

MIFF FIRST GLANCE: ADAM ELLIOT'S MEMOIR OF A SNAIL TO OPEN 2024 MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



Memoir of a Snail (Premiere Film Fund)

Press release

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MIFF Media Centre

The highly anticipated new feature from Melbourne-born Oscar-winning filmmaker Adam Elliot will officially open the 2024 Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) when the beloved cultural event returns this August.

Proudly screening in Naarm and surrounds from **8-25 August**, MIFF brings together some of the most talked about films of the year, hotly anticipated hits from the worldwide festival circuit and future award contenders – many of which will be shown for the first time in Australia – for 18 days of sheer cinematic revelry. Sharing an early First Glance look at some of this year's program, the festival has revealed details of its Gala events, the 2024 Premiere Fund Film slate, a suite of international highlights and a bevy of unmissable big screen and off screen experiences.

Hometown hero **Adam Elliot** will unveil *Memoir of a Snail* – arriving 20 years on from his remarkable 2004 Academy Award win for *Harvie Krumpet* – at this year's **Opening Night Gala** on Thursday 8 August. Supported by the MIFF Premiere Fund, the exquisitely hand-crafted stop-motion wonder assembles a star powered collective of voices, including **Sarah Snook, Kodi Smit-McPhee, Magda Szubanski, Eric Bana, Tony Armstrong, Nick Cave** and **Jacki Weaver** to enliven the latest gaggle of Elliot's unique claymation creations.

Looking ahead to Opening Night, filmmaker **Adam Elliot**, said: "After eight long years, producer Liz Kearney and I are a bit exhausted but thrilled to be asked to be the Opening Night film for MIFF 2024. It is truly a Melbourne film and MIFF is the perfect place for its Australian premiere. About Melbourne, made by Melburnians and voiced by Melburnians, *Memoir of a Snail* is a handmade stop-motion film lovingly crafted by a team of local artists. Opening night at MIFF will be a celebration of their artistry and a celebration of this wonderful city in which we live."

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Sharing a first look at the festival's 2024 program, **MIFF Artistic Director Al Cossar**, said: "Time to ready yourselves for another extraordinary voyage through cinema! MIFF is pleased to share our First Glance for 2024, a sneak peek of the program arriving this August – the marvelous visions, diversions, and cinematic surprises coming your way as over 250 films illuminate the screens this Winter across 18 days of unbridled binge-viewing."

"First Glance already sees us lifting the lid on some of the most anticipated films of the year, alongside films you won't find anywhere else – bold, thrilling, thoughtful, hilarious, terrifying, and essential new cinema, from Australia and all around the world."

"Remember – now's the time to sort passes, subscribe, mark your calendars, clear your diaries, and generally lay in wait for the return of Melbourne's biggest cinematic event – the 2024 Melbourne International Film Festival!"

Melbourne's wintry streets will be set abuzz with the energy of MIFF with round-the-clock screenings held across seven CBD and inner city theatres and plus talks, exhibitions and events taking place in the city's restaurants, performance halls, museums, bars and special festival pop-ups.

Outside of metro Melbourne, the **MIFF Regional** showcase expands its far-reaching tour with venues in Bendigo, Ballarat, Castlemaine, Echuca, Geelong, Rosebud and Shepparton set to screen some of the festival's biggest titles. And MIFF's digital offering will be back from 9-25 August, with a limited selection of festival highlights, including new films, retrospectives, and free short films available on demand with **MIFF Online – streaming via ACMI**.

The annual **MIFF Awards** will return to once again share in one of the richest filmmaking prize pools in the world, including the landmark \$140,000 Bright Horizons Award supported by the Victorian Government through VicScreen, in a celebration of cinematic excellence, technical innovation and filmmakers on the rise.

The full MIFF 2024 program, including the Bright Horizons competition line-up, will be unveiled Thursday 11 July. Nominees for the various **MIFF Awards** categories will be announced in late July.

MIFF PREMIERE FUND

Led by the highly anticipated Opening Night feature, ***Memoir of a Snail***, the **2024 MIFF Premiere Fund** line-up is again brimming with top-tier creatives, fresh local ideas and remarkable Australian storytelling.

MIFF's film commissioning fund provides co-financing to assist the production of new Australian feature films which then go on to premiere at MIFF. The Premiere Fund deepens the festival's relationship with homegrown filmmaking talent and helps to realise a diverse array of incredible new filmmaking to discover each year at MIFF. Now in its second decade, the Premiere Fund continues to proudly support a diverse crop of local talent and voices in telling their stories.

Screening as the 2024 **MIFF Family Gala** feature, **Magic Beach** brings to life the much loved Aussie children's book classic by **Alison Lester** as reimagined by ten Australian animators each with their own unique style. And for this year's **Music on Film Gala**, rock 'n' roll legend **Warren Ellis** of The Bad Seeds and Dirty Three shares his personal passion project to establish an animal sanctuary in Sumatra in **Ellis Park**, directed by **Justin Kurzel** (*Nitram*).

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MIFF Media Centre*Audrey (Premiere Film Fund)*

Natalie Bailey's *Audrey* follows soap opera hasbeen and self-proclaimed Mother of the Year, Ronnie Lipsick (**Jackie van Beek**, *The Breaker Upperers*) as she tries to take another stab at stardom by stealing the identity of her comatose teenage daughter. Also starring **Hannah Diviney** (*Latecomers*), **Josephine Blazier** (*The Gloaming*) and **Jeremy Lindsay Taylor** (*The Dry*), this nutty black comedy takes a mother's love to the extreme.

Presented by DECJUBA, ***Left Write Hook*** will screen as MIFF's inaugural **Premiere with Purpose** feature, a world premiere black-carpet event at ACMI. This powerful local documentary takes the audience inside a transformative recovery program attended by seven female survivors of childhood sexual assault. Under the guidance of boxing instructor and trauma survivor **Donna Lyons** – who also serves as producer on the film – the women band together as they break their silence for the very first time. Directed by **Shannon Owen**, the documentary explores how the physicality of boxing combined with the emotional power of creative writing gives space to survivors to release their memories, reclaim their bodies, and imagine new lives for themselves.

Directed by **Eliza Cox**, ***Queens of Concrete*** is a coming-of-age documentary that follows three young skateboarders – Hayley, Ava, and Charlotte – as they strive to compete in the 2020 Summer Olympics, all the while juggling the familiar obstacles of teenage girlhood. Competing for a few select spots on the Australian team and against the expectations of a male-dominated sport, the trio are on a mission to make their Olympic dreams come true.

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EXHIBITIONS, XR, MIFF SCHOOLS AND TALKS

MIFF's special events and expanded programming offering is an opportunity for audiences to connect, debate and engage beyond the dark of the cinema.

To coincide with the Australian premiere of Adam Elliot's *Memoir of a Snail* at MIFF 2024, **ACMI's** centrepiece exhibition, *The Story of the Moving Image*, will play host to some of the custom sets and characters from the film, as well as designs and development materials to give insight into the incredible creative and technical skill witnessed in every single shot. Visitors will be able to explore the film's reimagining of iconic Melbourne locations, such as Brunswick Street and Luna Park, and get to know its claymation stars through a selection of puppets. The display will also feature Adam's hand drawn storyboards and behind the scenes footage of the animators at work.

Also at ACMI, **MIFF XR** is back with cutting-edge extended reality (XR) experiences set to blur, bend and redefine storytelling boundaries. And for younger viewers, **MIFF Schools** offers a carefully curated program of global cinema aimed at enriching classroom learning and curriculum and the development of storytelling, language, media analysis skills and broader intercultural understanding.

Further details of attending special guests, restoration and retrospective screenings, **MIFF Talks**, **MIFF Shorts** and **MIFF XR** programming will be announced at Program Launch on Thursday 11 July.

FIRST GLANCE INTERNATIONAL TITLES

In an early snapshot of what's to come, MIFF revealed a handful of titles from its expansive program of 250+ films to whet the appetite of festival-goers ahead of the main event.

Following up the lo-fi, high concept *We're All Going to the World's Fair*, director **Jane Schoenbrun's** *I Saw the TV Glow* once again crafts a story about the ways that technology, art and pop culture can be lifelines for outsiders, this time interweaving themes of gender, queerness and identity. With elevated twists on genre, music by **Caroline Polachek** and **yeule**, and a plethora of pop-culture easter eggs (including appearances by **Phoebe Bridgers**, **Snail Mail** and **Fred Durst**), *I Saw the TV Glow* is bound to become one of the most talked-about films of the year.

Recent Cannes Critics' Week award winner, **Constance Tsang's** *Blue Sun Palace* investigates the complexities of the migrant experience alongside a warm, empathetic study of the universality of the human hunger for connection. Starring Golden Horse winning actor (and Tsai Ming-liang favourite) **Lee Kang-Sheng**, the story begins in New York City where two recently arrived Chinese workers are navigating the demands of family back home and the difficulties of their new lives working in a massage parlour, when an unexpected act of violence brings the pair together in an unlikely bond.

Euphoria's **Hunter Schafer** goes head-to-head with *Downton Abbey* alum **Dan Stevens** in **Cuckoo**, the frightfully weird second feature from German writer-director **Tilman Singer** (*Luz*) which set Berlinale audiences a flutter thanks to its wild and wacky, stylish yet sinister spin on the horror genre.

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Surveying a coming-of-age marked by MySpace and Motorola flip phones during the heady days of the 2000s, *Didi* is the double-Sundance-winning semi-autobiographical debut feature by **Sean Wang**. Sharing nostalgic DNA with *Eighth Grade* and Mid 90s, *Didi* further cements Wang's directorial talent following a recent Oscar nomination for his short *Nai Nai & Wàì Pó*.

Awarded Berlinale's Silver Bear for Best Leading Performance, **Sebastian Stan** (*Captain America: The Winter Soldier*) plays a wannabe actor who learns that confidence isn't skin-deep in the deliciously twisted A24-backed, *A Different Man*. Channelling David Cronenberg, David Lynch and Ari Kaurismäki in his film's blend of body-horror, dark comedy and surrealism, indie auteur **Aaron Schimberg** shrewdly takes a scalpel to misplaced ambition and the superficiality of modern society.

Executive-produced by **Amiel Courtin-Wilson** (*Hail*, MIFF 2012; *Bastardy*, MIFF 2008), **Jaydon Martin**'s directorial feature debut, *Flathead*, scooped a Special Jury Award as part of Rotterdam's Tiger Competition. Shot in an alluringly cinematic black-and-white, this intimate portrait blurs narrative and nonfiction to memorialise a working-class community in rural Queensland and their dealings with loss, masculinity and faith.



Fungi: Web of Life

From Australian production house Stranger Than Fiction Films and screening exclusively in IMAX, *Fungi: Web of Life* follows UK biologist **Dr Merlin Sheldrake** on a mission to educate the population about fungi's possibilities, advocate for their preservation and, in his own words, give this kingdom of life "a kingdom's worth of attention". Lulled by the soothing narration of **Björk** – a fellow fungi lover – and featuring mesmerising time lapse footage, this 3D documentary makes for a journey that's both meditative and awe-inspiring.

Continuing the socially driven work of his previous films, the World Premiere *Future Council* sees **Damon Gamou** (*That Sugar Film*; 2040) take eight inspiring young minds – including singer-songwriter **Ruby Rodgers**, the granddaughter of rock legend Jimmy Barnes – on the ultimate school excursion: a road trip across Europe in his vegetable-oil-powered, bright-yellow school bus to seek solutions to the climate crisis. What results is an optimistic portrait of what could be possible if adults actually listen to the kids set to inherit the (increasingly uninhabitable) Earth.

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Grand Theft Hamlet

Winner of SXSW's Grand Jury Prize for Documentary Feature, **Grand Theft Hamlet** sees two locked-down actors take Shakespeare to the least likely stage imaginable: the streets of multiplayer video game *Grand Theft Auto*. What begins as a playful collusion between the simulated thuggery of online gaming, the violent mayhem of Shakespeare's Denmark and the real-world camaraderie of theatre dorks swiftly develops into a surprisingly poignant story about unbridled creativity even during the worst of times.

Based on **Arnold Wesker's** play *The Kitchen* and starring **Rooney Mara** (*Song to Song*, MIFF 2017), ***La Cocina*** was a Berlinale competition standout for its gorgeously shot, righteously angry portrait of kitchen workers stewing in the pressure-cooker conditions of a New York City bistro. Director **Alonso Ruizpalacio** (*Museum*, MIFF 2018) contrasts his film's kitchen-confidential chaos with moments of quiet humanity, with stately compositions, gliding tracking shots and immaculate black-and-white cinematography further enhancing the palette.

Director **Lana Wilson's** earlier work – including the Taylor Swift concert film *Miss Americana* and *Pretty Baby: Brooke Shields* – has scaled the heights of fame and the image of celebrity. In this A24-backed documentary, her intimate meticulous approach takes viewers past the beaded curtain to meet seven psychics and their clients. Like a clairvoyant, ***Look Into My Eyes*** present insights that transcend, seeking to empathetically shed light on the profound impulses for compassion, connection and closure.

Venerated filmmaker and MIFF favourite **Frederick Wiseman's** 44th feature documentary turns the lens on the kitchens of Michelin Three-star French restaurants and the family that runs it in a genuine farm-to-table film. Unlike the small pleasures of its title, ***Menus-Plaisirs – Les Troisgros*** is a tremendous Epicurean delight, patiently following the Troisgros gastronomic dynasty from the market to the dining room and everything in between for a four-hour feast for the senses.

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Tender and funny yet politically daring, the double-Berlinale-winning late-life romance, ***My Favourite Cake***, is a warm, charming and incisive depiction of older women's inner lives that also breaks several entrenched Iranian cinematic taboos. The tender bubble of intimacy that writer-directors **Maryam Moghadam** and **Behtash Sanaeiha** (*Ballad of a White Cow*, MIFF 2021) have crafted in this gentle crowd pleaser is only made even more precious by its precariousness, with the pair unable to accept their awards in person as the Iranian government had confiscated their passports.

Oscar winner **Steve McQueen** (*Hunger*, *12 Years a Slave*) is known for tackling important themes in ambitious projects; in ***Occupied City***, he shifts his gaze to his adopted home of Amsterdam. Shooting throughout the COVID-19 pandemic he reveals the traumatising events from WWII that continue to haunt every corner of the city to this day. Building on the meticulous research of wife and fellow filmmaker **Bianca Stigter**'s book *Atlas of an Occupied City*, McQueen interweaves footage of schools, parks, homes, museums, businesses and the red-light district with revelatory, sometimes harrowing testimonies from locals, who reflect on the inter-bleeding of history and memory, trauma and healing.

Premiering at Tribeca, **Yannis Veslemes**'s outlandish and otherworldly ***She Loved Blossoms More*** follows three brothers as they attempt to lure their long-gone mother back to the world of the living using a time machine concocted from a wardrobe. As they deal with their delusional father and a girlfriend who plies them with drugs, their wayward experiments catapult them into a time-warped journey of grief and longing that is as visually arresting as it is comedic and disturbing.

*Teaches of Peaches*

Celebrate the world of gender-punk icon **Peaches** in the audacious Teddy Award-winning documentary, ***Teaches of Peaches***. Alongside footage of the singer's in-your-face breakthrough in the early 2000s, directors **Philipp Fussenegger** and **Judy Landkammer** grant audiences front-row access to one of the wildest tours of the decade as Peaches marks 20 years of her album of the same name. On hand for interviews are **Feist**, **Chilly Gonzales**, **Shirley Manson**, **Black Cracker** and more as they explore the enduring influence of this one-of-a-kind queer punk legend.

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Fiercely feminist and imbued with a wicked sense of humour, **We Were Dangerous** is an ambitious and comedic drama from debut Māori filmmaker **Josephine Stewart-Te Whiu** and executive producer **Taika Waititi**. Life on the island is ruled by sublime acting stand-outs of **Rima Te Wiata** (*Hunt for the Wilderpeople*), **Erana James** (*The Wilds*) and **Nathalie Morris** (*Petrol*, MIFF 2022) who team-up in this emotive subversion of the ‘coming-of-age delinquent’ narrative.

Director **Jodi Wille** has spent 25 years exploring alternative spiritual communities. Now, **Welcome Space Brothers** enters the world of the Unarians: California-based cosmic visionaries who use ‘fourth-dimensional physics’ and filmmaking to connect with extraterrestrials and their own past lives. In this affectionate celebration of extra-outsider art, executive-produced by **Elijah Wood**, Wille captures the exuberance that self-taught creativity can bring ordinary people in search of meaning.

The full program will launch on Thursday 11 July.

TICKETING

Audiences are encouraged to plan ahead, with MIFF Multipasses and MIFF Memberships – which offer exclusive pre-sale access – available for purchase now via miff.com.au/tickets

Tickets will go on sale to MIFF Members for an exclusive pre-sale from 8pm Thursday 11 July and will be on sale to the general public from 9am Tuesday 16 July. This year, MIFF will also be introducing allocated seating at select venues and sessions.

Stay tuned to MIFF socials for an announcement of Gala tickets going on sale.

FIRST GLANCE TITLES: MIFF 2024**FIRST GLANCE INTERNATIONAL**

A Different Man
Blue Sun Palace
Cuckoo
Didi
Flathead
Fungi: Web of Life
Future Council
Grand Theft Hamlet
I Saw the TV Glow
La Cocina
Look Into My Eyes
Menus-Plaisirs – Les Troisgros
My Favourite Cake
Occupied City
She Loved Blossoms More
Teaches of Peaches
We Were Dangerous
Welcome Space Brothers

MIFF PREMIERE FUND

Audrey
Ellis Park
Left Write Hook
Magic Beach
Memoir of a Snail
Queens of Concrete

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- MIFF 2024 runs 8-25 August
- Adam Elliot's *Memoir of a Snail* will make its Australian Premiere premiere at the 2024 MIFF Opening Night Gala on Thursday 8 August
- The Music on Film Gala screening of *Ellis Park*, presented by Triple R, will take place on Saturday 10 August
- The Family Gala screening of *Magic Beach* will take place on Sunday 18 August
- *Left Write Hook* will make its World Premiere as the inaugural Premiere With Purpose, presented by DECJUBA. The screening will be celebrated with a special black-carpet event hosted at ACMI on Wednesday 14 August
- The MIFF Awards ceremony will be held on Saturday 24 August at Rydges Melbourne
- The MIFF Shorts Award ceremony, presented by Campari, will take place Saturday 17 August at ACMI
- A limited selection of festival highlights will be available digitally from 9-25 August through MIFF Online – streaming via ACMI. Book and watch via ACMI's dedicated streaming platform [Cinema 3](#). Registration is free with films both free and paid for on demand.
- MIFF Schools runs 9-25 August at ACMI. For further information and bookings visit miff.com.au/schools
- MIFF Regional runs 16-18 August and 23-25 August with screenings in Bendigo (Star Cinema, Eaglehawk), Ballarat (Regent Cinemas), Castlemaine (Theatre Royal), Echuca (Paramount), Geelong (Village and Pivotonian), Rosebud (Peninsula Cinemas) and Shepparton (Village)
- The full 2024 program will be made public on Thursday 11 July
- MIFF Members exclusive pre-sale window runs from 8pm Thursday 11 July through to 9am Tuesday 16 July
- Tickets are on sale to the general public on 9am Tuesday 16 July