

Under embargo until Tuesday 3 July at 2pm

MIFF ANNOUNCES NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The board of Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) is thrilled to announce today the appointment of the festival's new Artistic Director, Al Cossar.

Cossar, who takes up the position in October 2018, comes to the role after acting as interim Artistic Director of this year's festival for outgoing MIFF Artistic Director, Michelle Carey, who took maternity leave in October 2017.

Having been directly involved with MIFF for close to a decade, Cossar has both an intimate knowledge of and deep affection for the festival, which will see it kept in excellent hands for the years ahead.

"I've experienced the festival as a square-eyed fan and film obsessive, as a volunteer, as its Programmer, and this year as its Associate Artistic Director," Cossar says. "I am both thrilled and honoured to take up this new role as Artistic Director in an organisation that I love."

Cossar's appointment comes after a global search for suitably eligible candidates to take the place of Carey, who is soon relocating to Germany after eight years in the role. Of his outgoing colleague, Cossar says he has nothing but praise and high esteem.

"I wish to recognise the extraordinary direction and dedication of Michelle Carey, who has driven the festival to new audiences, new initiatives, and across the board to new heights," he states. "Hers is a legacy that leaves MIFF with an incredible reputation; full of possibility."

MIFF Board Chair Claire Dobbin said:

"Both MIFF and Victorian audiences have benefitted from the extraordinary vision of Michelle Carey. Over the past eight years, the festivals that she curated have confirmed her status as a truly international cinephile, able to connect with audiences of all ages, tastes and sensibilities. She brought unseen and unforgettable worlds to us all and we will miss her."

"Having known and admired him as the festival's Programmer and more recently as our interim Artistic Director, I'm delighted that Al Cossar is our next Artistic Director," continued Dobbin. "Al's encyclopaedic knowledge of cinema, deep understanding of festivals, his curatorial rigour and vision for the future of MIFF made him an irresistible choice."

Speaking about his new role, Cossar says he is both humbled and buoyant:

"I look forward to continuing Michelle's work in building MIFF as an incredible centre for cinema; a champion of Australian talent; a diverse, inclusive and a welcoming destination for audiences. I look forward to seeing MIFF deepen its reputation as Melbourne's foremost screen event and a true cultural icon."

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