



MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 2AM TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER

DAMIAN WALSH-HOWLING WINS INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM SERIES

Lexus Australia and Sydney Film Festival today announce Australian director and actor, Damian Walshe-Howling, has been named one of four winners of the international Lexus Short Films series.

Announced at the Nappa Valley Film Festival, Walshe-Howling was selected from over 4,400 filmmakers, from over 100 countries, by the Producers at **The Weinstein Company**.

He will now go on to write and direct a short film to the theme of the series, "Anticipation", to be produced by The Weinstein Company. The four winners will tour top film festivals around the world to promote their films, including Sydney Film Festival.

The international series received 355 Australian entries; second in number only to United States; with 50 more entries than the United Kingdom.

The high volume of entries from Australia were supported by the new **Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship**, the largest short film cash prize in Australia at \$200,000; or \$50,000 for four fellowship winners in 2016.

Sydney Film Festival's Festival Director **Nashen Moodley** said, "The high quality of entries coming from Australia is a true testament to the exceptional filmmaking talent being nurtured here. We congratulate Damian Walshe-Howling on this fantastic achievement."

"The Festival is also delighted American filmmaker Pippa Bianco has been selected among the four international winners. Her film *SHARE* was screened at the Festival this year."

"We are proud to continue to support the future generations of emerging filmmakers, both in Australia and internationally," said **Moodley**.

Adrian Weimers, Corporate Manager, Lexus Australia said, "Lexus is absolutely thrilled with this result. We had hoped the only recently launched Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship would provide a pathway for emerging Australian filmmakers to win the international prize. It's amazing this has happened in just months."

Best known as a home grown small screen star, most recently for his role in Australian underworld drama *Underbelly*, Walshe-Howling has made a number of short films including his latest,

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Suspended, which screened at international film festivals St Kilda, Flickerfest, Nashville and Locarno in Switzerland. Walshe-Howling has also been awarded an AFI in 2008.

The other winners joining Walshe-Howling and Bianco are Alexis Michalik, from France, and Byoung-Gon Moon, from South Korea.

The 355 Australian entrants into the international competition are also eligible for the Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship. A shortlist will be curated by Producers at The Weinstein Company and provided to the Sydney Film Festival and Lexus Australia.

Of these, four fellows will be selected for the inaugural **Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship** cash prize of \$50,000 each. The four will produce their next short film in 2016, to premiere at Sydney Film Festival in 2017.

For more information on the Lexus Short Film Series, visit www.lexusshortfilms.com.

For more information on the Lexus Australia Short Film Fellowship, visit www.sff.org.au/fellowship.

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

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