

Six Oz docs head for Amsterdam

Thursday 6 November 2008

The prestigious International Documentary Festival of Amsterdam (IDFA) has announced the selection of six Australian titles that reflect the diversity of Australian documentary filmmaking.

***In My Father's Country* (d: Tom Murray)** will screen in the First Appearance competition, where it will compete with 15 films for the First Appearance and IDFA Audience Awards. This screening will be the international premiere of the film. In 2007, director Robert Nugent received the First Appearance Award for his film *End of the Rainbow* – a first for an Australian film.

Selected to screen in Reflecting Images: Best of Fests is the sports documentary ***Solo* (d: David Michod, Jen Peedom)**, which charts the brave attempt of Andrew McAuley to cross the wild Southern Ocean from Australia to New Zealand in a kayak. This screening follows the European premiere of *Solo* at the Sheffield Doc/Fest earlier this month.

***Skin* (d: Rhys Graham)**, an intimate and confronting film exploring art, the body and mortality, will have its international premiere when it screens in the Silver Cub competition – a competitive section for short documentaries. ***Wanja* (d: Angie Abdilla)**, a documentary about the block in Redfern, has also been selected to screen in the Silver Cub competition and will have its European premiere at the festival. *Wanja* received development funding from Screen Australia's Indigenous Branch.

***Twelve Canoes* (d: Molly Reynolds, Rolf de Heer)**, made for release on the internet and comprising 12 shorts that portray the history, culture and homeland of the Yolngu people of the Arafura Swamp, will screen in the Reflecting Images: Masters program of IDFA.

The final film in selection is ***Indonesia Calling***, a film by famous Dutch documentary maker **Joris Ivens**. Made in 1946, the film was sponsored by the Waterside Worker's Federation of Australia and is about the refusal of seamen and waterside workers in Australia to man Dutch ships containing arms and ammunition for attacks on the Indonesia Republic.

The International Documentary Festival of Amsterdam runs 20–30 November 2008.

In My Father's Country

(80 min)

Production Company: Mayfan Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Tom Murray

Producer: Graeme Isaac

Co-producers: Tom Murray, Amy Frasca

Domestic & International Sales: SBS Content Sales

Synopsis: In remote North East Arnhem Land a small homeland community is fighting for its future. It's Elders are struggling with the difficult task of mediating the demands of a richly complex traditional culture and a globalised 21st Century world, while hoping to raise their kids with the dignity, insight, and self-respect necessary to succeed in both.

Skin

(27 mins)

Production Company: Big and Little Films

Writer/Director: Rhys Graham

Producers: Tony Ayres, Michael McMahon

Synopsis: An unsettling meditation on death and creativity, *Skin* examines the 15-year collaboration between tattooist and artist Ex de Medici and her subject Geoff Ostling, as they negotiate the possibility of bequeathing Geoff's completely tattooed skin as an artwork when he dies.

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, which will be examined in the film.

Twelve Canoes

(66 mins)

Production Company: Indigemedia Incorporated

Directors/Writers: Molly Reynolds, Rolf de Heer

Producers: Molly Reynolds, Marshall Heald, Rolf de Heer

Web Design: Wanted Digital

Distributor: Ronin Films

Synopsis: Made for release on the internet, *Twelve Canoes* comprises a dozen shorts that portray the history, culture and homeland of the Yolngu people of the Arafura Swamp. The 12 'tone poems' include Creation, Our Ancestors, The Macassans, First White Men, Seasons, Language and Kinship.

Wanja

(26 mins)

Production Company: Jotz Productions Pty Ltd

Executive Producer: Tom Zubrycki

Writer/Director: Angie Abdilla

Producer: Tom Zubrycki

International Sales: Jotz Productions Pty Ltd

Cast: Barbara Stacey

Synopsis: A documentary about The Block, through the eyes of Auntie Barb, and the life of her blue heeler dog (recently deceased). The many and varied stories of *Wanja* reflect on the issues affecting this Indigenous community in the heart of Sydney.