

Historic Australian contingent at Sundance 2019

Thursday 29 November 2018: Six Australian feature films will screen at the Sundance Film Festival, surpassing the record set in 1997 of five features. [Animals](#), [I Am Mother](#), [Judy and Punch](#), [Little Monsters](#) and [Top End Wedding](#) will all make their World Premieres at the Utah-based festival. [The Nightingale](#) will make its North American Premiere, after taking home the [Special Jury Prize](#) at this year's Venice Film Festival.

Sundance has a history of launching Australian works that go on to be hits including [Animal Kingdom](#) in 2010 (World Cinema Jury Prize), [Wolf Creek](#) in 2005, [Shine](#) in 1996 and more recently documentary [Casting JonBenet](#) (2017) and FX television series [Mr Inbetween](#) (2018). The festival is particularly important for introducing Australian creatives to the US market.

“The six films selected by Sundance display the array of stories Australians now tell, and the demand for our screen content internationally,” said Screen Australia CEO **Graeme Mason**. “From quintessentially Australian tales [Top End Wedding](#) and [The Nightingale](#), to Australian takes on sci-fi and dark comedy [I Am Mother](#) and [Little Monsters](#), to international stories [Animals](#) and [Judy and Punch](#) - this is an incredible slate of premieres.”

“The fact that all the films revolve around central female characters, and half of the films are directed by women, is a milestone for the Australian industry. Change is coming - slowly, but surely.”

Starring Mia Wasikowska and Damon Herriman, [Judy and Punch](#) will compete in World Cinema Dramatic. Director **Mirrah Foulkes** said of the selection, “I am so happy that [Judy and Punch](#) will have its world premiere at Sundance in 2019. I owe a huge thank you to my enormously hard working cast and crew and everyone who invested in the film. Sundance holds some pretty special memories for me, many of [Blue-Tongue Films](#) work has screened at the festival over the years and the festival has been formative to the careers of many of my peers. It's an absolute privilege to be premiering my first feature there.”

[Top End Wedding's](#) **Miranda Tapsell** noted, “Hearing the news that [Top End Wedding](#) has been accepted to the Sundance Film Festival is absolutely a dream come true. As a co-writer, producer and actor in this film, it's been a labour of love for me and having the opportunity to showcase the Northern Territory to an international audience, through a different lens, at such a prestigious festival, makes this such a rewarding experience. I'm so proud of this film and the people that were part of it.”

Sophie Hyde took home the Sundance Directing Award: World Cinema Dramatic for her film [52 Tuesdays](#) in 2014, and returns with Official Australian/Irish Co-production [Animals](#). “Making this film has been such a pleasure - from the development, helping Emma [Jane Unsworth] adapt her own novel, through the shoot in Dublin with our glorious cast and international team, and right through our Australian post. I loved immersing myself in the world of [Animals](#) and I can't wait to have audiences immersing themselves too. We couldn't think of a better launchpad for this film than Sundance, so I am delighted to be returning with this fierce and beautiful story of friendship and competing desires.”

[Little Monsters](#) features an international cast, including Lupita Nyong'o ([Black Panther](#)), Josh Gad ([Beauty and the Beast](#)) and Australia's Alexander England ([Alien: Covenant](#)). Writer/Director **Abe Forsythe** said of the feel-good dark comedy, “A lot of people worked very hard bringing this logistically punishing story to life. I'm so happy that everyone's work will be premiered at a festival I've always dreamed of attending.”

The [Sundance Film Festival](#) runs 24 Jan to 3 February, 2019.

High resolution images of the selected films [here](#).



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ABOUT FESTIVAL SELECTIONS

Festival selections are influenced by multiple factors, including when a project is completed, how it is perceived by the selection panel and the overall themes of the program, the volume of other titles vying for selection, competition between festivals for the premiere and when the producers want the title in market.

The 2019 contingent is a record for Australian feature films at Sundance. Only the 1985 and 1986 Sundance festivals included more Australian features, due to them having dedicated Australian showcases. A history of Australian titles at Sundance is available [here](#).

AUSTRALIAN FILMS AT SUNDANCE 2019

[Animals](#)

Closer Productions Pty Ltd

Director: Sophie Hyde

Writer: Emma Jane Unsworth

Producers: Sarah Brocklehurst, Rebecca Summerton, Cormac Fox, Sophie Hyde

Australian Distributor: Bonsai Films

International Sales: Cornerstone Films

Synopsis: After a decade of partying, Laura (Holliday Grainger) and Tyler's (Alia Shawkat) friendship is strained by Laura's new love and her focus on her novel. A snapshot of a modern woman with competing desires, at once a celebration of female friendship and an examination of the choices we make when facing a crossroads

Production credit: *Animals* is an Official Australian/Irish Co-production by Closer Productions. Principal production investment from Screen Australia and the Irish Film Board. Financed with support from Adelaide Film Festival and South Australian Film Corporation.

Sundance Film Festival: World Premiere

Australian Media: Rebecca Summerton becsummerton@closerproductions.com.au

International Media: Anna Bohlin ab@cornerstonefilm.com

International Sales: Alison Thompson at@cornerstonefilm.com

[I Am Mother](#)

Mother Film Holdings Pty Ltd

Director: Grant Sputore

Writer: Michael Lloyd Green

Producers: Timothy White, Kelvin Munro

Co-Producers: Anna Vincent, Michael Lloyd Green

Executive Producers: Terry Douglas, Paris Kasidokostas-Latsis, Jean-Luc Di Fanti, Grant Sputore, Philip Wade, Bryce Menzies and John Wade

Australian Distributor: Studiocanal

USA Sales: Endeavor Content

International Sales: Mister Smith Entertainment

Synopsis: In the wake of humanity's extinction, a teenage girl (Clara Rugaard) is raised by a robot (voiced by Rose Byrne) designed to repopulate the earth. But their unique bond is threatened when an inexplicable stranger (Hilary Swank) arrives with alarming news.

Production credit: *I Am Mother* is a The Penguin Empire and Southern Light Films production. Principal production investment from Screen Australia in association with South Australian Film Corporation and Screenwest. Financed with support from Adelaide Film Festival.

Sundance Film Festival: World Premiere

Australian Media: Rosie Braye Rosie.Braye@studiocanal.com.au

International Media: Nastasya Morauw Nastasya.Morauw@ddapr.com

USA Sales: Christine D'Souza Gelb cgelb@endeavorcontent.com

International Sales: David Garrett info@mistersmithent.com

Media enquiries: Scott Dawkins
(02) 8113 5886 | 0403 937 074 | scott.dawkins@screenaustralia.gov.au
www.screenaustralia.gov.au



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[Judy and Punch](#)

Seaside Productions Pty Ltd

Director / Writer: Mirrah Foulkes

Producers: Michele Bennett, Nash Edgerton, Danny Gabai

Executive Producers: Eddy Moretti, Vincent Landay, Natalie Farrey, Jennifer Semler

Australian Distributor: Madman Entertainment

US Sales: Endeavor Content

International Sales: Cornerstone Films

Synopsis: Seaside (nowhere near the sea), puppeteers Judy and Punch are trying to resurrect their marionette show in an anarchic town on the brink of mob rule. Stars Mia Wasikowska and Damon Herriman.

Production Credit: *Judy and Punch* is a Seaside Productions film. Principal production investment from Vice Studios and Screen Australia, in association with Film Victoria. Financed with support from Create NSW.

Sundance Film Festival: World Premiere. In competition.

Australian Media: Fiona Nix fiona@nixco.com.au

USA Media: Perri Cohen perri.cohen@vice.com

USA Sales: Christine D'Souza Gelb cgelb@endeavorcontent.com

International Sales: Mark Gooder mg@cornerstonefilm.com, Alison Thompson at@cornerstonefilm.com

[Little Monsters](#)

Made Up Stories Pty Ltd

Director / Writer: Abe Forsythe

Producers: Jodi Matterson, Bruna Papandrea, Steve Hutensky, Keith Calder, Jessica Calder

Executive Producer: Jeanne Snow

Australian Distributor: Universal

International Sales: Protagonist

Synopsis: A film dedicated to all the kindergarten teachers who motivate children to learn, instil them with confidence and stop them from being devoured by zombies. Stars Lupita Nyong'o, Josh Gad and Alexander England.

Production Credit: *Little Monsters* is a Made Up Stories production. Principal production investment from Screen Australia in association with Snoot Entertainment. Financed with support from Create NSW.

Sundance Film Festival: World Premiere

Australian Media: Fiona Nix fiona@nixco.com.au

International Media: TBA

International Sales: Vanessa Saal vanessa@protagonistpictures.com

[The Nightingale](#)

Causeway Films HQ Pty Ltd and Made Up Stories Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Jennifer Kent

Producers: Kristina Ceyton, Bruna Papandrea, Steve Hutensky, Jennifer Kent

Australian Distributor: Transmission

US Sales: Endeavor Content

International Sales: FilmNation

Synopsis: Set in 1825, Clare, a young Irish convict woman (Aisling Franciosi), chases a British officer (Sam Claflin) through the rugged Tasmanian wilderness, bent on revenge for a terrible act of violence he committed against her family. On the way she enlists the services of an Aboriginal tracker named Billy (Baykali Ganambarr), who is also marked by trauma from his own violence-filled past.

Production Credit: *The Nightingale* is a Causeway Films and Made Up Stories production. Principal production investment from Screen Australia in association with Bron Creative. Financed with support from Screen Tasmania, South Australian Film Corporation and the Adelaide Film Festival.

Sundance Film Festival: North American Premiere

Venice Film Festival: [2018 Special Jury Prize, Best Young Actor](#) for Baykali Ganambarr

Australian Media: Amy Burgess amy@transmissionfilms.com.au

International Media: Selena Saldana ssaldana@filmnation.com

International Sales: Alice Laffillé ALaffille@filmnation.com, Rob Carney rcarney@filmnation.com

Media enquiries: Scott Dawkins

(02) 8113 5886 | 0403 937 074 | scott.dawkins@screenaustralia.gov.au

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[Top End Wedding](#)

Goalpost Pictures Australia

Director: Wayne Blair

Writers: Joshua Tyler, Miranda Tapsell,

Producers: Rosemary Blight, Kylie du Fresne, Kate Croser

Executive Producers: Ben Grant, Glen Condie

Australian Distributor: eOne Films

International Sales: Films Boutique

Synopsis: Lauren (Miranda Tapsell) and Ned (Gwilym Lee) are engaged, they are in love, and they have just ten days to find Lauren's mother who has gone AWOL somewhere in the remote far north of Australia, reunite her parents and pull off their dream wedding.

Production Credit: *Top End Wedding* is a Goalpost Pictures Australia production in association with Tapsell, Tyler & Condie and Kojo Entertainment. Principal production investment from Screen Australia. Financed with support from South Australian Film Corporation with Adelaide Film Festival. Supported by Tourism NT.

Sundance Film Festival: World Premiere

Australian Media: Tracey Mair traceym@tpublicity.com

International Media: TBA

International Sales: Films Boutique contact@filmsboutique.com

Media enquiries: Scott Dawkins
(02) 8113 5886 | 0403 937 074 | scott.dawkins@screenaustralia.gov.au
www.screenaustralia.gov.au



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