

# MIFF SHARES THRILLING FIRST LOOK AT 2025 PROGRAM INCLUDING SELECT INTERNATIONAL TITLES, PREMIERE FUND LINEUP, SPECIAL EVENTS AND MORE

**MIFF** Melbourne International Film Festival 7–24 August 2025

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Connect  
[miff.com.au](http://miff.com.au)  
[@melbfilmfest](https://twitter.com/melbfilmfest)

Media Centre  
[MIFF 2025](#)

Media Contact  
Caitlyn Miles  
[caitlyn@commonstate.co](mailto:caitlyn@commonstate.co)  
+61 4 3373 2850

Leigh-Anne Ramirez  
[leigh-anne@commonstate.co](mailto:leigh-anne@commonstate.co)  
+61 4 3935 3407



From 7–24 August, Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) proudly returns to Naarm and surrounds with some of the most talked about films arriving hot from Cannes, Berlin, Sundance and across the globe. Across 18 days of bold programming, this year's festival slate is brimming with original storytelling that will ask audiences to *Look Closer* as the much-loved festival lights up Melbourne this winter for its 73rd edition.

Announcing 26 of its first films and unmissable events, MIFF offers a First Glance at its 2025 program which includes seven MIFF Premiere Fund titles, 17 international and local highlights and two special events – many of which will screen for the first time in Australia.

Presented by MUBI, the Australian Premiere of *Julia Holter: The Passion of Joan of Arc* will take to the stage with an exclusive live-score cinematic event set to transform the Melbourne Recital Centre for two nights only. Meanwhile, in partnership with Now or Never, *When the World Came Flooding In* – an immersive installation and VR documentary centered on the intimate stories of life during a natural disaster – will have its World Premiere during MIFF. Then, offering cinephiles the chance to experience this year's Palme d'Or winner, *It Was Just An Accident* by Iranian master director **Jafar Panahi** makes its highly anticipated arrival to Melbourne this August. The Cannes-awarded revenge thriller is both a broadside and real-world triumph against authoritarian oppression, with MIFF audiences some of the first in the world to see it on the big screen.

Sharing a glimpse at the festival's 2025 program, **MIFF Artistic Director Al Cossar**, said: "It all starts here – the full MIFF 2025 program is soon to arrive; set to be a world-ranging, celebratory and all-out extraordinary collection of films. I'm excited to share some of our first announcement of titles, and incredible highlights, of this year's MIFF: beloved auteurs, festival blockbusters, the best of new Australian filmmaking, alongside the incredibly special and absolutely unmissable live-score cinema event, *Julia Holter: The Passion of Joan of Arc*. You'll want to look closer at MIFF's First Glance – there is so much to see, and so much more to come!"

Outside of metro Melbourne, the **MIFF Regional** showcase expands its tour across festival weekends **15–17** and **22–24 August** with venues in Bendigo, Ballarat, Castlemaine, Morwell, Geelong, Rosebud, Sale and Shepparton, ready to screen some of the festival's biggest and much-loved titles, supported by VicScreen.

MIFF's digital offering also returns from **15–31 August** for 18 days and continues one week after the festival wraps up – ensuring that cinema-lovers across Australia can catch films beyond the in-cinema season. **MIFF Online** features a limited suite of festival films and free short films available on demand via ACMI's dedicated online streaming platform, Cinema 3.

The annual **MIFF Awards** will also return on **Saturday 23 August**, celebrating cinematic excellence and talent with one of the world's most significant filmmaking prize pools – including the prestigious \$140,000 Bright Horizons Award, supported by the Victorian Government through VicScreen.

The full MIFF 2025 program including the complete **Bright Horizons Competition** lineup will be unveiled **Thursday 10 July** with category nominees and juries for the **MIFF Awards** to be announced in late July.

### MIFF PREMIERE FUND

The **2025 MIFF Premiere Fund** lineup champions outstanding Australian filmmaking, groundbreaking ideas, and spotlights unique Australian creatives within our local filmmaking industry.

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*Image — It Was Just An Accident*





Image — *Spreadsheet Champions*

Providing co-funding for all-new Australian feature films which later debut at the festival, the commissioning fund aims to reinforce MIFF's relationship with Australian filmmakers in a bid to foster a variety of exciting new voices for festival audiences. Entering its second decade, the MIFF Premiere Fund proudly continues to back diverse local perspectives.

Throwing it back to Y2K, an end-of-millennium house party becomes an endless, tequila-fuelled time loop in ***One More Shot***, an ingenious debut feature by Melbourne director **Nicholas Clifford**. Starring a standout lineup of Australian talent – **Emily Browning** (*God Help the Girl*, MIFF 2014), **Sean Keenan** (*Nitram*, MIFF 2021), **Ashley Zukerman** (*In Vitro*, MIFF 2024), **Aisha Dee** (*Sissy*, MIFF 2022) and **Elias Anton** (*Of an Age*, MIFF 2022) – the film is packed with non-stop turn of the century hits and shows audiences that some nights out are better left in the rear-view mirror.

Shot in a verdant mountainous landscape in northern Luzon, ***First Light*** is the feature debut by celebrated Filipino-Australian photographer **James J. Robinson** starring veteran Filipina actor **Ruby Ruiz** and industry legend **Maricel Soriano**. Evoking Ingmar Bergman's *Winter Light* and Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *Black Narcissus* through its masterfully composed images and thought-provoking interrogation of faith, *First Light* is a slow-burn crime drama and sensory meditation on the structures of power and corruption.

Suspenseful and heartwarming, ***Spreadsheet Champions*** captures the challenges of performing at an elite level while also navigating the volatile, identity-forming time of adolescence. Previously announced as part of **MIFF Schools**, Australian filmmaker **Kristina Kraskov** crafts an observational feature documentary charting six young people from around the globe as they channel their dreams into a competition with a difference: a test of their elite mastery of Microsoft Excel.

Starring beloved Nigerian stand-up comedian **Okey Bakassi** and impressive young actor **Tyson Palmer** as father and son, ***Pasa Faho*** by Australian director **Kalu Oji** presents a quintessentially Melbourne tale of life in a migrant community. A down-to-earth, moving and gently funny portrait of suburban African-Australian life, the debut feature is a vibrant tribute to life in the suburbs, a cinematically underrepresented local community, and to how, no matter where we're from, we all ultimately constitute *parts of a whole*.

***Iron Winter*** is the latest mesmerising documentary from **Kasimir Burgess** (*Franklin*, MIFF 2022) capturing a fading tradition at the intersection of rural life and modern technology. Beautifully shot for the big screen, the film brings to the screen the real-life story of camaraderie and survival, opening an intimate window into the icy Mongolian steppes – one of the world's most breathtaking and forbidding environments – as well as the immediate threats posed by catastrophic climate change.

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Intimately produced by his daughter **Lorin Clarke**, ***Not Only Fred Dagg But Also John Clarke*** is a deeply personal documentary portrait of a legend of the antipodean screen, **John Clarke**. In a tribute to the disruptive power of creativity, the film comprises a remarkable series of recorded conversations between John and Lorin, woven together with personal anecdotes, a rich television archive, tales from international comedy greats and riches from more than 200 boxes of Clarke's work and letters.

Directed by award-winning filmmaker **Sue Thomson** (*The Coming Back Out Ball Movie*, MIFF 2018 Closing Night Gala; *Under Cover*, MIFF 2022), ***Careless*** is a funny, moving and energetic exploration that follows elderly people's fight to grow old their way. Through observational footage, archival materials, home movies and interviews, the documentary issues a timely and powerful response to a hidden crisis.

### SPECIAL EVENTS, XR AND MIFF SCHOOLS

Acclaimed LA singer, songwriter and composer **Julia Holter** arrives exclusively to MIFF to present a special live-score to one of cinema's all time visionary works in ***Julia Holter: The Passion of Joan of Arc***, presented by MUBI. Combining **Carl Theodor Dreyer's** 1928 silent film masterpiece – widely considered as one of the greatest movies ever made – with a spellbinding score composed by Holter, expect an immense sonic tapestry performed live at the Melbourne Recital Centre for two nights only. Alongside Holter will be her band, singers of leading vocal ensemble, **The Consort of Melbourne**, and conducted by internationally renowned **Hugh Brunt** (co-Artistic Director/co-Principal Conductor, London Contemporary Orchestra). Commissioned by Opera North Projects.

Presented with Now or Never, ***When the World Came Flooding In*** is a powerful collective narrative co-directed by **Van Sowerwine** and **Isobel Knowles** and shaped by the deeply personal experiences of three flood-affected individuals who while thousands of kilometres apart, are united in their experience of living through climate disaster. Through virtual reality, projections, miniatures, photographs and sound, the immersive installation and creative VR documentary brings an evocative and wondrous tour through memory spaces, exploring personal memory, grief and loss, and the shared experience of an extreme climate event.

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Image — Julia Holter

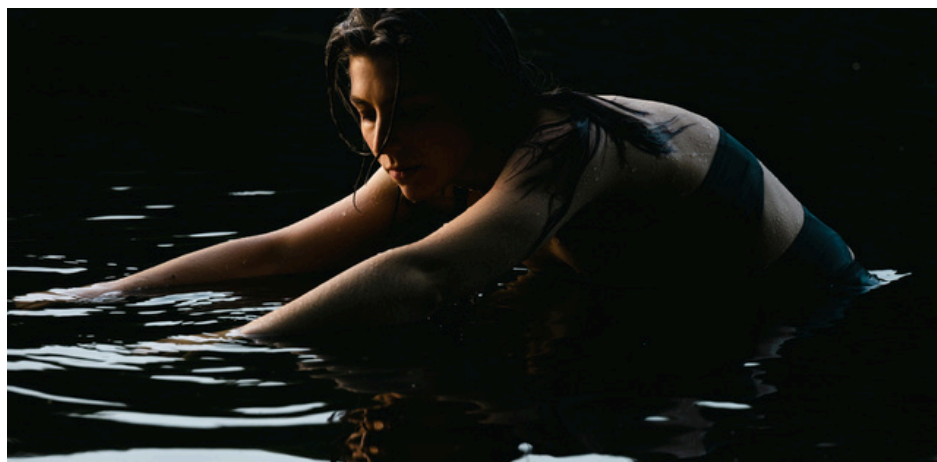






Image — Blue Moon

## FIRST GLANCE INTERNATIONAL AND AUSTRALIAN TITLES

Previously subjected to lengthy filmmaking and international travel bans and forced to film in secret even after his release, director **Jafar Panahi** (*No Bears*, MIFF 2023) claimed cinema's most coveted prize at this year's Cannes Film Festival for *It Was Just An Accident*. The incendiary thriller combines pitch-black gallows humour and devastating plot twists with elements of real stories Panahi heard from fellow prison inmates – a rage-filled rallying cry against state-sanctioned censorship and violent oppression that courageously interrogates the morality of retribution.

One of Sundance's buzziest debuts, *Sorry, Baby* is the A24-backed dramedy set to announce writer/director/star **Eva Victor** as a formidable new talent. Produced by **Barry Jenkins**, **Adele Romanski** and **Mark Ceryak** – the same team behind *Aftersun* (MIFF 2022) – and featuring key supporting turns from **Naomi Ackie**, **Lucas Hedges** and **Kelly McCormack**, *Sorry, Baby* is a funny, gentle and nuanced look at what it means to survive.

**Ethan Hawke** brings legendary Broadway lyricist **Lorenz Hart** to life in revered US filmmaker **Richard Linklater**'s A-list ensemble portrait of fallen stardom – featuring **Margaret Qualley**, **Bobby Canavale** and **Andrew Scott** – in *Blue Moon*. It's 31 March 1943: the opening night of *Oklahoma!*, the first musical collaboration between Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II and Hart laments his failing career and the changing nature of musical theatre. Linklater (*Boyhood*, MIFF 2014) synthesises the backstage showbiz lore approach of his 2008 period drama *Me and Orson Welles* with the conversational, philosophical mode of his beloved *Before* trilogy to craft an engaging chamber drama.

Led by a magnetic **Caleb Landry Jones** (*Nitram*, MIFF Premiere Fund 2021), *Harvest* by Greek auteur **Athina Rachel Tsangari** (*Attenberg*, MIFF 2011) is based on Jim Crace's Booker Prize-shortlisted novel of the same name. Walter watches on as his remote English village is rocked by a series of arrivals: a cartographer, who seeks to literally put the town on the map; and a despotic new estate lord, who upends the locals' arcadian social order. Shot in evocative 16mm by **Sean Price Williams** (*The Sweet East*, MIFF 2023) and assembly edited by Australian filmmaker **Alena Lodkina** (*Petrol*, MIFF 2022), this adaptation is a sagacious, at times humorous portrait of small-town small-mindedness and humanity's complicated bond with the land.

After winning the hearts of audiences at SXSW and taking home the Narrative Spotlight Audience Award, *The Baltimorons* is the directorial debut of **Jay Duplass** – one half of a renowned indie filmmaking duo alongside his brother, Mark – that brings its dreamy, postcard-perfect images of wintry Baltimore and a joyous soundtrack of jazzified holiday classics to the festival screen. Co-written with lead actor **Michael Strassner**, who based the film's setup on his own experiences, the feature is an uplifting crowdpleaser offering audiences the very gifts its central twosome bestow on one another: a reminder to laugh, and a hopefulness that fills the heart.

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**Dylan O'Brien** gives an award-winning dual performance in *Twinless*, a darkly comic, intriguingly queer study of grief loaded with twisty absurdity. Receiving a Special Jury Award for Acting at this year's Sundance Festival, where the film also claimed an Audience Award, O'Brien delivers a star-making double turn as Roman and Rocky. After his impressive 2019 debut, *Straight Up*, director **James Sweeney** levels up with this slick and slippery second feature, marking himself as a filmmaker to watch.

A cunning wannabe enters the orbit of an ascendant celebrity in *Lurker*, a thrillingly tense debut by TV producer and screenwriter **Alex Russell** (*The Bear*; *Beef*) about the hunger for – and hollowness of – stardom. Screening at Sundance and Berlin, the engrossing directorial debut collides the celebrity jealousies of *All About Eve* and *Ingrid Goes West* (MIFF 2017) with the obsessive fixation of *Saltburn* (also starring *Lurker*'s Archie Madekwe), resulting in a striking, shrewd critique of exploitation and superficiality in the entertainment world that shows there are no winners in the battle for fame.

In a wise and subtle meditation on the limits of music's emotional power, *The Ballad of Wallis Island*, brings together UK comedy veterans **Tim Key** and **Tom Basden**, who – alongside director **James Griffiths** – return to the premise of a 2007 short film they wrote and starred in. This time joined by three-time Oscar nominee **Carey Mulligan** and featuring Basden's original songs and Key's dryly funny wordplay, the film resists romantic clichés and bursts with comic charm.

*Marlon Williams: Two Worlds - Ngā Ao E Rua* chronicles the artistic process across four years of one of Aotearoa's most beloved artists, **Marlon Williams**, as he sets out on his most ambitious musical project yet: creating an album sung entirely in te reo Māori. Director **Ursula Grace Williams** follows the troubadour from the tranquillity of the South Island to his adopted home of Melbourne – and onwards to tours around the world and back, where he duets with **Lorde**, **Aldous Harding** and **Florence Welch** (of Florence and the Machine). Balancing moments of behind-the-scenes levity with remarkable musical sequences built around Williams' new waiata, this engrossing documentary playfully captures one musician's poignant personal journey.

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Image — *Lurker*



Debuting at Berlinale, *Fwends* by Accelerator Lab alum **Sophie Somerville** (*linda 4 eva*, MIFF 2023) makes its Victorian Premiere this MIFF, as is right and proper for any film so indebted to the city's bluestone-cobbled laneways. Estranged mates get lost in Melbourne in this full-of-feels feature debut – a paean to young-adult friendship that's a must-watch for anyone who loves the city, or might have lived here just a little too long.

Following his passing, legendary Yolngu actor **David Gulpilil** is brought back to his home country in a continent-traversing commemoration worthy of his transcendent talent in *Journey Home, David Gulpilil*. Narrated by **Hugh Jackman** and Yolngu hip-hop artist **Baker Boy**, co-directors **Trisha Morton-Thomas** (*Audrey Napanangka*, MIFF 2022) and **Maggie Miles** (*Paper Planes*, MIFF 2014) portray the man through the eyes of his community, intimately chronicling the epic trip through to its culmination in a Yolngu funeral ceremony and serving as a fitting tribute to a legend of Australian cinema.

*Cloud* is an unnerving, vicious psychological thriller from iconic director **Kiyoshi Kurosawa** (*Journey to the Shore*, MIFF 2015) that satirically skewers our complacent belief in the anonymity of the internet. As one of Japan's great genre filmmakers, **Kurosawa** cut his teeth working on no-budget straight-to-video action and pinku movies in the 1980s before breaking out on the global stage with 2001's J-horror classic *Pulse*, a fable of early-internet doom that has proven prescient. In *Cloud*, he turns his attention to the shady world of modern e-commerce, crafting ever-escalating tension from an online dystopia in which everyone's out to make a quick buck and nobody wants to be left holding the bag.

**Michel Gondry** (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*; *Mood Indigo*, MIFF 2013) returns to his roots with *Maya, Give Me a Title*, a wildly creative animated omnibus, assembling surreal two-dimensional adventures to entertain his young daughter. Living on a different continent to his four-year-old daughter, Maya, the iconic French filmmaker comes up with a way to connect with her: she gives him a title for a story, and he turns it into a handmade animated adventure. Often peeling back to reveal his methods and offer a how-to primer for animation, the Berlinale Children's Jury award-winner is a universal valentine to storytelling and its seminal place in the parent-child bond. The film is included in the 2025 MIFF Schools line up.

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Image — *Cloud*





*Dreams* marks the second collaboration between Cannes-awarded filmmaker **Michel Franco** and Oscar winner **Jessica Chastain** after *Memory* (MIFF 2024) in a scathing yet enthralling drama about immigration, manipulation and a romance built on inequality. With taut plotting and crisp cinematography, this Berlinale-premiering film exposes the toxic flip side of progressivism and how kindness can, when pushed, devolve into cruelty.

From darkness into light, *Come See Me in the Good Light* is a poetic documentary that brings audiences to the brink of what it means to love. Celebrated non-binary American poets **Andrea Gibson** and **Megan Falley** are partners and fellow artists. When Gibson is diagnosed with stage 4 ovarian cancer and only given two years to live, they embark on a journey through trips to the oncology clinic, chemotherapy and the all-too-immediate realities of life and death. Directed by **Ryan White** (*The Case Against 8*, MIFF 2014) and co-produced by queer comedian and cancer survivor **Tig Notaro**, the Sundance Festival Favourite Award winner uses archival footage and Gibson's own words as a poet laureate to bring this poignant story of queer love, catharsis, and sexual and gender acceptance to life.

Following six young female journalists over the course of four months, *My Undesirable Friends: Part 1 – Last Air in Moscow* is an engrossing observational documentary set against the backdrop of a steady erosion of civil liberties. A gripping portrait of Russian journalists living and working under the crosshairs of a hostile regime, director **Julia Loktev** (*The Loneliest Planet*, MIFF 2012) brings a distinct feeling of intimacy to this long-form episodic work, mostly shooting on her iPhone and maintaining a close rapport with her subjects. Capturing big-picture history in small moments, this real-life epic invites us into the lives of journalists striving to fight for the truth and maintain their humanity as the walls close in around them.

In their latest feature *Reflections in a Dead Diamond*, the Belgian-based French filmmaking couple **Hélène Cattet** and **Bruno Forzani** behind *Let the Corpses Tan* (MIFF 2018) bring a touch of Dario Argento's brutally surreal aesthetic to this homage to 60s-Bond-style sexy spy thrillers. Debuting in competition at Berlinale, the film fuses eurotrash flesh onto giallo bones to breathe life into a deliriously entertaining, drop-dead-gorgeous pastiche.

The full MIFF 2025 program will launch on **Thursday 10 July**.

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Image — *Come See Me In Good Light*





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Media Centre  
[MIFF 2025](#)

Media Contact  
Caitlyn Miles  
[caitlyn@commonstate.co](mailto:caitlyn@commonstate.co)  
+61 4 3373 2850

Leigh-Anne Ramirez  
[leigh-anne@commonstate.co](mailto:leigh-anne@commonstate.co)  
+61 4 3935 3407

### TICKETING

Audiences are encouraged to plan ahead, with MIFF Multipasses and MIFF Memberships – which offer exclusive pre-sale access including allocated seating (in select venues) – available for purchase now via [miff.com.au/tickets](http://miff.com.au/tickets)

Tickets for *Julia Holter: The Passion of Joan Arc*, presented by MUBI, are on sale from **11am AEST, Thursday 5 June** and available via the Melbourne Recital Centre [website](#).

All other tickets will go on sale to MIFF Members for an exclusive pre-sale from **8pm AEST, Thursday 10 July** and will be on sale to the general public from **10am AEST, Tuesday 15 July**.

Stay tuned to MIFF socials for an announcement of Gala and other Special Event tickets going on sale soon.

- ENDS -

### NOTES TO EDITOR

- MIFF 2025 runs 7–24 August
  - First Glance titles will be live on the MIFF [website](#) from 11am AEST, Thursday 5 June
  - Tickets for *Julia Holter: The Passion of Joan Arc*, presented by MUBI, are on sale from 11am AEST, Thursday 5 June and available via the Melbourne Recital Centre [website](#)
  - The MIFF Awards ceremony will be held on Saturday 23 August at Rydges Melbourne
  - The MIFF Shorts Award ceremony will take place Friday 15 August at ACMI
  - A limited selection of festival highlights and short film packages will be available digitally from August 15–31 through MIFF Online – streaming via ACMI. Book and watch via ACMI's dedicated streaming platform [Cinema 3](#). Short films screen for free and feature films will be paid for on-demand.
  - MIFF Schools runs during the festival period at ACMI. For further information and bookings visit [miff.com.au/schools](http://miff.com.au/schools)
  - MIFF Regional runs 15–17 and 22–24 August with screenings in Bendigo (Star Cinema, Eaglehawk), Ballarat (Showbiz Cinemas), Castlemaine (Theatre Royal), Geelong (Village and Pivotonian), Rosebud (Peninsula Cinemas), Morwell (Village), Sale (Sale Cinema) and Shepparton (Village)
  - The full MIFF 2025 program will be made public on Thursday 10 July
  - MIFF Members exclusive pre-sale window runs from 8pm AEST, Thursday 10 July through to 10am AEST, Tuesday 15 July
  - Tickets are on sale to the general public from 10am AEST, Tuesday 15 July
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### FIRST GLANCE TITLES: MIFF 2025

#### MIFF Premiere Fund

*Careless*

*First Light*

*Iron Winter*

*Not Only Fred Dagg But Also John Clarke*

*One More Shot*

*Pasa Faho*

*Spreadsheet Champions*

#### Special Events & XR

*Julia Holter: The Passion of Joan of Arc*

*The World Came Flooding In*

#### Australian and International

*Blue Moon*

*Cloud*

*Come See Me in the Good Light*

*Dreams*

*Fwends*

*Harvest*

*It Was Just An Accident*

*Journey Home, David Gulpilil*

*Lurker*

*Marlon Williams: Two Worlds - Ngā Ao E Rua*

*Maya, Give Me a Title*

*My Undesirable Friends: Part I — Last Air in Moscow*

*Reflection in a Dead Diamond*

*Sorry, Baby*

*The Ballad of Wallis Island*

*The Baltimorons*

*Twinless*

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