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A historic contingent of seven Australian projects selected for South by Southwest Festival 2022

Thursday 3 February 2022: Seven Australian screen projects have been selected for the 29th South By Southwest (SXSW) Film Festival which will take place in Austin, Texas and online from 11-20 March this year. Making their world premieres are feature films [Seriously Red](#) and [Sissy](#), mid-length film *Shadow*, feature documentary [Clean](#) and virtual reality (VR) project *Lustration VR*.

Feature documentary [Anonymous Club](#) will make its international premiere and VR project *Gondwana* is also set to be showcased at the festival.

Screen Australia's CEO **Graeme Mason** said, "Congratulations to these teams on their selection for SXSW. To have a group of seven such distinct stories premiering at a festival renowned for launching ground-breaking work is a fantastic achievement and evidence of the wealth of unique and compelling stories coming out of Australia that are connecting with global audiences."

Seriously Red, the comedy written by and starring Krew Boylan and directed by Gracie Otto will have its world premiere at SXSW Film Festival in the Narrative Feature category. The story follows Red (Boylan), a vivacious but, at times, misguided red-head who trades her job in real estate for a new career as a Dolly Parton impersonator. Featuring a catalogue of classic songs including music by Dolly Parton, Kenny Rogers, Neil Diamond, David Bowie and more, *Seriously Red* is the debut feature film from the all-female collective Dollhouse Pictures, founded by Krew Boylan, Rose Byrne, Jessica Carrera, Gracie Otto and Shannon Murphy.

Director **Gracie Otto** said, "I'm thrilled to continue my longstanding association with SXSW and I am particularly proud to have my first narrative feature *Seriously Red* follow up last year's screening of my music doco *Under the Volcano*."

Producer **Jessica Carrera** said, "SXSW is a cultural happening - the festival has a great synergy across film and music so it's the perfect home for the world premiere of *Seriously Red*."

Having its world premiere in the Midnighters section is feature film *Sissy*, a horror-comedy by writer/directors Hannah Barlow and Kane Senes and produced by Arcadia, the team behind [2067](#). Also producing is DEMS Entertainment, The Academy of Interactive Entertainment and Freedom Films. Led by *The Bold Type* star Aisha Dee, the film centres on Cecilia (aka Sissy), a successful social media influencer living the dream, until she runs into her ex-teenage best friend. Invited away on a bachelorette weekend, Sissy is stuck in a remote cabin with her high school bully...and a taste for revenge.

Sissy producers **Lisa Shaunessy**, **John De Margheriti**, **Jason Taylor** and **Bec Janek** said, "We're excited and honoured to be premiering in the Midnighters Section on the opening night of the festival and at such a premium venue as the Alamo Drafthouse. SXSW has a wonderful track record of world premieres, including some of our favourite films of the past few years: *A Quiet Place*, *Booksmart* and *Spring Breakers*. It's fantastic to have *Sissy* recognised in this company. We can't wait to unleash this film on audiences."

Also making its world premiere is *Shadow*, a film from Victorian theatre company Back to Back Theatre. The film follows Simon, Scott and Sarah, a trio of activists with intellectual disabilities, who hold a town hall meeting about the future impacts of artificial intelligence. What begins as a polite discussion quickly descends into bickering and chaos, seemingly provoked by a force within.

Actor and co-writer **Scott Price** said, "*Shadow* is a story that needs to be told, it's about Artificial Intelligence and disability activism. The fact that it is premiering at festival such as SXSW shows that it is a beautiful piece of work, and the importance of telling stories from perspective of people with disabilities."

Shadow producer **Alice Fleming** said, "Back to Back's transition into the screen space is extremely exciting. *Shadow*'s World Premiere status at SXSW is something we dreamed about, but didn't imagine would

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be possible for our debut into feature filmmaking. It is strong evidence for more inclusive film-making and storytelling teams. We couldn't be any more thrilled."

From writer/director Lachlan McLeod is feature documentary *Clean* that will make its world premiere in the Documentary Feature Competition section. It provides a fly-on-the-wall insight into the world of trauma cleaning through the journey of larger-than-life business owner Sandra Pankhurst and the workers at Melbourne's Specialised Trauma Cleaning Services.

Clean director **Lachlan McLeod** said, "To have *Clean* premiere at SXSW is a huge honour and means so much to me and the production team involved. This documentary has been three years in the making, and we can't thank Sandra and the team at STC Services enough for inviting us into their lives during this time. SXSW is a dream launch for our film, and we are absolutely thrilled to be able to participate in the 2022 festival."

Created, written and directed by First Nations creative Ryan Griffen (*Cleverman*), *Lustration VR* is an animated four-part virtual series adapted from Griffen's graphic novel series of the same name. Created for Meta Quest, this unique project will make its world premiere in the XR Experience section.

Writer/Director **Ryan Griffen** said, "I was always taught that culturally, our stories were earned and not just given. I've been trying to apply this to our modern structures of storytelling for a while and VR is the perfect home for it. With Screen Australia's support, we were able to assemble a world-class team and cast to bring this story to the world. Being given the opportunity to launch *Lustration* at SXSW, a festival that doesn't shy away from innovation in storytelling and technology, feels like the perfect fit."

After its world premiere at Melbourne International Film Festival, followed by Cinefest Oz, Brisbane and Sydney Film Festivals, feature documentary *Anonymous Club* will make its international premiere at SXSW. Written and directed by Danny Cohen and produced by Film Camp, this film provides an intimate portrait of acclaimed Australian singer-songwriter Courtney Barnett.

Writer/director **Danny Cohen** said, "I'm still pinching myself to have our international premiere at the incredible music and film festival that is SXSW. I'm thrilled for US audiences to experience our film on the big screen there, ahead of the theatrical releases here in Australia and then the US."

After premiering at Sundance Film Festival last month, VR documentary *Gondwana* will also screen at SXSW. The project is a world-first durational VR experience that runs over 24 hours, featuring a constantly-evolving virtual ecosystem and chronicling the possible futures of the world's oldest tropical rainforest, the Daintree."

A history of Australian titles at South by Southwest is available [here](#).
Images for the selected projects are available [here](#).

Australian projects selected for South by Southwest Festival 2022:

SERIOUSLY RED

World Premiere

Dollhouse Pictures

Director: Gracie Otto

Writer: Krew Boylan

Producers: Robyn Kershaw, Jessica Carrera, Sonia Borella, Timothy White,

Executive Producers: Rose Byrne, Danny Nozell, Jack Christian, D.J. McPherson, Deanne Weir, Clare Ainsworth, Hayley Baillie, Olivia Humphrey, Josh Pomeranz

Cast: Krew Boylan, Daniel Webber, Rose Byrne, Bobby Cannavale, Celeste Barber, Thomas Campbell

Australian Distributor: Roadshow Films

International Sales: Arclight Films

Production credits: Dollhouse Pictures and Robyn Kershaw Productions in Association with Invisible Wall Productions with Southern Light Films and Borella Films. Major production investment from Screen Australia in association with Filmology. Financed with support from Weir Anderson, Storyd, Spectrum Films and Screen NSW.

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Synopsis: Red is a vivacious but at times misguided red-head who pours herself a cup of ambition and trades her 9 to 5 career in real estate for a life under the spotlight as a Dolly Parton impersonator.

Media Contact: [Margot Lohan](#)

SISSY

World Premiere

Arcadia, DEMS Entertainment, The Academy of Interactive Entertainment and Freedom Films

Writer/ Directors: Hannah Barlow, Kane Senes

Producers: Lisa Shaunessy, John de Margheriti, Jason Taylor, Rebecca Janek

Cast: Aisha Dee, Hannah Barlow, Emily De Margheriti, Daniel Monks, Yerin Ha, Lucy Barrett with Shaun Martindale

Australian Distributor: Arcadia

International Sales: XYZ (North America) / LevelK (ROW)

Production credit: Principal production funding from the ACT Government, Screen Canberra and Freedom Films in association with Screen Australia, The Academy of Interactive Entertainment, Grumpy Originals and Running Girl Pictures.

Synopsis: Invited away on a bachelorette weekend, Sissy is stuck in a remote cabin with her high school bully...and a taste for revenge. #Triggered

Media Contact: [Alexandra Burke](#)

SHADOW

World Premiere

Back to Back Pictures

Director: Bruce Gladwin

Writers: Michael Chan, Mark Deans, Bruce Gladwin, Simon Laherty, Sarah Mainwaring, Scott Price, Sonia Teuben

Producer: Alice Fleming

Associate Producer: Meret Hassanen

Executive Producers: Bruce Gladwin, Tim Stitz

Production credit: Developed and produced with support from Australian Government Department of Social Services, the City of Greater Geelong in partnership with UNESCO Creative City of Design, with additional support from Give Where You Live, the Une Parkinson Foundation, and Screen Australia through the COVID-19 Budget Support Fund Program.

Synopsis: A group of activists hold a public meeting, desperate to save the world. As the meeting unravels, they discover the greatest threat to their future is already in the room.

Media Contact: [Miranda Brown](#)

CLEAN

World Premiere

Walking Fish Productions Pty Ltd and GoodThing Productions Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Lachlan McLeod

Producers: Charlotte Wheaton, David Elliot-Jones

Executive Producers: Virginia Whitwell, Nick Batzias

Australian Distributor: Madman Entertainment

Australian Broadcaster: SBS

International Sales: Rocket Science

Production credit: Principal production funding from Screen Australia in association with Film Victoria.

Synopsis: When illness forces her away from her beloved trauma cleaning business, Sandra Pankhurst faces up to her traumatic past and begins a search for her birth mother. Meanwhile, her workers approach this difficult work with camaraderie and humour, bringing hope to their clients despite carrying trauma of their own.

Media contact: [David Elliot-Jones](#)

LUSTRATION VR

World Premiere

New Canvas

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Director: Ryan Griffen

Writers: Ryan Griffen, Nayuka Gorrie

Producers: Carolina Sorensen, Taryne Laffar

Executive Producers: Nathan Anderson, Wolfgang Bylsma, Ryan Griffen, Kevin Conroy

Distributor: Meta Quest

Production credit: Principal production funding from Screen Australia in association with Screenwest and Lotterywest, with support from Screen NSW.

Synopsis: An animated four-part virtual reality series for Meta Quest developed by Byron Bay-based XR Studio New Canvas. The multistrand story follows a group of characters whose stories are mysteriously intertwined in the real world and afterlife. Lustration VR is adapted from a comic of the same name published by Gestalt Comics.

Media contact: [Nathan Anderson](#)

ANONYMOUS CLUB

International Premiere

Film Camp Pty Ltd

Writer/Director Danny Cohen

Producers Philippa Campey, Samantha Dinning

Australian Distributor Film Art Media

North American Distributor: Oscilloscope Laboratories

International Sales: Monoduo Films

Production credit: Principal production investment from Screen Australia in association with Film Victoria and the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) Premiere Fund.

Synopsis With unprecedented access to the personal and private life of notoriously shy, but widely acclaimed Australian singer-songwriter Courtney Barnett, *Anonymous Club* delicately and intimately explores the inner life of an artist in conflict with herself.

Media contact: [Nicole Hurren](#)

GONDWANA

Pernickety Split Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Ben Joseph Andrews

Producer: Emma Roberts

Production credit: Principal production funding from Screen Australia in association with Film Victoria.

Synopsis: A world-first durational VR experience that runs over 24 hours, *Gondwana* is a constantly-evolving virtual ecosystem chronicling the possible futures of the world's oldest tropical rainforest, the Daintree.

Media contact: [Emma Roberts](#)

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