

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

05–16 JUNE 2019

EMBARGOED UNTIL 08:00am WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 2019

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL AUDIENCE AWARDS ANNOUNCED

The 66th Sydney Film Festival wrapped on Sunday 16 June with the Australian Premiere screening of rock 'n' roll comedy *Yesterday* at the State Theatre.

Today the Festival announced the **Audience Awards**, the list of the audience's top five voted features and documentaries. Winner for best narrative feature went to *Sequin in a Blue Room* directed by **Samuel Van Grinsven** and winner for best documentary went to *Martha: A Picture Story* directed by **Selina Miles**.

Sydney Film Festival CEO Leigh Small said: "There were many sold out sessions – 160 – across the Festival this year, which had the highest attendance to date of 188,000."

Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley said: "The people have spoken – and it is with great pleasure that the Festival announces *Sequin in a Blue Room* and *Martha: A Picture Story* as the winners of the 2019 Audience Award. The fact that the majority of the top-voted titles were local productions gives a great insight into our collective appetite for excellent Australian storytelling."

"*Sequin in a Blue Room* is a very highly-accomplished film, particularly as the debut feature of young Australian filmmaker Samuel van Grinsven," he said. "This coming-of-age tale about a high schooler whose hook-up app obsession sends him down a dangerous path is a breath of fresh air from the independent Australian queer film scene."

"Delving into a story beyond our own borders, *Martha: A Picture Story* is a wonderful Australian production about an unexpected icon of New York's vivid graffiti scene – one of the biggest art movements in history," he said.

Minister for the Arts Don Harwin said: "Since the 2009 increase in NSW Government support, this truly impressive cultural event has grown by over 80% in attendance and scale to become one of the leading international Film Festivals operating around the world today. Across the past 12 days, we have supported 22 titles shown: from Opening Night's *Palm Beach*, *Judy and Punch*, *Lambs of God* through to the Screenability shorts."

"One of the great things about this Festival is that it lives on across regional centres over the course of the year ahead. Through the Travelling Film Festival, this year eight NSW locations will enjoy highlights as part of the tour, starting in Newcastle next weekend. We will also add five additional locations in 2020. It's all part of the NSW Government's expanded \$5 million funding commitment over the next four years," he said.

Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore said: "As it proves year after year, Sydney Film Festival is an irresistible drawcard and a great standard-bearer for Sydney's life and culture. The many venues across the City were crowded with avid film-goers whether here, or at the Dendy Cinemas in Newtown and Opera Quays, or the Art Gallery and outdoor screen in Pitt Street Mall."



“From the Adam Goodes film, *The Final Quarter*, which has rightfully stirred so many consciences, to tonight’s closing screening, *Yesterday*, the Festival has brought so much great cinema to its audiences,” she said.

Eight feature films, one documentary and two shorts from this year’s Festival will premiere in Newcastle this weekend when the Travelling Film Festival brings *Judy & Punch*, *Daffodils*, *Skin*, *Slam*, *Kursk*, *Yuli*, *The Biggest Little Farm*, *Photograph*, and *The Third Wife* to Event Cinemas Kotara from Friday 21 – Sunday 23 June.

THE AUDIENCE AWARDS

The Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature Top Five:

1. *Sequin in a Blue Room*, directed by Samuel Van Grinsven (Australia)
2. *Hearts and Bones*, directed by Ben Lawrence (Australia)
3. *Suburban Wildlife*, directed by Imogen McCluskey (Australia)
4. *Never Look Away*, directed by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck (Germany)
5. *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*, directed by Céline Sciamma (France)

The Audience Award for Best Documentary Top Five:

1. *Martha: A Picture Story*, directed by Selina Miles (Australia)
2. *The Final Quarter*, directed by Ian Darling (Australia)
3. *She Who Must Be Obeyed Love*, directed by Erica Glynn (Australia) - also the winner of the 2019 [Documentary Australia Foundation Award](#)
4. *Sanctuary*, directed by Kaye Harrison (Australia)
5. *Honeyland*, directed by Ljubomir Stefanov, Tamara Kotevska (North Macedonia)

What: Travelling Film Festival Newcastle

When: Friday 21 June - Sunday 23 June, 2019

Where: Event Cinemas Kotara, Park Ave, Kotara NSW 2289

Full program details and ticketing information can be found at: sff.org.au/tff/program/Newcastle

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

EDITOR’S NOTES

OTHER 2018 SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL AWARD WINNERS INCLUDE:

Parasite, by renowned Korean director **Bong Joon-ho** was awarded the prestigious Sydney Film Prize, out of a selection of 12 Official Competition films, at the Festival’s Closing Night Gala.

Indigenous director **Erica Glynn** was awarded the Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentary’s \$10,000 cash prize for *She Who Must Be Obeyed Loved*, a celebration of the life of her mother, the trailblazing Indigenous filmmaker Alfreda Glynn.

Charles Williams took out both the \$7,000 cash prize for the Dendy Live Action Short Award, and the \$7,000 Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Director in Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films, for *All These Creatures*, which also won the Short Film Palme d’Or at Cannes. The \$5,000 Yoram Gross Animation Award went to **Lee Whitmore’s** *Sohrab and Rustum*.



The Event Cinemas Australian Short Screenplay Award, a \$5,000 prize for the best short screenwriting, was awarded to **Michael Hudson** of *Ties That Bind*, for its narrative simplicity and complex perspective on family violence. **Victoria Hunt**'s film *Take* received a Special Mention for its weaving of found material and dance into a powerful story about the repatriation of stolen Indigenous art.

The \$10,000 Sydney-UNESCO City of Film Award, bestowed by Create NSW to a trail-blazing NSW-based screen practitioner, went to **Darren Dale** and **Rachel Perkins** of **Blackfella Films**, with Deborah Mailman presenting the award to filmmaker **Rachel Perkins**.

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From Wednesday 5 June to Sunday 16 June 2019, the 66th Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, in-depth discussions, international guests and more.

Sydney Film Festival also presents an Official Competition of 12 films that vie for the Sydney Film Prize, a highly respected honour that awards a \$60,000 cash prize based on the decision of a jury of international and Australian filmmakers and industry professionals. Previous Sydney Film Prize winners: *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 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 66th Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW and Destination NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the City of Sydney. The Festival's Strategic Partner is the NSW Government via its tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW.

