLLECTIVE** affirms SFF's commitment to equity and its role in driving positive change in the screen sector. The money raised by the Collective nurtures, empowers, promotes and celebrates women in film through industry events, panel discussions and conscious programming.

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The **WOMEN'S GIVING COLLECTIVE** proudly stands behind the Europe! Voices of Women in Film program, which introduces talented female directors from Europe to Australian audiences and facilitates opportunities for Australian female filmmakers to build international networks.

"Within such a short time, what Nashen has done with his programming has brought female filmmakers to the fore."

– Rachel Ward, Director, *Palm Beach* (SFF 2019)

CHARTER

15+



Sweden, Denmark, Norway | 2019 | 94 mins | In Swedish with English subtitles
Director, Screenwriter: Amanda Kernell | Producers: Lars G Lindström, Eva Åkergren | Cast: Ane Dahl Torp, Troy Lundkvist, Tintin Pogats Sarri | Rights Holder: The Swedish Film Institute

In her daring and impressive follow-up to SFF 2017 favourite *Sami Blood*, Amanda Kernell follows a desperate mother's abduction of her two estranged children.

Charter opens with Alice (Ane Dahl Torp) arriving at a small town in Northern Sweden after receiving a troubling call from her young son, and being firmly told to stay away by her ex-husband. She hasn't seen her children in months. Following the messy divorce, she is embroiled in a custody battle in which the entire community seems pitted against her. Distressed, Alice abducts her kids and heads to a holiday resort in the Canary Islands. Kernell expertly plays with mystery and tension, always keeping the audience guessing as to the true motives of the key characters. Dahl Torp excels in a difficult and complex role, conveying both the intense desire for Alice to be with her children, and her reluctance to sacrifice her independence to do so.

Amanda Kernell was born in Umeå, Sweden, and has made several award-winning short films. Her debut feature, *Sami Blood* (SFF 2017), won several international prizes following its Venice premiere.

FORCE OF HABIT

TOTTUMISKYSYMS

15+



Finland | 2019 | 79 mins | In Finnish with English subtitles
Directors, Screenwriters: Alli Haapasalo, Anna Paavilainen, Reetta Aalto, Jenni Toivoniemi, Kirsikka Saari, Elli Toivoniemi, Miia Tervo | Producer: Elli Toivoniemi | Cast: Veikko Aalste, Teemu Aromaa, Suvi Blick | Sales Agent: Totem Films

Seven Finnish women directors question gender stereotypes and the way women's lives are conditioned in a post-#MeToo era in this clever, provocative fictional anthology.

Force of Habit follows the stories of six different women at various stages of life, in both private and public spaces. From casual sexual harassment by strangers in restaurants; sinister workplace practices; inadequacies of the legal system; and to troublesome behaviour in the supposedly more progressive world of the arts, the film matter-of-factly catalogues habitual acts of discrimination. Sometimes, these incidents appear to be minor or commonplace. Sometimes devastating. They all convey how society appears to have gotten used to gender disparity. The overall effect of these women's stories is powerfully indelible.

Alli Haapasalo: *On Thin Ice; The Appointment; Love and Fury*. **Anna Paavilainen:** wrote, directed and performed *Play Rape* monologue. **Elli Toivoniemi:** co-founder-owner and head producer of Tuffi Films; *Role*. **Jenni Toivoniemi:** *The Date; Korso; Sihja*. **Kirsikka Saari:** *Do I Have to Take Care of Everything; Stupid Young Heart*. **Miia Tervo:** *The Little Snow Animal; Clumsy Little Acts of Tenderness; Aurora*. **Reetta Aalto:** *Pussy for Beginners; Girls' Night; Guardian Angel*.

KIDS RUN

18+



Germany | 2020 | 104 mins | In German with English subtitles
Director, Screenwriter: Barbara Ott | Producers: Gabriele Simon, Martin Heisler | Cast: Jannis Niewöhner, Lena Tronina, Eline Doenst | Sales Agent: The Yellow Affair

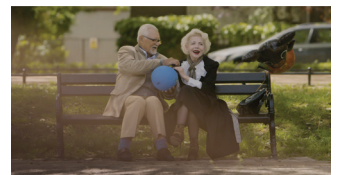
In this gritty German love story, a former boxer is tested as he tries to keep custody of his children and win over his ex-girlfriend.

Andi, a father of three young children, is always strapped for cash and ekes out a living as a labourer. Facing eviction, Andi turns to his ex-girlfriend Sonja – the mother of his youngest child – and borrows a large sum of money to avert his eviction. When he loses his construction job, Andi is unable to pay back the loan, and Sonja insists that he pays up or she will stop him seeing his child. Desperate, Andi decides that an amateur boxing competition, and its cash prize, is his only salvation. Kinetically directed by Barbara Ott, Jannis Niewöhner is tremendously good as the aggressive, moody Andi, who frequently makes bad decisions but wants nothing more than a decent life for his family.

Barbara Ott was born in 1983 and has a degree in fiction directing from the Film Academy Baden-Wuerttemberg. Her short film *Sunny* screened at several festivals and received many awards.

LESSONS OF LOVE

15+



Poland | 2019 | 75 mins | In Polish with English subtitles
Directors: Małgorzata Goliszewska, Kasia Mateja | Screenwriters: Anna Stylińska, Małgorzata Goliszewska | Producer: Anna Stylińska | Sales Agent: Autlook Filmsales

Charismatic and optimistic Jola is on the lookout for romance in her native Poland, but just how hard will it be to surrender to love for the first time at age 69?

After decades married to a "worthless fleabag" husband, and raising six kids, Jola has finally decided to let loose. Although, the immaculately garbed, primed and coiffed sexagenarian would never allow her appearance to slide! She leaves her abusive partner in Italy and heads to her native Poland, where she lounges on the beach with her girlfriends, takes singing lessons and writes poems. Then, Jola meets Wojtek at a Latin dance class and her head is turned. He's a gallant and considerate man, but Jola is hesitant to commit; "Should I try one more time, or are all men the same?" she muses. Filmmakers Goliszewska and Mateja have crafted a wonderfully cinematic and joyful account of a woman's battle to reinvent herself in her twilight years.

Małgorzata Goliszewska graduated from Wajda School in 2012 and POLSKA.DOC, before working in experimental film at the Academy of Fine Arts, Szczecin. She has directed several short films, two of which screened at festivals around the world. **Kasia Mateja** graduated from Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland. She has made short documentaries and experimental films, and her documentary, *Silence on the way to the Reindeer People*, won several festival awards.

MY LITTLE SISTER
 SCHWESTERLEIN

15+



Switzerland | 2020 | 99 mins | In English, German and French with English subtitles
 Directors, Screenwriters: Stéphanie Chuat, Véronique Reymond | Producer: Ruth Waldburger | Cast: Nina Hoss, Lars Eidinger, Marthe Keller | Sales Agent: Beta Cinema

Two of Germany's finest actors, Nina Hoss (*Barbara*, SFF 2012; *Phoenix*, SFF 2015) and Lars Eidinger (*Babylon Berlin*) star as inseparable twins in this intricate family drama set in Berlin's elite theatrical circles.

Hoss plays the brilliant playwright Lisa, who has given up writing and moved countries to support her husband's career as the head of a prestigious school in Switzerland. Her twin brother, Sven (Eidinger), who's a famous theatre actor, remains in Berlin. Though physically separated, the twins become closer than ever when Sven is diagnosed with leukemia. Lisa refuses to accept Sven's prognosis and knows that in order for him to live he must return to the stage, where he feels truly alive. Neglecting everything she once held important, Lisa devotes herself to her brother, and finds a route to her own calling. Hoss and Eidinger give beautiful, emotional performances in this moving film about creativity and filial love.

Stéphanie Chuat and Véronique Reymond are childhood friends and accomplished actresses. Their short film, *Berlin Backstage*, won a Berlin Today Award, and their prize-winning first feature, *The Little Bedroom*, premiered at Locarno. Their documentaries include *Evening Class for Adults* (2005), *Buffo, Buten & Howard* (2009) and *Ladies* (2018).

THEY CALL ME BABU
 ZE NOEMEN ME BABOE

15+



The Netherlands | 2019 | 79 mins | In Indonesian with English subtitles
 Director, Screenwriter: Sandra Beerends | Producer: Pieter van Huystee | Narrator: Denise Aznam | Rights Holder: Pieter van Huystee Films

An Indonesian nanny tells her remarkable life story, which plays out against the backdrop of World War II and her country's struggle for independence, in this ingenious archival documentary.

As a young woman, Alima flees to the city to avoid an arranged marriage. She finds a job as a nanny, or 'babu', for a Dutch family who are about to leave on a trip to Holland. As conflict descends across the globe, Alima returns to the Dutch colony, surviving Japanese occupation and her homeland's battle for liberation, before finding her own place in the world. Sandra Beerends uses never-before-seen archive footage to construct Alima's partly fictionalised story, based on the lives of several Indonesian nannies of the era. The lyrical images of colonial society are hauntingly present, and Alima's alienation is palpable. Her gradual understanding of colonial society and her own position, exquisitely narrated, tells a universal story of women's empowerment.

Sandra Beerends is a script editor, creative producer and writer/director who works for the Dutch broadcaster NTR and runs her own company. Her work includes the script-editing of *Kauwboy* (2012), *Polska Warrior* (2017) and her own documentary, *They Call Me Babu*.

A PERFECTLY NORMAL FAMILY
 EN HELT ALMINDELIG FAMILIE

15+



Denmark | 2020 | 97 mins | In English and Danish with English subtitles
 Director, Screenwriter: Malou Reymann | Producers: Matilda Appelin, René Ezra | Cast: Kaya Toft Loholt, Mikkel Boe Følsgaard, Rigmor Ranthe | Sales Agent: New Europe Film Sales

Winner of the VPRO Big Screen Award at Rotterdam, this touching drama – inspired by the director's own experiences – looks at the complex relationship between a young girl and her transgender parent.

For 11-year-old Emma, life appears to be completely uneventful until her dad, Thomas, decides to transition and live as a woman. Thomas becomes Agnete, and the pair must carefully renegotiate their relationship to nurture the closeness and deep love they always shared. Debut feature film director, Malou Reymann, inspired by her own childhood, says: "It's very true to how I experienced it back then... There was a sense of sorrow, sure, but also humour, a sense of love and loss – experienced at the exact same time." Using re-created home videos, and a terrific cast, Reymann beautifully captures a family working its way through a unique situation and finding themselves in the process.

Malou Reymann started acting in her early teens and has directed a number of short films. *A Perfectly Normal Family* is her first feature film and is inspired by her own life.

A YEAR FULL OF DRAMA
 AASTA TÄIS DRAAMAT

15+



Estonia | 2019 | 109 mins | In Estonian and Russian with English subtitles
 Director: Marta Pulk | Producer: Paul Piik | Production Company: Kinoteater

A job advert with a difference: seeking someone who's never been to the theatre to watch every production in one small country for a whole year. 224 Estonian productions later...

The successful candidate is a small-town girl from a Russian-speaking family (a fact that puts her on the periphery of Estonian society). Alissija hasn't been to the theatre since she was a small child, so she's about to immerse herself in and document a world she knows nothing about. It's not just the performing arts that are new to Alissija; she'll also be moving to Estonia's capital, Tallinn, and living away from family. As the months pass, she experiences everything from farce to the classics, and ends up questioning theatre's place in the world, as well as her unique role. Alissija's curious and courageous theatrical journey – 224 shows in 365 days (matinees included) – turns out to be a life-changing and true coming-of-age story.

Marta Pulk (born 1988) earned her Master's degree in filmmaking from the Baltic Film and Media School. Her short films have screened at numerous film festivals worldwide.

SEA FEVER

15+



Ireland, Sweden, Belgium, UK | 2019 | 89 mins | In English
 Director, Screenwriter: Neasa Hardiman | Producers: Brendan McCarthy, John McDonnell | Cast: Hermione Corfield, Connie Nielsen, Dougray Scott | Australian Distributor: Icon Film Distribution

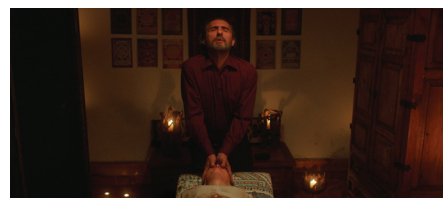
The crew of an Irish fishing trawler fall prey to a deadly sea creature in this gripping sci-fi thriller. Official Selection, Toronto International Film Festival.

Neasa Hardiman's suspenseful creature feature has acquired a new relevance since its world premiere at Toronto. Dougray Scott and Connie Nielsen anchor the tale as a couple facing financial ruin unless their trawler snares a bumper catch on its next foray into the Atlantic. Joining them is Siobhán (Hermione Corfield, *Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation*), a brilliant and socially awkward marine biology student. Hardiman's screenplay neatly combines tense human drama and monster movie terror when a massive underwater entity latches onto the vessel and begins to infect crew members with voracious parasitic spores. Siobhán's attempt to destroy the organism and prevent an apocalyptic pandemic lends an eerie, prescient quality to the film's exciting action.

Neasa Hardiman's credits include award-winning shorts, documentaries and drama. She won BAFTAs for directing episodes of TV series' *Happy Valley* and *Tracy Beaker Returns*. *Sea Fever* is her first feature.

ZANA

15+



Kosovo, Albania | 2019 | 97 mins | In Albanian with English subtitles
 Director: Antoneta Kastrati | Screenwriters: Antoneta Kastrati, Casey Cooper Johnson | Producer: Casey Cooper Johnson | Cast: Adriana Matoshi, Astrit Kabashi | Sales Agent: Alief

Mysticism and modernity clash in this tense family drama about a Kosovar Albanian woman's struggles to overcome wartime trauma and conceive a child.

In a small Kosovar village, Lume lives with her husband, Ilir, and mother-in-law Remzije. Lume's daughter was killed in the war a decade ago, and she has been unable to conceive since. Modern medicine has failed, and now her mother-in-law, desperate for a grandchild, is working on securing an eager new wife for her son. Lume is convinced to seek help from a traditional healer, but the suppressed traumas of a vicious war rear up to threaten her chance at happiness. With a tremendous central performance by Adriana Matoshi as Lume, *Zana* is a profoundly personal film from director Kastrati, a war survivor herself, and one that makes clear the lingering impact of war.

Antoneta Kastrati was born in Zahaq, Kosovo. Her credits include *Seeking Magic* and *She Comes in Spring*. *Zana*, her feature debut, premiered at Toronto International Film Festival.



Amanda Maple-Brown, David Hov, Mirrah Foulkes and Damon Herriman at the Director's Lab Launch (2019)



Carole Campbell, Zarah Nalebandan, Darren Dale and Ping Hebandan at the Chair's Dinner (SFF 2018)



Ben Ferris and Vida Irani at the Opening Night Party (SFF 2018)

"The experience that you can have at the Film Festival as a Patron is vastly different to the experience that you have prior to becoming a Patron. You feel very much included in the whole process – in the films, with the filmmakers, with the directors, with the jury – it's a very exciting experience. I would thoroughly recommend supporting the Film Festival in any way you possibly can. We need to keep it alive and it's the most wonderful institution."

– Kathryn Lovric, Director's Champion (SFF 2019)



David Michôd, Drew Bailey, Isabel Stanfield, Nashen Moodley and Daniel Joyce at the Director's Lab Launch (April 2019)



Ros Horin, George Miller AO and John Collee at the SFF Patron Preview of *Hotel Mumbai* (October 2018)



Patron Michael Selwyn at the *Hotel Mumbai* Q&A (October 2018)



Jan Chapman AO and Kathryn Lovric at the Chair's Dinner (SFF 2018)



Peter Ivany AO, Nashen Moodley, Sharon Ivany at the Patron's Program Preview (May 2018)



Uyo Dyasi, Phillip Noyce and Nashen Moodley at SFF Alumni Event (June 2018)

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