

Screen Australia announce Talent USA recipients heading to New York

Wednesday 6 February, 2019: Screen Australia has announced a delegation of 13 creatives who will travel to New York in March. The group will attend the [Australian International Screen Forum](#) where they will partake in professional development and networking opportunities and gain an insight into the US television and film industry.

“There is an increasing appetite for Australian stories in the USA, most recently evident at the Sundance Film Festival where [our films](#) were making substantial sales,” said CEO of Screen Australia Graeme Mason. “Talent USA is an important opportunity to showcase and promote some of our best creative talent to the North American market and help elevate their projects to be in the best position to compete and be seen internationally.”

“Attending the Screen Forum will give these delegates an opportunity to hear from key US players on latest trends, challenges and opportunities in the current global market. This year the Talent USA delegation will also benefit from the Forum’s ambassadors Deborra-Lee Furness, Hugh Jackman, Baz Luhrmann and Catherine Martin drawing industry attention to the work of Australian creators.”

TALENT USA: NEW YORK 2019 CONTINGENT

Note: International media can refer to the end of this release for definitions.

Niki Aken: A prolific television writer, Aken has extensive experience working across both drama and comedy. Starting out in film, she wrote and produced her short film *Poppy*, which screened at both Flickerfest and St Kilda Film Festival. Since transitioning to television, Aken has worked on a number of popular series including [The Secret Daughter](#), [Janet King](#), [Why Are You Like This](#) plus the AWGIE award-winning series [ANZAC Girls](#) and [Underbelly: Badness](#). Aken is also an experienced script producer, having worked on the highly anticipated comedy-drama series [Upright](#) starring Tim Minchin. Recently, she co-wrote [The Hunting](#) for SBS and Closer Productions, which will star Logie award winner Asher Keddie and AACTA/Logie award winner Richard Roxburgh.

Kodie Bedford: Beginning her career as a cadet journalist for SBS, Bedford is an accomplished storyteller, having written for a range of drama series including the AACTA award-winning ABC series [Mystery Road](#), which became the most streamed non-children’s show in ABC iview history and was the [New York Times’ Critic’s Pick](#) on US streaming. She also wrote an episode of the AACTA nominated NITV series [Grace Beside Me](#). Recently, Bedford was awarded the Balnaves Fellowship with Belvoir Theatre for 2019 to develop her own play. She is currently working on the much anticipated second series of *Mystery Road*.

Alison Bell: An AACTA award-winning writer, Bell is best known as the co-creator/co-writer/producer and star of the ABC and Netflix Original series [The Letdown](#). Prior to [The Letdown](#), Bell spent much of her career on the stage, receiving numerous nominations and awards for her work with the Melbourne Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, Malthouse, Belvoir and STCSA, including two Helpmann’s and one Green Room Award. She has also appeared in television series including the AACTA award-winning comedy [Laid](#) (available on Netflix in the US) and US television hits *The Leftovers*, *No Activity* and the reboot of Spielberg’s *Amazing Stories*. Bell recently completed production of the [The Letdown Series 2](#), which also marked her debut as a director. The series will air later this year.

Joe Brumm: Brumm worked as an animator for 10 years in London on numerous children’s series, including the BAFTA award-winning *Charlie and Lola*. After returning to Australia, he founded Studiojoho animation studio whose clients include ABC’s *Good Game*, Viacom, CollegeHumor and Ludo/Cartoon Network. His original web-series *Dan The Man* has been turned into a highly successful mobile game in partnership with HalfBrick studios. Brumm is the writer and creator of the breakout ABC/BBC Worldwide children’s series [Bluey](#), which gained over 11 million views in its first month in Australia, and has since become the most watched program in ABC iview history.



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Matthew Cormack: Cormack is an award-winning writer, with credits including the feature film [52 Tuesdays](#), which was awarded the Crystal Bear at Berlin International Film Festival and an AWGIE award for Original Screenplay. He was also a writer on the ABC comedy series [F###ing Adelaide](#) along with the award-winning short film [My Last Ten Hours With You](#). Cormack is the co-creator and co-writer of the SBS drama [The Hunting](#), starring screen luminaries Asher Keddie and Richard Roxburgh which is due for release in 2019. Cormack also has 10 years' experience working in development, production and sales, most recently working as a script editor on the Irish/Australian co-production feature film [Animals](#), which premiered to rave reviews at Sundance 2019.

Glen Dolman: An established writer and executive producer working across film, television and web series, Dolman created, wrote and executive produced the six-part drama series [Bloom](#), which premiered on Australian streaming service Stan in early 2019. Dolman also wrote the Australian feature film [I Met a Girl](#) which will star Brenton Thwaites and Lily Sullivan. Working on international projects across Australia, the UK and the US, he wrote the screenplay for the animated comedy feature [The Ark and the Aardvark](#), which is currently in production with [Kung Fu Panda](#) director John Stevenson. Dolman's television writing credits include the TV movie [Hawke](#), which won an AWGIE award and three AFI awards, along with working as a writer and script editor on the UK's longest running crime drama, [The Bill](#).

Liz Doran: Working across both feature film and television, Doran is an experienced writer and script producer, having worked on a range of popular Australian series including [Please Like Me](#) (available on Hulu and Netflix in the US), [Molly](#), [Doctor Doctor](#), [Dance Academy](#) (available on Hulu and Netflix in the US), [Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries](#) (available on Netflix in the US) and [The Secret Life Of Us](#). In 2015 and 2016, she co-created and was the head writer and script producer on the AACTA and Logie award-winning children's series [Ready For This](#). Doran is currently developing a drama series for the ABC, along with two feature films titled [Chain Reaction](#) and [Bondi Beach Breakfast Club](#).

Benjamin Gilmour: An acclaimed author and filmmaker, Gilmour was the writer/director of the recent Australian/Afghanistan feature film [Jirga](#). After its world premiere at Sydney Film Festival [Jirga](#) was selected for the Toronto International Film Festival and won the highly coveted Film Prize at CinefestOZ in 2018, along with the AACTA award for Best Independent Film. [Jirga](#) is due for a US theatrical release in June 2019. Gilmour's other credits include the feature documentary [Paramedico](#) and the Australian/Pakistani drama [Son of A Lion](#), which screened at a range of international film festivals including the Berlinale.

Kate McCartney: A writer, director, producer and performer, McCartney's work has featured on [Hamish and Andy](#), [Adam Hills Tonight](#), [You're Skitting Me](#) and [Big Bite](#). In 2015, alongside writing partner Kate McLennan, McCartney created, executive produced and starred in the web series [The Katering Show](#), which has accumulated over 10 million views on YouTube since its release. The series returned in 2016, premiering on ABC iview. McCartney (alongside McLennan) then went on to write, executive produce and star in their full length AWGIE-winning series [Get Crack!n](#), where they set their satirical sights on the world of breakfast television. The highly anticipated second series of [Get Crack!n](#) is set to premiere today on ABC TV.

Kate McLennan: McLennan is an award-winning writer, comedian and actress whose writing credits include [Bleak](#) and [Little Lunch](#) and [The Mansion](#). Alongside writing partner Kate McCartney, she created and performed in the web series [The Katering Show](#), which has accumulated over 10 million views on YouTube since it was first released in 2015. The second series of [The Katering Show](#) premiered on ABC iview in 2016, receiving an AACTA nomination for Best Online Video or Series and remains iview's most watched original series. In 2017, McLennan (alongside McCartney) set their sights on the chirpy world of morning TV in their full-length series titled [Get Crack!n](#), with the second series of the show due to air on ABC TV today.

Grant Sputore: An internationally renowned commercial director, Sputore's work has been recognised at award shows around the world including the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity and the London International Advertising Awards. In 2017, his feature film script [I Am Mother](#) (formally titled [Mother](#)) was included on the prestigious Black List of Hollywood's most sought after screenplays. [I Am Mother](#), starring new-comer Clara Rugaard alongside two-time Academy Award®-Winner Hilary Swank, is Sputore's debut feature film and premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2019. Variety said of the film, "If this were his [Sputore] job application for a blockbuster gig, he'd get the job."

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Samantha Strauss: A writer and producer, Strauss was the co-creator and head writer of Australian teen drama series [Dance Academy](#) (available on Hulu and Netflix in the US), which screens internationally in over 160 countries and has won over 10 awards including a Logie award for Most Outstanding Children's Program in both 2011 and 2013. Her other television credits include [The Wrong Girl](#) and [Mary: The Making of a Princess](#). In 2017, Strauss wrote the feature film [Dance Academy: The Movie](#). She is currently writing and executive producing her latest original series [The End](#) with See-Saw Films for Foxtel and Sky Atlantic.

Courtney Wise: A former development producer at Lingo Pictures, Wise is a renowned writer and producer, having recently created and produced the critically acclaimed four-part drama series [On The Ropes](#) for SBS. Working in the Television Fiction Department at the ABC, she was development manager on [The Secret River](#), a two-part telemovie adaptation of Kate Grenville's award-winning novel and [The Beautiful Lie](#), a six-part adaptation of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. Wise also produced series 1 and 2 of the award-winning online series [Fragments of Friday](#) along with writing for the award-winning teen series [Dance Academy](#) (available on Hulu and Netflix in the US).

The Forum will held at the Francesca Beale Theatre at Lincoln Centre in New York City from March 19-22, 2019. More information is available at: <https://www.australianscreenforum.org/>

DEFINITIONS

- ABC - Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Australia public broadcaster.
- ADG Award - The annual Australian Directors Guild Awards are Australia's only peer-judged awards for directors with a wide range of categories including feature film, television and documentary.
- AFTRS - Australian Film, Television and Radio School. Australia's federally-funded tertiary education facility for screen professionals.
- AFI/AACTA - Previously known as the AFI Awards, the AACTA Awards recognise excellence in film, television and documentary.
- AWGIES - Presented by the Australian Writers' Guild, the AWGIES are an annual award ceremony that celebrates Australia's best screen storytellers.
- CinefestOZ - West Australian film festival, which includes the largest cash prize of any Australian festival.
- Logie - the TV Week Logie awards are an annual celebration of Australian television.
- SBS - Special Broadcasting Service. Australian public broadcaster.



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