

SYDNEY CLOSES WITH A SURREAL SPLASH

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT CLOSING NIGHT GALA

The 64th Sydney Film Festival awarded ***On Body and Soul***, directed by **IldikÃ³ Enyedi**, the prestigious 10th anniversary Sydney Film Prize, out of a selection of 12 Official Competition films.



The $60,000 cash prize for â??audacious, cutting-edge and courageousâ?? film was awarded to Enyedi at the Festivalâ??s Closing Night Gala awards ceremony and event at the State Theatre, ahead of the Australian premiere screening of **Bong Joon-hoâ??s *Okja***.

Accepting the award, Enyedi said, â??It was such an amazingly strong competition. Itâ??s marvellous that such a film can move so many people, it gives me so much hope in cinema and in human communication.â?•

Sydney filmmakers **Sascha Ettinger Epstein** and **Claire Haywood** were awarded the Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentaryâ??s $10,000 cash prize for ***The Pink House*****,** about the last brothel in old mining town Kalgoorlie.

The Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films saw the $7000 cash prize for the Dendy Live Action Short Award going to ***Adele***, directed by **Mirene Igwabi**. **Sunday Emerson Gullifer** was Highly Commended for her short film ***Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow***. And **Daniel Agdagâ??s** animation ***Lost Property Office*** took out both the $7000 Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Director and the $5000 Yoram Gross Animation Award.

The Event Cinemas Australian Short Screenplay Award, a $5,000 prize for the best short screenwriting, was awarded to **Michael Cusack**, the writer and director of stop motion animation ***After All***. And the writers of Screenability short film ***The Milky Pop Kid***, **Johanna Garvin** and **Emily Dash**, were Highly Commended.

The $10,000 Sydney-UNESCO City of Film Award, bestowed by Create NSW to a trail-blazing NSW-based screen practitioner, went to Indigenous Australian actor, director and writer **Leah Purcell**.

Chris Freeland announced he will step down as Sydney Film Festival Chair while remaining on the Board. Freeland, a Partner of Baker McKenzie and a member of its Asia Pacific Regional Council, chaired the organisation for eight years. He led an era of expansion as well as industry and public popularity, seeing attendances almost double.

Festival Board Director **Deanne Weir** was welcomed to the position of Chair. Weir has over 25 yearsâ?? experience in media and communications and is Foxtelâ??s Managing Director, Content Aggregation and Wholesale. She is also a renowned television producer and philanthropist whose passion is to support the advancement of women in the community.

Sydney Film Festival CEO Leigh Small said, â??This year again, the Festival exceeded previous attendance figures â?? a continuing ten-year trend. There was an average of 72% capacity across all sessions with almost 185,000 attendances. This result marks a fitting end to Chris Freelandâ??s eight year tenure during which the number of people attending the Sydney Film Festival almost doubled.â?•

Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley said: â??2017 has been a significant year for film and filmmakers. As the world looks for ways to understand and interpret the momentous events and challenges facing humanity, filmmakers across the globe have risen to the challenge.

â??From refugees and the horrors of war, to the state of the worldâ??s oceans, this program of films â?? screened to Australian audiences for the first time at the 64th Sydney Film Festival â?? has provided an opportunity to debate and discuss some of the most pressing and contentious issues of our time.

â??With a spotlight on questions of equality in race, sexuality, wealth, accessibility, and many other global conversations, these 12 days have provided a wealth of stories from diverse viewpoints and a moment in time to take stock of who, what and where we are today.

â??I congratulate all the winners and all of the finalists, as well as the hundreds of filmmakers who have joined us at the Festival to present their ideas and opinions in films, talks and discussions,â?• he said.

THE SYDNEY FILM PRIZE

On awarding the Sydney Film Prize to Hungarian filmmaker IldikÃ³ Enyediâ??s ***On Body and Soul***, Jury President Margaret Pomeranz said:

â??Over the past 12 days weâ??ve experienced a most extraordinary cinematic journey curated by Sydney Film Festival.

â??Weâ??ve seen films about women struggling to find a space for themselves in a world that seems to want to keep them in their place; there have been films about transgressions, from youthful murder to child abuse.

â??Weâ??ve seen films about the many faces of sexual desire; weâ??ve been invited into worlds of wonder we have never experienced and weâ??ve been exposed to the ugly side of ourselves, through racism, poverty, cruelty and displacement. And weâ??ve also been invited into the world of human compassion.

â??And that element of compassion is very present in the film weâ??ve chosen to award the Sydney Film Prize. Itâ??s a film that shows us that even in this divided world we are capable of sharing the same dreams, that amongst the ugliness of a slaughterhouse, kindness, gentleness can be found,â• she said.

â??So the Sydney Film Prize goes to the graceful, measured and ever so compassionate *On Body and Soul* from Hungarian filmmaker IldikÃ³ Enyedi.â•

Winner of the Berlinale Golden Bear, *On Body and Soul* is Enyediâ??s visually ravishing return to filmmaking after an 18-year break. The film is about the unconventional romance between two co-workers who discover that each night they have exactly the same dreams.

The Festival jury was comprised of Australian film critic **Margaret Pomeranz**, critically acclaimed Nepali director **Deepak Rauniyar**, former senior film executive of South Korean powerhouse CJ Entertainment **Kini Kim**, independent Asian-Canadian animator **Ann Marie Fleming**, and Australian film producer **Rosemary Blight** of smash-hit *The Sapphires* and acclaimed television series *Cleverman*.

Previous winners include: *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 competition is endorsed by FIAPF, the regulating body for international film festivals, and is judged by a jury of five international and Australian filmmakers and industry professionals.

THE DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION AWARD FOR AUSTRALIAN DOCUMENTARY

The **Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentary** was awarded to ***The Pink House*** from filmmakers **Sascha Ettinger Epstein** and **Claire Haywood**. The Jury comprising award-winning Asian-American filmmaker **Ramona S. Diaz**, CEO of the Documentary Australia Foundation **Dr Mitzi Goldman** and Australian based Iranian filmmaker **Amin Palangi** in a joint statement said:

â??Amongst ten noteworthy films, one film enthralled us with its blend of nuanced characters and narrative depth.

â??In classic cinema verite fashion, the filmmaker introduces us to two singular women who give her unfettered access to their constantly changing lives, revealing a profound trust between filmmaker and subject that renders this film deeply personal and intimate.

â??Through the unflinching gaze of her lens, this filmmaker immerses us in a world that, in less disciplined hands, could very well have been voyeuristic. Instead we are treated to a film that is handled with affection and grace.â?•

â??We the Jury give the Australian documentary prize to Sasha Ettinger Epstein and Claire Haywood for *The Pink House*.â?•

2017 marks the fourth year the prize has been supported by the Foundation.

Previous winners include: *In the Shadow of the Hill* (2016); *Only the Dead* (2015); *35 Letters* (2014); *Buckskin* (2013); *Killing Anna* (2012); *Life in Movement* (2011); and *The Snowman* (2010). In 2009 the inaugural prize was shared between *Contact* and *A Good Man*, and each film received a $10,000 cash prize.

The 10 finalists for the 2017 Sydney Film Festival Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentary are listed HERE.

THE DENDY AWARDS FOR AUSTRALIAN SHORT FILMS

The **Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films** were awarded to **Mirene Igwabi** for ***Adele*** (Dendy Live Action Short Award), **Sunday Emerson Gullifer** for ***Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow*** (Highly Commended), and **Daniel Agdag** for ***Lost Property Office*** (Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Director and Yoram Gross Animation Award). The Jury comprised Canadian filmmaker **Kirsten Carthew**, former Vice President of Paramount Pictures **Mike Selwyn**, and Australian film producer **Kath Shelper**. In a joint statement, the Jury said:

â??This yearâ??s Jury was particularly excited by the exceptional talent that continues to emerge from Australiaâ??s animation sector.

â??We were captivated by the original and diverse stories and variety of animation techniques presented in both the Dendy Awards and in the rest of the Festival.

â??*Lost Property Office* stood out for its direction, storytelling and exquisite visuals that could only have been realised through animation, which was the perfect choice of medium to tell this story.â?•

The Festivalâ??s short-film competition is now in the 48th year; and has been sponsored by **Dendy Cinemas** for 29 years. Winners of the Best Live Action Short Film award and the Yoram Gross Animation award, sponsored by Yoram Gross Films, are **Academy Award-eligible**, opening new pathways for many Australian filmmakers.

These ground-breaking awards have kick-started the careers of many prominent filmmakers, with past competitors Warwick Thornton, Ariel Kleiman, Cate Shortland, Jane Campion, Phillip Noyce and Ivan Sen among Dendy Awards alumni.

The 10 finalists for the 2017 Dendy Award for Australian Short Film are listed HERE.

EVENT CINEMAS AUSTRALIAN SHORT SCREENPLAY AWARD

A jury comprising Canadian filmmaker **Kirsten Carthew**, former Vice President of Paramount Pictures **Mike Selwyn**, and Australian film producer **Kath Shelper** awarded the **Event Cinemas Australian Short Screenplay Award** to **Michael Cusack**, the writer and director of stop motion animation ***After All***. Highly Commended the writers of Screenability short film ***The Milky Pop Kid***, **Johanna Garvin** and **Emily Dash**.

Sponsored by **Event Cinemas**, **Anthony Kierann**, Area General Manager, Event Cinemas said:

â??Event Cinemas is proud to once again sponsor The Event Cinemaâ??s Australian Short Screenplay award. Events acknowledges and supports the idea, concept and vision of a short film as penned by the writers in this exciting category.

â??To be able to participate and support an outstanding written script by an Australian at this iconic film festival, we hope to encourage and support the writer towards inspiring development and achievements in the film landscape. We applaud all the short films within the category as stand out short films from the writers.â?•

The Australian short films eligible for the 2017 Event Cinemas Australian Short Screenplay Award are listed HERE.

Winners of all Sydney Film Festival awards are presented with the Festivalâ??s signature mesmeric swirl award, designed and handmade in Sydney by Festival partners **Dinosaur Designs**.

The UNESCO Sydney City Of Film Award

The $10,000 Sydney-UNESCO City of Film Award, bestowed by Create NSW to a trail-blazing NSW-based screen practitioner, went to Indigenous Australian actor, director and writer **Leah Purcell**.

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 worldâ??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 Festivalâ??s Strategic Partner is the NSW Government through Destination NSW.



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1. television

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