

65TH MIFF ANNOUNCES GUEST LINE-UP

**HUGO WEAVING, RACHEL GRIFFITHS, RACHEL WARD
TERENCE DAVIES, CELIA ROWLSON-HALL, ROBERT GREENE
ERIC DARNELL, JESSICA BRILLHART, OSCAR RABY + MANY MORE**

MELBOURNE, 13 JULY 2016 – Celebrating 65 years, the **Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF)** is thrilled to reveal a line-up of special guests including the brightest names in feature-filmmaking, award-winning documentary makers, and a huge array of Australia's finest acting and filmmaking talent – from 28 July – 14 August.

MIFF will kick off the festival in style when it welcomes the team behind the MIFF Premiere Fund supported tale of time travel, *The Death and Life of Otto Bloom*. Melbourne director **Cris Jones** and cast members **Xavier Samuel**, **Matilda Brown** and **Rachel Ward** will hit the blue carpet for the festival's glittering **Opening Night** celebrations, presented by Grey Goose Vodka.

Plenty of guests will be in town for MIFF's opening weekend with director **Jocelyn Moorhouse** and actor **Hugo Weaving** attending the 25th anniversary screening of the classic Australian film, *Proof* – presented in association with the National Film & Sound Archive.

Also joining MIFF for its opening weekend will be film critic **Margaret Pomeranz**, who will host the special Talking Pictures event *Breaking the Celluloid Ceiling* – joined by some of Australia's finest directors including **Gillian Armstrong** and **Jocelyn Moorhouse**.

Veteran UK director **Terence Davies** will be in town for the festival's opening weekend on behalf of his long-awaited passion project *Sunset Song*, featuring a career-making performance from former model Agyness Deyn. He'll be joined by film critic **David Stratton**, who will host the special **Talking Pictures** event *In Conversation with Terence Davies*.

Other guests arriving across MIFF's opening weekend include:

- Melbourne filmmaker **Rosie Jones** with the world premiere of her MIFF Premiere Fund-supported film *The Family*, a heartbreaking investigation into one of Australia's most notorious cults.
- Filmmaker **Trevor Graham** and artist/director **Philippe Mora**, on behalf of the world premiere of the MIFF Premiere Fund-supported film *Monsieur Mayonnaise* – an incredible true tale of mayonnaise sandwiches, Nazis and a hand-painted comic book.
- Director **Sotiris Dounoukas** and cast members **Gia Carides**, **Maggie Naouri**, **Tony Nikolopoulos**, **Laura Gordon**, and **Jerome Meyer** for *Joe Cinque's Consolation*, based on Helen Garner's award-winning book.
- US director **Robert Greene** and his Sundance Special Jury Award-winning film *Kate Plays Christine*, which follows actor Kate Lyn Sheil as she prepares to play suicidal journalist, Christine Chubbuck.

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- Director **Roger Ross Williams** and his Sundance Best Directing (US Documentary) Award-winning film *Life, Animated*, about a young boy with autism who is able to open up through animated Disney films.
- Choreographer and first-time feature film director **Celia Rowson-Hall** with *Ma*, her contemporary, choreographic road movie re-imagining the Virgin Mary's story.
- Iranian director **Babak Anvari** for his feature debut *Under the Shadow*, a horror film following in the tradition of the acclaimed Farsi-language hit *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*.
- **David Farrier** with his documentary *Tickled*, which starts as an investigation into the world of 'competitive endurance tickling' and soon takes a darker turn.
- **David Stubbs** for his docu-drama *Belief: The Possession of Janet Moses*, a work exploring un-failing spiritual belief – and the very best intentions of a family that conclude in heartbreaking disaster.
- Rock photographer and videographer-turned-director **Fran Strine** for his documentary *Hired Gun*, which gives voice to some of the greatest players in the world who work as session musicians. Musician **Ray Parker Jr** (the writer and performer of the original *Ghostbusters* theme song!) appears in the film and will also be a guest of MIFF.
- Filmmaker **Andrew Wiseman** for *On Richard's Side*, the final chapter of his film trilogy about 35-year-old Richard Rook, who has lived with a severe intellectual disability since birth.

Guest highlights across the middle week (1-7 August) of MIFF will include the cast and crew of *Down Under*, who will be in attendance when the rip-roaring black comedy screens as the festival's **Centre-piece Gala**. Director **Abe Forsythe** will be joined on the red carpet by cast members **Lincoln Younes**, **Rahal Romahn**, and **Harriet Dyer**.

Other guests arriving across the first week of MIFF include:

- US director **Matthew Jones** on behalf of *The Man from Mo'Wax*, a no-holds-barred insight into the extraordinary James Lavelle and his pioneering trip-hop record label.
- Award-winning debut director **Rosemary Myers**, writer/actor **Matthew Whittet** and actors **Bethany Whitmore**, **Harrison Feldman**, **Imogen Archer**, and **Amber McMahon** on behalf of *Girl Asleep* – a wonderfully eccentric fairytale of female adolescence.
- US director **Kim A Snyder** with her documentary *Newtown*, which explores the aftermath of one of America's deadliest mass shootings by taking viewers into the homes of three families who lost their children.
- Writer/director **Damien Power** and actors **Aaron Pedersen** and **Harriet Dyer** on behalf of *Killing Ground*, a low-budget survival thriller inspired by Michael Haneke's *Funny Games* and Sam Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs*.
- Director **Sascha Ettinger Epstein** and Indigenous bodybuilder **Natasha Lawrence** on behalf of the documentary *Destination Arnold*, a fascinating glimpse into the forever strange world of professional bodybuilding.

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- **Jake Mahaffy** (*AD 1363, the End of Chivalry*, MIFF 2015) with his Venice Film Festival award-winning film *Free in Deed*, about a single mother who struggles to stay afloat in the face of poverty and the demands of her autistic son.
- Australia's **Mat de Koning** for the world-premiere of his documentary *Meal Tickets*, which paints a cautionary, insider's, tale about the realities of the new musical landscape.
- **Rohan Spong** for his documentary *Winter at Westbeth*, which traces a year in the life of one of New York's most eclectic and vibrant artists' residences.
- Local director **Steven McGregor** with *Servant or Slave*, tracing the secret history of slavery in Australia during the time of the Stolen Generations.
- Australian documentarian **Ian Darling**. He'll join his film subjects **Suzy Muir** and **John Muir** in Melbourne on behalf of *Suzy and the Simple Man* – a spellbinding love story of two people living off the land whose joint adventure takes an unexpected turn and becomes something far more perilous.

The final week of the festival (8-14 August) will see the MIFF Premiere Fund supported titles *Ella*, *Emo the Musical* and *Bad Girl* receive their world premieres, with directors and cast members in attendance. Meanwhile, in a specially curated program of nine Virtual Reality (VR) experiences – supported by major partners City of Melbourne and Victoria Harbour and supporting partner Screen Australia – some of the world's most exciting VR filmmakers will be welcomed to the festival.

MIFF guests during the final week of the festival include:

- Actor **Rachel Griffiths** for *Mammal*, an unsettling and deftly assured drama about the nebulous, perilous relationships between mothers and their sons.
- Writer/director **Fin Edquist** and lead actor **Sarah West** for the world premiere of *Bad Girl*, a film offering a boldly dramatic twist on the femme fatale.
- Local director **Neil Triffett** and cast members **Jordan Hare**, **Rahart Adams** and **Jon Praside** for *Emo the Musical*, a cheerfully irreverent take on Romeo and Juliet-style star-crossed love, via *High School Musical* and *Glee*.
- Director **Doug Watkin** and dancer **Ella Havelka** for the documentary *Ella*, charting the personal journey of The Australian Ballet's first Indigenous artist.
- Writer/director and immersive cinema pioneer **Eric Darnell** (*Madagascar* films) for his VR experience *Invasion!* – and the Talking Pictures keynote session *Eric Darnell: Virtual Reality and Storytelling*, which will be presented in partnership with the Wheeler Centre.
- Google's principal filmmaker for VR, **Jessica Brillhart**, with her Talking Pictures presentation: *We Are Here: Jessica Brillhart on Virtual Reality*.
- Award-winning local multi-media artist **Oscar Raby** for his VR experiences *The Turning Forest* and *Easter Rising: Voice of A Rebel*.
- **Michael Beets** for his VR documentary *Jafri*, about an African-Australian man who uses Melbourne's busiest intersection (Flinders Street) to silently challenge the beliefs of passers by.

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- Film and theatre-maker **Ros Horin** with *The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe*, a documentary about the making of her theatre show, which told the stories of four African refugee women.
- **Sean Byrne** with the US-produced horror film *The Devil's Candy*, following his 2009 MIFF Premiere Fund supported film *The Loved Ones*.

Many festival guests will also be part of MIFF's Talking Pictures, presented by AFTRS, designed to have festival goers discussing all things cinematic. As part of the program, the festival will present Tony Wilson's *The Galahs*, the new documentary celebrating the first Australian football world tour, followed by a discussion with Australian football luminaries including **Hassa Mann, Rob Heath, Bob Keddie** and **Tony Wilson**.

Some of the world's leading film critics will also be in town to mentor participants in MIFF's Critics Campus, an intensive five-day lab that enables emerging Australian film critics to develop their skills in a live festival setting. Guests will include esteemed film scholar and journalist **Jonathan Rosenbaum** (USA); the editor of *Little White Lies*, **David Jenkins** (UK); film critic and programmer **Chris Fujiwara** (US/Japan); and the Europe-based cultural writer for Fairfax Media, **Stephanie Bunbury** (UK/Australia).

The festival's Industry Programs, which will present talks and master classes open to the public via the MIFF 37°South & Accelerator: Public Access Events, will again welcome former British Film Institute and London Film Festival Director **Adrian Wootton**. He'll present another series of his acclaimed *Illustrated Film Talks* with Wootton Talks Shakespeare, focusing on the rich screen legacy of the most filmed author ever: William Shakespeare.

LA-based developer, writer and lecturer **Wendall Thomas** will also return exclusively to Melbourne for more of her popular series Wendall Thomas Talks Scripts, unlocking the secrets of films' script structure with a series of four standalone all-day seminars.

Metro Trains Melbourne is the Principal Partner of the 2016 Melbourne International Film Festival.

The 2016 Melbourne International Film Festival runs 28 July - 14 August. Tickets are now on sale.

For more information visit miff.com.au

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