

MIFF ANNOUNCES \$300,000 PRIZE POOL AND 2023 FILM AWARDS, NOMINEES AND JURY LINE-UP



Marungka Tjalatjunu (Dipped in Black)

Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) has today announced a total prize pool of over \$300,000 across a suite of six award categories, together with the juries and nominees for two significant competition awards: the inaugural **First Nations Film Creative Award** in collaboration with **Kearney Group**, and the return of the **Blackmagic Design Australian Innovation Award** recognising an outstanding Australian creative within a film playing in the MIFF 2023 program.

The newly shared award nominees join the stellar line-up of films already announced for the **Bright Horizons Competition**, MIFF's recently established breakthrough filmmaking prize. Championing first and second-time directors, the Bright Horizons Competition awards a \$140,000 prize to the winning filmmaker, supported by **VicScreen**, making it one of the most substantial film prizes in the world.

Winners across long-form awards categories will be announced at **MIFF's Closing Night Gala** event, presented by Champagne Duperrey, on **Saturday 19 August**, including the recipient of the much-loved **MIFF Audience Award**, which gives punters the chance to vote for their favourite flick from across the program.

"MIFF is a space that presents world class cinema to Melbourne, and with our Film Awards in 2023, we continue to recognise and reward the talents of the screen industry who compel our cinema-going," says **Al Cossar, Artistic Director**.

"The MIFF film awards recognise and amplify the vitality of our screen industry, and those who move it forward; from the Bright Horizons Competition as a space for global breakthrough, to the recognition and celebration of excellence in craft amongst individual

[MIFF.com.au](https://www.miff.com.au)

[Media Centre](#)

Media Contact

Alice Lewinsky
E alice@commonstate.co
M (+61) 403 837 351

Leigh-Anne Ramirez
E leigh-anne@commonstate.co
M (+61) 439 353 407

screen practitioners, in the Blackmagic Design Australian Innovation Award and First Nations Film Award, with generous support from the Kearney Group. Not to mention our own MIFF-fluencers – our festival audience – crowning their own via our annual Audience Award! We stand in awe of our competing films and our shortlisted nominees, and congratulate all."

MIFF has proudly celebrated and promoted the talents of First Nations storytellers on titles including *Sweet As* (MIFF 2022), *The Drover's Wife: The Legend of Molly Johnson* (MIFF 2021) and *Bran Nue Dae* (MIFF 2009). Transforming this commitment with formal industry recognition and significant financial reward, the inaugural **First Nations Film Creative Award** supports First Nations talent and storytelling with the recipient awarded a \$20,000 cash prize and \$25,000 worth of financial services in collaboration with **Kearney Group**.

The pool of award contenders are drawn from across all film creative departments including directing, producing, screenwriting, composing, editing, cinematography, acting, production design, art direction and sound design. The nominees of the **First Nations Film Creative Award** in collaboration with **Kearney Group** are:

- **John Harvey** – *Katele (Mudskipper)* – Director
- **Lelarnie Hatfield-Yasso, Aunty Nicky Hatfield, and Margaret Hornagold** – *Generations of Men* – Screenwriters
- **Derik Lynch** – *Marungka Tjalatjunu (Dipped in Black)* – Co-Director
- **Adrian Russell Wills and Gillian Moody** – *Kindred* – Co-Directors
- **Tyson Mowarin and Mark Coles Smith** – *Keeping Hope* – Director, Featured subject
- **Douglas Watkin** – *Rebel with a Cause: Neville Bonner* – Director

The first-time prize will be awarded to the creative deemed to have demonstrated excellence and commitment in their relevant craft, with the eventual winner selected by a film jury of celebrated Australian First Nations creatives including Yidinji, Meriam woman and esteemed actor and director **Rachael Maza AM** (*Radiance, Così, Lillian's Story*); Yorta Yorta, Wurundjeri (Woiwurrung) acclaimed screen and stage practitioner and Birrangga Film Festival Artistic Director, **Tony Briggs** (*The Sapphires, The Warriors, Force of Nature*); and Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung artist, academic and director **Tiriki Onus** (*Ablaze*, MIFF 2021).

Of the new award, **Rachael Maza** said; "I'm very proud and inspired by this next generation of incredible First Nation film makers. I'd like to acknowledge MIFF and the Kearney Group in establishing this Award in recognition of these artists who will be our future leading storytellers. It's an honor to be a part of the jury."

"Congratulations to each of the extraordinary talents nominated this year," says **Paul Kearney, Founder and CEO of Kearney Group**. "We are incredibly proud to partner with MIFF and present the inaugural First Nations Film Creative Award. This award is a celebration of talent, creativity and the 65,000+ year legacy of storytelling within Australian First Nations communities. We believe in the power of storytelling and the transformative impact it can have on society. Through this partnership, we're devoted to centring First Nations voices. And it's our hope that, in turn and in time, it promotes a more inclusive and equitable Australia."

Following its inaugural awarding last year, the **Blackmagic Design Australian Innovation Award** returns with a \$70,000 cash prize to recognise an outstanding Australian creative within a festival film. Writer-director Jub Clerc was awarded the prize in 2022 for her work on the uplifting coming-of-age outback road trip film, *Sweet As*.

MIFF.com.au

[Media Centre](#)

Media Contact

Alice Lewinsky
E alice@commonstate.co
M (+61) 403 837 351

Leigh-Anne Ramirez
E leigh-anne@commonstate.co
M (+61) 439 353 407

An expansive range of roles were eligible for award consideration; such as director, technical or creative lead and other cinema craft positions. The nominees of the **Blackmagic Design Australian Innovation Award** are:

- **Andrew Robinson** – *Mercy Road* – Lead VFX Supervisor
- **Jeni Thornley** – *Memory Film* – Director
- **Nathan Jurevicius** – *Scarygirl* – Production Designer
- **Soda Jerk** – *Hello Dankness* – Director

“Blackmagic Design is excited to be back supporting the Melbourne International Film Festival,” said **Grant Petty, CEO, Blackmagic Design**. “It is amazing seeing the level of creativity these filmmakers are bringing to the festival and I want to congratulate all the nominees for pushing creative boundaries.”



Mercy Road

Judging two categories within this year’s MIFF Awards, the celebrated jury panel for the **Blackmagic Design Australian Innovation Award** and the recently announced **Bright Horizons Competition** includes American filmmaker, musician, poet, writer and actor co-Jury President **Saul Williams**, Rwandan filmmaker, actor and playwright co-Jury President **Anisia Uzeyman**, Swiss documentary filmmaker, pop culture historian and cinema cognoscente **Alexandre O Philippe** (*You Can Call Me Bill*, MIFF 2023), revered Singaporean filmmaker and prior Camera d’Or winner **Anthony Chen** (*The Breaking Ice*, *Drift*, MIFF 2023) and Indonesian director **Kamila Andini** (*Before, Then & Now*, MIFF 2021; *Yuni*, MIFF 2021).

Presented by VicScreen, this year’s **Bright Horizons Competition** introduces 11 films by first and second-time directors, including two feature directing debuts from Australia (*Shayda* and *The Rooster*). All screening as Australian or World Premieres, the competition films represent the new, the next, the breakthrough and the best, bringing international filmmaker guests and esteemed overseas jury members in attendance.

The full slate of **2023 Bright Horizons Competition** films include:

- *Ama Gloria* directed by **Marie Amachoukeli**
- *Animalia* directed by **Sofia Alaoui**
- *Banel & Adama* directed by **Ramata-Toulaye Sy**

MIFF.com.au

[Media Centre](#)

Media Contact

Alice Lewinsky
E alice@commonstate.co
M (+61) 403 837 351

Leigh-Anne Ramirez
E leigh-anne@commonstate.co
M (+61) 439 353 407

- *Disco Boy* directed by **Giacomo Abbruzzese**
- *Earth Mama* directed by **Savanah Leaf**
- *How to Have Sex* directed by **Molly Manning Walker**
- *Inside the Yellow Cocoon Shell* directed by **Pham Thien An**
- *The Rooster* directed by **Mark Leonard Winter**
- *Shayda* directed by **Noora Niasari**
- *The Sweet East* directed by **Sean Price Williams**
- *Tótem* directed by **Lila Avilés**



The Sweet East

A number of the 2023 Bright Horizons filmmakers – including visiting international directors – will attend the festival in-person with Q&A events and introductions scheduled for various screenings. A special **Bright Horizons Pass** is also available for purchase, with ticket holders able to see all 11 competition films at a discounted rate.

Last year's Bright Horizons winner, *Neptune Frost* – directed by 2023 co-Jury presidents **Saul Williams** and **Anisia Uzeyman** – was recognised from amongst an exciting crop of fresh filmmaking talent, including the likes of Charlotte Well's *Aftersun* which later garnered Oscars recognition and Thomas M. Wright's *The Stranger* which proved a bona-fide international hit following its wider streaming release in late 2022.

The **MIFF Schools Youth Jury** will also name their category winner at the Closing Night Gala on Saturday 19 August, with a panel of three young filmmakers – selected from Top Screen 2023's best and brightest – deliberating on the best title from the **MIFF Schools** program.

The 62nd edition of the **MIFF Shorts Awards**, presented by Campari, will be held earlier in the festival on **Saturday 12 August** at ACMI. 2023 shorts jury members are filmmaker Alena Lodkina (*Petrol*, MIFF Premiere Fund 2022; *Strange Colours*); curator and artist Kate ten Buuren; and Head of Production and Partner, Virginia Whitwell of Good Thing Productions.

NOTES TO EDITOR

- MIFF 2023 runs in-cinema from 3-20 August
- The 62nd MIFF Shorts Awards will take place on Saturday 12 August, awarding \$50,000 in prizes

MIFF.com.au

[Media Centre](mailto:Media@MIFF.com.au)

[Media Contact](mailto:Media@MIFF.com.au)

Alice Lewinsky
E alice@commonstate.com.au
M (+61) 403 837 351

Leigh-Anne Ramirez
E leigh-anne@commonstate.com.au
M (+61) 439 353 407



Melbourne
International
Film Festival

August 2023
03–20 Cinemas
18–27 Online

- The 2023 MIFF Awards will take place on Saturday 19 August
- The MIFF Bright Horizons Award is supported by VicScreen. The winner receives \$140,000
- The inaugural First Nations Film Creative Award is presented in collaboration with Kearney Group. The winner receives a \$20,000 cash prize and \$25,000 worth of financial services with Kearney Group
- The Blackmagic Design Australian Innovation Award is supported by Blackmagic Design. The winner receives \$70,000
- The MIFF Schools Youth Jury, which was inaugurated in 2020, returns in 2023. The jury is a panel of three young filmmakers who deliberate on the MIFF Schools Youth Jury Award
- Closing Night Gala and MIFF Awards presented by Champagne Duperrey
- Music on Film co-presented by RRR and Mountain Goat
- MIFF Shorts presented by Campari
- MIFF Regional runs 11-13 and 18-20 August with screenings in Bendigo, Bright, Castlemaine, Echuca, Geelong, Rosebud and Warrnambool
- MIFF Play, the festival's online streaming platform, is available nationally from 18-27 August
- To purchase tickets, including the Bright Horizons Pass, and explore the full program visit miff.com.au

Principal Government Partner



Major Government Partners



Miff.com.au

[Media Centre](#)

Media Contact 

Alice Lewinsky
E alice@commonstate.co
M (+61) 403 837 351

Leigh-Anne Ramirez
E leigh-anne@commonstate.co
M (+61) 439 353 407