



MEDIA INFO DOC

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

FULL GUEST LINE UP FOR 2014 FESTIVAL

The 61st Sydney Film Festival presents over 180 films and welcomes over 100 filmmaker guests from 16 countries to walk the red carpet, introduce their films and participate in talks, panels and Q&A sessions this 4-15 June.

For the most up-to-date information on guests and film please visit sff.org.au

Highlights include:

Direct from its world-premiere screening at the Cannes Film Festival, SFF and **Vivid Ideas** are proud to present the Australian Premiere of the highly anticipated futuristic thriller ***The Rover*** and host director **David Michôd**, actors **Guy Pearce** and **Robert Pattinson** and producer **Liz Watts** at the State Theatre on Saturday 7 June. *The Rover* screens as part of SFF's Official Competition. Michôd, Pearce, Pattinson and Watts will also give a talk as part of Vivid Ideas at Town Hall on Sunday 8 June.

Actor **Cate Blanchett** will attend the Festival to introduce a special screening of DreamWorks Animation's ***How to Train Your Dragon 2*** the second chapter of the epic trilogy in which Blanchett is the voice of the character Valka. The screening is held at 2pm on Public Holiday Monday, 9 June, at Event Cinemas George Street.

UK visual artists and film directors **Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard** introduce SFF's Opening Night Film, the Australian Premiere of ***20,000 Days on Earth***, on Wednesday 4 June at the State Theatre. The film, a highly stylised imagination of a day in the life of musician and author Nick Cave is also in SFF's Official Competition. Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard have worked together as artists since the mid-1990s. Performance and music play significant roles in their work, including a sound installation with Scott Walker at Sydney Opera House and their ongoing collaboration with Cave. *20,000 Days on Earth* is their debut feature.

Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard will also join Academy Award[®] winning director **Ross Kauffman** for a special industry workshop day presented in partnership with **Screen Australia** called ***Think Big at the Festival***, on **Friday 6 June** at the Festival Hub, Lower Town Hall.

New Zealand director **Taika Waititi** and actor **Jonathan Brugh** introduce the SFF Closing Night Film ***What We Do in the Shadows*** on Sunday 15 June at the State Theatre. This vampire mockumentary is Waititi's third feature film (after *Eagle vs Shark* and *Boy*, SFF 2010), and the first in collaboration with

his longtime comedy mate Jemaine Clement (*Flight of the Conchords*). Waititi became an international name in 2005 when his short film, *Two Cars, One Night*, was nominated for an Oscar.

Director **Fred Schepisi** takes part in the annual Ian McPherson Memorial Lecture on Monday 9 June at Event Cinemas George Street, following the Australian Premiere of his new feature ***Words and Pictures***, starring **Clive Owen** and **Juliette Binoche**. ABC-TV's **David Stratton** will bring his consummate interviewing skills to host a special discussion with Schepisi, one of the most respected directors in the international film and television industry. Schepisi's first feature film, *The Devil's Playground* (1976) won six AFI Awards. Two years later, the success of his second film, *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*, took him to the USA, where he directed *Barbarosa* (1982), *Iceman* (1984), *Plenty* (1985) and *Roxanne* (1987). He returned to Australia to write and direct *Evil Angels* (1988), based on John Bryson's book about the infamous Azaria Chamberlain case. His other films include *The Russia House* (1990), *Six Degrees of Separation* (1993) and *The Eye of the Storm* (2011).

Official Competition Guests

Black Coal, Thin Ice writer and director **Diao Yinan** (China) is a leading figure in China's avant-garde theatre, and has also written numerous screenplays. He is attending SFF for his third feature film *Black Coal, This Ice*, which won the Golden Bear at the Berlinale 2014. He graduated with a degree in literature and screenwriting from the Central Academy of Drama in Beijing. His screenplays for other directors include: *Spicy Love Soup*, *Shower*, *All the Way* and *Eternal Moment*. As an actor, he starred in Yu Likwai's independent feature *All Tomorrow's Parties*, which premiered in Un Certain Regard at the Cannes Film Festival in 2003. He wrote and directed his debut feature *Uniform* in 2003; the film went on to win the Dragons & Tigers Award at the Vancouver International Film Festival and was released in several countries. He wrote and directed his second feature, *Night Train* in 2007; it premiered in Un Certain Regard the same year, winning critical acclaim for its minimalist style and securing distribution throughout Europe.

Boyhood actor **Ellar Coltrane** (USA) and producer **Cathleen Sutherland** (USA) will attend the Australian premiere and take part in a Meet the Filmmakers talk at the Apple Store Sydney on Saturday 7 June. Coltrane was born and raised in Austin, Texas. Unconventionally schooled through most of his childhood, he was allowed to learn through experience and develop a deep interest in art of all kinds. He stumbled into acting at a young age, and after a few small roles in independent films and commercials, was cast in **Richard Linklater's** *Boyhood*, which was filmed over a 12-year period. Sutherland is also a native Austinite, and holds a BS in Radio-Television-Film from the University of Texas. Having been exposed to film production at an impressionable age – while visiting the set of her aunt's production of *The Whole Shootin' Match*, appearing as a fish-chomped kid camper in *Piranha*, and securing her first PA job at 16 on *Mongrel* – her roots are firmly planted in the early days of independent filmmaking in Texas.

Australian Director **Kasimir Burgess** will attend the World Premiere of his first feature, ***Fell***, and take part in a Meet the Filmmakers talk at the Apple Store with actor **Matt Nable** on Saturday 14 June. Burgess studied at the Victorian College of the Arts. His award-winning shorts include *Lily*, winner of the Crystal Bear at the 2011 Berlinale. Also attending are *Fell* producers **John Maynard** and **Mary Minas** and writer **Natasha Pincus**.

Fish & Cat director **Shahram Mokri** (Iran) will introduce the Australian premiere of his film at the State Theatre on Thursday 12 June. Born in 1978 in Marand, Iran, Mokri is a graduate of cinema from Tehran's Soureh College. He has been making short films since 2000 and he has also edited eight TV dramas, two TV series and more than 20 short and documentary films. His short films brought him national and international recognition and *Ashkan, The Charmed Ring and Other Stories*, his debut

feature film, had its international premiere at Busan in 2009. His second feature, *Fish & Cat*, premiered at Venice in 2013.

Kumiko, the Treasure Hunter director **David Zellner** (USA) is an Austin-based filmmaker who has directed, written and produced a number of award-winning shorts and two feature films, *Goliath* and *Kid-THING*, which have screened at international festivals including Sundance and the Berlinale. David will introduce the Australian Premiere of *Kumiko, the Treasure Hunter* at the State Theatre on Monday 9 June.

Locke producer **Guy Heeley** (UK) worked as an assistant director on over 30 films before forming Shoebox Films with director Joe Wright and producer Paul Webster in 2011. His credits include the BBC series *True Love*, which was written and directed by Dominic Savage; and *Hummingbird*, written and directed by Steven Knight, which was released in the UK in 2013. Heeley's credits as first assistant director include *The Iron Lady*, starring Meryl Streep; *My Week With Marilyn*, with Michelle Williams and Kenneth Branagh; Joe Wright's *Pride And Prejudice*, and Wright's *Hanna* (SFF 2011), with Saoirse Ronan, Cate Blanchett and Eric Bana. In addition, Heeley's credits include *Brighton Rock*, *Cemetery Junction*, *It's a Wonderful Afterlife*, *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day*, *Sleuth*, *Miss Potter*, *Love + Hate*, *Bend It Like Beckham*, *The Warrior* and *Hilary and Jackie*.

Ruin co-directors **Amiel Courtin-Wilson** and **Michael Cody** will introduce their Australian Premiere screening on Tuesday 10 June at the State Theatre. Amiel Courtin-Wilson (SFF 2012 Official Competition jury member) is an Australian writer, director and producer. At 19 his feature-length film debut *Chasing Buddha* (2000) won best Australian documentary at SFF. His narrative-feature debut *Hail* (SFF 2011) premiered at Venice and won international attention. Michael Cody is a graduate of UTS. He produced *Hail* (SFF 2011). *Ruin* is his feature debut as director. Also attending this screening are Cambodian cast members **Malen Sang** and **Mony Ros**. Mony Ros featured in the Australian feature *Wish You Were Here*, which premiered on opening night at Sundance in 2011. He has also recently received accolades as a drummer and dancer in theatre productions across the country. Sang Malen is an actress, circus performer, acrobat, gymnast, and choreographer. Malen's circus performing has taken her around Southeast Asia including international tours to Laos in 2012.

Official Competition Jury President and Full Jury:

The 2014 **Jury President Rachel Perkins** (Australia) is also the director of ***Black Panther Woman***, competing for SFF's Documentary Australia Foundation Award. Rachel's filmmaking work spans documentary, TV drama series, telemovies and feature films. She recently directed the multiple-award-winning series *Redfern Now* as well as the telemovie *Mabo* which premiered at SFF 2012. Her feature-directorial work includes the musical hit *Bran Nue Dae*, *One Night the Moon* and *Radiance* (SFF 1998), which screened at Berlin, Sundance and many other international festivals. In 2009 she completed the landmark documentary series *First Australians*. Other documentary work includes the series *Blood Brothers* and *From Spirit to Spirit*. She is currently engaged in the development of multiple TV drama and factual projects through her production company Blackfella Films, one of Australia's leading content creators, which she co-founded in 1992. Rachel lives between Sydney and Alice Springs, the traditional lands of her people, the Arrernte Nation.

Perkins is the seventh Jury President of the Official Competition, following Australian actor **Hugo Weaving** (2013), Australian filmmaker **Rachel Ward** (2012), Chinese filmmaker **Chen Kaige** (2011), Australian producer **Jan Chapman** (2010) and Australian filmmakers **Rolf de Heer** (2009) and **Gillian Armstrong** (2008).

Rachael Blake (Australia) is currently in production on Alex Proyas' *Gods of Egypt* alongside Nikolaj Coster-Waldau and Gerard Butler. Blake has recently completed production on the independent feature film *Melody* and will next be seen in Stephen Lance's upcoming feature, *My Mistress*. Her other feature credits include *Paws*, Alkinos Tsilimidis' *Tom White*, Ray Lawrence's *Lantana*, *Derailed* with Clive Owen and Jennifer Aniston, Kenneth Glenaan's *Summer*, Daniel Young's *Pinprick*, *Cherry Tree Lane*, Gaylene Preston's *Perfect Strangers*, and, most recently, Julia Leigh's *Sleeping Beauty* (SFF 2011). She has appeared in some of Australia's most popular television series including *Wildside*, *Water Rats*, *Home and Away*, *Heartbreak High*, *The Straits* and *Grass Roots*. Her other television credits include *Pacific Drive*, *Nowhere to Land*, *The Three Stooges*, *Auf Wiedersehen*, *Clapham Junction*, *Suburban Shootout*, *Inspector Lewis*, *False Witness*, *The Prisoner*, Network Ten's telemovie *Hawke*, and the ABC/HBO co-production *Serangoon Road*. Rachael was awarded the Centenary Medal for her services to the Australian Film Industry. She has also received numerous awards and nominations for her film and television work.

Oh Jung-wan (South Korea) is the chief producer and founder of BOM Film Productions, known for its producer-based production system and creative marketing strategies. Oh has focused on producing accomplished feature films with a unique style that challenges the conventional ideas of cinema. Her filmography includes the award-winning box office successes *My Dear Enemy*, *Come Rain*, *Come Shine*, *A Tale of Two Sisters*, *A Bittersweet Life*, *Untold Scandal*, *Foul King* and many more.

Shelly Kraicer (Canada) is the guest programmer of the SFF 2014 **China: Rebels, Ghosts and Romantics** program strand. A Beijing-based writer, critic and film curator, he has written for magazines and journals including *Cinema Scope*, *Positions*, *Cineaste*, *Village Voice* and *Screen International*. Since 2007, Kraicer has been a programmer at the Vancouver International Film Festival and has worked as a consultant for the Venice, Udine, Dubai, and Rotterdam film festivals. Shelly has written numerous articles on Chinese cinema, including a two-part review on 100 years of Chinese cinema for the *Village Voice*, and interviews with Johnnie To, Wai Kai-fai, Tsai Ming-liang and Edward Yang.

Khalo Matabane (South Africa) is the multi-award-winning director of numerous feature-length documentaries, drama series, campaigns and commercials. His feature film ***Nelson Mandela: The Myth & Me*** (SFF 2014) won the 2013 Special Jury Prize at the International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam. He completed his first dramatic feature film, *State of Violence*, in 2010, and his work has been screened in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. Matabane has a passion for narrative storytelling, working with scripts that challenge the society we live in and creating challenging roles for his actors. With his latest film, Matabane sees his quest to make sense of current South African and global politics with the opinions of people who have known Mandela, or whose perspectives and destinies have in some way been shaped by him.

Altman on Altman retrospective:

Michael Altman (USA) is the eldest son of director Robert Altman. At age 14 he wrote the lyrics for 'Suicide Is Painless,' the theme song for *M*A*S*H*. He has spent most of his career working in feature film. He founded several technical and service companies relating to motion-picture production. In the last 10 years Michael has focused on producing, writing and directing, including the Hollywood stage production of *EXIT 10*, several soundtrack albums and the multi-award-winning documentary film *American Songwriter*. He currently has a number of projects in development and is looking to expand his directing career.

Program curator **Richard Moore** (Australia) is a former Executive Producer of TV Arts at ABC TV, and ex-director of the Brisbane and Melbourne International Film Festivals. Richard is still active as a programmer and producer, including programming a film series called ART MATTERS for the Melbourne International Arts Festival, which last year featured a special tribute to John Landis. He also works as head of theatrical distribution for Umbrella Entertainment.

James Benning: An Outsider Visionary retrospective:

James Benning (USA) is an avant-garde filmmaker hugely important to a discerning group of curators, critics, academics, and fellow artists from all over the world who continually support him and engage in dialogues about his work. Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, during World War II, Benning played baseball for the first 20 years of his life, receiving a degree in mathematics while on a baseball scholarship. At the age of 33 he received an MFA from the University of Wisconsin. For the next four years he taught filmmaking at Northwestern University, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Oklahoma and the University of California, San Diego. In 1980 he moved to New York, making films with the aid of grant and German television money. After eight years in New York he moved to Val Verde, California, where he currently resides, teaching film and video at California Institute of the Arts.

Program curator **Gabe Klinger** (USA) is a film-studies professor, critic, archivist, curator and filmmaker. His articles have appeared in *Sight & Sound*, *Film Comment*, *Cinema Scope*, and many other publications. Klinger has taught film studies at University of Illinois and Columbia College in Chicago, and has worked in the motion-picture departments at George Eastman House, MoMA New York, and the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University. His book on Joe Dante, co-edited by Nil Baskar, will be published by the Austrian Filmmuseum and Slovenian Cinematheque in fall 2013. *Double Play: James Benning and Richard Linklater* (SFF 2014) is his first feature film.

Non-competition documentaries:

Keep on Keepin' On director **Alan Hicks** (USA) is the winner of Best New Documentary Director and the Audience Award for Best Documentary at Tribeca. A first-time director/drummer/surfer from Australia, Hicks convinced his surfing mate and cinematographer, Adam Hart, to travel to the USA to follow and film 89-year-old jazz legend, **Clark Terry** (Quincy Jones' first teacher) over four years – to document an unlikely mentorship between Terry and a driven, blind piano prodigy, Justin Kauflin.

Dior & I director **Frederic Tcheng** (France) also co-produced, co-edited and shot *Valentino: The Last Emperor*, the 2009 hit documentary shortlisted for an Oscar. He is the co-director of *Diana Vreeland: The Eye Has to Travel*. His collaborations include such varied personalities as the poet Sarah Riggs and the fashion photographer Mikael Jansson. He works as an editor on commercials for brands such as H&M, Jimmy Choo and Ferragamo.

Double Play: James Benning and Richard Linklater director **Gabe Klinger** (USA) (see James Benning retrospective notes above for bio)

E-Team co-director **Ross Kauffman** (USA) is the director, producer, cinematographer and co-editor of *Born Into Brothels*, which won the 2005 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. *Born Into Brothels* was shown in over 50 film festivals worldwide, and has since received a multitude of awards. Ross filmed a number of the E-Team missions in Syria and Libya and travelled with them to Moscow, Paris, Berlin, Geneva and beyond. *E-Team* subject **Dr. Anna Neistat** is a specialist in

humanitarian crises and works to investigate and expose human-rights violations in crisis situations on a rapid-response basis. She has experience working in Haiti, Zimbabwe, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Armenia, Belarus, Israel, the Philippines and Kenya. Previously, as director of Human Rights Watch's Moscow office, Neistat worked on the conflict in Chechnya and other human rights problems in the former Soviet Union. Neistat also holds an LL.M. degree from Harvard Law School, a J.D. and Ph.D. in law, and an M.S. in history and philology.

Ross Kauffman will also join UK visual artists and filmmakers Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard for a special industry workshop day presented in partnership with **Screen Australia** called **Think Big at the Festival**, on **Friday 6 June** at the Festival Hub, Lower Town Hall.

Nelson Mandela: The Myth & Me director **Khalo Matabane** (South Africa) will also attend the festival as an Official Competition jury member (see details above).

Particle Fever director **Mark Levinson** (USA), earned a doctoral degree in particle physics from the University of California at Berkeley before embarking on his film career. In the film world, he became a specialist in the postproduction writing and recording of dialogue known as ADR. He has worked closely with such directors as Anthony Minghella, Francis Ford Coppola, Tom Tykwer, Milos Forman and David Fincher. He is the writer/producer/director of the narrative feature film *Prisoner of Time*, which examined the lives of former Russian dissident artists after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and premiered at the Moscow International Film Festival.

Pulp: A Film about Life, Death & Supermarkets screenwriter **Peter O'Donoghue** (New Zealand) is an award-winning editor, director and writer from New Zealand based in Sydney. In 2013 Peter directed his first documentary, *Happy Every Day: Park Life in China*, an upbeat reflection on self-censorship in Beijing and Shanghai. Peter's main collaborations are with New Zealand director Florian Habicht: their 2011 co-written feature film *Love Story* (shot in New York) won Best Film, Best Director (Florian) and Best Editor (Peter) at the 2011 New Zealand Film Awards. Their new collaboration – *Pulp: A Film about Life, Death & Supermarkets* is a UK production showcasing the iconic Britpop band Pulp and their enigmatic front man Jarvis Cocker. Peter was again co-writer and editor. The film had its world premiere at SXSW 2014 in Austin, Texas, and will have theatrical releases in the UK, the USA and Australia in 2014.

Feature guests:

Appropriate Behaviour director **Desiree Akhavan** is an Iranian-American filmmaker and the co-creator and star of the award-winning web series *The Slope*, a comedy that follows a pair of superficial homophobic lesbians in love. She was recently featured as one of Filmmaker Magazine's 25 New Faces of Film and is currently in production on an animated series for former MTV CEO Judy McGrath's new site, *Astronauts Wanted*, called *The Origin of Shame*. Her first feature, *Appropriate Behaviour* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival 2014.

The Two Faces of January director **Hossein Amini** (Iran) was nominated for a BAFTA and an Oscar in 1998 for his adaptation of Henry James' classic novel *Wings of a Dove*, which starred Helena Bonham Carter, Linus Roach and Alison Elliott. Amini also wrote the screenplay for the 1996 release *Jude*, starring Kate Winslet and Christopher Eccleston, which won the Edinburgh Film Festival prize for Best British Film. Other credits include the 2002 release *The Four Feathers*, with Heath Ledger, and *Killshot* (2008). In 2011, Amini wrote the screenplay for the international hit *Drive*, starring Ryan Gosling and Carey Mulligan. *Drive* screened in Competition at the Cannes Film Festival and was also nominated for Best Film at the 2012 BAFTAs. Most recently, Amini co-wrote Universal Pictures' *Snow*

White and the Huntsman. His directorial debut is an adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's *The Two Faces of January*, starring Viggo Mortensen, Kirsten Dunst and Oscar Isaac.

Casa Grande director **Fellipe Barbosa** (Brazil) was born in Rio de Janeiro and completed his MFA in film at Columbia University. Two of his shorts – *La muerte es pequeña* and *Salt Kiss* – screened at the Sundance Film Festival. *Salt Kiss* was also an official selection of the New York Film Festival and won numerous awards at festivals including Aspen, Austin, Guadalajara and the Rio de Janeiro Short Film Festival. In 2007, Fellipe was named one of Filmmaker Magazine's 25 New Faces of Independent Film. His screenplay *Casa Grande* went to the 2008 Sundance Screenwriter's and Director's Lab, won the Annenberg Grant and was a finalist of the Sundance/NHK Award. His feature documentary *Laura* won Best Documentary at the 2011 Hamptons Film Festival, where it premiered, and then played at Hot Docs, Visions du Réel and Bafici among others.

Gabrielle actor **Alexandre Landry** (Canada) graduated from the National Theatre School of Canada in 2009. He participated in the theatrical production *Les aventures de Lagardère*, directed by Frédéric Bélanger for the Théâtre de la Roulotte (2009-2011). At the same time, Alexandre was in the cast of *Chambres* (2009), directed by Eric Jean and presented at the Théâtre du Quat'Sous. In 2011, he appeared in the play *Tom à la Ferme* by Michel-Marc Bouchard, directed by Claude Poissant and presented at the Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui. That same year, he was in the play *Médée* produced by Caroline Binet at the Théâtre Denise-Pelletier. From 2010 to 2012, he portrayed the role of Olivier Côté in the TV show *Destinées*. On the big screen, Alexandre appeared in Gabriel Pelletier's *La peur de l'eau* (2011). In 2013, he will be part of the cast of Rodrigue Jean's *L'amour au temps de la guerre civile*. In Louise Archambault's *Gabrielle* he portrays Martin, Gabrielle's boyfriend.

Calvary director **John Michael McDonagh** (Ireland) made his first foray into writing and directing with *The Second Death*, a short film released in 2000. Next McDonagh adapted Robert Drewe's 1991 novel *Our Sunshine* into the screenplay for the 2003 film *Ned Kelly*, which was directed by Australian filmmaker Gregor Jordan. McDonagh gained considerable attention in 2011, with the theatrical release of his feature-film directorial debut *The Guard* (SFF 2011) starring Brendan Gleeson and Don Cheadle. The film received critical acclaim and went on to become the most financially successful independent Irish film of all time. His brother is the playwright and filmmaker Martin McDonagh (*In Bruges*). This screening will also be attended by *Calvary* co-producer **Elizabeth Eves**.

Faith Connections director **Pan Nalin** (India) is a self-taught filmmaker. He was born in a remote village in Gujarat and made several short films and documentaries before venturing into feature films. His first feature film, *Samsara*, was a huge commercial and critical success worldwide and won him over 30 awards. With box office collection of US \$27million, *Samsara* remains the highest-grossing Indian independent film internationally. Nalin's documentary *Ayurveda: The Art of Being* has also won many awards and was theatrically released worldwide. Nalin's epic *Valley of Flowers* was filmed in the remote Himalayas and in Japan and was considered a major underground hit. Nalin has been hired to write *Race*, about the incredible story of Jesse Owens. Nalin is also scripting the Paris-set spy thriller *Codename: Madeleine* with Isabelle Sobelman (writer of Oscar winner *La Vie en Rose*) for Cite Films & Virginie Films France. He is also attached to direct forthcoming India-New Zealand set drama *Beyond the Known World* for The Reservoir Films NZ and Arsam International France.

The Little Death director **Josh Lawson** is a writer, director and actor. He has written and directed an original feature film, *The Little Death*, the short film, *After the Credits*, (Best Comedy at the LA Shorts Fest, Best Narrative Short (Comedy) at the Fargo Film Festival and Best Achievement in Screenplay at St Kilda Film Festival and the screenplay was nominated for an AWGIE award). Josh also wrote for the Jungleboys comedy series *The Elegant Gentleman's Guide to Knifefighting* which aired on ABC1

in 2013. Other television credits include writing for *TV Burp*, *Twenty Four Seven* and *My New Best Friend* and he hosted the series *Wipeout*. His play *Shakespearealism* won Naked Theatre Company's Top Shorts playwriting competition, *The 11'o'clock* won best comedy script in Short and Sweet. *Shakespearealism* was subsequently produced as a radio drama by ABC radio's Airwaves program and enjoyed a return season at the Old Fitzroy alongside *The 11'o'clock* and a new short play, *Work In Progress*. These plays resulted in Josh being shortlisted for the Phillip Parsons Award at Belvoir.

Siddharth director **Richie Mehta** (India) has recently completed two feature films: *I'll Follow You Down*, a science-fiction drama starring Haley Joel Osment, Gillian Anderson, Rufus Sewell and Victor Garber, which premiered at the 2013 Busan International Film Festival; and **Siddharth**, a Hindi-language film starring Rajesh Tailang and Tannishtha Chatterjee, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival in 2013. Both films will be theatrically released in 2014. Mehta's first feature film, *Amal* starred Naseeruddin Shah, Roshan Seth, and Seema Biswas. *Amal* has won over 30 international awards, was nominated for six Genie awards, including Best Picture, Director, and Adapted Screenplay, and was named one of the top ten Canadian films of the decade by Playback Magazine. *Amal's* remake rights were optioned by producer Oprah Winfrey and Harpo Films, the screenplay being written by Mehta as well. Trained as a painter and sculptor, Mehta was mentored by directors such as Wim Wenders, Shekhar Kapur and Brian DePalma. Mehta is also an on-screen judge for the Canadian version of the popular reality TV program *Bollywood Star*, airing in 2014.

Touch director **Christopher Houghton** originally trained as a fine-art photographer and is an award-winning graduate of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. Christopher's short comedy *Versus*, featuring award-winning actor Russell Dykstra, collected the Australian Screen Directors Association/AFTRS award for Best Director. The film premiered internationally in the Cinema des Antipodes Showcase at Cannes 2003, and with two other graduate films went on to screen at numerous film festivals around the world. In 2007 Christopher directed *Swing*, a 26-minute short financed by the South Australian Film Corporation and the Adelaide Film Festival (AFF). Premiering at AFF in 2007, the film won the Audience Award for Best Short Film. *Swing* also won Best Film at the St Kilda International Film Festival and was nominated for Best Short Film at the 2007 Australian Film Institute Awards. In 2010 Christopher secured investment through Screen Australia's Signature Fund for *Sons & Mothers*, a feature-length observational documentary about a unique group of artists. *Sons & Mothers* premiered at the Adelaide Film Festival in 2013, and premieres internationally at the Lucerne International Film Festival (Switzerland) in October 2014.

What We Do In The Shadows director **Taika Waititi** (New Zealand) is an acclaimed artist, comedian, writer, actor and director. *What We Do in the Shadows* is his third feature film, and the first in collaboration with his long time comedy mate, Jemaine Clement. Taika became an international name in 2005 when his short film, *Two Cars, One Night*, was nominated for an Oscar. The concept was eventually expanded to a feature-length film, *Boy*, shot in 2009, which went on to break all box office records in New Zealand, becoming the highest grossing local film of all time. After Jemaine's appearance in Waititi's first feature, *Eagle vs Shark*, Taika became one of the writers and directors on the HBO TV hit, *Flight of the Conchords*, and has since directed for ABC, MTV, and other companies with three letters in their name. Comedian **Jonathan Brugh**, who plays Deacon in the film, has been performing his unique brand of comedy theatre for over 15 years. He began with the absurdist tragic-comic duo Sugar & Spice, who won critical acclaim throughout New Zealand and Australia; and won the Chapman Tripp Award for best Comic Performance in 1996 and the Billy T Award in 1998. Jonny has appeared in several local films, including *How to Meet Girls from a Distance* and *Tangiwai*. His television drama credits are extensive.

Australian Documentary Foundation Prize Guests:

SFF is pleased to include the following Australian documentary filmmaker guests:

35 Letters director **Janine Hosking's** career highlights include producing and directing the feature documentary *My Khmer Heart* for HBO, which won several awards including best documentary at the Hollywood Film Festival and the Gracie Allen Award for Best Feature Documentary. Her critically acclaimed film about French academic Lisette Nigot, titled *Mademoiselle and the Doctor* (SFF 2004), premiered in competition at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam and was televised worldwide. Her second film for HBO, *Ganja Queen*, went behind the scenes of the controversial Schapelle Corby case and was nominated for the Most Outstanding Documentary Logie in 2008. In 2012 SFF premiered *I'm Not Dead Yet*, Janine's portrait of popular country-music legend Chad Morgan and his roadie wife Joanie.

Once My Mother director **Sophia Turkiewicz** was born in a refugee camp in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia. She arrived in Australia as a young child. Sophia grew up in Adelaide, where she completed an arts degree at Adelaide University. She became a teacher before being selected for the prestigious first intake of full-time students at the newly created Australian Film, Television & Radio School. Since graduating from AFTRS in 1978, Sophia has worked in the film and television industry as a drama director. Her credits include the feature film *Silver City*, which was released internationally in 1984 and won three AFI Awards, as well as Best Film at the 1984 Sydney Film Critics Awards. Her television work includes both adult and children's drama (*Something in the Air*, *Escape of the Artful Dodger*, *Mirror Mirror*, *A Country Practice*) and telemovies (*Time's Raging*, *I've Come About the Suicide*). She spent six years lecturing in the Directing Department at AFTRS before leaving to prepare for the making of *Once My Mother*, her first documentary.

All This Mayhem director **Eddie Martin's** debut film *Jisoe* (2005) was praised by critics as "one of the best, most significant documentaries to be produced in Australia." It continues to be sold around the world and has gained a cult following; it won the Audience Award at the St Kilda Film Festival and was selected to screen at several international festivals. *Lionel* (2008), a documentary about the legendary Indigenous world-champion boxer Lionel Rose, was nominated for a FCCA award and two AFI awards, including Best Documentary Feature. *Lionel* was commissioned by SBS Television and premiered at the Melbourne International Film Festival, where Eddie was also invited to participate in the prestigious Accelerator program for emerging filmmakers. *All This Mayhem* (2013) is produced by George Pank and James Gay-Rees (*Senna*, *Exit Through the Gift Shop*) and edited by Chris King (*Senna*, *Exit Through the Gift Shop*). The documentary was produced with the backing of Vice Films, Screen Australia, Screen Queensland and the Adelaide Film Festival where it recently premiered.

Black Panther Woman director and producer **Rachel Perkins** is also the SFF Official Competition Jury President (details above). The film's subject, **Marlene Cummins**, was born in the southwest town of Cunnamulla; the traditional people on her fathers' side are Guguyelandji, and on her mother's side Woppaburra. By the time she met the leader of the Black Panther Party, Marlene, still a teenager already bore the scars of discrimination and institutionalised racism. Drawn to the party's potent mix of militant, sexy black power, Marlene became a member of the first and only Australian Black Panther Party. Marlene is Australia's foremost Indigenous female blues writer and performer. She refined her skills as a blues saxophonist and songwriter at the Berklee College of Music in Boston in the mid-1990s. She continues to busk a few times a week as she finds this helps her to maintain and develop her feel as a musician. In addition to her musical talent, Marlene has been a regular broadcaster on Koori Radio for years with her renowned blues show, *Marloo's Blues*. She won Broadcaster of the Year at the Deadly Awards in 2009. Now Marlene is preparing to release her first full-length album, *Koori Woman Blues*, to coincide with the premiere of *Black Panther Women*.

China's 3Dreams director and producer **Nick Torrens** has commissioned documentary programming for the SBS Television Network and conducted film-development programs for various institutions and agencies. Torrens has designed and directed courses for the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS), taught documentary history and practice, chaired international forums, prepared industry submissions and reviews, acted as mentor for emerging filmmakers and worked to enhance the profile and sense of community among documentary practitioners. In 2005 he directed *Headlands*, Australia's first Documentary Ideas Development program. He conducts master classes and seminars in documentary technique, including presentations at the AIDC, the Victorian College of the Arts, AFTRS, the Australia-China Business Council and the Australian Graduate School of Management. His award-winning films include *The Men Who Would Conquer China*, *To Get Rich Is Glorious*, *Running From the Ghost*, *Vis à Vis: Techno Tribal* and *Liberal Rule: The Politics That Changed Australia*.

The Last Impresario director **Gracie Otto**, from the Australian Otto acting family, graduated from Sydney Film School in 2006 and works as a director, editor and actress. Her debut feature *The Last Impresario* recently premiered at the London BFI Film Festival. Previously her five short films screened internationally. She was the lead actress in *Three Blind Mice*, *LBF* and *Poor Little Rich Girls*.

Love Marriage in Kabul director **Amin Palangi** is an Iranian-born Australian filmmaker who has been making documentaries and fictional films in Australia, Afghanistan and Iran. He spends his days dramatising the human experience, teaching at a number of film schools and running the Persian International Film Festival in Australia. Amin is in the final stages of his PhD (ANU). He holds a Masters from the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS), and a BA with Honours from the Australian National University.

The Redfern Story director **Darlene Johnson** started her career as a writer and director with the short film *Two Bob Mermaid* in 1996, a story inspired by her mother's experiences of growing up under the assimilation period of the 1950s. It deals with the effects of racism on a fair-skinned Aboriginal teenager, and struck a chord nationally and internationally. Darlene has continued exploring themes of race, identity and perception in both documentary and fiction. Her films include *Stolen Generations*, which was nominated for an International Emmy Award; *Stranger in My Skin*; *The Making of Phillip Noyce's Rabbit-Proof Fence*; the supernatural drama *Crocodile Dreaming*, which featured the first-time pairing of legendary Aboriginal actors David Gulpilil and Tom E. Lewis; and her poetic and moving portrait, *River of No Return*, about the complexities of living in a remote Indigenous community. *River* was chosen as the opening film at the Imaginative Film Festival in 2008. Darlene has recently been producing documentaries for the Message Stick series at ABC TV. She is currently writing two feature films. Her first, *Obelia*, will be executive-produced by Phillip Noyce.

Tender director **Lynette Wallworth** is an Australian artist whose immersive video installations reflect on the connections between people and the natural world. Her work uses photography, film and interactive technologies – like touch-based interfaces – to engage viewers and allow them to experience her works intuitively. Often working in series or meditations on one theme, her measured pace suggests that patient observation might lead to richer understanding between ourselves and the natural environment. Always experimenting with the newest technologies, her ability to build a sense of community and compassion with these tools is startling. Beauty, revelation and wonder are celebrated in these works. Wallworth's work has been exhibited at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Sundance Film Festival, the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art in Melbourne, Auckland Triennial, England's Brighton Festival and the Vienna Festival among many others. In April 2009, Wallworth's largest solo show in Australia opened at the Samstag

Museum of Art as part of the Adelaide Film Festival. Wallworth has been awarded an International Fellowship from the Arts Council of England, a New Media Arts Fellowship from the Australia Council for the Arts, and was the inaugural recipient of AFTRS Creative Fellowship in 2010.

Ukraine Is Not A Brothel director and producer **Kitty Green** is a graduate of the Victoria College of the Arts School of Film and TV. After graduating, Kitty worked for ABC's *Art Nation*, producing documentary content for national broadcast. Kitty spent a year in her mother's native Ukraine shooting with the topless feminist movement FEMEMN. Her abduction by the KGB made headlines across the globe. Her feature documentary, *Ukraine Is Not a Brothel*, premiered at the Venice Film Festival in September 2013, was nominated for the Grierson Trust award at the London BFI Film Festival, and screened at IDFA as part of the Best of the Fests program.

Devil's Playground co-director **Rachel Ward** adapted and directed her first feature film ***Beautiful Kate*** (SFF Closing Night Film 2009) starring Ben Mendelsohn, Rachel Griffiths and Bryan Brown. The film also won an IF Award for Cinematography and was nominated for 10 AFI (Australian Film Industry) Awards including Best Direction. Rachel's television directing credits include *Heart Attack* (2005), an episode of the *Twisted Tales* series starring Greta Saatchi for Channel 9, episodes of *Rake* (2010), *My Place* (2010) and *The Straits* (2011-12) and the telemovie *An Accidental Soldier* (2013), all for ABC-TV. In her former life as an actress, Rachel Ward was the recipient of several International drama awards and nominations including two Golden Globe nods. She's starred in a number of International films throughout the last 20 years and is most well known for her portrayal of Meggie Cleary in *The Thorn Birds*.

Devil's Playground co-director **Tony Krawitz** is currently in pre-production on the Gothic thriller *The Kettering Incident*, to be screened on Foxtel. He directed the feature film *Dead Europe* based on the award winning book by Christos Tsiolkas. The film premiered in Official Competition at SFF 2012 and screened at many international festivals including Toronto, London, Melbourne, Thessaloniki and Istanbul. The film was nominated for Best Film at the Film Critics Circle Awards and received five AACTA nominations. Tony wrote and directed *Jewboy*, which premiered in Un Certain Regard at the 2005 Cannes Film Festival and which went on to screen at many festivals including Sundance. The film won three AFI Awards and the AWGIE Award for Best Original Telemovie as well as the Film Critics Circle Award for Best Australian Short Film. It was released theatrically by Dendy Films. For television, Tony has directed episodes of the TV series *The Surgeon* for Southern Star/Channel Ten and *City Homicide* and *All Saints* for Channel Seven. In 2007 he was awarded the Best Director award by the Australian Director's Guild for an episode of *All Saints*.

Dendy Short Film Award Guests:

Crochet Noir director **Jessica Harris** and producer **Heamin Kwun**; ***Grey Bull*** director and screenwriter **Eddy Bell** and producer **Khoby Rowe**; ***The iMom*** director **Ariel Martin**; ***I Want to Dance Better at Parties*** directors **Matthew Bate** and **Gideon Obarzanek** and producer **Rebecca Summerton**; ***Man*** director **Richard Hughes** and writer and producer **Dave Christison**; ***Showboy*** director **Samuel Leighton-Dore** and producer **Diana Burnett**; ***Stuffed*** director **Warwick Young** and producer **Rachel Argall**; ***The Video Dating Tape of Desmond Ray, Aged 33 & ¾*** director and screenwriter **Steve Baker**; and ***Welcome to Iron Knob*** director **Dave Wade** and co-producer **Maxx Corkindale**

The 61st Sydney Film Festival runs 4-15 June and brings a packed program of screenings and special events to even more venues across Sydney. For tickets and full up-to-date program information visit sff.org.au

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

Sydney Film Festival screens feature films, documentaries, short films and animated films across the city at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, the Art Gallery of NSW, Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, the Apple Store, SFFTV at Martin Place, Skyline Drive-In Blacktown, and the Festival Hub at Town Hall.

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

Sydney Film Festival also presents 12 films that vie for the Official Competition, a highly respected international 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 include: *Only God Forgives* (2013), *Alps* (2012), *A Separation* (2011) – which went on to win an Academy Award, *Heartbeats* (2010), *Bronson* (2009) and *Hunger* (2008).

The 61st Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia, and the City of Sydney. The Festival's Strategic partner is the NSW Government through Destination NSW.

What: Sydney Film Festival

When: 4-15 June, 2014

Tickets & Info: 1300 733 733 sff.org.au

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