

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

05-16 JUNE 2019



Screen
Australia



MEDIA RELEASE

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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL SPOTLIGHTS FIRST NATIONS STORYTELLING

The 66th Sydney Film Festival in partnership with Screen Australia's Indigenous Department proudly continues its celebration of First Nation storytelling from Australia and around the world in 2019.

"The Festival continues a commitment to showcasing First Nation filmmakers and storytelling, from Australia and around the world," said **Festival Director Nashen Moodley**. "From a portmanteau feature film by nine women filmmakers from the South Pacific, to documentaries on two hugely influential Indigenous screen icons, this year's program of First Nations films is overflowing with diverse ideas and themes, unique perspectives and traditional stories."

"We're proud to continue our partnership with Sydney Film Festival to showcase a diversity of projects from Indigenous filmmakers. It is vital Indigenous people continue to be seen and heard across a variety of storytelling platforms and it's fantastic to see documentaries featured that explore important environmental issues and inspiring individuals including Alfreda Glynn," said **Penny Smallacombe, Head of Indigenous at Screen Australia**.

"Supporting new talent is at the heart of what we do and there is a really exciting crop of emerging filmmakers whose projects will be on display in the Indigenous horror anthology *Dark Place*, and the five short films from our [Short Blacks](#) initiative which we ran in partnership ABC," she said.

Leading the pack of Australian films screening are: Erica Glynn's *She Who Must Be ~~Obeyed~~ Loved*, about trailblazing Indigenous filmmaker Alfreda Glynn; the World Premiere of two documentaries from Screen Australia's State of Alarm initiative about traditional Indigenous practices in environmental protection, *Warburdar Bununu: Water Shield* and *Saving Seagrass*; and, another World Premiere, *Dark Place*, an Indigenous horror anthology with five twisted short tales from five Indigenous filmmakers.

First Nation stories from around the world are: *Merata: How Mum Decolonised the Screen*, a portrait of trailblazing Māori filmmaker Merata Mita, reportedly the first Indigenous woman to direct a feature film; and eight-part portmanteau film *Vai*, about an imaginary figure encompassing every woman of every age, by nine women filmmakers from the South Pacific (both also screening as part of **Focus on New Zealand**); and from Canada-Norway, feature film, *The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open*, about a chance encounter between two Indigenous women on a Vancouver street.

The Festival will also premiere nine short films by Indigenous filmmakers. Australian shorts include *Between Two Lines*, *Doug The Human*; *Elders*; *Shed*, and *Ties that Bind*; and New Zealand short films by Māori filmmakers include: *The Gravedigger of Kapu*; *Hinekura*; *A Matter of Time*; and *Rū*.

Screening in the Festival's **Essential Australian Women Directors – 10 Trailblazers Selected by David Stratton** program is *Bedevil* (1993) - the first and only feature by Indigenous artist and photographer Tracey Moffatt.

Attending as guests will be: **Erica Glynn** (*She Who Must Be ~~Obeyed~~ Loved*) alongside her mother and film subject **Freda Glynn**; director **Heperi Mita** and producer **Chelsea Winstanley** (*Merata: How Mum*



Decolonised the Screen); five of the nine directors of *Vai*: **Becs Arahanga, Matasila Freshwater, Marina Alofagia McCartney, Nicole Whippy** and **Sharon Whippy**; and the five *Dark Place* short film directors: **Björn Stewart, Perun Bonser, Kodie Bedford, Liam Phillips, and Rob Braslin.**

Hosted by UNSW Arts & Social Sciences, talk **The Work of Freda Glynn and Merata Mita** will feature filmmakers behind *She Who Must Be Obeyed* and *Merata: How Mum Decolonised the Screen* discussing the ground breaking work of these two trailblazers at the Festival Hub (Friday 14 June, 8:15pm).

The full Sydney Film Festival 2019 program can be found online at sff.org.au.

Sydney Film Festival runs 5 – 16 June 2019. Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2019 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](#)

EDITOR'S NOTES

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From Wednesday 5 June to Sunday 16 June 2019, the 66th 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: *The Heiresses* (2018), *On Body and Soul* (2017); *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 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: sff.org.au.

The 66th Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW and Destination NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the City of Sydney. The Festival's Strategic Partner is the NSW Government via its tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW.

