

## Two Australian projects selected for Sundance Film Festival

Wednesday 11 December 2019: Australian feature *Relic* and short film *Backpedal* will screen at the Sundance Film Festival taking place in Utah from 23 January to 2 February 2020.

Sundance has a history of launching Australian films into the US market, including *Berlin Syndrome* (2017), *Sweet Country* (2018), as well as *The Nightingale* and *Top End Wedding* which screened at this year's festival.

Screen Australia's CEO, Graeme Mason said, "We're particularly thrilled to see *Relic* selected to screen at this prestigious festival as it's the second feature supported through Screen Australia's Gender Matters program to go into production and brings together a strong female cast and crew helmed by Natalie Erika-James making her feature directorial debut."

"Congratulations also to writer and director Dani Pearce on the selection of her innovative short film *Backpedal* which continues to garner global attention following her [Cannes Lions Young Directors Award](#) earlier this year and selection at Brisbane International Film Festival."

Drawn from a record high 15,100 submissions across the festival's program, *Relic* will make its world premiere in the Midnight program which features horror and comedy projects that defy genre classification.

Writer and director of *Relic* Natalie Erika-James said, "I'm absolutely thrilled *Relic* will have its world premiere at Sundance 2020. It's a film that has been intensely personal for me, and I can't thank the dedicated crew, our wonderful cast and investors enough for helping me tell this story. It's honestly a dream come true to have my first feature at the festival, and I'm so pleased everyone's hard work will be shared with audiences in Park City."

Short film *Backpedal* is one of 74 short films to screen at the festival and will be featured as part of the international narrative short films program.

Writer and director of *Backpedal* Dani Pearce said, "This is one of the most defining moments of my career. *Backpedal* is by no means a conventional short film and therefore amazing to have all the trust and commitment of our cast and crew identified in such a meaningful forum. I'm so exceptionally honoured to be able to share this moment with all of the incredible Australian talent that made this short film all that it is. *Backpedal* being accepted into Sundance is a cherished confirmation of my voice, my style and my cinematic perspectives."

Australian writer and director Kitty Green known for feature documentary [Casting JonBenet](#) will have her latest US feature film *The Assistant* screening in the festival's Spotlight program.

Australian director Emma Sullivan has a Danish documentary *Into the Deep* in the world cinema documentary competition.

Australian director Oscar Raby has a UK project *A Machine for Viewing* screening in the New Frontier program which highlights works at the crossroads of film, art and technology.

### AUSTRALIAN FILMS AT SUNDANCE 2020

#### *Relic*

Carver Films Pty Ltd

Director: Natalie Erika-James

Writers: Natalie Erika-James, Christian White

Producers: Sarah Shaw, Anna McLeish, Jake Gyllenhaal, Riva Marker

Executive Producers: Joe Russo, Anthony Russo, Mike Larocca, Todd Makurath, Wang Zhongjun, Wang Zhonglei, Hu Junyi

Cast: Emily Mortimer, Robyn Nevin, Bella Heathcote

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Australian Government



MEDIA RELEASE

**Australian Distributor:** Umbrella Entertainment

**International Sales:** Endeavor Content

**Synopsis:** When Edna, the elderly and widowed matriarch of the family, goes missing, her daughter Kay and granddaughter Sam travel to their remote family home to find her. Soon after her return, they start to discover a sinister presence haunting the house and taking control of Edna.

**Production Credit:** *Relic* is a Carver Films and Nine Stories production. Major production investment from Screen Australia in association with AGBO. Financed with support from Film Victoria.

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### *Backpedal*

Lotus Films Pty Ltd

**Director:** Dani Pearce

**Writer:** Dani Pearce

**Producer:** Sarah Nichols, Rob Galluzzo, Dani Pearce

**Cast:** Brenna Harding, Michael Sheasby

**Synopsis:** A young woman laments her teen years, her home town and the death of a friend in this visually surreal mosaic, adapted from renowned American spoken-word poet Olivia Gatwood's poem of the same name.

**Production credit:** *Backpedal* is a Lotus Films production in association with Finch Company. The film was financed through an ACF Crowdfunding Campaign.

**Australian and International media contact:** Sarah Nichols E: [sarah.nichols@me.com](mailto:sarah.nichols@me.com)

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

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