



Media Release

For immediate release

Australian Academy announces Martin Butler and Bentley Dean as this year's Byron Kennedy Award recipients

The Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) today announced acclaimed filmmaking collaborators **Martin Butler** and **Bentley Dean** as this year's recipients of the **Byron Kennedy Award**.

The Byron Kennedy Award will be presented to the two-man film crew at the 7th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel on Wednesday 6 December at The Star Event Centre in Sydney.

First awarded in 1984, the Byron Kennedy Award celebrates outstanding creative enterprise within the screen industry and is given to an individual or organisation whose work embodies the qualities of innovation, vision and the relentless pursuit of excellence. The Award, which honours **Dr George Miller's** original filmmaking partner and **MAD MAX** co-creator **Byron Kennedy**, includes a cash prize of \$10,000 and is a discretionary Award determined by an appointed jury.

Martin and Bentley's ten-year partnership has focused on genuine collaboration with Indigenous communities to produce some of the most emotionally compelling performances ever seen on screen. Their first collaboration, **CONTACT** (2010), a documentary about the Martu people's first contact with modern Australia, stands as the most revealing and complete account of the 'first contact' experience. **CONTACT** won numerous accolades, including a Walkley Award and the AFI Award for Best Feature Length Documentary.

Their landmark Walkley Award-winning **FIRST FOOTPRINTS** (2013) series, charted 60,000 years of Australia's history, in close collaboration with Indigenous communities across the continent.

Last year the duo collaborated to create the current AACTA-nominated documentary **A SENSE OF SELF** (2017) – an intimate portrayal of Martin's partner, journalist **Liz Jackson's** struggle with Parkinson's disease.

Their unique, improvisational process resulted in the triumphant success of the AACTA Award-winning **TANNA** (2015), co-written with and performed by the people of Yakel on a volcanic island in Vanuatu. The film received critical acclaim worldwide, culminating in an Oscar® nomination for Best Foreign Language Film – the only Australian film in the history of the Oscars® to be nominated in the category.

"Martin and Bentley are exemplary recipients of the Byron Kennedy Award," said **Dr George Miller**. "Their integrity shines through all their endeavours. Because of this, they are held in the highest regard by their collaborators and audiences all over the world."

Their work has received two AFI | AACTA Awards and a further six nominations, including Best Direction in a Documentary for **A SENSE OF SELF** at the 7th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel. The pair are currently working on what they can only reveal at this stage as "Australia's greatest untold story."

"Receiving the Byron Kennedy Award is such an honour," said **Bentley Dean** and **Martin Butler**. "Our motivation has always been bringing important, but seemingly impossible stories to life in utterly compelling ways. We are humbled and fired up to join a league of Award recipients who get their kicks from 'the relentless pursuit of excellence'."

The AACTA Awards are proudly supported by the New South Wales Government through its tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW.

– ENDS –

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Official hashtag: #AACTAs | Facebook: /AACTAawards | Twitter: @aacta | Instagram: @aacta

For further information about AFI | AACTA visit: www.aacta.org

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

NIXCo | P: 02 8399 0626 | E: info@nixco.com.au

AFI | AACTA | Michelle Berg | P: +61 (03) 9695 7222 | E: mberg@afi.org.au

Thanks to the generous support of our partners and sponsors:

PRESENTING PARTNER



STRATEGIC SPONSORS



sydney.com

IT'S ON!
IN SYDNEY

DESTINATION PARTNER

THE  STAR SYDNEY

TELECAST PARTNER



MAJOR GOVERNMENT SPONSOR



MAJOR PARTNERS



OFFICIAL PARTNERS



Create NSW
Arts, Screen & Culture



SPLASHBOX



EVENT AND PRODUCTION PARTNERS

