

Over \$1 million in development and production funding for 12 projects and one industry placement

Wednesday 12 April 2017: Screen Australia has announced development funding for seven feature films and one high-end television project; production funding for three digital series and one virtual reality (VR) project; and talent development funding for writer/director Lucy Gaffy who will be the first Australian invited to observe Masters students during a 10-week placement at the prestigious Juilliard School of Drama in New York City.

Among the slate of feature films to receive development funding are:

- *The Wedding Officer*, a WWII drama based on the best-selling novel by Anthony Capella and adapted by Andrew Knight (*Hacksaw Ridge*, *Jack Irish*), with Jocelyn Moorhouse (*The Dressmaker*) attached to direct. The Martha Coleman produced Revlover Films feature has also secured matched funding from eOne.
- Gender Matters: Brilliant Stories funded project *Relic*, a psychological thriller produced by Carver Films' Sarah Shaw and Anna McLeish (*Sunshine*, *Partisan*, *Snowtown*), and written and directed by Natalie Erika James (*Creswick*). It would be James' feature debut.
- Drama *Fruit Pickers* from writer/director brothers Sam and Tom McKeith whose debut feature *Beast* screened at Toronto International Film Festival, Sydney Film Festival and Adelaide Film Festival.
- And New Zealand author Kate de Goldi's adaptation of her novel *From The Cutting Room of Barney Kettle* - a coming-of-age story about a brother and sister whose attempts to make a film are side-tracked by a catastrophic earthquake. Bridget Callow-Wright (*Bitter and Twisted*) and Philippa Campbell (*Top of the Lake*) are producing and Darren Ashton (*Offspring*) is attached to direct.

Nerida Moore, Senior Development Manager said: "Literary adaptations continue to feature prominently in our development funding rounds with author Kate de Goldi crossing over into film and the prolific screenwriter Andrew Knight adapting Anthony Capella's hugely popular period romance novel. We're also delighted to support promising emerging talents like Natalie Erika James, whose project *Relic* has garnered significant interest since receiving Gender Matters funding last year."

The digital projects that have received production funding are:

- *Awake - First Contact* from Start VR, an innovative virtual reality film about ordinary people who are visited in their dreams by aliens from another reality. *Awake* will be a full-room VR experience where users will have the ability to influence and interact with the narrative. It is being produced by James Marshall, executive produced by Nathan Anderson, written by Mike Jones and Christian Cantamessa, and directed by Martin Taylor.
- Mememe Productions live-action children's series *Get Grubby*, a spin-off from the hugely successful ABC children's series *Dirtgirlworld* which won an International Emmy in 2013. Written and directed by Cate McQuillen who also produces with Hewey Eustace, it will shoot in the NSW Northern Rivers and will be available on both ABC KIDS and iview.
- Last Frame Productions' supernatural lesbian drama *Jade of Death* from producer Taylor Litton-Strain and writer/director Erin Good. The series was one of 10 projects selected for the 2016 Berlinale Talents project lab and will be distributed internationally by French outfit Rockzeline. It is slated to feature in the 2018 Queer Film Festival program after being a recipient of Queer Screen's 2017 Completion Fund.
- Self-released comedy series *Method* from Fire Sky Films and Blonde Skye Productions, which is based on the lives of two struggling actors who work a wide array of obscure and amusing side-jobs to pay the bills and take every opportunity to hone their craft. Created and performed by Jerome Velinsky



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and Tawni Bryant who also produce and direct, the series was written by Velinsky and produced by Kristin Skye Sargent.

Mike Cowap, Investment Manager of Multiplatform said: "This slate shows how digital content makers in Australia are constantly experimenting with genre, format and delivery. *Awake - First Contact* is now the fourth virtual reality project (and the first full-room VR experience) we have funded, and alongside the more traditional platforms such as iview and YouTube, we're also seeing more and more international partners like Rockzeline attached to projects."

For the full list of projects funded, please visit the following links:

- [Story Development - Features and Matched Marketplace](#)
- [Story Development - High End TV](#)
- [Talent Development](#)
- [Multiplatform Production Funding](#)

MEDIA RELEASE