



# MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2017 MIFF SCHOOLS PROGRAM

## FILMS TO ENGAGE AND ENLIGHTEN YOUNGER AUDIENCES

**MELBOURNE, 5 May 2017** – The **Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF)** is thrilled to present the 2017 **MIFF Schools** program. Taking the place of what was previously known as the Next Gen section, **MIFF Schools** will continue to offer an exciting and diverse all-ages program of films selected exclusively for school students.

Carrying on the essence of Next Gen with a newly invigorated spirit, **MIFF Schools** will present eight exceptional films that seek to challenge, educate and exhilarate students. These films investigate themes such as individual responsibility and social culpability, the tension between fiction and documentary, social hierarchies at school, friendship, family, culture and morality.

The films have been thoughtfully chosen to compliment language studies in schools and span across a range of languages including French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Japanese, Mandarin and Spanish.

Thomas Caldwell, MIFF Schools Programmer said: “There is nothing like immersing yourself in the world of a film to gain insights into other languages and cultures, and the MIFF Schools program is designed to give students such an opportunity with exceptional world cinema that isn't otherwise available in Australia.”

This year the program includes literature to film adaptations ***Boy on the Bridge***, a darkly edged coming-of-age story from Cyprus, which is based on author Eve Makis' novel *Land of the Golden Apple*; and ***Fly Away Home***, the deeply humane portrayal of children in war adapted from award-winning author Christine Nöstlinger's autobiographical novel. In this captivating film, nine-year-old Christl and her family are moved to an abandoned villa on the outskirts of Vienna where she believes she's discovered a newfound peace, until the Nazis retreat and the Russians move in.

An unexpected friendship blossoms in ***Hello, Goodbye***, the second feature film from Japanese director Takeo Kikuchi. When Hazuki and Aoi are drawn to helping the same elderly woman, they are forced to confront their differences, similarities and deepest secrets. ***Hello, Goodbye*** is a keenly observed tale of teen turbulence that probes not only the hierarchies that dictate high-school life, but also the repercussions that echo beyond the classroom.

The remote wilderness of Indonesia's Maluku Islands provides a magnificent backdrop for ***Salawaku***, an eye-opening and heart-stirring road movie set in a stretch of the world where roads barely exist. When his older sister disappears, ten-year-old Salawaku sets off on a grand journey to find her and along the way learns to view her in a new light. Nominated for eight awards at the Indonesian Film Festival, this is a tender film full of surprise and wonder.

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## MEDIA RELEASE

Michel Ocelot (*Tales of the Night*, MIFF 2011), the modern master of French animation, delivers another fantastical kaleidoscope of imagery and invention with *Ivan Tsarevitch and the Changing Princess*. In a forgotten cinema in Paris, a projectionist and his two young assistants are bringing stories of old back to life in this visually sumptuous animation packed with winsome humour and sublime storytelling.

Also from France comes *Swagger*, the bold, genre-bending documentary about a diverse group of underprivileged teenagers grappling with familiar questions of love, identity and ambition. This film from former music video director Olivier Babinet embellishes the teens' fierce perspectives on their everyday realities with richly imagined fantasy sequences bringing their hopes and dreams to life, while underlining the deep similarities that bind all of us together.

Going one step further to blur the line between documentary and fiction is the creative docudrama *Jeffrey*, from the Dominican Republic. This charming film follows an impoverished 12-year-old boy chasing his dream of stardom as a reggaeton singer. Director Yanillys Perez's inventive debut feature picked up the Discovery Best Film award at the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival, where it won the jury over with its heartwarming portrait of youthful drive and resilience.

Rounding out the program is Chinese director Xiang Zhao's moving testament to the innocence and angst of childhood and the bonds between friends. *Stonehead* is a tender and gently wrought exploration of the plight of China's 'left-behind' generation, the estimated 60 million children who live with their grandparents in remote villages while their parents move to the city to find work.

For the past ten years, MIFF has offered a carefully selected Next Gen program for school students; under the new banner of **MIFF Schools**, the festival will provide an even richer showcase of films to explore. The program has been designed with a range of age groups in mind and with the intention of engaging students to investigate societal challenges and cultural issues through media analysis.

For program information and to book tickets visit [schools.miff.com.au](http://schools.miff.com.au)

**Schools bookings are now open.**

The 2017 Melbourne International Film Festival runs 3 – 20 August 2017. MIFF's First Glance will be announced on 6 June 2017 and the full program will be launched 11 July 2017, with public tickets on sale 14 July 2017.

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**For all media enquiries contact Asha Holmes Publicity:**  
Asha Holmes | 0403 274 299 | [asha@ashaholmespublicity.com.au](mailto:asha@ashaholmespublicity.com.au)  
Stephanie Payne | 0409 010 441 | [stephanie@ashaholmespublicity.com.au](mailto:stephanie@ashaholmespublicity.com.au)  
Isabella Radevski | 0403 596 083 | [isabella@ashaholmespublicity.com.au](mailto:isabella@ashaholmespublicity.com.au)