

Australian talent headed to Toronto including Simon Baker's *Breath*

Wednesday 16 August 2017: It was announced overnight that Simon Baker's feature film directorial debut *Breath* will have its world premiere at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) competing in Contemporary World Cinema. *Breath* joins two previously announced Australia films in this year's line-up - the North American premiere of Warwick Thornton's *Sweet Country*, which will close the Platform competition, and the world premiere of Violeta Ayala's *Cocaine Prison* competing in TIFF Docs.

"There is no doubt that TIFF sets Australian films on the path to international success, as we saw with *Lion* and *The Dressmaker*. It is an incredible achievement for Simon Baker's directorial debut *Breath* to be selected. The screen adaptation of this much-loved Australian classic not only showcases our industry's creativity but also our country itself," said Graeme Mason, Screen Australia's CEO. "I'm thrilled to see Warwick Thornton's *Sweet Country* garner further and well-deserved festival recognition, and special congratulations to the *Cocaine Prison* team for bringing a story of such global significance to the screen through an Australian gaze."

Based on Tim Winton's award-winning novel of the same name, *Breath* follows two teenage boys hungry for discovery, in mid-70s coastal Australia, who form an unlikely friendship with an enigmatic man and his wife, who push them to take risks that will have a lasting and profound impact on their lives. Director Simon Baker also stars in the film, alongside an impressive cast including Elizabeth Debicki, Richard Roxburgh and Rachael Blake, and introducing Samson Coulter and Ben Spence.

Breath has been adapted for the screen by Gerard Lee (*Top of the Lake*), Tim Winton and Baker, who also co-produced with Oscar® and Emmy® Award-winning producer Mark Johnson (*Breaking Bad*) for Gran Via Productions and Jamie Hilton (*The Little Death*) for See Pictures. International sales are being handled by Embankment Films. The film received major production investment support from Screen Australia, Screenwest, Great Southern Development Commission and Lottery West, in association with Autumn Productions and Deluxe Australia. Distributed locally by Roadshow Films, *Breath* will be released theatrically across Australia on May 3 2018.

"From an early age I was both seduced and terrified by the ocean. The Australian coastline raised me; it's enmeshed in my identity. Tim Winton's book *Breath* authentically captured the rawness of growing up on that coastline," said Simon Baker.

"I'm eternally grateful to everyone who committed to this incredible journey. Their support and encouragement is all there, where it should be, on the screen. I'm immensely proud that *Breath* will represent Australian cinema at the Toronto International Film Festival, and for the opportunity to share with the world the power, beauty and wisdom of the Australian landscape."

Earlier this month it was announced the highly-anticipated feature *Sweet Country* from director Warwick Thornton (*Samson and Delilah*) would be the closing film competing in Platform. A period Western set in the late 1920s on the Northern Territory frontier, where justice itself is put on trial, *Sweet Country* stars Sam Neill, Bryan Brown, Hamilton Morris, Gibson John, Natassia Gorey-Furber, Thomas M. Wright, Ewen Leslie, Matt Day, Anni Finsterer and introducing Tremayne and Trevon Doolan.

Produced by David Jowsey (*Mystery Road*, *Goldstone*), Greer Simpkin (*Goldstone*, *Jasper Jones*) and David Tranter (*Nganampa Anwernekenhe*) *Sweet Country*, which will have its [World Premiere in competition](#) at the 2017 Venice Film Festival, received major production funding from Screen Australia's Indigenous Department.

Also previously announced was *Cocaine Prison* from writer/director/producer Violeta Ayala, which will compete in TIFF's 2017 documentary lineup. Filmed in Bolivia over five years, including inside the notorious San Sebastian prison, *Cocaine Prison* provides a ground-level view of the international drug trade through the eyes of its foot soldiers: a drug mule, his sister, and a cocaine worker. Co-produced by Daniel Fallshaw, the film received development support from Screen Australia.



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Other Australian talent featured at TIFF throughout the Gala and Special Presentations sections include Ben Mendelsohn (*Darkest Hour*), Margot Robbie and director Craig Gillespie (*I, Tonya*), writer Emma Jensen and executive producer Rebecca Miller (*Mary Shelley*), Nicole Kidman (*The Upside*) and Abbie Cornish and Samara Weaving (*Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*).

The [Toronto International Film Festival](#) runs from 7 September to 17 September 2017. Complete TIFF 2017 program still to be announced.

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