

## Five set to shine at Sheffield

**Tuesday 14 October 2008:** The Sheffield Doc/Fest has announced its program for 2008, which will include five Australian projects – two international premieres and three European premieres.

Screening as part of the Official Program are ***Beyond Our Ken*** (d: Luke Walker, Melissa Maclean) and ***Dominick Dunne: After the Party*** (d: Kirsty de Garis, Timothy Jolley), which will have their European premieres, while ***A Northern Town*** (d: Rachel Landers) will have its international premiere.

*A Northern Town* screened earlier this year at the Sydney Film Festival, while *Dominick Dunne: After the Party* screened at the 2008 Melbourne International Film Festival. *Beyond Our Ken* was also featured as part of the 2008 festival line up for Hot Docs – Canada's International Documentary Festival.

Each night as part of the festival, Doc/Fest will also showcase a film from their specially prepared strands. ***Heart*** (d: Amy Gebhardt) will enjoy its international premiere as part of Bent Docs – a program showcasing some of the most exciting documentary cinema of gay and lesbian filmmaking.

Some of the biggest and most controversial documentaries of the year have been unabashed sports documentaries. The Sports Doc strand of Doc/Fest will unite sports fans and laymen alike, and will showcase the European premiere of ***Solo*** (d: David Michod, Jen Peedom).

Other strands at this year's Doc/Fest will include: Anti Docs – a program for documentaries featuring something weird either in form, subject or structure; and Regime Change – a special collection of documentaries focusing on the effects of power shifts and struggles, and how they impact on culture, politics and daily life.

**The Sheffield Doc/Fest will run 5 – 9 November 2008**

*See film details below.*

## **A Northern Town**

(75 mins)

Production Company: Pony Films Pty Ltd

Executive Producer: N/A

Writer/Director: Rachel Landers

Producer: Dylan Blowen

International Sales: SBS Content Sales

### Synopsis

As the white witnesses to Kempsey's bloody history have aged, many have found themselves doing what they never could have imagined: moving in with Aboriginal people. *A Northern Town* lays bare the horror of the true history of this town to break the tragic divisions of the past.

## **Beyond our Our Ken**

(88 mins)

Production Company: Scribble Films

Directors: Luke Walker, Melissa Maclean

Writer/Producer: Luke Walker

Distributor (Aust & NZ): Hopscotch

### Synopsis

In this riveting and disturbing doc, filmmakers Luke Walker and Melissa Maclean obtain unprecedented access to a controversial Australian "spiritual enlightenment" organization called Kenja. Founded in 1982 by leader Ken Dyers and partner Jan Hamilton, Kenja members and supporters claim that the group offers a Utopia where life's purpose is defined, the human spirit discovered and the universe itself explained. Meanwhile, during its 25-year lifetime, Kenja has been derided in the media as a "secretive cult," and Ken described as a "seedy conman." Families blame the group for the disappearance of loved ones. As the people of Kenja prepare to defend themselves in the latest of several court cases, Ken and Jan invite the filmmakers into their spiritual enlightenment centre. Through remarkable vérité footage and candid interviews, BEYOND OUR KEN explores the anatomy and ambiguity of the cult enigma. We discover the extent to which environment defines our reality, a reality as fragile as the truth.

## **Dominick Dunne: After the Party**

(84 mins)

Production Company: Road Trip Film

Executive Producers: Sue Maslin, Daryl Dellora

Writers/Directors/Producers: Kirsty de Garis, Timothy Jolley

Distributor (Aust and NZ): Film Art Media, Kojo Pictures

International Sales: Mercury Media

Cast: Dominick Dunne, Graydon Carter, Robert Evans, Joan Didion, Griffin Dunne, Liz Smith

### Synopsis

*Dominick Dunne: After the Party* is an intimate snapshot of the famous *Vanity Fair* magazine writer as he covers the Phil Spector murder trial in Los Angeles.

However, it is also an under-the-skin story of Dunne's amazing personal triumphs and tragedies. It is both an inspiring and sad story of one man's search for belonging in a celebrity-obsessed world.

### **Heart**

(26 mins)

Production Company: Big and Little Films

Writer/Director: Amy Gebhardt

Producers: Tony Ayres, Michael McMahon

### Synopsis

Shot with rare intimacy, *Heart* reveals the origins of creative inspiration as artist Jacqui Stockdale embarks on a portrait of her long-time muse, Rose. As past storms of their personal life break around them, we witness the changing nature of love within the artistic process.

### **Solo**

(58 mins)

Production Company: Essential Media and Entertainment

Executive Producer: Chris Hilton

Directors: David Michod, Jen Peedom

Writer: David Michod

Producer: Jen Peedom

Distributor: Hopscotch

International Sales: RDF Rights

### Synopsis

The extraordinary journey of a man who refused to be ordinary. This story charts the brave attempt of Andrew McAuley to cross the wild Southern Ocean from Australia to New Zealand in a kayak. After a month at sea and one day away from success, a distress signal was received. His empty kayak was found only 30 miles from shore. His body was not recovered, but the tapes from his cameras were. The exact circumstances of Andrew's death remain a mystery, and are explored in the film.