

Thursday 17 August 2017

THE 23rd BRISBANE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL BEGINS

The Brisbane International Film Festival (BIFF) has begun! Earlier this evening, guests walked the black carpet at Palace Barracks ahead of the screening of the highly anticipated and Palme d'Or award-winning film *The Square*. The event marked the return of the festival, which over the next 18 days gives movie lovers in Brisbane the chance to indulge in a program of indie darlings, festival circuit award-winners, cinema masters, Australian, International and World premieres, family favourites and must-see documentaries.

Festival co-directors Maxine Williamson and Richard Sowada were delighted to open the re-booted BIFF, and also to reveal to a packed audience that the much loved CINE SPARKS will return in 2018. CINE SPARKS is an international film festival for young people that provides a program of vibrant, intelligent cinema for a younger audience. The event will return in 2018, as part of the wider 24th BIFF program.

Maxine Williams, BIFF co-director said "Youth cinema has long been a passion of mine and I am very pleased we are able to bring this important event back to its rightful home within BIFF. I look forward to engaging with educational platforms to ensure that we have a vibrant schools program and an authentic engagement with young audiences across Brisbane and the greater South-East, some of whom will be our filmmakers of tomorrow."

Richard Sowada, BIFF co-director said "BIFF's commitment to bringing films to all audiences of all ages is seen this year in our free family animation programs which in many cases may be the first cinema experiences for some children. Palace has had a tradition of curating a quality family selection program and it's a real pleasure to break this out to the production side of things with the reinvigoration of Cine Sparks which hopes to introduce the filmmakers of tomorrow to the wonderful world of creative production"

Guests at BIFF Opening Night included BIFF filmmakers, local media personalities and musicians, as well as filmmakers keen to show their support of the return of the festival. Guests included Alice Foulcher (actor and writer), Gregory Erdstein (writer and director), Rosemary Blight (producer), Kavi Shastri (actor), Emma Sheppard & Amy Sheppard (musicians – Sheppard), Lee Carseldine and El Rowland (Australian Survivor) Jillian Whiting, Kay McGrath, Sharyn Ghidella, Damien Anthony Rossi and Tony Auden (Channel Seven), Ben Zabel (Big Brother), Ella Golding (Model) and Tess Alexander (Miss World Australia 2015).

Images from BIFF Opening Night are available on request.

Full Program and ticketing information at: www.biff.net.au

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About the Festival

The Brisbane International Film Festival runs from 17 August – 3 September 2017. The festival is co-directed by experienced film curator Richard Sowada and Brisbane's Maxine Williamson, previously Film Director of the Asia Pacific Screen Awards and the Brisbane Asia Pacific Film Festival. The festival is made possible through the support of Screen Queensland via the Queensland Government and major partner, Palace Cinemas.

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