



MEDIA RELEASE

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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES NEW FILMS, ON SALE NOW

The 62nd Sydney Film Festival announces three important new films will screen.

“The Festival is very pleased to announce two new documentaries: *Steve Jobs: The Man in the Machine* and *Among the Believers*; together with one new feature, *The Assassin*, direct from Cannes, will be added to the Sydney Film Festival program,” said Festival Director Nashen Moodley.

Steve Jobs: The Man in the Machine, from award-winning documentarian and Festival guest **Alex Gibney**, is a candid and revealing portrait about the father of Apple. The film will accompany *Mr. Dynamite: The Rise of James Brown*, premiering at the Festival; together with a co-presented **Vivid Ideas** and **Sydney Film Festival** talk, **Alex Gibney: In Conversation**.

An intimate and powerful new documentary *Among the Believers*, by Indian filmmaker **Hemal Trivedi** and Pakistani filmmaker **Mohammed Ali Naqv** will also screen. Filmed over several years with unprecedented access, the film looks at the power struggle between Muslim extremists and secular leaders, presenting with brutal clarity the ideological battles shaping up in Pakistan and the Muslim world today.

A beautiful and enigmatic martial arts epic, *The Assassin*, comes direct to Sydney Film Festival from competition at Cannes, where the film won **Hou Hsiao-hsien** the Best Director Award. Based on the tale of Nie Yinniang from the era of the Tang dynasty in 9th century China, the film is an intelligent and visually remarkable new addition.

Synopsis for these special screenings:

AMONG THE BELIEVERS

This powerful, alarming documentary, which premiered at the recent Tribeca Film Festival, looks at the power struggle between Muslim extremists and secular leaders in today’s Pakistan. In one camp is Abdul Aziz Ghazi, an ISIS supporter and Taliban ally, whose Red Mosque network runs a number of *madrassahs* (Islamic seminaries). Aziz’s mother, brother and only son along with 150 students were killed when the Pakistani government levelled his flagship Islamabad mosque in 2007. Following the building’s destruction, the Taliban retaliated by massacring 132 Peshawar school children. Director, producer and editor Hemal Trivedi and Pakistan-born director Mohammed Ali Naqvi, secured unprecedented access to Aziz and the resulting interview is alarming. At the other end of the Pakistani political spectrum is nuclear physicist and educational activist Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy, who with his media appearances and lectures is desperately trying to combat extremism in his country. We also meet Talha, a 12-year-old who has decided to become a jihadi preacher, against his family’s

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wishes. In contrast, there is Zarina, a determined young girl who escapes the rigours of endless memorisation and recitation to join a regular school. The story of these two impoverished teens makes for a heartbreaking and intimate insight into modern Pakistan.

Screens Saturday 13 June, 5.15pm, Event Cinemas George Street, and Sunday 14 June, 4.30pm, Event Cinemas George Street.

THE ASSASSIN

Straight from Competition at Cannes, where it won Hou Hsiao-Hsien the Best Director award, *The Assassin* is a beautiful and enigmatic martial arts film set in 9th century China. Ten-year-old Nie Yinniang is abducted by a nun who initiates her into the martial arts, transforming her into an exceptional assassin charged with eliminating cruel and corrupt politicians. Thirteen years later she is sent back to the land of her birth with orders to kill the man to whom she was once betrothed. Nie Yinniang must choose: sacrifice the man she loves or break forever with the sacred way of the righteous assassins. Hou (*Flowers of Shanghai*; *A City of Sadness*, SFF 1990; *Millennium Mambo*, *Three Times*) brings his distinctive, poetic style to this captivating epic, his ninth film to screen at Sydney Film Festival.

Screens Saturday 13 June, 8pm, Event Cinemas George Street, and Sunday 14 June, 7pm, Event Cinemas George Street.

STEVE JOBS: THE MAN IN THE MACHINE

Alex Gibney, director of *Mr. Dynamite: The Rise of James Brown* – screening in this year’s program – and many other award-winning documentaries, brings his latest film to the Festival. His subject is the father of Apple, Steve Jobs. The film begins on an emotional note, with the announcement of Jobs’ death in October 2011 – as one tearful kid says, “he made the iPhone, he made the iPod, he’s made everything”. Gibney considers this public grief and then takes a remarkably personal look at Jobs’ career and legacy. From Jobs’ first encounter with a computer at 12, the age he met Apple cofounder Steve Wozniak, to the newly anointed ‘personal computer’, his legendary maniacal drive, to his final public appearance at the launch of iCloud. Anecdotes and interviews reveal conflicts in the boardroom, problematic personal decisions, as well as his marketing genius. Director and narrator Gibney, a self-confessed Apple aficionado, poses questions about the nature of man and machine, as he tells the engrossing story of a world changer, one not without flaws.

Screens Friday 5 June, 9.15pm, Event Cinemas George Street, and Friday 12 June, 6pm, Event Cinemas George Street.

Sydney Film Festival runs 3 – 14 June 2015.

Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2015 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit sff.org.au for more information.

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From **Wednesday 3 June** to **Sunday 14 June 2015**, the 62nd Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, panel discussions, international guests and more. Each year the Festival’s programming team curates 12 days of cinema sourced from world-famous film festivals, including Cannes, Sundance, Toronto and the Berlinale; as well as Australia’s finest local productions.

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 are: *Two Days, One Night* (2014); *Only God Forgives* (2013); *Alps* (2012); *A Separation* (2011), which went on to win an Academy Award; *Heartbeats* (2010); and *Bronson* (2009).

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The Festival takes place across greater Sydney: at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, Dendy Newtown, Art Gallery of NSW, Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, Casula Powerhouse, the Festival Hub at Sydney Town Hall and SFF Outdoor Screen.

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 62nd 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.

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