

MEDIA RELEASE

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FILMS TO FREAK YOU OUT

The 64th Sydney Film Festival today announces that seven **Freak Me Out** films will complete the Festival's horror, cult, macabre and extreme arthouse film program.

Returning to **Dendy Newtown** and **Event Cinemas George Street**, as well as **Skyline Drive In Blacktown**, the Festival's weird, wonderful and completely whacked-out **Freak Me Out** program remains dedicated to twisted pleasures and shocking cinema.

"It is with the greatest of twisted pleasure we invite you to experience cinema that'll make your spine tingle and your pulse quicken," said **Freak Me Out** Programmer **Richard Kuipers**, a *Variety* critic specialising in weird cinema.

"Film fans with a taste for the bizarre will be challenged by full-tilt assaults from evil board game thriller **Game of Death** and killer-virus-bloodbath-meets-corporate-satire **Mayhem**, a SXSW smash hit with rising Australian actor **Samara Weaving** starring alongside *The Walking Dead's* **Steven Yeun**."

"Nerves will be put to the test with Christmas-themed Aussie-USA co-pro spooker **Better Watch Out** with Australian stars **Levi Miller**, **Ben Oxenbould** and **Olivia DeJonge**, and brains will be bent by gothic psycho-melodrama **Fashionista** and eerie Portuguese arthouse-meets-grindhouse tale **The Forest of Lost Souls**," he said.

"**Freak Me Out** will also screen its first-ever documentary **Spookers**, a look inside the lives of the actors who play killer clowns and zombie brides at the Southern Hemisphere's largest 'scream park'."

Joining the Festival is gifted Berlin-born, New Zealand-based filmmaker, **Florian Habicht**, who will present the Australian premiere of **Spookers**.

And true horror fans should not miss cult classic Oscar-winning horror comedy **An American Werewolf in London**, playing under the full moon at the Skyline Drive In on Friday 16 June. Cinephile freak fans should also check out **78/52**, screening in our International Documentary program. A documentary tribute to the infamous shower scene in *Psycho*, which includes interviews with acclaimed horror filmmakers and scream queen Jamie Lee Curtis.

"Bang a gong, let's get this freaky thing on," said Kuipers. "See you in the grindhouse..."

SFF 2017 Freak Me Out film screenings and guests include:

- **An American Werewolf in London**
Wednesday 7 June, 8.30pm, Dendy Newtown
Friday 16 June, 7.00pm, Skyline Drive In

- **Better Watch Out**
Sunday 11 June, 5.35pm, Event Cinemas George St
Friday 16 June, 8.00pm, Dendy Newtown
- **Fashionista**
Thursday 8 June, 8.05pm, Event Cinemas George St
Wednesday 14 June, 8.30pm, Dendy Newtown
- **Game of Death**
Wednesday 7 June, 8.25pm, Event Cinemas George St
Tuesday 13 June, 8.35pm, Dendy Newtown
- **Mayhem**
Friday 9 June, 8.45pm, Event Cinemas George St
Thursday 15 June, 7.50pm, Dendy Newtown
- **Spookers | Introduced by New Zealand filmmaker Florian Habicht**
Saturday 10 June, 8.45pm, Event Cinemas George St
Sunday 11 June, 8.50pm, Dendy Newtown
- **The Forest of Lost Souls**
Monday 12 June, 8.30pm, Event Cinemas George St
Saturday 17 June, 7.45pm, Dendy Newtown

Sydney Film Festival runs 7 – 18 June 2017.

Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2017 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit sff.org.au for more information.

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

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From **Wednesday 7 June** to **Sunday 18 June 2017**, the 64th Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, in-depth discussions, international guests and more.

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: *Aquarius* (2016); *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, Randwick Ritz, Casula Powerhouse, the Festival Hub at Sydney Town Hall and SFF Outdoor Screen in Pitt Street Mall.

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 64th 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.



DOCUMENTARIES

SPOOKERS

Director: Florian Habicht | New Zealand, Australia | 82mins | In English | Australian Premiere
Located on the site of a former psychiatric hospital near Auckland, 'scream park' Spookers has been scaring the living daylight out of visitors since 2005. Dressing up and playing psycho clowns, corpses and chainsaw-wielding maniacs is all in a day's work for Spookers' talented and super-enthusiastic performers. But what draws someone to this line of work, and what are their own fears, hopes and dreams? The answers are revealing, funny and sometimes deeply moving. Complete with beautiful fantasy sequences and made with a huge heart, *Spookers* is another feather in the cap of gifted Berlin-born, New Zealand-based filmmaker Florian Habicht (*Pulp* SFF 2014). If ever there was a Freak Me Out 'family film', this is it.

FEATURES

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON

Director, Screenwriter: John Landis | UK, USA | 97mins | In English
It's one thing to be bitten by the travel bug and go backpacking around Europe for three months. It is quite another thing to be bitten by a mythical beast while hoofing through the English moors. So begins the genuinely frightening and extremely funny tale of American backpackers David and Jack. Once bitten, twice shy? Not on your life, as Londoners discover when the next full moon rises. But can lovely local nurse Alex (the divine Jenny Agutter) save the day? Written and directed by John Landis (*The Blues Brothers*) at the height of his powers, *American Werewolf...* set a standard for horror-comedy that's rarely been equalled. And the soundtrack totally, utterly, completely rocks.

BETTER WATCH OUT

Director: Chris Peckover | Australia, USA | 85mins | In English | Australian Premiere
When high school beauty Ashley (DeJonge) arrives to babysit precocious 12-year-old Luke (Levi Miller, *Jasper Jones*) it's the usual routine of ordering pizza and watching a scary movie, but that is where any semblance of normality ends. It would be a sin to even hint at what happens next to Ashley and Luke in their supposedly safe suburban neighbourhood. What we can say is that *Better Watch Out* generates white-knuckle suspense and pitch black humour while dishing out plot shocks galore that even hardened horror hounds won't see coming. Directed with a winning combination of guile and brute force by Chris Peckover (*Undocumented*), this twisted Christmas cracker is packed with gory delights.

FASHIONISTA

Director, Screenwriter: Simon Rumley | USA | 108mins | In English | International Premiere
You're unlikely to see many better performances this year than Amanda Fuller's mesmerising turn as April, a 30-something whose self-image and perception of life is determined by the vintage clothes she wears and sells at a funky emporium in Austin, Texas with husband Eric (Freak Me Out favourite Ethan Embry; *The Devil's Candy*, SFF 2016; *Cheap Thrills*, SFF 2013). When Eric strays, a devastated April meets Randall, a smooth-talker with a predilection for strange sexual games. That's just the start of this dazzlingly filmed and superbly edited journey into real and imagined worlds. A killer soundtrack rounds out the best film yet by genre-mashing British ace Simon Rumley (*The Living and the Dead*).

GAME OF DEATH

Directors: Laurence 'Baz' Morais, Sébastien Landry | Canada, France | 73mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Game of Death takes the trusty kill-or-be-killed premise to fabulously blood-soaked extremes. It all starts with seven young party animals chillaxing on a sunny afternoon. The mayhem starts as soon as someone says 'hey, let's play this goofy-looking retro board game I just found.' Cue a swift descent into hell as the pals realise they have to kill a lot of people quick-smart or one by one their heads will explode. Orchestrating more than a simple cavalcade of highly entertaining violence, first-time



feature directing duo Laurence 'Baz' Morais and Sébastien Landry pack in smart social commentary as these bratty millennials become more human – and inhuman – as the body count mounts.

MAYHEM

Director: Joe Lynch | USA | 86mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Talk about a tough day at the office. Ambitious lawyer Derek Cho (Steven Yeun, *The Walking Dead*, *Okja* screening at SFF this year) is framed for dismissal by a calculating superior. If that's not bad enough the firm's gleaming office tower then becomes infected by ID7, a virus that causes victims to lose all inhibitions. As rampant fornication and unbridled bloodlust erupt in the quarantined building, Derek meets disgruntled client Melanie (Aussie star Samara Weaving). So begins a fast and furious tale in which the unlikely duo must slaughter their way to the top floor and demand justice from those corrupt scumbag executives who done them wrong. Director Joe Lynch (*Everly*, 2014) and writer Matias Caruso, please take a bow.

THE FOREST OF LOST SOULS

Director, Screenwriter: José Pedro Lopes | Portugal | 71mins | In Portuguese with English Subtitles | Australian Premiere

If you have an eye for slow burn horror in the style of *The Eyes of My Mother* (SFF 2016) and *Goodnight Mommy* (SFF 2015), then don't miss the sophisticated debut feature by José Pedro Lopes. A brooding atmosphere develops from the moment depressed old man Ricardo meets Carolina, a beguiling beauty in a black leather jacket. When these two strangers decide to exchange stories the true sadness of their lives is revealed, perfectly assisted by surprise shots of black humour and an unnerving feeling that something here is very wrong. Impeccably performed by respected veteran Jorge Mota and rising star Daniela Love, this black-and-white widescreen nightmare will creep up on you with a vengeance.