

## MIFF 2023 SHARES DAZZLING FIRST GLANCE PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

**UNDER EMBARGO: 8.00AM AEST, THURSDAY 8 JUNE**



*The Rooster*

Bounding back into theatres and online this August, the **Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF)** has shared a **First Glance** announcement for its 2023 program, featuring an expansive selection of World Cinema, engrossing documentaries, hotly anticipated releases from the likes of Sundance, Berlinale and Toronto film festivals.

An iconic celebration of film, filmmakers and cinema, MIFF has dedicated itself for over 70 years to bringing artists and audiences together in Melbourne and to making movies matter more.

In its 71st edition, the 2023 festival event is set to dazzle audiences again with a jam-packed 18 day in-cinema program running **3-20 August**, far-reaching regional showcase between **11-13** and **18-20 August** and an abundance of films available to stream nationally via **MIFF Play** from **18-27 August**.

Across World Premieres, exclusive releases, insightful filmmaker conversations and special one-off events, MIFF's unique festival experience is designed to provide places and spaces to connect with fellow film lovers, hear from inspiring local and international guests and showcase the best films that you won't see anywhere else this August.

On sharing the First Glance preview, **Al Cossar, MIFF Artistic Director**, said: "In 2023, the Melbourne International Film Festival returns for our 71st edition, bringing you essential, incredible, unexpected cinema from the whole world before us, far beyond the streamers, far beyond the multiplex – hotly anticipated works by iconic filmmakers, alongside new and breakthrough voices waiting to be discovered."

"The release of our First Glance titles means it's time again to get set for an August invitation back to the world of MIFF this year – a cinematic, kaleidoscopic adventuring through hundreds of filmmakers and artists you can carve your own path through; an invitation to find yourself at the movies once more."

[MIFF.com.au](http://MIFF.com.au)

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“With MIFF’s 2023 First Glance release, you’ll find your not-to-be-missed first taste of what to expect from the festival lineup this year. I know you’ll find there’s much to be excited about here already!”

The new slate of films unveiled today join the previously announced **Opening Night Gala** showcase of Sundance award-winner, *Shayda*, and the eagerly awaited **Music on Film Gala** screening of *Ego: The Michael Gudinski Story*. Tickets for both Gala events are on sale now.

The full MIFF 2023 program will be announced **Tuesday 11 July**.



*This Is Going to Be Big*

## MIFF PREMIERE FUND

Year on year, the **MIFF Premiere Fund** delivers a fresh array of documentary and narrative features to festival audiences with 2023 presenting a diverse crop of exciting homegrown talent.

With a commitment to supporting “Stories that need telling”, the MIFF Premiere Fund has invested in over 90 films since its inception in 2007. From beloved Australian actors to first-time directors, this year’s Premiere Fund line-up explores potent conversations around neurodiversity, the connection between art and wellbeing, our sporting identity and collective memory making.

As announced last month, the Premiere Fund-supported *Shayda* from Australian-Iranian writer-director and MIFF Accelerator alum **Noora Niasari**, will open the festival in a special **Opening Night Gala** screening on **Thursday 3 August**. Filmed and set in Melbourne, Cannes Best Actress winner **Zar Amir-Ebrahimi** (*Holy Spider*, MIFF 2022) anchors this Sundance Audience Award-winning portrait of a mother seeking a new life for herself and her daughter.

*This Is Going to Be Big* follows the students, their families and the staff of Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School in Bullengarook as they prepare to stage their school’s time-travelling John Farnham-themed musical. Told squarely from the teenagers’ perspective and documenting their experiences of autism, clinical anxiety and acquired brain injury, **Thomas Charles Hyland**’s feature directorial debut is an endearing, relatable tale of adolescent aspiration and the community that comes together to ensure these young voices ring out.

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**Hugo Weaving** (*Lone Wolf*, MIFF Premiere Fund 2021; *Measure for Measure*, MIFF Premiere Fund 2019) and **Phoenix Raei** (*Below*, MIFF Premiere Fund 2019; *Clickbait*) play a hermit and a cop who form an unlikely connection amid crisis in the feature debut from actor turned writer/director **Mark Leonard Winter** (*The Dressmaker*; *Little Tornadoes*, MIFF Premiere Fund 2021). Set in stunning regional Victoria, **The Rooster** unfurls as a distinctive, unforgettable tale of two individuals confronting life's challenges and discovering what hides behind the bravado.

Revered filmmaker **Jeni Thornley** composes a lovingly crafted, dialogue-free cine-poem from her extensive super-8 archive in **Memory Film: A Filmmaker's Diary**. Set against the backdrop of radical feminism, Aboriginal land rights and widespread social upheaval, the film incorporates footage from Thornley's earlier works *Maidens*, *For Love or Money* and *A Film for Discussion*. This hyper-intimate opus contemplates gender fluidity, sexual politics, the pleasure and pain of motherhood, and the desire for a world free of war and colonisation.



*Past Lives*

**The Slam** relives the most thrilling moments of our beloved Australian Open tennis tournament – from its humble grass court beginnings in 1970s Kooyong, through its iconic rivalries and nail-biting finals at the cutting-edge Melbourne Park, to its current status as the highest-profile sporting event in the country. Featuring interviews with players old and new (**Pat Cash, Frances Tiafoe, Rennae Stubbs, Liam Broady**), this heart-pumping documentary from director **Ili Baré** (*The Leadership*, MIFF 2020) explores sport's relationship with cultural identity and social progress, athletes' duality as heroes and humans, and the controversies courted by the Grand Slam event.

## INTERNATIONAL FILMS

Melbourne will be the epicentre of World Cinema this August with a growing program of first-look international features for local audiences.

Drawing comparisons to Richard Linklater's *Before* trilogy, **Past Lives** is a swooning romance about Nora (**Greta Lee**, *Russian Doll*), a Korean-American woman who just can't seem to move on from the memory of her childhood friend Hae-sung (**Teo Yoo**, *Decision to Leave*, MIFF 2022). Screening in competition at the Berlinale and championed by indie powerhouse A24, the film's emotional heft is all the more impressive given it's the feature debut of Korean-Canadian playwright-turned-filmmaker **Celine Song**.

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Leaning into the French New Wave's steamiest tropes, *Love is Strange* director **Ira Sachs** explores a tempestuous love triangle brewing within the Parisian indie film scene in *Passages*. Debuting at Sundance, this mature, mordantly funny look at sexual fluidity and wavering commitment stars **Franz Rogowski** (*Great Freedom*, MIFF 2021) and **Ben Whishaw** (*Women Talking*; *Bond*) as a couple caught in a funk and **Adèle Exarchopoulos** (*Blue Is the Warmest Colour*) as the woman who comes between them.



*BlackBerry*

Banned from making films by Iranian officials and ostensibly under house arrest, revered auteur **Jafar Panahi** (*3 Faces*, MIFF 2018; *Closed Curtain*, MIFF 2013; *Offside*, MIFF 2006) has produced another miracle work of covert filmmaking. Awarded the Special Jury Prize at Venice, *No Bears* is a docudrama that follows a Turkish couple who are procuring fake passports to cross the border into Europe, mirroring Panahi's own temptation to transgress his home country's limits.

Sketching the 'before' and 'after' of a woman's mysterious disappearance, *Trenque Lauquen* is a dazzling rabbit hole of a film by director **Laura Citarella** and co-writer and actor **Laura Paredes** (both of whom formed part of the team behind Mariano Llinás's 14-hour saga *La Flor*). Unfolding over twelve chapters across two parts and a near four-and-a-half hour runtime, this circular opus continues to unspool in unexpected and interconnected ways in a film consumed by the possibilities of narrative.

**Michael Cera** (*Cryptozoo*, MIFF 2021; *Barbie*) reunites with director **Dustin Guy Defa** (*Person to Person*, MIFF 2017) for *The Adults*, a slow-burn heartwarmer in which Cera plays Eric, a perfectly awkward, thirtysomething who returns home after a long absence. Old childhood squabbles with Eric's two sisters (**Hannah Gross**, *Stinking Heaven*, MIFF 2015; *Mindhunter* and **Sophia Lillis**, *I Am Not Okay With This*; *Asteroid City*) swiftly resurface just as Eric also finds himself caught up again with his old poker group.

Direct from competition at this year's Berlinale, the latest feature from mock-documentary specialist **Matt Johnson** (*Operation Avalanche*, MIFF 2016; *The Dirties*, MIFF 2014) offers a wildly entertaining account of the dramatic rise and fall of the world's first smartphone. *BlackBerry* stars comic mainstay **Jay Baruchel** (*This Is the End*) and a ferocious **Glenn Howerton** (*It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*) in a slyly satirical and frequently uproarious look at the genius and hubris of the tech industry.

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**Jennifer Connelly** (*Noah*; *Requiem for a Dream*) and **Ben Whishaw** (who is also appearing in *Passages*, MIFF 2023) star in ***Bad Behaviour***, a black comedy about a former child star who attends a spiritual retreat in search of enlightenment and filial reconciliation. Working from her own screenplay, actor-turned-director and MIFF Accelerator Lab alum **Alice Englert** (*You Won't Be Alone*, MIFF 2022; *Top of the Lake: China Girl*, MIFF 2017) reveals serious technical skill behind the camera – whilst also appearing as Connelly's on screen daughter in the film – tempering moments of absurd satire with sincerity about the intentions of participants in the so-called enlightenment industry.

In **Daniel Goldhaber's** (*Cam*) ***How to Blow Up a Pipeline***, eight young Americans hatch a plan to detonate explosives in the Texan desert to destroy an oil pipeline, with hopes of sending shockwaves through the fossil-fuel industry. Earning widespread acclaim after its Toronto premiere, *How to Blow Up a Pipeline* plays out like the most thrilling of heist movies – yet, at its core, it's a rousing journey into the fiery beating heart of the climate-justice movement.



*The Kingdom Exodus*

Over 25 years after **Lars von Trier's** (*Melancholia*, MIFF 2011) small-screen horror soap opera *The Kingdom* (MIFF 1995) amassed a cult following, Danish cinema's enfant terrible returns to further the show's signature mayhem. A must-see for fans of offbeat masterpieces such as David Lynch and Mark Frost's *Twin Peaks* (MIFF 1990), ***The Kingdom Exodus*** revisits the wacky, disturbing world of Kingdom Hospital in his cult series' long-awaited final chapter.

British writer/director **Thomas Hardiman** teases together influences ranging from Robert Altman, Pedro Almodóvar, and Peter Greenaway in this dazzling one-shot ride through the larger-than-life subculture of competitive hairdressing. Featuring onscreen looks by real-life hair superstar **Eugene Souleiman**, who has worked with Björk, Lady Gaga and more, ***Medusa Deluxe*** sees extravagance and excess collide when the stylist to beat is found dead – and scalped! – the night before their annual contest.

## MUSIC ON FILM

With the World Premiere of ***Ego: The Michael Gudinski Story*** leading MIFF's **Music on Film** line-up, music-lovers will be rewarded with more stories of behind-the-scenes musical history, classic album covers and legendary musicians.

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Music video auteur, revered photographer and director **Anton Corbijn** (*Control*, MIFF 2007) takes history for a spin as he explores the world of Hipgnosis, the photo-design company whose album artworks graced the LPs and the gatefolds of some of the 1970s most beloved rock 'n roll releases. Featuring wall-to-wall musicians as talking heads – including **Paul McCartney, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, David Gilmour, Roger Waters** and **Noel Gallagher** – *Squaring the Circle (The Story of Hipgnosis)* goes behind the music to uncover what makes an album cover iconic.

Winner of a SXSW Audience Award, *Louder Than You Think* traces the unlikely ascendancy of one of rock's most influential yet under-sung musicians: **Gary Young** of Californian indie-rock band, **Pavement**. Channeling as much gusto as the subject himself, feature debut director **Jed I Rosenberg** combines never-before-seen archival video and audio footage, candid new interviews and even stop-motion animation in the definitive telling of both Young's and Pavement's stories.



*The Disappearance of Shere Hite*

## DOCUMENTARY FEATURES

The festival's expanding factual bill will explore affecting real-world stories from near and afar, from the lives of forgotten feminist revolutionaries and the inner workings of sinister political operatives to the joys, heartaches and rhythms of daily life in rural Mexico.

In her follow-up to the acclaimed documentary *Crip Camp*, Academy Award-nominated documentarian **Nicole Newnham** unearths the story of **Shere Hite**, the 1970s sexologist whose pioneering insights on female pleasure saw her all but erased from cultural memory. Narrated by **Dakota Johnson** (who also serves as executive producer), *The Disappearance of Shere Hite* rescues the charismatic and glamorous trailblazer from the margins of history in a fascinating portrait of a woman ahead of her time.

Following her fiction debut *Prayers for the Stolen* (MIFF 2022), which won a Cannes Un Certain Regard Special Mention, documentarian **Tatiana Huezo** returns to factual filmmaking with this mesmerising and tender depiction of an oft-overlooked side of Mexico. A stunning work of narrative-inspired nonfiction, *The Echo* justifiably scored Huezo the Best Director award in the Berlinale's Encounters section as well as the festival's overall Documentary Award.

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After three years of all-areas access, Danish filmmaker **Christoffer Guldbrandsen** was dying to bring his new film to screens. Literally – having suffered a near-fatal heart attack during the shoot, with his doctor noting that stress played a significant role in his collapse. And no wonder: ***A Storm Foretold*** chronicles the dizzying trajectory of Donald Trump’s wily adviser **Roger Stone**; from his scheming with the seditious Proud Boys to the explosive fall-out of the closed-door machinations that allegedly led to the 6 January 2021 Capitol attack.



*A Storm Foretold*

## RESTORATIONS

In a gorgeous new 4K restoration, directors **Béla Tarr** (*The Turin Horse*, MIFF 2011) and **Ágnes Hranitzky** find metaphysical horror in a nascent revolution. A work of textures and moods in a slow-cinema masterpiece, ***Werckmeister Harmonies*** contains only 39 black-and-white shots over 145 minutes, sharpening and thrilling the senses in a film deemed one of the towering achievements of 21st century cinema.

## MIFF AWARDS

The recently established **MIFF Awards** will return in 2023, with a new suite of films appearing in **Bright Horizons Competition**, one of the world’s richest feature film prizes, supported by VicScreen. Awarded by an illustrious panel of jurors and exclusively screening for MIFF audiences in Australian Premiere, the Bright Horizons Competition champions global breakthrough filmmaking - those first and second time feature directors changing the map of cinema itself, with compelling new voices from the world of Australian and World Cinema that are future masters, now not to be missed.

Many of the inaugural 2022 Bright Horizons filmmakers have continued to make their mark, following their Australian Premieres in last year’s MIFF Bright Horizons competition, including **Charlotte Wells**, director of the globally acclaimed and Oscar-nominated ***Aftersun***, and **Thomas M. Wright’s** *The Stranger*, which proved a global streaming hit upon its subsequent release on Netflix in October.

The full lineup for the 2023 Bright Horizons Competition will be unveiled at the MIFF Program Launch on **Tuesday 11 July**.

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Winners of **The Blackmagic Design Australian Innovation Award** and **MIFF Audience Award** – together with a new award supported by Kearney Group – will also be announced at the festival's Closing Night Gala on Saturday 19 August.

Audiences are encouraged to plan ahead, with **MIFF Passes** and **MIFF Memberships** available for purchase now via [miff.com.au/tickets](https://miff.com.au/tickets)

### FIRST GLANCE TITLES: MIFF 2023

- *A Storm Foretold* (dir. Christoffer Guldbrandsen)
- *Bad Behaviour* (dir. Alice Englert)
- *BlackBerry* (dir. Matt Johnson)
- *How to Blow Up a Pipeline* (dir. Daniel Goldhaber)
- *Louder Than You Think* (dir. Jed I Rosenberg)
- *Medusa Deluxe* (dir. Thomas Hardiman)
- *Memory Film: A Filmmaker's Diary* (Premiere Fund) (dir. Jeni Thornley)
- *No Bears* (dir. Jafar Panahi)
- *Passages* (dir. Ira Sachs)
- *Past Lives* (dir. Celine Song)
- *Squaring the Circle (The Story of Hipgnosis)* (dir. Anton Corbijn)
- *The Adults* (dir. Dustin Guy Defa)
- *The Disappearance of Shere Hite* (dir. Nicole Newnham)
- *The Echo* (dir. Tatiana Huezo)
- *The Kingdom Exodus* (dir. Lars von Trier)
- *The Rooster* (Premiere Fund) (dir. Mark Leonard Winter)
- *The Slam* (Premiere Fund) (dir. Ili Baré)
- *This Is Going To be Big* (Premiere Fund) (dir. Thomas Charles Hyland)
- *Trenque Lauquen* (dir. Laura Citarella)
- *Werckmeister Harmonies* (Restoration) (dir. Béla Tarr, Ágnes Hranitzky)

### NOTES TO EDITOR

- MIFF 2023 runs in-cinema from 3-20 August
- MIFF Regional runs 11-13 and 18-20 August with screenings in Bendigo, Bright, Castlemaine, Geelong, Mildura, Rosebud and Warrnambool
- MIFF Play, the festival's online streaming platform, is available nationally from 18-27 August
- MIFF Schools returns in 2023 with cinema screenings held during the festival period (3–20 August) and streaming via MIFF Play available (18–27 August). Find out more about MIFF Schools [here](#)
- The Opening Night Gala screening of *Shayda* takes place on Thursday 3 August
- *Ego: The Michael Gudinski Story* will make its World Premiere as the festival's Music on Film Gala screening on Thursday 10 August
- The Music on Film Gala is presented by RRR and Mountain Goat
- General release tickets for the Opening Night and Music on Film Galas on sale now
- The Closing Night and Awards Gala will be held on Saturday 19 August at the Forum Theatre
- The full 2023 program will be made public on Tuesday 11 July
- MIFF Members exclusive pre-sale window runs from 11-13 July
- Tickets are on sale to the General Public on Friday 14 July

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