

Four Australian films selected for Sundance Film Festival 2023

Thursday 8 December 2022: Four Australian feature films will screen at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival including writer/director Noora Niasari's debut [Shayda](#) which will open the World Cinema Dramatic Competition, and the world premiere for [Run Rabbit Run](#) from director Daina Reid. [Talk to Me](#), directed by Danny and Michael Philippou (also known as RackaRacka) will make its international premiere and Robert Connolly's [Blueback](#) will have its US premiere at the festival which runs from 19 - 29 January 2023.

Sundance has a history of launching Australian works into the US market including [You Won't Be Alone](#) in 2022, [Relic](#) in 2020, [52 Tuesdays](#) in 2014 and [Animal Kingdom](#) in 2010.

Screen Australia CEO **Graeme Mason** said, "This is an incredible slate of premieres and I'd like to congratulate the teams on their selection for this world-leading festival. To have two feature debuts is a real coup, with rising talent Noora Niasari's *Shayda* in competition, and RackaRacka who have built an exceptional fanbase online now reaching global audiences with their feature *Talk to Me*. It's also wonderful to see a range of stories representing Australia, from the stunning natural beauty celebrated in *Blueback* and the modern migrant experience showcased in *Shayda*, to the gripping supernatural tales in *Talk to Me* and *Run Rabbit Run* which will no doubt have audiences on the edge of their seats."

Writer/director Noora Niasari's debut feature *Shayda* is produced by Vincent Sheehan ([The Hunter](#), [Animal Kingdom](#)) and stars Iranian actress Zar Amir Ebrahimi, Osamah Sami, Leah Purcell, Jillian Nguyen, Mojean Aria, Selina Zahednia. It will make its world premiere as the Opening Night Film of the World Cinema Dramatic Competition.

Noora Niasari said, "I am thrilled for my debut feature film, *Shayda* to be selected for the 2023 Sundance Film Festival. It is an honour for us to be one of the Opening Night films, to showcase our talented Iranian/Australian cast and crew on the world stage and to hold a spotlight on the brave women of Iran."

Also making its world premiere is *Run Rabbit Run*, written by award-winning author Hannah Kent, directed by Daina Reid and produced by Carver Films' Anna McLeish and Sarah Shaw. The film, which stars Sarah Snook (*Succession*), received development funding under Screen Australia's Gender Matters Brilliant Stories initiative in 2015.

Daina Reid said, "I am so thrilled to see *Run Rabbit Run* premiering at Sundance. It has been an incredible journey making this film and working with such a massively talented writer in Hannah Kent and our amazing leading actors Sarah Snook, Lily LaTorre and Damon Herriman. Indeed all our cast, our outstanding crew and wonderful producers. It is so exciting to see their work showing at such a fantastic festival."

After a preview screening at Adelaide Film Festival this year, Danny and Michael Philippou's feature debut *Talk To Me*, produced by Causeway Films' Samantha Jennings and Kristina Ceyton, will make its international premiere in the Midnight Section.

Danny and Michael Philippou said, "We're so excited to be premiering *Talk to Me* at the Sundance Film Festival. It's surreal. Cannot process it. So happy!! We cannot thank everyone involved enough for all their amazing hard work and unbelievably kind support."

And after its world premiere at Toronto International Film Festival 2022, Robert Connolly's drama *Blueback* based on the best-selling novel by Tim Winton, will make its US premiere in the Kids Program and screen as the Salt Lake City Opening Night Event. The film stars Mia Wasikowska, Radha Mitchell and Eric Bana as well as newcomers Ariel Donoghue and Ilsa Fogg.

Robert Connolly said, "As one of the most innovative and distinctive film festivals and champions of cinema in the world, we are delighted by the invitation to launch *Blueback* in the US at the Sundance Film Festival."

A history of Australian titles at Sundance is available [here](#).



Australian Government



MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIAN PROJECTS AT SUNDANCE 2023:

SHAYDA

World Premiere, International Competition

Origina 45

Writer/Director: Noora Niasari

Producer: Vincent Sheehan, Noora Niasari

Executive Producers: Cate Blanchett, Andrew Upton, Coco Francini

Australian Distributor: Madman Entertainment

International Sales: HanWay Films, UTA

Synopsis: Shayda, a brave Iranian mother, finds refuge in an Australian women's shelter with her 6-year-old daughter. Over Persian New Year, they take solace in Nowruz rituals and new beginnings, but when her estranged husband re-enters their lives, Shayda's path to freedom is jeopardized.

Production credit: Major production investment from Screen Australia in association with The 51 Fund and financed with support from VicScreen and the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) Premiere Fund.

Media contact: [Anna Bohlin](#)

RUN RABBIT RUN

World Premiere, Midnight Section

Carver Films

Director: Daina Reid

Writer: Hannah Kent

Producers: Sarah Shaw, Anna McLeish

Executive Producers: Nate Bolotin, Maxime Cottray, Deanne Weir, Olivia Humphrey, D.J. McPherson, Jack Christian, Daina Reid, Sarah Snook

Australian Distributor: Maslow Umbrella 387 Entertainment

International Sales: XYZ Films

Synopsis: As a fertility doctor, Sarah has a firm understanding of the cycle of life. However, when she is forced to make sense of the increasingly strange behaviour of her young daughter, Sarah must challenge her own beliefs and confront a ghost from her past.

Production credit: Major production investment from XYZ and Screen Australia, in association with Film Victoria, the South Australian Film Corporation and Soundfirm.

Media contact: [Carver](#)

TALK TO ME

International Premiere, Midnight Section

Causeway Films

Directors: Danny Philippou & Michael Philippou

Writers: Danny Philippou, Bill Hinzman

Producers: Samantha Jennings, Kristina Ceyton

Australian Distributor: Maslow Umbrella 387 Entertainment

International Sales: Bankside Films

Synopsis: When a group of friends discover how to conjure spirits using an embalmed hand, they become hooked on the new thrill, until one of them goes too far and opens the door to the spirit world forcing them to choose who to trust: the dead or the living.

Production credit: Major production investment from Screen Australia in association with the South Australian Film Corporation, and financed with support from the Adelaide Film Festival, KOJO Studios, Head Gear Films and Hold Standard.

Media contact: [Samantha Jennings](#)

BLUEBACK

US Premiere, KIDS Program

Arenamedia

Director/Writer: Robert Connolly

Producers: Liz Kearney, James Grandison, Robert Connolly

Executive Producers: Andrew Myer, Robert Patterson

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MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Distributor: Roadshow Films

International Sales: HanWay Films

Synopsis: Written and directed by Robert Connolly, Blueback is based on the best-selling novel by Tim Winton, and is a timely tale about the ocean, a beautiful marine creature, and a young girl's power to change the world. Set on the coast of Western Australia, the family-friendly film centres on Abby, a child who befriends a magnificent wild blue groper while diving. When Abby realises that the fish is under threat, she must take on poachers to save her friend.

Media contact: [Asha Holmes](#)

ENDS

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