

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

5-16 JUNE 2024

2024 SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS

The 71st Sydney Film Festival has announced the return of accolades to be awarded at the 2024 Festival including the 16th year of the Festival's Official Competition's Sydney Film Prize, with the Festival's awards bigger and better than ever.

The 2024 Festival will have the largest prize pool for filmmakers and their films in the Festival's history with a record prize pool worth \$200,000. Prize money on offer this year includes:

- Sydney Film Prize - \$60,000
- Documentary Australia Award - \$20,000
- Sustainable Future Award - \$40,000
- First Nations Award - \$35,000
- Sydney UNESCO City of Film Award - \$10,000
- The Dendy Live Action Short Award - \$7,000
- The Rouben Mamoulian Award - \$7,000
- The Yoram Gross Animation Award - \$7,000
- The AFTRS Craft Award - \$7,000
- The Event Cinemas Rising Talent Award - \$7,000

OFFICIAL COMPETITION

For the 16th year, the Official Competition will award the \$60,000 cash Sydney Film Prize to a film that demonstrates audacious, cutting-edge and courageous cinema.

Direct from the 2024 Cannes Film Festival competition will be: ***Kinds of Kindness***, a darkly hilarious fable starring Emma Stone, Jesse Plemons and Willem Dafoe from Yorgos Lanthimos (*Alps*, Sydney Film Prize 2012; *Poor Things*); ***Grand Tour***, the latest from Miguel Gomes (*Tabu*, SFF 2012; *Arabian Nights*, Sydney Film Prize, SFF 2015); and Christophe Honoré's ***Marcello Mio***, where an all-star French cast play themselves in a meta comedy paying homage to the great Marcello Mastroianni. Payal Kapadia's romantic drama ***All We Imagine as Light*** is the first Indian film to appear in the Cannes Competition in 30 years and follows two women in Mumbai who are thwarted in their quests for love.

Also screening straight from Cannes is acclaimed actor Ariane Labed's (*Attenberg*, SFF 2011; *Alps*, SFF 2012) directorial debut ***September Says***, a Gothic psychological drama in which the closeness of two sisters becomes increasingly disruptive; and Cannes Un Certain Regard contender ***Việt And Nam***, the love story of two gay mineworkers.

Internationally awarded films in competition at SFF include Berlin Film Festival Silver Bear winning feature ***Dying***, a multi-generational epic about a conductor and his turbulent family; and the



Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner **Sujo**, a moving Mexican cartel drama that follows a cartel-born child from infancy to manhood. Rich Peppiatt's raucous and rude comedy **Kneecap** stars three real-life Belfast rappers as themselves and took out the Audience Award in the Sundance NEXT strand.

Outperforming *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer* at the box office in its native Italy, **There's Still Tomorrow** is a melodrama from director-star Paola Cortellesi about an industrious woman in post-WWII Rome. It screens in competition at SFF alongside **Puan**, an incisive comedy about a philosophy professor at a Buenos Aires university who is threatened by a charismatic rival.

Opening Night Film **Midnight Oil: The Hardest Line** will also screen in competition at the 2024 Festival. Featuring previously unseen interviews with every band member, plus new live and studio footage, alongside signature moments like the outback tour with Warumpi Band, the band's Exxon protest gig in New York and those famous "Sorry" suits at the Sydney Olympics, this film traces the singular journey of Australia's quintessential rock band across their 45-year career.

The winner of the Sydney Film Prize is announced at the Festival's Closing Night Gala on Sunday 16 June. Previous winners include *The Mother of All Lies* (2023), *Close* (2022), *There Is No Evil* (2021), *Parasite* (2019), *The Heiresses* (2018), *On Body and Soul* (2017), *Aquarius* (2016), *Arabian Nights* (2015), *Two Days, One Night* (2014), *Only God Forgives* (2013), *Alps* (2012), *A Separation* (2011), *Heartbeats* (2010), *Bronson* (2009), and *Hunger* (2008).

The competition is the only film competition in Australia endorsed by FIAPF, the regulating body for international film festivals, and is judged by a jury of international and Australian filmmakers and industry professionals.

The 2024 Official Competition Jury is led by Bosnian writer and director Danis Tanović as Jury President, joined by Indonesian director Kamila Andini, Australian producer Sheila Jayadev, US producer Jay Van Hoy, and Australian director Tony Krawitz.

DOCUMENTARY AUSTRALIA AWARD

Ten documentaries (including seven World Premieres) will contest the 2024 Documentary Australia Prize. As well as receiving a \$20,000 cash prize courtesy of Documentary Australia, the winning film becomes Academy Award eligible.

"It's been a tough year for the world and we look forward to sharing extraordinary stories of strength, wonder, beauty and art so we can strive to better understand the diversity of perspectives and lived experiences," said **Dr Mitzi Goldman, Documentary Australia CEO**. "Documentaries inspire us to listen, feel and act passionately. Documentary Australia is proud to celebrate the hard work of documentary filmmakers and we encourage audiences to join us, support and fund the work, and help these important voices be heard."

World Premieres: **Dale Frank – Nobody's Sweetie**, an intimate portrait of artist Dale Frank; **Aquarius**, documenting a 1973 gathering embraced by activists, hippies, and radicals that changed the town of Nimbin forever; **The Blind Sea**, following professional athlete Matt Formston as he takes on the challenge of surfing the biggest wave ever tackled by a blind surfer; **Welcome to Yiddishland**, about a global community of artists on a quest to rediscover and revitalise the endangered Yiddish language; **Mozart's Sister**, the story of the other Mozart, Maria-Anna, a child prodigy forgotten to time; **Skategoat**, about a young boy's dream to become a pro skateboarder by renegade graffiti artist and acclaimed music video director Van Alpert; Stan Originals' **Revealed: Otto by Otto**, in which Gracie Otto (*Under the Volcano*, SFF 2021; *The Last Impresario*, SFF 2014)



attempts to capture the memories of her father, iconic Australian actor and artist Barry Otto; and ***Welcome to Babel***, which charts Chinese-Australian artist Jiawei Shen's plans to create an epic work.

Also in the running: Sally Aitken's Sundance Selected ***Every Little Thing***, a story of a woman finding herself as she cares for injured hummingbirds, and ***You Should Have Been Here Yesterday***, a cinematic ode to Australia's early surfing culture featuring the likes of Tim Winton and Wayne Lynch.

THE DENDY AWARDS FOR AUSTRALIAN SHORT FILMS

Sydney Film Festival's short film competition has launched the careers of countless directors, writers, producers, cinematographers and other film creatives in its 55-year history.

Sharon Strickland, CEO, Dendy / Icon who sponsors the Dendy Awards said, "Dendy Cinemas has been the proud sponsor of the short film awards for the last 36 festivals, contributing to the spotlight on Australian filmmaking talent. A hearty congratulations to this year's finalists, we wish you the best of luck."

The 10 finalists compete for five illustrious prizes: the **Dendy Live Action Short Award**; the **Yoram Gross Animation Award**; the **Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Director**; the **AFTRS Craft Award**; and the **Event Cinemas Rising Talent Award**.

The short films competing are: ***Alone***, ***Besharam! (Shameless)***, ***Bong Xi Fa Cai***, ***Darwin Story***, ***Die Bully Die***, ***The Disconnected***, ***The Gay***, ***The Meaningless Daydreams of Augie & Celeste***, ***Say*** and ***This Will Never Last***.

SUSTAINABLE FUTURE AWARD

The Sustainable Future Award, offering \$40,000, leads the world with the largest cash prize for a film tackling climate change and sustainability. The Sustainable Future Award is made possible by a syndicate of passionate climate activists.

The award will be presented to a film that explores the social, economic, political, and environmental consequences of climate change and highlights the urgent need for action to mitigate its effects.

The feature length films in the 2024 Sustainable Future Award are all documentaries: ***Black Snow***, ***The Battle for Laikipia*** and ***Wilding***.

Three shorts, ***The Feast***, ***The Waiting*** and ***Grove of Giants***, will also individually compete for the coveted award.

FIRST NATIONS AWARD PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY TRUANT PICTURES

This year, Sydney Film Festival launches the inaugural First Nations Award, proudly supported by Truant Pictures. This Award establishes the world's largest cash prize in global Indigenous filmmaking, awarding \$35,000 to the winning First Nations filmmaker.

From homegrown First Nations voices to Māori and Sámi narratives – these films are brimming with diverse ideas and rich perspectives from Indigenous storytellers.



In a World Premiere screening, *Once Were Warriors* stars Temuera Morrison and Cliff Curtis reunite for *Ka Whawhai Tonu*, a historical epic about Aotearoa's first land war, when vastly outnumbered Māori fought against colonial soldiers.

In *The Convert*, Guy Pearce stars as a British preacher caught up in 1830s Māori wars in Lee Tamahori's (*Once Were Warriors*, 1993; *Mahana*, SFF 2016) sweeping historical drama.

The haunting history of the Stolen Generations looms large in *The Moogai* when a malicious spirit enters the home of a young Indigenous couple with a newborn baby. Based on his SFF-winning short of the same name, writer-director Jon Bell's striking feature debut arrives direct from SXSW and Sundance.

From New Zealand comes *The Mountain*, the directorial debut of actor Rachel House (*Hunt for the Wilderpeople*). Executive produced by Taika Waititi, the film centres on three children discovering friendship's healing power through the spirit of adventure as they trek through spectacular New Zealand landscapes.

Another New Zealand feature executive produced by Taika Waititi, *We Were Dangerous* by director Josephine Stewart-Te Whiu follows three defiant girls caught in New Zealand's history of eugenics. In *Ellogierdu – The Tundra Within Me*, an artist returns to her childhood home, reconnecting with her Sámi heritage and finding love with a reindeer herder. This debut feature from Sara Margrethe Oskal was screened at Toronto International Film Festival.

Three First Nations shorts, *First Horse*, *Tayal Forest Club* and *Lea Tupu'anga / Mother Tongue*, will also individually compete for the award.

THE SYDNEY UNESCO CITY OF FILM AWARD

This annual award recognises a trailblazing NSW- based screen practitioner whose work stands for innovation, imagination and high impact. Screen NSW awards a \$10,000 cash prize to the winner at SFF's Closing Night ceremony on Sunday 16 June. Previous winners include **Chris Godfrey**, **Karina Holden**, **Warwick Thornton**, **Leah Purcell**, and **Lynette Wallworth**.

THE GIO AUDIENCE AWARDS

The GIO Audience Awards are the Festival's people's choice awards, where Festival fans get to vote for their favourite films at the Festival. Using the SFF 2024 app and website, Festival goers are invited to rate films after each screening and the winning films are announced in the week following the festival. Four awards are presented: best Australian narrative feature, best international narrative feature, best Australian documentary, and best international documentary.

Previous winners have included: *Birdeater* and *The Defenders* (2023), *Evicted! A Modern Romance* and *Keep Stepping* (2022), *Beautiful Minds* and *Blind Ambition* (2021), *Sequin in a Blue Room* and *Martha: A Picture Story* (2019), *The Insult* and *Backtrack Boys* (2018), *Ali's Wedding* and *Roller Dreams* (2017), *Mustang* and *Zach's Ceremony* (2016), *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* and *Wide Open Sky* (2015), *Winter Sleep* and *Love Marriage in Kabul* (2014), and *Mystery Road* and *Big Name No Blanket* (2013).

SIGNATURE DINOSAUR DESIGNS AWARDS



The winners of all Sydney Film Festival awards are presented with the Festival's signature mesmeric swirl award, designed and handmade in Sydney by SFF partner Dinosaur Designs.

The full Sydney Film Festival 2024 program can be found online at sff.org.au.

Sydney Film Festival runs from 5-16 June 2024. Tickets and Flexipasses to Sydney Film Festival 2024 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit sff.org.au for more information or to book.

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*****Sydney Film Festival Press Pack and Images Available [HERE](#)**

EDITOR'S NOTES

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From Wednesday 5 to Sunday 16 June 2024, the 71st Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, in-depth discussions, film guests and more.

Sydney Film Festival is a major event on the New South Wales cultural calendar and is one of the world's longest-running film festivals. For more information visit sff.org.au.

The 71st Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW and Destination NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the City of Sydney.

