

Melbourne International Film Festival announces 2019 Audience Awards winners

Press Release

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MIFF 2019 Media Centre



Adam Goodes: *The Australian Dream*

The 68th Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) ended on Sunday 18 August after 18 electrifying days of cinema. The 2019 program was the largest in its history, featuring **263** feature films, **123** shorts and **16** virtual reality experiences, which were all eligible for the 2019 MIFF Audience Awards.

With **41,107** votes registered, Adam Goodes and Stan Grant's incredibly moving film *The Australian Dream* has taken out the Audience Award for Documentary Feature, after receiving an eight-minute standing ovation at MIFF's Opening Night Gala, while Céline Sciamma's incandescent period romance *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* won the award for best narrative feature.

Written by Walkley award-winning Australian journalist Grant, critics have called *The Australian Dream* the most important film of 2019. Directed by Daniel Gordon, *The Australian Dream* explores race, identity and belonging as told from the perspective of champion AFL footballer and Indigenous rights activist, Adam Goodes.

Winner of Best Screenplay and the Queer Palm at this year's Cannes, Céline Sciamma's *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* depicts a romance between a painter and her subject. Working from a deceptively simple narrative, Sciamma tightens the emotional screws with devastating precision as she explores her characters' emotionally overwhelming relationship with heartbreaking clarity.

Premiere Fund Film titles:

Voted second-most popular narrative title was MIFF Accelerator Lab alumni director John Sheedy's debut feature *It Is for Happiness*, which was supported by the MIFF Premiere Fund. The Premiere Fund had a record three films in the Audience Awards with fellow Accelerator Lab alumus director Rodd Rathjen's *Buoyancy* also placing in the top-ten narrative favourites, while Hylton Shaw and Samantha Dinning's *No Time for Quiet* was voted amongst the most popular feature documentaries.

While nine Australian films made the short list, our antipodean neighbours took out second and third place in the documentary category, with Heperi Mita's *Merata: How Mum Decolonised the Screen* and Ve'a Mafile'o's *For My Father's Kingdom*, receiving second and third place respectively. Third-placed narrative feature was *Vai* – eight female Pacific Islander's ode to femininity by directors Amberley Jo Aumua, Becs Arahanga, Dianna Fuemana, Marina Alofagia McCartney, Matasila Freshwater, Mirria George, Nicole Whippy and Ofa-Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki.

"The people have spoken! Massive congratulations to the lauded crowd-pleasers of MIFF 2019," said MIFF Artistic Director, Al Cossar. "We are so pleased in particular to see so many stories from Australia and the South Pacific in this list resonating with MIFF-goers this year - our particular congratulations go to the whole team behind MIFF Opening Night film *The Australian Dream* as our Documentary Audience Award Winner - an urgent, accomplished film, a landmark documentary that has really made a mark here at the festival, and I'm sure will continue from success to success."

MIFF is about to hit the road with the Travelling Film Showcase which gets underway next week with Bendigo and Geelong on 30 August – the first of eight locations across regional Victoria to experience some of this year's festival favourites, including the record slate of seven MIFF Premiere Fund-supported films, on the big screen. Find out what's playing in each town at miff.com.au/travelling

THE 2019 MIFF AUDIENCE AWARDS TOP 10 FEATURE FILMS AND DOCUMENTARIES AS FOLLOWS:

Documentaries —

1. *The Australian Dream* (Australia/UK) – dir. Daniel Gordon
2. *Merata: How Mum Decolonised the Screen* (NZ) – dir. Heperi Mita
3. *For My Father's Kingdom* (NZ) – dir. Veve Mafire'o
4. *For Sama* (Syria / UK) – dir. Edward Watts, Waleed al-Kateab
4. *No Time for Quiet* (Aus) – dir. Hylton Shaw, Samantha Dinning
6. *Martha: A Picture Story* (Aus / USA) – dir. Selina Miles
7. *Collingwood: From the Inside Out* (Aus) – dir. Josh Cable, Marcus Cobbledick
8. *In My Blood It Runs* (Aus) – dir. Maya Newell
9. *Seahorse* (UK / Spain) – dir. Jeanie Finlay
10. *5B* (USA) – dir. Dan Krauss, Paul Haggis

Features —

1. *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* (France) – dir. Céline Sciamma
2. *H is for Happiness* (Aus) – dir. John Sheedy
3. *Vai* (NZ) – dir. Amberley Jo Aumua, Becs Arahanga, Dianna Fueamana, Marina Alofagia McCartney, Matasila Freshwater, Mirria George, Nicole Whippy, Ofa-Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki
4. *Bellbird* (NZ) – dir. Hamish Bennett
5. *Buoyancy* (Aus) – dir. Rodd Rathjen
6. *Kairos* (Aus) – dir. Paul Barakat
7. *And Then We Danced* (France/Georgia/Sweden) – dir. Levan Akin
8. *La Flor* (Argentina) – dir. Mariano Llinás
8. *Adam* (France / Morocco) – dir. Maryam Touzani
8. *Hearts and Bones* (Aus) – dir. Ben Lawrence

NOTES TO EDITOR

- The 2019 Melbourne International Film Festival ran from 1–18 August.
 - Visit www.miff.com.au to explore the full program and red-carpet photo galleries
 - MIFF Travelling Film Showcase travels around Victoria from 30 August – 6 October
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MIFF's 2019 program images and synopses [here](#)