



MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 6AM TUESDAY 6 OCTOBER

NEW \$200,000 ANNUAL FILM FELLOWSHIP TO KICK START CAREERS OF FOUR AUSTRALIAN FILMMAKERS

The Sydney Film Festival and Lexus Australia today announce the Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship, the largest cash fellowship for short film in Australia, providing a new platform to support future generations of emerging filmmakers.

Up to four annual Fellowship winners will receive \$50,000 each to produce their next short film in 2016 and 2017, to premiere at the **Sydney Film Festival in 2017 and 2018**.

A shortlist of the best Australian entrants to the **Lexus Short Films** series will be curated by the Producers at **The Weinstein Company**, and sent to the Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship jury. This jury, headed by Sydney Film Festival's Festival Director **Nashen Moodley**, will then select the four winners of the Fellowships grants.

"The Festival has a proud heritage of supporting Australian filmmakers. Working with Lexus on this substantial new investment will open up vital funding to local filmmakers to enable them to tell their stories, and assist the next generation of world class Australian directors to kick start their careers," said **Festival Director Nashen Moodley**.

Adrian Weimers, Corporate Manager, Lexus Australia said, "At the heart of Lexus's DNA, there's a deep appreciation of creativity, design and craftsmanship. Lexus helps emerging filmmakers from around the world realise their dream through the Lexus Short Film Series. Lexus Australia have created the Fellowship because we want to create a pathway for emerging Australian filmmakers to win that international prize."

Acclaimed Australian filmmaker **Gillian Armstrong** whose films include *Oscar and Lucinda*, *Charlotte Gray*, and *Little Women* has commented on the significance of short film and award incentives for aspiring filmmakers. "Short film is such an important launching pad for young film makers. The best shorts are like a little short story or poem, a tiny jewel in themselves. My 10 min AFTRS short, *One Hundred a Day*, which was screened at the Sydney Film Festival in 1970 truly launched my career. The producer of *My Brilliant Career*, Margaret Fink always said it was the best thing I ever made!," said Armstrong.

The Piano and *An Angel at My Table* director, **Jane Campion** also won her first award at the Festival in 1984 for her short *A Girl's Own Story*, later saying, "I knew that it could be a career changer".

Sotiris Dounoukos, this Festival's 2015 Dendy Live Action Short Award winner for *A Single Body*, now working on post-production on his first feature film, *Joe Cinque's Consolation*, considers the

Principal State Government Partner



Strategic Partners



Government Partners



importance of short film in a filmmaker's development. "The freedom and purity of the short film form invites the filmmaker to discover themselves and refine their point of view through the questions they are willing to ask about the world around them and about cinema itself," he said.

Red Dog director **Kriv Stenders**, who twice won awards for his short films at the Festival, is also a strong advocate for the format, having commented, "Shorts are becoming a medium unto themselves because of the internet".

Australian filmmakers must enter the international Lexus Short Films series before **25 October 2015**, where their film will be viewed by The Weinstein Company, who will select the Australian finalists.

2016 Finalists will be announced in November 2015, and the inaugural Lexus Australia Short Film Fellows will be announced in April 2016, and see their work premiered at the 2017 Sydney Film Festival.

It's a simple process with no entry fee and no complex application processes. All filmmakers have to submit by 25 October is an eligible film and CV.

Australian filmmakers also have the chance to be one of the international winners of the series, who go on to direct short films that will be produced and receive first-look deals courtesy of The Weinstein Company, and tour to four international film festivals, including Sydney Film Festival.

For more information on the Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship, visit www.sff.org.au/fellowship. For Lexus Short Films eligibility criteria and submission details, as well as entry submission, visit <http://www.lexus-int.com/lexusshortfilms/>.

ABOUT THE LEXUS AUSTRALIA SHORT FILM FELLOWSHIP

The Lexus Australia Short Films Fellowship is a new \$200,000 investment by Lexus Australia, presented by Sydney Film Festival, to support future generations of emerging filmmakers. The Fellowship is the largest cash fellowship for short film in Australia. Up to four Fellowship winners will receive \$50,000 each to produce their next short film in 2016, to premiere at the 64th Sydney Film Festival in 2017.

ABOUT LEXUS SHORT FILMS

In 2013, Lexus Short Films was launched with the goal of supporting and nurturing a new generation of emerging filmmakers. These aspiring directors and writers have received a unique opportunity supported by Lexus to collaborate with acclaimed film studio The Weinstein Company to produce and showcase their work on an international stage. For more information, visit www.lexusshortfilms.com.

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

Sydney Film Festival screens feature films, documentaries, short films and animation across greater Sydney. 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.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Amber Forrest-Bisley, Publicity Manager, Sydney Film Festival

E: amber@cardinalspin.com.au P: 02 8065 7363 M: 0405 363 817

Principal State Government Partner



Strategic Partners



Government Partners

