

Three Australian films selected for Venice Film Festival

Thursday 26 July 2018: The makers of *The Babadook* have struck gold again, with Jennifer Kent's much anticipated second feature film *The Nightingale* set to have its World Premiere in competition at the 75th [Venice International Film Festival](#) (29 August to 8 September 2018). The film was jointly produced by Kristina Ceyton of Causeway Films and Bruna Papandrea and Steve Hutensky of Made Up Stories.

The feature is joined by two virtual reality (VR) short films also in competition - Michael Beets' *The Unknown Patient* (World Premiere) and Lynette Wallworth's *Awavena* (International Premiere).

"It's been four years since Jennifer Kent astounded audiences with [The Babadook](#), so *The Nightingale*'s selection for Venice marks a triumphant and eagerly anticipated return for this Australian auteur," said **Graeme Mason**, CEO of Screen Australia. "We are thrilled to have been able to support Jennifer's vision from development, to production, now at festival and soon distribution."

"Congratulations also to *The Nightingale*'s producers Causeway Films and Made Up Stories who have so carefully and lovingly shepherded this Australian tale to this incredible juncture."

"We are also thrilled to see Australia's new-form storytellers being showcased at Venice. *The Unknown Patient* and *Awavena* are reminders of the diversity of stories Australians can tell, and the ingenuity our local industry brings to crafting a tale. These selections are an incredible achievement."

"It's a dream come true to be premiering *The Nightingale* at Venice in official competition. I owe a great deal to my exceptional cast and crew, who were wholeheartedly devoted to making this film the very best it could be," said **Jennifer Kent**. "Thanks to all our investors for allowing me to make the film I set out to make. And a huge thanks to Uncle Jim Everett. Without his guidance and support, along with the help we received from many Tasmanian Aboriginal people, this film would quite simply not exist."

The Nightingale producers **Kristina Ceyton**, **Bruna Papandrea** and **Steve Hutensky** added, "We're so honoured and excited to be sharing the incredibly talented Jennifer Kent's second feature film with the world at such a prestigious festival."

"We're eternally grateful to our committed and hardworking cast and crew, to Tasmanian Aboriginal elder Jim Everett for his guidance, and to our investors - Screen Australia, Screen Tasmania and The South Australian Film Corporation, as well as Kojo Productions, and of course Bron Creative, FilmNation and Endeavor Content - for entrusting us to tell this very powerful story of our colonial past."

The two VR inclusions both provide the audience with immersive story experiences, with *The Unknown Patient* retracing the true story of an Australian soldier found wandering in London with no memory of his identity.

Conversely the Australian-US team behind *Awavena* have told a world story, centered on allowing the viewer access to the spirit realm as seen by an elder of the Indigenous Amazonian people.

"It is gratifying to see eminent film festivals inviting the swiftly developing form of VR into competition," said director **Lynette Wallworth**. "*Awavena* has an incredibly powerful story at its heart; a crucially relevant narrative of Indigenous cultural revival in the Brazilian Amazon, arising from female empowerment. The *Awavena* story is essentially being gifted to the world by the Yawanawa people via technologies they perceived could best represent their unique world view. It's been a joy to make and we can't wait for it to be experienced in Venice."

Notably Australia's selection for Venice includes two female directors, plus *Awavena* has an all-female producing team.

Australian films have proven popular at the Venice International Film Festival in the past, with Warwick Thornton's [Sweet Country](#) receiving [a rapturous reception last year](#) and taking home the Special Jury Prize. [Hacksaw Ridge](#), [Boys in the Trees](#), [Tanna](#) and [Hounds of Love](#) are also [recent Venice alumni](#).



Australian Government



MEDIA RELEASE

The Venice announcements come in the same week that it was revealed Australian feature film [Hotel Mumbai](#) will have its [World Premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival](#) in September followed by an [Australian Premiere at the Adelaide Film Festival](#) in October.

AUSTRALIAN FILMS AT VENICE 2018

[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 and South Australian Film Corporation.

The Unknown Patient

Unwritten Endings and VRTOV

Writer / Director: Michael Beets

Producers: Bethany Jones & Katy Morrison

Synopsis: In 1916 a man was found wandering the streets of London in an Australian soldier's uniform. He did not know who he was. He was deemed unfit for service, labelled a 'deserter', and sent to Sydney's Callan Park Mental Asylum where he would spend 12 years without an identity: lost and forgotten. How he came to be found is the remarkable true story of 'The Unknown Patient'. In real-time interactive virtual reality, through discovery and exploration of the patient's memories and real-life events, the audience is invited to piece together the identity of the Unknown Patient. In doing so, the audience experiences the impact that war had on the psyche of soldiers who made it home and the hope that this story gave to a nation in mourning.

Production Credit: *The Unknown Patient* is a Unwritten Endings and VRTOV production. Principal production investment from Screen Australia.

Awavena

VR Wallworth Pty Ltd

Director: Lynette Wallworth

Producers: Nicole Newnham, Lynette Wallworth, Tashka Yawanawa (co-producer), Laura Yawanawa (co-producer)

Executive Producers: Sandy Herz, Marcie Jastrow, Gigi Pritzker, Nico Daswani

Synopsis: For the Yawanawa, an Indigenous Amazonian people, every living thing has a spirit. Using technology that the Yawanawa feel enables them to share their visions, this immersive work allows the visitor to enter the spirit world seen by their elder shaman Tata, and his disciple Hushahu--the Yawanawa's first female shaman whose transcendent visions helped to revive a culture.

Production credit: *Awavena* is a VR Wallworth/Coco Films production, Presented by Technicolor Experience Center and Screen Australia in association with Just Films, Ford Foundation, Madison Wells Media and Create NSW. Supported by Stories of Change, a project of the Sundance Institute supported by the Skoll Foundation, Sundance Institute New Frontier Artist Residency Program, The World Economic Forum, Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program with support from the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation & The Kendeda Fund, and the Pritzker Foundation. *Awavena* is a US-Australian production.

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

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