

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11.00am WEDNESDAY 10 MAY 2017

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS AT THE STATE

The 64th Sydney Film Festival today announced 15 titles, including award winners and four world premieres, to screen as Special Presentations at the State Theatre.

Presented by Princess Cruises, the program offers audiences the ultimate Festival experience with screenings at the magnificent State Theatre. Special guests will present their films at many of these premieres, and attend attached talks after the screenings.

“From across Australia, to South East Asia, around Europe and beyond, Sydney Film Festival and Princess Cruises will take audiences on a cinematic journey in these Special Presentations at the magnificent State Theatre” said **Stuart Allison, Princess Cruises Vice President, Australia and New Zealand**.

“Princess Cruises have been providing our guests memorable escapes and meaningful experiences around the world to for over 50 years, so for the fourth year we are delighted to support this voyage of ideas and perspectives from some of the most talked about storytellers,” he said.

“Seeing a film at the State Theatre is one of the highlights of the Sydney Film Festival,” said **Festival Director Nashen Moodley**. “Audiences will be treated to world premieres like *Australia Day* from *Red Dog* director Kriv Stenders, the World Premiere of the French romantic comedy *Madame* starring Toni Collette and Harvey Keitel, and timely documentaries like *Mountain* (a unique collaboration between *Sherpa* director Jennifer Peedom and the Australian Chamber Orchestra), *Blue* (an investigation into the state of the world’s oceans) and *My Year With Helen* (the story of former NZ PM Helen Clarke’s candidacy for UN Secretary General).”

“Films fresh from Cannes that will have premieres at The State include New Jersey story *Patti Cake\$* (the breakthrough role for Australian actress Danielle Macdonald), *Wind River* starring Jeremy Renner and Elizabeth Olsen, and celebrated German director Fatih Akin’s *In the Fade* starring Diane Kruger.

“Home-grown comedy *Ali’s Wedding*, sumptuous romance *Call Me By Your Name*, and haunting micro-budget love story *A Ghost Story*, made in secret and starring Rooney Mara and Oscar-winner Casey Affleck, are also compelling choices,” he said.

SFF 2017 Special Presentations at the State screenings and guests include:

- ***Ali’s Wedding*** | Introduced by Australian filmmaker **Jeffrey Walker**
Thursday 8 June, 6.25pm, State Theatre
Friday 9 June, 8.15pm, State Theatre
Saturday 10 June, 7.30pm, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre
- ***Australia Day*** | Introduced by Australian filmmaker **Kriv Stenders**
Monday 12 June, 8.40pm, State Theatre
Wednesday 14 June, 8.00pm, Hayden Orpheum

- **Blue** | Introduced by Australian filmmaker **Karina Holden**
 Sunday 11 June, 8.30pm, State Theatre
 Monday 12 June, 4.05pm, Ritz Cinema
 Tuesday 13 June, 6.15pm, Dendy Newtown
- **Call Me By Your Name**
 Thursday 15 June, 9.00pm, State Theatre
 Saturday 17 June, 6.00pm, Hayden Orpheum
- **A Ghost Story**
 Tuesday 13 June, 9.10pm, State Theatre
 Friday 16 June, 6.30pm, The Ritz Cinema
 Saturday 17 June, 6.00pm, Dendy Newtown
- **Hotel Salvation** | Introduced by Indian filmmaker **Shubhashish Bhutiani**
 Saturday 10 June, 2.00pm, State Theatre
 Sunday 11 June, 1.30pm, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre
 Sunday 11 June, 3.30pm, Hayden Orpheum
- **In The Fade**
 Saturday 17 June, 6.00pm, State Theatre
 Sunday 18 June, 8.40pm, Dendy Opera Quays
- **Ingrid Goes West**
 Saturday 10 June, 9:15pm, State Theatre
 Wednesday 14 June, 9:10pm, Event Cinemas George St
 Saturday 17 June, 6:15pm, Dendy Newtown
- **Madame**
 Monday 12 June, 4:15pm, State Theatre
 Tuesday 13 June, 6:45pm, Hayden Orpheum Cremorne
- **Mountain** | Introduced by Australian filmmaker **Jennifer Peedom**
 Saturday 17 June, 4:05pm, State Theatre
 Sunday 18 June, 4:00pm, Hayden Orpheum Cremorne
- **My Year With Helen** | Introduced by New Zealand filmmaker **Gaylene Preston**
 Saturday 10 June, 4:20pm, State Theatre
 Sunday 11 June, 5:30pm, Dendy Opera Quays
- **One Thousand Ropes** | Introduced by New Zealand filmmaker **Tusi Tamasese**
 Monday 12 June, 1:55pm, State Theatre
 Tuesday 13 June, 6:15pm, Event Cinemas George St
 Sunday 18 June, 1:30pm, Casula Powerhouse
- **The Party**
 Wednesday 7 June, 6:30pm, Hayden Orpheum Cremorne
 Friday 9 June, 9:20pm, State Theatre
 Wednesday 14 June, 5:00pm, State Theatre
 Saturday 17 June, 4:20pm, The Ritz Cinema
- **Patti Cake\$** | Introduced by Australian actress **Danielle Macdonald**
 Friday 16 June, 9:00pm, State Theatre
 Saturday 17 June, 8:00pm, Event Cinemas George St
- **Wind River**
 Wednesday 14 June, 9:15pm, State Theatre
 Friday 16 June, 8:25pm, The Ritz Cinema
 Sunday 18 June, 2:00pm, Event Cinemas George St

Related Talks:

After the Movie Discussions in the Treasury Room:

- **Extended Q&A: My Year With Helen** Saturday 10 June, 6.30pm
 New Zealand filmmaker Gaylene Preston will discuss her year-long project with former NZ Prime Minister and UN Secretary-General candidate Helen Clark.
- **Extended Q&A: One Thousand Ropes** Monday 12 June, 4.15pm



Tusi Tamasese, the director of *One Thousand Ropes* and of the first-ever Samoan feature (*The Orator*, 2011) will chat about his approach to storytelling with *Sydney Morning Herald's* Garry Maddox.

Talking Movies in the Treasury Room:

- **Diversity On Australian Screens** Friday 16 June, 6.00pm
Are we diverse enough and do we like what we see on the screen? The filmmakers of *Australia Day* and *Ali's Wedding* discuss the realities of multiculturalism in Australian cinema.
- **Low Budget? No Worries** Monday 12 June, 6.00pm
Join the Australian filmmakers behind *That's Not Me* and *OtherLife* to get the insiders' guide to low budget filmmaking.

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

BLUE

Director, Screenwriter: Karina Holden | Australia | 70mins | In English | World Premiere

As marine biologist and activist Lucas Handley explains, our oceans are in trouble and it's time we stopped thinking of them both as a place of limitless resources and a dumping ground. His call for action is echoed by passionate advocates for marine preservation, including a shark activist, an FNQ ranger, seabird specialist, sustainability promoter, Greenpeace SE Asia's Mark Dia and long-time



campaigner Valerie Taylor. Filmed over two years in Indonesia, the Philippines, Hawaii and Australia, this cinematic, galvanizing documentary comes at a time when we are making critical decisions that will decide the legacy we leave for generations to come.

MOUNTAIN

Director: Jennifer Peedom | Australia | 70mins | In English

Fellow collaborators to this unique project are British writer Robert Macfarlane (author of the award-winning *Mountains of the Mind*) and leading high altitude cinematographer Renan Ozturk (*Sherpa, Meru*). Richard Tognetti's recorded score is stunning; soaring as the camera climbs vertiginous slopes or swoops across rocky peaks. With all this earthly beauty, it's hard to believe that only three centuries ago, the idea of conquering a peak was considered crazy. Mountains were once solely places of peril, not beauty. The absorbing narration traces our modern day fascination – our irresistible and sometimes fatal attraction to the dizzying heights. Peedom's follow-up to *Sherpa* (SFF 2015) is a suitably uplifting, symphonic ode to high places.

VIVID Live, Sydney Film Festival and the Australian Chamber Orchestra are proud to present Mountain LIVE, the World Premiere of Jennifer Peedom's *Mountain* with live musical score by the ACO, at the Opera House on Monday 12 June, 3:00pm.

MY YEAR WITH HELEN

Director: Gaylene Preston | New Zealand | 93mins | In English | World Premiere

Over the UN's 72-year history, there have been eight Secretaries-General; not one of them a woman. Helen Clark has spent her whole life breaking the glass ceiling, including her appointment as the first female Administrator of the UN Development Program, and ranking as one of *Forbes'* top 25 most powerful women in the world. With her familiar forthright yet measured approach, Clark embarks on her 2016 campaign, complemented by a groundswell of popular support for a woman in the role. Director-producer Gaylene Preston (*War Stories*, SFF 1995; *Home by Christmas*, SFF 2010) has crafted an inspiring documentary, one that celebrates Clark's achievements, as well recording another step forward for equality.

FEATURES

ALI'S WEDDING

Director: Jeffrey Walker | Australia | 110mins | In Farsi, Arabic and English with English Subtitles

Truth is stranger than fiction. *Ali's Wedding* is based on the real-life experience of lead actor Osamah Sami, whose arranged marriage lasted less than two hours. The smart screenplay by Sami and Andrew Knight (*Hacksaw Ridge*, *Rake*, *Jack Irish*) tells a humorous, authentic and poignant tale about family life in multicultural Australia. Stylishly directed by Jeffrey Walker (*Modern Family*, *Angry Boys*), the film boasts a terrific cast including Don Hany as Ali's father and delightful newcomer Helana Sawires as Dianne, the Lebanese-Australian medical student who sends Ali's heartbeat racing. The time is right for a feelgood winner like *Ali's Wedding*.

AUSTRALIA DAY

Director: Kriv Stenders | Australia | 94mins | In English and Mandarin | World Premiere

April is a 14-year-old Indigenous teen fleeing from a car crash. 17-year-old Iranian boy Sami is running from a crime he didn't commit. Lan, from China, is escaping sexual slavery. Elsewhere there's Sonya (Sebbens), an Indigenous cop wracked by guilt, and Terry (Brown), a cattle farmer who's just lost everything. Irwin's even-handed screenplay doesn't shy away from exposing intolerance and prejudice across the spectrum of Australian society. The propulsive direction of Stenders (*The Go-Betweens: Right Here*, SFF 2017) drives the intertwined stories to a suspenseful and exciting conclusion. *Australia Day* has much to say about the present state and potential future shape of the nation.



CALL ME BY YOUR NAME

Director: Luca Guadagnino | Italy, France | 130mins | English, Italian, French and German with English Subtitles | Australian Premiere

Guadagnino meticulously creates a world of sophistication and great splendour in this moving romance. It is the summer of 1983, and teenager Elio (Timothée Chalamet, superb) is on holiday at his parents' Italian villa. His days are spent reading, swimming and flirting with girls. At first, when his professor father's new American assistant Oliver (Armie Hammer) arrives, Elio is indifferent. As the days pass, the two spend more time together and grow irresistibly attracted to each other. Based on André Aciman's novel, Guadagnino co-wrote the screenplay with James Ivory (*The Remains of the Day*). A sensitive, intelligent and gorgeous coming-of-age story, *Call Me By Your Name* is one of the films of the year.

A GHOST'S STORY

Director, Screenwriter: David Lowery | USA | 87mins | In English | Australian Subtitles

Influenced by the work of Apichatpong Weerasethakul (Palme d'Or winner, *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*, SFF 2010), David Lowery's enigmatic film is built with a sparse narrative, minimal dialogue and a series of glorious images that convey great emotion. Affleck and Mara play a married couple who live in a cosy Texan home. When the man is killed, he returns to the house they shared as a spectral presence covered by a white sheet. The ghost watches his grieving wife as she lives on without him: what follows is a startling meditation on loss, grief, love and the passage of time.

HOTEL SALVATION

Director: Shubhashish Bhutiani | India | 99mins | In Hindi with English Subtitles | Australian Premiere

Daya Kumar tells his family that he wishes to die in the holy city of Varanasi, on the banks of the Ganges. The stubborn old man drags along his reluctant adult son Rajiv and they check into the Hotel Salvation, where people come to die. But once there, Daya gets his lust for life back, making new friends with the other 'dying' residents. Daya and Rajiv are forced to reconnect – both to each other and to the world around them. Described as an "arthouse take on the *Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*", *Hotel Salvation* is a wonderfully accomplished film that captures the vibrancy and strangeness of Varanasi with gentle humour.

IN THE FADE

Director, Screenwriter: Fatih Akin | Germany, France | 106mins | In German with English Subtitles | Australian Premiere

Diane Kruger (*Inglourious Basterds*, *Farewell My Queen*) gives a rare German-language performance in the new film by Fatih Akin. Set in Hamburg, the film is about the aftermath of an explosion. Katja's life collapses after the death of her husband and son in a bomb attack. But after the time of mourning and injustice comes the time for revenge. Whether making complex dramas like *Head-On* (which won the Berlinale Golden Bear in 2004) and *The Edge of Heaven* (Best Screenplay winner at Cannes 2007), or vibrant comedies like *Soul Kitchen* and *Goodbye Berlin*, Akin brings a distinctive energy and a keen understanding of German society to his films. The timely *In the Fade* is no exception, and finds him at his searching, pointed best.

INGRID GOES WEST

Director: Matt Spicer | USA | 97mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Ingrid (Plaza, *Parks and Recreation*; *Safety Not Guaranteed*, SFF 2012) is a troubled young woman who's found herself in strife because of her dangerous obsession with social media. Let loose upon the world with an inheritance she travels to befriend social media influencer Taylor (Olsen, *Avengers: Age of Ultron*; *Wind River* playing at SFF this year). As seen through the sunny filter of Instagram, Taylor's life is perfect. The determined Ingrid soon stalks her way into her online idol's life with both funny and disastrous consequences. A biting, dark satire about the impact of social media on real human connection, *Ingrid Goes West* is sure to cause both laughter and reflection.



MADAME

Director: Amanda Sthers | France | 90mins | In English | World Premiere

Anne (Collette; *Fun Mom Dinner*, SFF 2017) and Bob (Keitel), a wealthy, well-connected American couple, move into a manor in Paris. While preparing a luxurious dinner for sophisticated international friends, Anne discovers there are only 13 guests. So, she insists her loyal maid, Maria (Almodóvar regular Rossy de Palma; *Julieta*, SFF 2016), disguise herself as a mysterious Spanish noblewoman to even out the numbers. Too much wine and some playful chat lead Maria to endear herself to a dandy British artbroker (Smiley; *My Name is Emily*, SFF 2017). Their budding romance soon has Anne chasing her maid around Paris, reinventing the truth and finally plotting to destroy this most unexpected and joyous love affair.

ONE THOUSAND ROPES

Director, Screenwriter: Tusi Tamasese | New Zealand | 98mins | In Samoan with English Subtitles | Australian Premiere

Middle-aged Maea is a gentle Samoan man in Wellington who helps bring babies into the world. It's a far cry from the past when he was a tough fighter known as 'The Lion'. Maea lost his family long ago and now lives with painful memories and a volatile spirit that lingers in his house and won't let him forget. When his estranged daughter shows up pregnant and distressed Maea is presented with an opportunity to begin the healing process. The second film by Samoan New Zealander Tusi Tamasese (*The Orator*) is both tender and tough. The immediate and illuminating perspective is Samoan, but the broad and richly rewarding emotional terrain is universal.

THE PARTY

Director, Screenwriter: Sally Potter | UK | 71mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Respected British art house filmmaker Sally Potter (*Orlando*, SFF 1993; *The Man Who Cried*; *The Tango Lesson*) is the surprise writer-director of a fabulous farce that can proudly take its place in the 'dinner party from hell' hall of fame. Career politician Janet (Kristin Scott Thomas) is celebrating her promotion. Well, that's the plan, anyway. Things go hilariously downhill as soon as Janet's uber-cynical bestie, April (Patricia Clarkson, superb), and other perfectly dreadful guests arrive. Naturally everyone has something to hide and everyone's going to receive their just desserts long before the actual dessert arrives. Filmed in glorious monochrome, packed with zingers and paced like lightning, this 'Party' is well worth RSVPing for.

PATTI CAKE\$

Director, Screenwriter: Jeremy Jasper | USA | 108mins | In English | Australian Premiere

A star was born when writer-director Jeremy Jasper's terrific debut screened at Sundance this year. Sydney-born Danielle Macdonald wowed everyone as one of the great underdog characters of recent times. People mock hefty white rapper Patricia Dombrowski (Macdonald), aka Patti Cake\$, but in the great tradition of endearing movie misfits, she simply doesn't care. Nor is she deterred by living in a hovel with her alcoholic mother (Bridget Everett, priceless). With the help of her only friend, Hareesh (Siddharth Dhananjay) and a crazy African-American punk rocker named Basterd (Mamoudou Athie), Patti might just prove what we've suspected all along. Just like the actress who plays her, this kid's got talent.

WIND RIVER

Director, Screenwriter: Taylor Sheridan | USA | 111mins | In English | Australian Premiere

Renner (*The Hurt Locker*) plays Cory Lambert, a wildlife officer in Wyoming. When he discovers the body of a young Native American woman while hunting, the FBI come knocking. Rookie agent Jane Banner (Olsen, *Avengers: Age of Ultron*; *Ingrid Goes West* playing at SFF this year) is assigned to the case and requires Lambert's aid in the inhospitable, frozen terrain. As the puzzle comes together, we build a picture of both the present and past of this unforgiving and violent land. Superbly directing his own screenplay, Sheridan brings his trademark sense of place, fully drawn characters and real emotion to bear. This stylish, potent mystery also features the music of Nick Cave and Warren Ellis.

