

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL RETURNS: FULL 2024 PROGRAM AND BRIGHT HORIZONS COMPETITION SLATE REVEALED



Inside (Premiere Film Fund)

Press release

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MIFF Media Centre

Beloved cultural event, the **Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF)**, has tonight shared its impressive 2024 program of over 250 features, shorts and XR experiences landing across Melbourne, around Victoria and online Australia-wide this August. Running **8-25 August**, this year's film line-up boasts a world class roster of international features, a assembly of stellar World Premiere local titles and a comprehensive shorts collection alongside immersive XR experiences, curated retrospectives, insightful talks, one-off special events and international guest appearances.

Following tonight's Program Launch event presented by Yering Station, **Artistic Director, Al Cossar**, said: "Here it is – the big moment of our annual reveal, packed with anticipation, discovery, a celebration of all things cinema. This year's MIFF program features over 250 films, with more than 400 sessions across 18 days, bringing together incredible Australian filmmaking, world cinema, drama, comedy, horror, animation, bold experimentation – things you've been waiting months to see, and others you never thought you'd get a chance to. The MIFF program this year, like every year, is a multi-faceted festival of cinematic excess, designed to delight, and sure to bring out the best in your imaginations. We're thrilled to welcome audiences back – come along and settle in for all too many movies at Melbourne's favourite binge this Winter!"

This evening's announcement has also revealed the full slate of films screening in competition for MIFF's flagship prize, the **MIFF Bright Horizons Award**, presented by VicScreen. Recognising first and second-time filmmakers, the prize awards \$140,000 to a filmmaker on the ascent, making it the richest feature film prize in the Southern Hemisphere. Across a prize pool of over \$300,000, the MIFF Awards and MIFF Shorts Awards include a number of further categories with nominees to be revealed later this month.

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Premier of Victoria Jacinta Allan, said: "Melbourne is the cultural capital of Australia - we're proud to support the nation's largest film festival which brings film lovers to Melbourne and the regions and highlights Victoria's leading role in the film industry."

Alongside many of the Bright Horizons competition directors, MIFF will host visiting creatives from Australia and around the world to introduce and discuss their films at in-cinema Q&A sessions, panel events and other public appearances. International guests attending the festival include British screenwriter and director **Luna Carmoon**, award-winning Latvian animator **Gints Zilbalodis** and American filmmaker, poet, and photographer **Raven Jackson**.

As previously announced, **Adam Elliot's *Memoir of a Snail*** will make its Australian Premiere as the **Opening Night Gala** feature film on **Thursday 8 August**. Returning to MIFF some twenty odd years since winning his Oscar for *Harvie Krumpet* – and twenty one years since that same short opened MIFF in 2003 – Elliot's latest hand-made wonder is a fitting hometown curtain raiser.

With a cavalcade of local stars including **Sarah Snook, Kodi Smit-McPhee, Magda Szubanski, Eric Bana** and **Jacki Weaver** lending their voices to the production, the much anticipated claymation was recently named Best Feature at this year's Annecy International Animation Festival in France.

Other special events include the **MIFF Family Gala** presentation of **Robert Connolly's *Magic Beach***, adapted from the **Alison Lester** classic; the **Music on Film Gala** showcase of **Warren Ellis** documentary *Ellis Park* by **Justin Kurzel**; and the inaugural **MIFF Premiere with Purpose** presented by DECJUBA which will debut **Shannon Owen's *Left Write Hook***.

Popping up in theatres statewide, the **MIFF Regional** showcase brings some of the festival's must-see titles to audiences further afield across the weekends of **16-18 August** and **23-25 August**. Meanwhile, **MIFF Online – streaming via ACMI** offers digital access Australia-wide to a limited selection of festival highlights from **9-25 August**.

Alongside **MIFF Premiere Fund** supported titles *Memoir of a Snail*, *Left Write Hook*, *Ellis Park* and *Magic Beach*, the 2024 PFF line-up will include female-fronted skateboarding doco, *Queens of Concrete* directed by **Eliza Cox** and presented by Rydges Melbourne; **Natalie Bailey's** pitch-black comedy *Audrey*; and the World Premiere of the **Charles Williams**-directed prison drama, *Inside*, which will also screen in competition as part of Bright Horizons.

With so many films screening across the 18-day event, attendees may have a hard time choosing a favourite. However there is good reason to do so this year, with festival goers given the chance to win an Intrepid trip for two to Vietnam just by voting for their top pick in the Intrepid Audience Award.

BRIGHT HORIZONS COMPETITION AND AWARD

Screening in competition at MIFF, the 2024 Bright Horizons films showcase an exciting array of innovative and compelling cinematic works from ten exceptional filmmakers on the rise.

In *Good One*, the revelatory debut from **India Donaldson**, a simple camping trip in the Catskills evolves into a life-changing experience. Breakout star **Lily Collias** delivers a stellar performance as the seventeen-year-old Sam who is roped along on a trip with her divorced father and his also divorced friend. Soon enough, competing egos come to the surface and just as Sam learns

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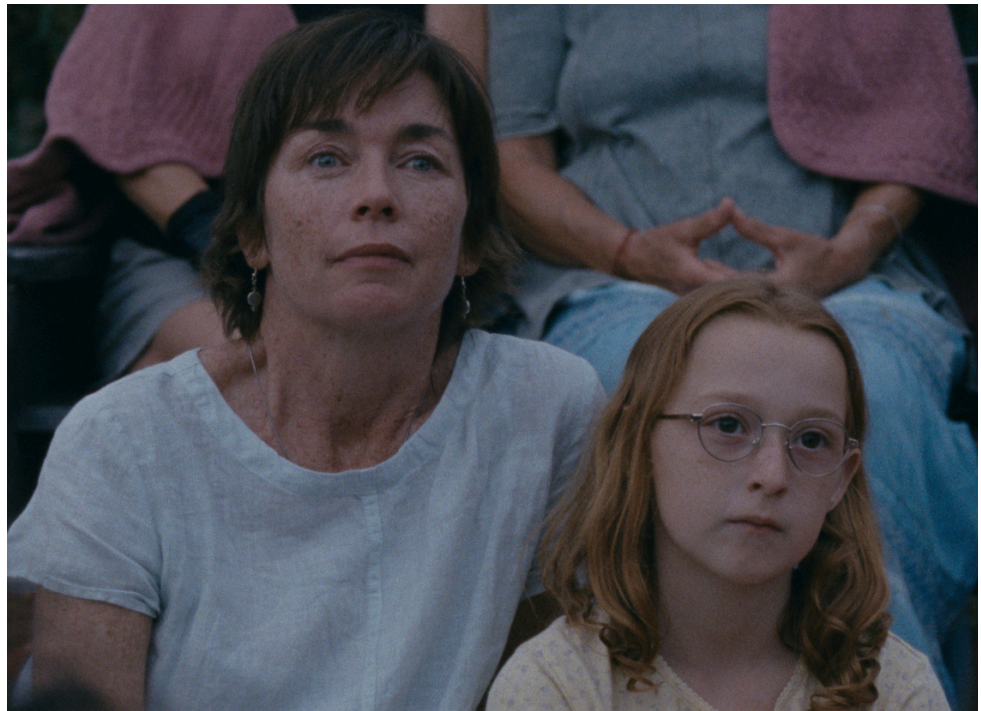
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uncomfortable truths about them, so too does she discover where, and how, she'll draw the line.

Inspired by Ken Russell and other British filmmakers of the 1960s and 70s, **Luna Carmoon's *Hoard*** appears in competition at MIFF having scooped four prizes at Venice Critics' Week. Starring newcomer **Saura Lightfoot Leon** and *Stranger Things'* **Joseph Quinn**, this intimate and at times confronting coming-of-age feature is centred on Maria, a young woman grappling with the grief, trauma and hoarding tendencies imposed by her mother.

Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright **Annie Baker's** debut film is a sublime mother-daughter tale that pays extraordinary attention to the ordinary. Over the course of one early 90s summer in Massachusetts, hyper-needy 11-year-old Lacy (**Zoe Ziegler**) comes to terms with the riddle that is her mother, Janet (**Julianne Nicholson**, *Monos*, MIFF 2019). Collaborating with cinematographer **Maria von Hausswolff**, who shoots on 16mm, Baker imbues her debut with a warm nostalgia that bathes her characters in an almost surreal haze. Presented by Letterboxd, ***Janet Planet*** is a certain marvel.

*Janet Planet*

Belgian director **Leonardo Van Dijn's *Julie Keeps Quiet*** tracks a young tennis prodigy who is teetering on the brink of athletic stardom when her coach at a prestigious training academy is accused of misconduct. With its mood of roiling tension beneath watchful stillness, this incisive character portrait premiered to acclaim at Cannes Critics' Week, where it won the Critics' Week (SACD) Award. Real-life tennis player **Tessa Vanden Broeck** delivers an impressively poised performance in her first acting role, making Julie's vulnerable interiority powerfully eloquent despite her outward stoicism.

The desperate absurdities of colonisation are laid bare in the acidic ***Sweet Dreams***, the assured second film from Bosnian-Dutch filmmaker **Ena Sendijarević**, which took home Locarno's Best Performance Award for lead actor **Renée Soutendijk**. Intent on subverting the conventional period drama, this satire about a Dutch family's fallout following the death of their wealthy patriarch confronts the Netherlands' colonial trespasses with dark humour, lurid colours and the confining Academy aspect ratio, building to what Sendijarević has dubbed a "horrific fairytale."

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In a reimagined Winnipeg that looks a lot like 1980s Iran – just with a lot more turkeys and Kleenex factories – two young kids find a banknote, leading them on an odyssey that takes them out of childhood and into the unforgiving world of adults. Calling ***Universal Language*** an “autobiographical hallucination” drawn from a love-hate relationship with his hometown, writer-director **Matthew Rankin** (who also plays himself in the film), brings the best of Iranian cinema to Canada’s most beige city in this delightful cross-cultural comedy.

*Universal Language*

Hope and familial bonds thrive in dangerous conditions in the groundbreaking ***The Village Next to Paradise*** – the first ever Somali film to screen at Cannes. Selected for Un Certain Regard, the affecting debut feature from **Mo Harawe** (*Will My Parents Come to See Me*, MIFF 2022) follows a makeshift family living in a cramped one-bedroom apartment in a small fishing village as they try to carve out a better life for themselves and together. Vividly rendered through Harawe’s rich visual language, ***The Village Next to Paradise*** is a gentle portrayal of survival in a country racked by instability and violence.

Flow, the striking animated allegory from Latvian filmmaker **Gints Zilbalodis** (*Away*), also arrives from Cannes Un Certain Regard to screen in competition at MIFF. In this wordless wonder, a menagerie of animals adrift on a boat must work together to survive a catastrophic flood. Having recently notched up four awards at Annecy International Animation Festival, this poignant parable for our climate-catastrophe times, ***Flow*** showcases an ascendant master hitting his stride.

With absurdist humour and playfully surrealist imagery, the disarmingly funny ***On Becoming a Guinea Fowl*** rages at a middle-class Zambian family’s shameful silence in the wake of the death of one of their own. **Rungano Nyoni** follows her acclaimed directorial debut *I Am Not a Witch* (MIFF 2017) with another formally adventurous Zambian feminist social critique – this one winning the Best Director prize in Un Certain Regard at Cannes.

Executive-produced by **Thomas M. Wright** (*The Stranger*, MIFF 2022) and supported by the MIFF Premiere Fund, ***Inside*** is the impressive first feature from Short Film Palme d’Or winner **Charles Williams**. Shot in Melbourne and regional Victoria, the film showcases a trio of powerhouse performances – from

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Vincent Miller in his debut role, to a transformative turn from **Cosmo Jarvis** (*Shōgun*), to **Guy Pearce** (who also appears in *The Shrouds*, MIFF 2024) as a man seeing out a life sentence – in this prison-set portrait that poignantly examines the complex interplay between incarceration, rehabilitation and remorse.

HEADLINERS

MIFF's Headliners strand, presented by MINI, features a captivating selection of the most anticipated and buzzed about new films from global cinema's leading voices.

*Megalopolis*

Megalopolis, Francis Ford Coppola's star-studded, 40-years-in-the-making passion project arrives at MIFF in all its loopy, maximalist glory, in a strictly one-off special screening at IMAX. Steeped in the Roman Empire, Shakespeare and Dickens, and featuring **Adam Driver**, **Jon Voight** and **Shia LeBeouf**, Coppola's out-of-control 'fable' is the stuff of modern-day moviemaking myth. Having invested over \$120 million of his own money into the production when no studios would dare bankroll its uncompromising vision and mega-scale ambition – the film sees Coppola at work with unparalleled creative freedom. Dedicated to Coppola's recently departed wife Eleanor, **Megalopolis** looms as an indelible vision from the 85-year-old auteur.

Mumbai-based director **Payal Kapadia** returns with the highly anticipated fiction follow-up to her striking debut feature documentary *A Night of Knowing Nothing* (MIFF, 2022). Recently shown in Cannes as the first Indian film to screen in competition in 30 years, **All We Imagine as Light** is the sensuous tale of three nurses, their romantic entanglements and a mystical trip to the coast. Awarded the 2024 Grand Prix at Cannes, Kapadia has delivered one of the year's most assured films.

Demi Moore satirises Hollywood ageism in an audacious gory feminist body horror that was the talk of this year's Cannes Film Festival, where it won Best Screenplay. **The Substance** sees French director **Coralie Fargeat** (*Revenge*) ruthlessly marshal Cronenbergian tropes, from 1980s-inspired production design to some truly superlative prosthetics, provocatively depicting the turmoil of ageing as a woman in a patriarchal world. Featuring performances by **Margaret Qualley** (*Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, MIFF 2019) and **Dennis Quaid**.

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MIFF mainstay and Sixth Generation legend **Jia Zhang-ke** (*Unknown Pleasures*, MIFF 2002, *Ash Is Purest White*, MIFF 2018) remains the master of capturing China's relentless march towards modernity – and the 'drifting generation' lost in its wake. In ***Caught By the Tides***, he fashions a free-flowing narrative from over 20 years of video, complete with varied aspect ratios and resolutions. At the centre of it all is Jia's wife and muse **Zhao Tao**, a magnetic screen presence who digs deeper and deeper into a character that has spanned her husband's career.

Sebastian Stan (*Captain America: The Winter Soldier*) plays a wannabe actor who learns that confidence isn't skin-deep in the deliciously twisted morality tale, ***A Different Man***. Channelling Cronenberg and Lynch 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. Stan, who won the Berlinale's Silver Bear for Best Leading Performance, appears alongside **Renate Reinsve** (*The Worst Person in the World*, MIFF 2021) and **Adam Pearson** (*Chained for Life*) who are both equally magnetic.

The Cannes Best Director-winning Asian odyssey, ***Grand Tour***, spectacularly mashes up time and place, genre and form, to transport audiences somewhere sublime. This stunning cinematic essay from **Miguel Gomes** (*Tabu*, MIFF 2012) is much grander in scope than its story of a determined bride in hot pursuit of her runaway groom across Asia; it demands to be experienced moment to moment. As one wise character recommends: "Abandon yourself to the world, and see how generous it is to you."

*Grand Tour*

A gigantic brain in a forest, masturbating bog zombies, **Cate Blanchett**, **Alicia Vikander** and **Charles Dance** all collide for **Guy Maddin's** audacious ***Rumours***. Once again joining forces with co-director siblings **Evan** and **Galen Johnson** (*The Green Fog*, MIFF 2018), Maddin delivers an explosively topical satire set in a German forest where a nearby fictional G7 summit is taking place. A bittersweet hit at this year's Cannes, ***Rumours*** delivers witty and wildly existential laughs.

Responding to his country's punishing political climate, Iranian filmmaker **Mohammad Rasoulof** (*There Is No Evil*, MIFF 2021; *A Man of Integrity*, MIFF 2017) returns with a searing family drama that captures the growing unrest among a generation deprived of rights. Having shot the incendiary film in

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secret, and – after receiving an eight-year prison sentence earlier this year – Rasoulof fled the country to attend its competition premiere at Cannes. Much like its maker, *The Seed of the Sacred Fig* is a courageous testament to resistance against tyranny.

Following the recent death of his wife, **David Cronenberg's** *The Shrouds* fashions a deeply personal meditation on loss, longing and grief, filtered through a necro-techno body-horror land. As Karsh, **Vincent Cassel** is a dead-ringer proxy for Cronenberg while **Diane Kruger** gives three full-throttle performances: as Karsh's dead wife, as her alive twin sister and as an AI assistant that might be messing with Karsh's mind. **Guy Pearce** (who also appears in *Inside*, MIFF 2024) joins the cast as Karsh's paranoid hacker ex-brother-in-law, hamming it up with aplomb.

*The Shrouds***INTERNATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS**

Chinese auteur **Lou Ye** (*Summer Palace*, MIFF 2006) tackles the seismic disruption brought by COVID through an exhilarating blend of drama and documentary. In *An Unfinished Film*, a fictional crew based near Wuhan stumbles upon 10-year-old footage of a (real) aborted queer film and sets about reuniting the cast to complete it with a new act. But this is early 2020, and fate has other ideas. With the film halted once again, the project comes to morph into something else entirely.

Named one of the top 10 independent films of 2023 by the National Board of Review, *All Dirt Roads Taste of Salt* is award-winning poet and photographer **Raven Jackson's** mesmerising debut feature. Shot in gorgeous 35mm, this ode to a Black woman's joys and tragedies in the Deep South is propelled by a visceral soundscape and a sparse but revealing script. For fans of Barry Jenkins (who has a producer credit here) and Terrence Malick.

In cult UK comedy treasure **Alice Lowe's** second feature, a woman's misguided fatal attraction to the same pretty bad-boy has lasted six centuries...so far. After co-writing and starring in comedy slasher *Prevenge*, Lowe is joined in *Timestalker* by an eager ensemble cast including *Hot Fuzz's* **Nick Frost**, *Sex Education's* **Tanya Reynolds**, *Interview With the Vampire's* **Jacob Anderson** and period-drama darling **Aneurin Barnard**.

Forming a trilogy on human togetherness (alongside *The Strange Little Cat* and *The Girl and the Spider*, MIFF 2021), *The Sparrow in the Chimney* marks the

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highly anticipated return of **Ramon** and **Silvan Zürcher**, the Swiss filmmaking brothers behind some of the most distinctive experimental dramas to emerge from Europe. Rebellious and hopeful, their latest sees tensions explode when two sisters come together with their families for a birthday party in their countryside.

MIFF favourite **Hong Sang-soo** reunites with **Isabelle Huppert** for a third time (*Another Country*, MIFF 2012; *Claire's Camera*, MIFF 2017) in ***A Traveler's Needs***, the mysteriously tricky comedy that won the Berlinale's Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize. Wide-eyed Iris (Huppert) is an expat adrift in Seoul. Eking out a strangely dislocated life mooching in the spare bedroom of a younger man, much to his mother's ruffled chagrin, Iris teaches French to the locals using unusual methods that hint at deeper meanings.

*Sunlight*

Award-winning comedian **Nina Conti** makes her directorial debut with ***Sunlight***, a darkly funny joy ride featuring a monkey, a radio host brought back from the brink and a dead man's watch. Co-written by Conti and her real-life partner comedian **Shenoah Allen** (and executive produced by **Christopher Guest**), the pair also share their chemistry on-screen in what can only be described as an unconventional love story. With its upbeat soundtrack and the sprawling desert landscape of New Mexico, ***Sunlight*** is sure to provoke both belly laughs, melancholy and a heartwarming afterglow.

The incomparable **Jane Squibb** (*Nebraska*) leads delightful crowdpleaser ***Thelma*** as the titular 93-year-old grandma on a mission for revenge after falling for an online money scam. Having seen his own grandmother targeted by digital fraudsters, improv-comedy veteran **Josh Margolin** has crafted a rollicking action-comedy parody that serves as a touching tribute to the determination and defiance of older people. Joining in on the fun are Blaxploitation legend **Richard Roundtree** (*Shaft* himself, in his final role), **Parker Posey** and **Malcolm MacDowell**.

Elijah Wood (*Come to Daddy*, MIFF 2019) stars as a wayward but well-meaning father in the charming throwback, ***Bookworm***. In it, 11-year-old bibliophile Mildred (**Nell Fisher**) and her washed-up illusionist father (Wood) embark on a quest in the New Zealand wilderness to hunt down a mythical beast that may prove essential to healing their family. For his second feature film, director **Ant Timpson** has conjured a fantastical coming-of-age odyssey that is sure to appeal to both the young and the young-at-heart.

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Having received the Caméra d'Or Special Mention at Cannes, **Mongrel** is the striking feature from directors **Chiang Wei Liang** and **You Qiao Yin** that takes viewers inside the lives of undocumented workers in Taiwan. Driven by an unswerving lead performance from **Wanlop Rungkumjad** (*Manta Ray*, MIFF 2019), this evocative portrait sees Oom, a calm and attentive caregiver, attempting to maintain his own humanity amidst exploitation at the hands of his employer.

Winning a Berlinale Encounters Special Jury Award, **Some Rain Must Fall** is the arresting first feature from MIFF Accelerator Lab and Victorian College of the Arts alumnus **Qiu Yang**, who won the Short Film Palme d'Or back in 2017. With an extraordinary central performance from **Yu Aier** as a woman in the midst of a midlife existential crisis, Yang quietly and confidently infuses his intimate family drama with a palpable suspense and pinprick-sharp class commentary to create a masterful psychological thriller.

*Some Rain Must Fall*

Delivering a bundle of joy from the slapstick indignities of impending motherhood is **Babes**, the raucous 'mom-com' written by and starring **Ilana Glazer** (*Broad City*). It follows pals Eden (Glazer) and Dawn (**Michelle Buteau**) as their friendship is put to the test when the carefree and single Eden decides to have a baby on her own after a one-night-stand. Described as a perinatal *Bridesmaids*, director **Pamela Adlon** (*Better Things*) delivers both a bawdy comedy and an unexpectedly sweet love story between dear friends.

DOCUMENTARY HIGHLIGHTS

Black Box Diaries is a daring work of first-person investigative journalism that charts the extraordinary case that not only launched #MeToo in Japan but altered the country's justice system for good. Retelling her own experience of rape and the ensuing legal battle, director and survivor **Shiori Itō** gives powerful voice to her life-and-law-changing story – and hope to women everywhere.

As the restitution conversation gains momentum worldwide, the striking Berlinale Golden Bear-winning documentary, **Dahomey**, tracks a stolen statue home to the Republic of Benin. While literally capturing the careful transportation of the statue and other artefacts, French filmmaker **Mati Diop** (*A Thousand Suns*, MIFF 2014) and cinematographer **Joséphine Drouin-Viallard** were also begin to unpack much needed questions around the significance of these items to the Beninese people, the country's vestigial ties to France and the very purpose of museums.

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When Mats Steen dies at just 25 due to a rare degenerative disease, his parents are inundated with heartfelt condolence messages from strangers all around the world who had – unbeknownst to them – come to befriend Mats virtually. Winner of two Sundance awards, **Benjamin Ree's** extraordinary ***The Remarkable Life of Ibelin*** traces Steen's exploits in the video game landscape of *World of Warcraft* – amid the restrictions of his physical life with Duchenne muscular dystrophy – and the many people who came to know and love him.

*As the Tide Comes In*

The 27 residents of Mandø, an eight-square-kilometre island off the Danish coast, serve as a microcosm for the world's impending climate concerns in ***As the Tide Comes In***. To make this sensitively handled, at times humorous account of life in remote conditions, co-director and visual anthropologist **Sofie Husum Johannesen** immersed herself in the locals' experiences, lending a scholarly eye that elevates the film's observational storytelling. Meanwhile, director **Juan Palacios** was behind the visually arresting camerawork of sky meeting sea, ebbing tides and flat plains, culminating in footage gathered across 15 trips in four years.

Executive-produced by **Jesse Eisenberg**, the stranger-than-fiction ***Secret Mall Apartment*** recounts how a 2000s artist collective spent four years living inside a shopping mall. Screening to much acclaim at SXSW and Hot Docs, this funny, charismatic and slyly provocative film from director **Jeremy Workman** (*Lily Topples The World*; *Claire Makes It Big*, MIFF 1999) captures the scrappy DIY ethos and us-against-the-world spirit of its subjects, interrogating what it means to make art in the face of late-period capitalism.

The complex relationship between two married artists is laid bare over the course of a year in ***Two Strangers Trying Not to Kill Each Other***. At 84 and 75, **Joel Meyerowitz** and **Maggie Barrett** have been together for a quarter of a century. But when Barrett injures herself in a fall, the couple's dynamic alters significantly, and long-buried resentments come to the surface. Receiving CPH:DOX's Dox:Award Special Mention, **Manon Ouimet** and **Jacob Perlmutter's** film is a tender, at times funny, other times painfully candid study of the realities behind the romantic ideal of growing old together.

Intercepted takes its name from a cache of audio recordings played throughout this haunting psychological portrait of invasion: phone calls from invading Russian fighters, as captured by Ukrainian security forces. Director **Oksana Karpovych** – who was working for *Al Jazeera* when the Russian invasion began – has authored a wholly unique study of war and what it does to the mindset of people caught up in its cruelties.

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MIFF will host a free showing of the double Sundance-winning ***Daughters*** in its Australian Premiere. In this deeply moving feature documentary executive-produced by **Kerry Washington** and **Joel Edgerton**, activist and Girls for Change CEO **Angela Patton** and filmmaker **Natalie Rae** follow four young girls as they prepare to meet their incarcerated fathers – many of whom have been sentenced for up to 20 years – for a day of celebration at the prison's Daddy Daughter Dance.

British filmmaker **David Hinton** (*Nora*, MIFF 2009) brings his deft touch for kinetic storytelling to bear on this beautifully drawn documentary exploring the remarkable oeuvre of *The Red Shoes* co-directors **Michael Powell** (the late husband of editor supreme **Thelma Schoonmaker**) and **Emeric Pressburger**. ***Made in England: The Films of Powell and Pressburger*** is presented by unbridled super-fan **Martin Scorsese** who waxes lyrical about how the mesmerising films of two of Britain's finest inspired his own adventures in cinema.

AUSTRALIAN HIGHLIGHTS

Jai Courtney, **Celeste Barber**, **Jack Thompson** and **Deborah Mailman** star in the heartwarming and hilarious adaptation of **Craig Silvey's** bestselling ***Runt***, which is set to make its World Premiere at MIFF. Ignoring the age-old axiom not to work with children or animals, director **John Sheedy** (*H Is for Happiness*, MIFF 2019) rose to the challenge to do both, with magnificent results. Newcomer **Lily LaTorre** delivers a charisma-fuelled performance as Annie, while the notable Australian cast bring to life this upbeat underdog tale for the whole family.

*Runt*

A disturbing secret threatens a couple's relationship in the Australian eco-thriller, ***In Vitro***, starring *Succession's* **Ashley Zukerman**. Writer-directors **Tom McKeith** and **Will Howarth** (*Beast*) also worked with co-writer and star **Talia Zucker** on their thought-provoking screenplay that was developed after being selected for the Sundance Screenwriters Lab. Meanwhile, cinematographer **Shelley Farthing-Dawe** imbues a haunting energy to the plains around Cooma and Goulburn in New South Wales, which serve as the moody backdrop to this tense, outback-set sci-fi nail-bitter.

World Premiere feature ***Voice*** offers an inspirational insider's look at the Indigenous-run collective Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good (DIYDG) as they embark on a 3,000 kilometre cross-country roadtrip to gather support for the Australian Indigenous Voice referendum. But while they seek to inspire a new future, the resulting votes seemingly bring another fight for recognition to a

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close. Directed by **Krunal Padhiar** alongside DIYDG co-founder and chair **Semara Jose** as co-director, this observational film is the first major Australian documentary to chronicle the journey of the Voice referendum in 2023.

Twilight Time is the gripping profile of Australian academic, agitator and surveillance expert **Des Ball** – the man who counselled the US against nuclear escalation in the 1970s and was subsequently hailed by former president Jimmy Carter as “the man who saved the world.” Employing a wealth of archival footage, veteran documentarian **John Hughes** (*Senses of Cinema*, MIFF 2022) has captured a timely look at Australia’s complicated involvement in global strategy, defence policy and mass surveillance.

Shot in and around Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, the latest fiction feature from director **Paul Goldman** (*Ego: The Michael Gudinski Story*, MIFF 2023) explores a mostly untold chapter of Australia’s national narrative in the true story of Irish tent boxer, **Kid Snow**. British actors **Billy Howle** and **Tom Bateman** star alongside a sterling local cast that includes **Phoebe Tonkin**, **Mark Coles Smith**, **Tasma Walton** and **Hunter Page-Lochard**. As punches are thrown, **Kid Snow** is ultimately a story of hope and the redemptive power of love.

Co-directed by **Danielle MacLean** and **Sal Balharrie**, **Like My Brother** is an inspiring World Premiere documentary about four young women from the Tiwi Islands who all dream of playing professional footy in the AFLW. But while dreaming is one thing, achieving it is another as they each navigate the hardship of leaving loved ones, the strain of distance and homesickness and the barriers faced by many First Nations young people.

MUSIC ON FILM

Slip into the serene surrounds of Japanese ‘listening cafés’ – a space where music lovers, audiophiles and locals come together to hear records – in a limited series from New Zealand filmmakers **Tu Neill** and **Nick Dwyer**. **A Century in Sound** transports audiences to the world of these uniquely Japanese settings, chronicling the history of music in the country, the importance of these gathering places in post wartime and the influence of Western culture during the second half of the 20th century.

*A Century in Sound*

Dig! XX brings fans up to date on the enduring friendship and rivalry between 90s indie staples, **The Dandy Warhols** and **The Brian Jonestown Massacre**, some twenty years after the release of definitive rock doc, *Dig!*. With over 40

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minutes of new material in hand, director **Ondi Timoner** returns to mythologise the bands and big identities at the centre of her breakout documentary, this time through older and somewhat wiser eyes.

Alexis Spraic's *The World According to Allee Willis* presents a kaleidoscopic ride through the 50-year career of the larger-than-life mega-hit songwriter behind the *Friends* theme song, Earth Wind & Fire's *September*, The Pointer Sisters' *Neutron Dance* and many more. Over her half-century-long career, Willis' compositions sold over 60 million records. Drawing on a wealth of archival home videos and featuring interviews with Cyndi Lauper, the Pet Shop Boys and the late Paul "Pee-wee Herman" Reubens, the film is a sincere and affecting tribute to a singular subject.

Ohio-born bluesy rockers **Dan Auerbach** and **Patrick Carney** of **The Black Keys** get candid and introspective in the warts-and-all documentary direct from SXSW, ***This is a Film About The Black Keys***. Director **Jeff Dupre** employs extensive archival concert and studio footage, lively re-enactments, and revealing interviews (including with Gen X icon Beck), to give viewers front row seats to the ups and downs – both professional and personal – of the iconic duo.

Omar and Cedric: If This Ever Gets Weird shares the untold 40-year story of the crowning moments, creative turmoils and deep friendship of the duo behind ***At the Drive-In*** and ***The Mars Volta***: **Omar Rodríguez-López** and **Cedric Bixler-Zavala**. Together, the pair have lived and created, fought and filmed through drug addictions, the death of friends, musical stardom and even Cedric's fraught stint in the Church of Scientology. This intimate and immersive film from British director **Nicolas Jack Davies** is built almost entirely around four decades' worth of Omar's self-shot footage and features lively, almost duelling voiceovers from both men.

MIFF SHORTS

Undertaken in collaboration with the Seth MacFarlane Foundation and Martin Scorsese's Film Foundation, ***Back From the Ink: Restored Animated Shorts*** unearths lost classics from animation's Golden Age. The animations selected include a 1944 stop-motion 'Puppetoon' from **George Pál**, a 1939 Terrytoon directed by **Mannie Davis**, and seven short films, drawn from 1928 to 1939, by the **Fleischer Brothers** (creators of *Betty Boop* and *Koko the Clown*), which feature jazz-age collaborations with **Louis Armstrong** and **Cab Calloway**.



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Winner of the Cannes Short Film Palme d'Or, *The Man Who Could Not Remain Silent* is a razor-sharp, ultra-tense standoff by director **Nebojša Slijepčević**. Recreating the 1993 Štrpci massacre in Bosnia, where 19 civilians were pulled off a train and executed by a Serbian nationalist paramilitary group, this meticulous work of mounting tension is both a tribute to a hero and a study in the bystander effect. It effectively asks viewers: with danger in the air, would you speak up, or stay quiet?

Sundance Short Film Grand Jury Prize winner, *The Masterpiece*, sees race and class complicate the transaction between a wealthy couple and the scrap dealers they invite to their mansion, leading to an amusingly awkward exchange. **Alex Lora Cercós'** gripping exploration of class disparity builds from a slow simmer to viscerally unbearable tension, culminating in a confrontation that exposes the hidden hostility of polite society.

*The Masterpiece*

Direct from Cannes, the gentle and tender *Withered Blossoms* chronicles the relationship between a twenty something and her ageing grandmother. Using the hallmarks of slow cinema – still frames, no score, a reverence for tiny moments, emotions gradually accruing – to capture the passage of time, **Lionel Seah's** beautifully observed, Sydney-set two-hander tells a Chinese-Australian story at once specific and universal.

MIFF XR

Presented with Now or Never and ACMI, *kajoo yannaga (come on let's walk together)* is at once a cinematic story, an immersive two-channel projection journey guided by First Nations knowledge. Through real-time motion tracking mapping body movement, connect to place and be transported to a vivid Spirit realm sprinkled with signs and signals for those who look to see. Lead artist **April Phillips** is a Wiradjuri-Scottish woman of the galari/kalari peoples, based on the Yuin Nation. Her practice is aligned with representations of First Nations futurism, intergenerational healing and digital experimentation to celebrate the potential of computer art for a new world.

Step into an otherworldly cityscape representing the subconscious and the space between dying and the after life in *The Memphis Chronicles: Water's Edge* by co-directors **Mike Robbins** and **Harmke Heezen**. Amid dilapidated buildings and seemingly deserted dwellings, users set out to discover hidden stories and secrets, solve puzzles to piece together fragments of memory, and evade the mysterious entities known as the Keepers.

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Lui Avallos' *Queer Utopia: Act I Cruising* brings the user into the living room of a retired playwright where he regales them with nostalgic and intimate stories of his youth. Inspired by real-life accounts from queer elders, this profound intergenerational essay on the fight for LGBTQIA+ rights delves into the past to conjure a renewed vision of the future.

*Queer Utopia: Act I Cruising***RESTORATIONS, TALKS, RETROSPECTIVES AND SPECIAL SCREENINGS**

One of the leading lights of Australian queer cinema, **Stephen Cummins**, will be celebrated with a retrospective showcase following the restoration of nine of his short films by the National Film and Sound Archive. Cummins' beautiful and often provocative works included the 1991 film ***Resonance***, which screened at over 100 international festivals including Sundance, New York and Toronto, becoming one of the most lauded and successful Australian short films of its era.

Richard Roxburgh's 2007 AFI Best Film Award-winner, ***Romulus, My Father*** has been lavishly restored and will return to the big screen at MIFF. Driven by stirring performances from **Eric Bana** and then-10-year-old **Kodi Smit-McPhee** (who both voice characters in *Memoir of a Snail*, MIFF 2024), this emotionally textured adaptation of philosopher **Raimond Gaita's** eponymous memoir remains one of the country's most stirring dramas.

MIFF is set to pay tribute to cinema's favourite reptilian, amphibious kaiju over one glorious night with a ***Godzilla 70th Anniversary Marathon*** presented by Asahi. Kicking off proceedings will be the original 1954 film, magnificently restored in gigantic 4K, and running through the many eras and retellings that followed. With seven features screening across the night, it'll be a celebration worthy of the giant city-crushing monster.

The ***Autobiographical Fictions*** retrospective brings together the pioneering avant garde output of experimental choreographer and filmmaker, **Yvonne Rainer**. With an influence that still looms large, the New York-based dancer and artist is widely regarded as one of the most important creative figures of our time.

Iranian New Wave: 1962-79 has been uniquely curated for MIFF from The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York's landmark Iranian Cinema before the Revolution, 1925-1979 retrospective. Discover "Cinema-ye Motafavet" (Iranian New Wave), featuring new restorations and rare discoveries – some of which were censored or suppressed upon release.

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MIFF Media Centre*The Cow screening as part of Iranian New Wave: 1962-79*

Hear My Eyes is back at MIFF once again, presenting bonafide Australian cult-classic ***Wake in Fright*** in a World Premiere NFSA 4K restoration alongside a new score from instrumental jazz-funk journeyman **Surprise Chef** at Arts Centre Melbourne.

Other unique cinematic experiences on offer this year include MIFF's annual jaw-dropping full-dome showcase at the **Melbourne Planetarium** and an especially immersive screening of ***Magic Beach*** at the **Peninsula Hot Springs**.

The **MIFF Talks** program, presented by University of Melbourne, brings together some of the festival's brilliant international and local guests – from filmmakers and academics to critics and commentators – for a series of one-off conversations and events. The audience-beloved ***Consuming Culture*** roundtable returns to provide a renewed snapshot of what to watch, read and otherwise consume across the pop culture landscape, co-presented by The Wheeler Centre.

Carefully and expertly programmed in response to the Victorian Curriculum learning areas, **MIFF Schools** features high-quality, diverse films in languages commonly taught in Victorian schools (French, Mandarin, Japanese, Spanish, and German). Screenings will be held during the festival period and will be complemented with free Professional Learning webinars delivered by MIFF's film-analysis expert, **Dr Josh Nelson**.

EATING AND DRINKING AT MIFF

The **Campari Cinema Lounge** returns with cocktails, DJs and even more Euro film glamour at ACMI. Open late, the Lounge offers a stylish and vibrant space for festival-goers to unwind, mingle, and discuss films over an expertly crafted Campari tiple.

The reinvented **MIFF Festival Hub**, presented by Challenger, provides a new home for MIFF audiences to eat, drink and unwind between sessions from day to night. With a menu by Miss Pearl, coffee from St Ali, fragrance from Aesop and drinks by Yering Station, Asahi and Campari, there's really no reason to leave – except to see another film.

MIFF's perfect **Food and Film** pairings will match seven of Melbourne's hottest restaurants with a selection of the most salivating films in the program. Participating restaurants include Bar Lourinhã, Victoria by Farmer's Daughter,

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Cumulus Inc., Miss Pearl at the Festival Hub, Supernormal, Sunda and Bossley Restaurant and Bar.

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– ENDS –

NOTES TO EDITOR

- 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 across Australia 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 a mix of free and pay on demand content available
- 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), Castlemaine (Theatre Royal), Echuca (Paramount), Geelong (Village and Pivotonian), Rosebud (Peninsula Cinemas), Morwell (Village) and Shepparton (Village)
- 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

BRIGHT HORIZONS

Flow
 Good One
 Hoard
 Inside (Premiere Fund)
 Janet Planet
 Julie Keeps Quiet
 On Becoming a Guinea Fowl
 Sweet Dreams
 The Village Next to Paradise
 Universal Language

AFRICAN & MIDDLE EAST

Behind the Mountains
 East of Noon
 To a Land Unknown
 My Favourite Cake
 Norah
 Who Do I Belong To

ASIA PACIFIC

A Traveler's Needs
 Abiding Nowhere
 All Shall Be Well
 An Unfinished Film
 Black Dog
 Brief History of a Family
 Ghost Cat Anzu
 Head South
 House of the Seasons
 Mongrel
 My Sunshine
 Santosh
 Shambhala
 Some Rain Must Fall
 Viet and Nam
 We Were Dangerous

AUSTRALIAN

Aquarius
 Audrey (Premie Fund)
 Dale Frank – Nobody's Sweetie
 Flathead
 He Ain't Heavy
 In Vitro
 Kid Snow
 Left Write Hook (Premiere Fund)
 Rewards for the Tribe
 The Organist
 Twilight Time
 Voice

DOCUMENTARIES

A New Kind of Wilderness
 Black Box Diaries
 Dahmone
 Daughters
 Direct Action
 Ernest Cold: Lost and Found
 Gaucho Gaucho

Grand Theft Hamlet
 I Shall Not Hate
 Immortals
 Intercepted
 Look Into My Eyes
 Made in England: The films of Powell
 and Pressburger
 Menu-Plaisirs – Les Troisgros
 No Other Land
 Occupied City
 Scala!!!
 Secret Mall Apartment
 Super/Man: The Christopher Reeve Story
 The Remarkable Life of Ibelin
 The Ride Ahead
 The Stimming Pool
 Two Strangers Trying Not to Kill Each
 Other
 Welcome Space Brothers

EUROPE & UK

Armand
 Close Your Eyes
 Crossing
 Ghost Trail
 Green Border
 Hesitation Wound
 Kneecap
 Lee
 Misericordia
 September Says
 Sunlight
 Suspended Time
 The Girl With the Needle
 The Most Precious of Cargoes
 The Outrun
 The Rye Horn
 The Sparrow in the Chimney
 The Story of Souleymane
 Tuesday

EXPERIMENTATIONS

Dream Team
 Pepe
 The Hyperboreans
 Us and the Night

FAMILY FILMS

Bookworm
 Magic Beach (Premiere Fund)
 Runt

HEADLINERS

A Different Man
 All We Imagine as Light
 Caught by the Tides
 Dying
 Grand Tour
 I Saw the TV Glow
 Megalopolis

Rumours
 The Seed of the Sacred Fig
 The Shrouds
 The Substance

IRANIAN NEW WAVE: 1962-79

A Simple Event
 Brick and Mirror
 Dead End
 Golden Age of Iranian Animation
 Tall Shadows of the Wind
 The Carriage Driver
 The Cow
 The Deer
 The Stranger and the Frog
 Tranquility in the Presence of Others

LATIN AMERICA

Cidade; Campo
 La Cocina
 Malu
 Motel Destino
 Reinas
 Simon of the Mountain
 Sujo
 Toll
 You Burn Me

MIFF SCHOOLS

Alemania
 The Concierge
 Moving
 Normal
 Pigsy
 She Sat There Like All Ordinary Ones
 Winners

MIFF XR

Emperor
 Frame Documentary Showcase
 kajoo yannaga
 Queer Utopia: Act 1 Cruising
 Shadowtime
 Taiwan With a Twist
 The Memphis Chronicles: Water's
 Edge

MUSIC ON FILM

A Century in Sound
 Community to Commercial -
 Restored Australian Music Videos
 DEVO
 Dig! XX
 Dory Previn: On My Way to Where
 Ellis Park (Premie Fund)
 Mogwai: If the Stars Had a Sound
 Omar and Cedric: If This Ever Gets
 Weird
 Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat
 Teaches of Peaches

The World According to Allee Willis
This Is a Film About The Black Keys

NIGHT SHIFT

Animale
Blackout
Cuckoo
Oddity
She Loved Blossoms More
The Demon Disorder
The Moogai
Timestalker
Wake Up

NORTH AMERICA

All Dirt Roads Taste of Salt
Babes
Blue Sun Palace
Bob Trevino Likes It
Didi
Matt and Mara
Memory
My First Film
My Old Ass
Problemista
Sasquatch Sunset
Sing Sing
The Damned
Thelma
Vulcanizadora
Who by Fire

RESTORATIONS

Back From the Ink: Restored
Animated Shorts
Histoires d'Amerique; Food, Family and Philosophy
Lake Mungo 4K
Romulus, My Father
Stephen Cummins Retrospective
The Cars That Ate Paris
The Small Black Room
Un rêve plus long que la nuit

SHORTS

Accelerator Shorts 1
Accelerator Shorts 2
Animation Shorts
Australian Shorts
Documentary Shorts
Experimental Shorts
International Shorts 1
International Shorts 2
WTF Shorts

SPECIAL EVENTS

Music on Film Gala: Ellis Park
Godzilla 70th Anniversary
Marathon

Hear My Eyes: Wake in Fright x Surprise Chef
Peninsula Hot Springs: Magic Beach
Lasting Impressions
Premiere with Purpose: Left Write Hook
Family Gala: Family Gala
Opening Night Gala: Memoir of a Snail
Planetarium Fulldome Showcase

SPORTS

Copa 71
Like My Brother
Queens of Concrete (Premiere Fund)
You Should Have Been Here Yesterday

THE NATURAL WORLD

Architecton
As the Tide Comes In
Every Little Thing
Fungi: Web of Life
Future Council
The Cats of Gokogu Shrine
The Falling Sky
Wilding

YVONNE RAINER: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FICTIONS

Film About a Woman Who...
Lives of Performers
The Man Who Envied Women
MURDER and murder
Privilege

MIFF REGIONAL

****Films vary between regional venues, see MIFF website to confirm specific screening locations**

Audrey
Aquarius
Bookworm
Copa 71
Ellis Park
Flathead
Inside
I Saw the TV Glow
Janet Planet
Kneecap
LA Cocina
Let Write Hook
Memoir of a Snail
MIFF Shorts
Problemista
Queens of Concrete
Thelma
The Magic Beach
Twilight Time
We Were Dangerous
You Should Have Been Here Yesterday