

THE BRISBANE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FILMMAKER GUESTS

The Brisbane International Film Festival kicks off next week and the festival is delighted that a number of filmmaker guests will visit the city to support their films and take part in Q&A events and panel discussions. Australian guests include Kriv Stenders, the Brisbane born director of *Red Dog* who has two films in the festival – *Australia Day* and *The Go-Betweens: Right Here*. *The Go-Betweens: Right Here* is the Closing Night Gala Film of the festival and is a documentary about the seminal Brisbane band. Kriv Stenders will be joined at the screening by band member Lindy Morrison (OAM).

Other Australian filmmakers attending BIFF include Jeffrey Walker (*Ali's Wedding*) and Gregory Erdstein & Alice Foulcher (*That's Not Me*). The US thriller *Broken Ghost* will receive its World Premiere at BIFF. The film is directed by Australian Richard Gray and written by two Australians, Abe Pogos and Catherine Hill. BIFF is excited to welcome both Richard Gray and Abe Pogos to the festival, alongside American actor Autry Hayden-Wilson and Australian actor Nick Farnell. *Watch The Sunset* is an anticipated Australian action thriller that plays out in one single shot, and director Tristian Barr and cinematographer Damien E Lipp will both attend the festival. BIFF is also thrilled that Vietnamese director Pham Thi Hong Anh will be in town for the Australian Premiere screening of her multi-award winning debut film *The Way Station*.

BIFF is hosting a wide range of documentaries during the festival, including the moving *Namatjira Project*. Producer Sophia Marinos and Namatjira family members Lenie Namatjira and Gloria Pannka will both attend the screening on 29 August and BIFF are thrilled that ahead of this screening a small number of Albert Namatjira's artworks will be on display. Australian filmmakers Les McLaren and Annie Stiven will also attend the festival with their film *Life Is A Very Strange Thing*, which receives its World Premiere at BIFF.

BIFF will also host director Karina Holden who will be in town to present her film *Blue*, an environmental call to arms, alongside conservationist Madison Stewart who appears in the film. *Blue* is a remarkable documentary about what is happening in the world's oceans, some of which was shot off the QLD coast.

"We are honored to have two World Premiere screenings in our lineup and look forward to screening these to audiences with filmmakers in attendance first at BIFF. We look forward to hosting the Australian Premiere of Pham Thi Hong Anh's *The Way Station* which just received another award to add to its swag of prizes, the Jury Prize at the 13th Eurasia International Film Festival. It is gratifying to have such strong Australian creativity on show during BIFF and we are committed to adding to the audience's experience with engaging post-film discussions" said Maxine Williamson, co-director of BIFF.

The Brisbane International Film Festival opens on 17 August with the Queensland Premiere of the highly anticipated *The Square*. Over the course of the 18 days of the festival, there will be over 100 screenings, including 6 Australian Premieres, an International Premiere and 2 World Premieres.

FESTIVAL GUESTS

Film: *That's Not Me*

Guests: Director and Writer Gregory Erdstein and Writer and Actor Alice Foulcher

Date: Friday 18 August (film also screens on 24 August)

Further details: *That's Not Me* is the debut feature from husband and wife filmmaking team Alice Foulcher & Gregory Erdstein. Gregory is the director and co-wrote the film with Alice who plays the lead roll of Polly. The much anticipated comedy has played to sell out sessions at the film festivals in Melbourne and Sydney and will released in cinemas around the country on 7 September.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2C-78QW3xq8>

Film: *Ali's Wedding*

Guest: Jeffrey Walker (Director)

Date: Saturday 19 August

Further details: Charismatic Aussie actor Osamah Sami stars in an AWGIE Award-winning adaptation of his stranger-than-fiction true life story. Ali (Sami) is an Iraqi in Melbourne, the second son of a top Muslim cleric (Don Hany) who fled war-torn Iraq by way of Iran to come to Australia. As the son of the leader of a mosque, Ali has big expectations on his shoulders – none of which he feels like living up to. He doesn't have the grades to get into medical school, but he lies about it to his whole family and turns up to classes anyway – of course, it helps that the girl he has a crush on, Dianne, (Helana Sawires), is studying there too.

But that's not the way love works in Ali's family. His bride will not be his choice, but his father's, and he's apparently destined to be paired off with Yomna (Maha Wilson). How can this unconventional battler charm his way out of this one? *Ali's Wedding* is a funny, authentic and poignant tale about love, duty and the juggling act of family life in multicultural Australia.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJYqGp490_I

Film: *Blue*

Guests: Karina Holden (Director) and Madison Stewart (conservationist and shark advocate)

Dates: Saturday 26 – Monday 28 August

Further details: Our oceans are broken, and under threat of devastation. Half of all marine life has been lost within just the last 40 years. And by 2050 there will be more plastic in the sea than fish. And on our own shorelines, the threats are just as deadly. Coral cover on critical habitat the Great Barrier Reef has halved; on Lord Howe Island, plastic fills the bellies of 90 per cent of seabirds; and more than a third of fish stocks in Australian waters are now over-exploited. Karina Holden's remarkable documentary *Blue* is fascinating and worrying in equal measure. Shot off the coasts of Queensland, other parts of Australia, Indonesia, the Philippines and the USA, it features in-depth commentary from passionate scientists and activists, including veteran oceanographer Valerie Taylor, discussing the undeniable impact of the way we treat the oceans. A call to arms filled with beautiful and harrowing sights, this remarkable film rams home some inconvenient truths and asks us to consider the legacy we will leave for future generations. With a study last month putting a

price tag of \$56 billion on the Great Barrier Reef – more than double the value of a proposed Central Queensland mega-mine, which some say is the biggest threat to the reef in living memory – this film could not be more poignant nor more timely.

Film: Namatjira Project

Guests: Sophia Marinos, Lenie Namatjira and Gloria Pannka

Date: Tuesday 29 August (the film also screens on 18, 22 and 24 August)

Further details: *The Namatjira Project* is a moving documentary following the extraordinary plight for justice of the Namatjira family. Albert Namatjira is one of the most revered icons of Australia's art scene, and is considered by many as the father of Australia's contemporary Aboriginal art movement. However, since 1983 Albert Namatjira's family have earned no money from copyright or royalties from reproductions of Albert Namatjira's works.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=22&v=9xyoKq6_3HY

Film: The Way Station

Guest: Pham Thi Hong Anh

Date: Wednesday 30 August (the film also screens on 31 August, 1 & 2 September)

Further details: Sumptuously lensed by multi-awarded veteran director of photography Ly Thai Dzong, *The Way Station* is director Hong Anh's 10-year passion project and debut feature. Hong Anh is highly influenced by Hong Kong director Wong Kar-Wai and is one of Vietnam's most popular actresses with a 20-year career that includes winning the Golden Lotus Award for Best Leading Actress three years consecutively.

Based on a short story with the same name by author Do Phuoc Tien and boasting an exceptional cast, the beautifully stylised *The Way Station* centres around the crumbling, isolated restaurant White Night and the different lives of those who live and work there, all from disparate origins and gathered in this little village by the sea.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqIXtTZNnck>

Film: Watch The Sunset

Guests: Tristian Barr (director) and Damien E Lipp (cinematographer)

Date: Wednesday 30 August

Further details: This new Aussie action thriller packs about the biggest punch of the genre seen on screen for a long time, and heralds the arrival of some major new talents across the board.

Playing out in an amazing single shot, *Watch The Sunset* is a gripping tale of redemption and revenge set in the lonely streets of a country town where lives and pasts explosively intersect.

While the camera ducks, dives and weaves in and out of cars, houses, schools, churches and sheds, we spend some 80 minutes in the lives of Danny (Tristan Barr) – a former biker who wants to reclaim his life – his ex, and their child. Unfortunately for Danny, extricating himself from the gang is easier said than done, leading to a "how did they do that?" climax you'll want to watch over and over again.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=0dLxFQqDkTO

Film: Life Is A Very Strange Thing

Guests: Les McLaren and Annie Stiven (directors)

Date: Thursday 31 August & Friday 1 September

Further details: Shot over two years mainly in France but also in Cambodia and Australia, *life is a very strange thing* is full of warmth and tenderness that involves the audience in the shared joy, worry and uncertainty facing Frédéric, his family and his friends in modern France. The film is a heady and unusual mix of documentary bio-pic, social history and light comedy. Its use of observational filming, previously unseen archive images from PNG and Cambodia and arthouse montage create a vivid sense of character and place.

Film: Broken Ghost

Guests: Richard Gray (director), Abe Pogos (writer) Autry Hayden-Wilson (actor) and Nick Farnell

Date: Friday 1 September

Further details: The World Premiere of *Broken Ghost* will take place at BIFF. Helmed by Australian director Richard Gray, and starring some up-and-coming homegrown talent, it was penned by Melbourne-based husband-and-wife screenwriting team Abe Pogos and Catherine Hill. On the face of it, they're just another family moving to the wide open spaces of the Big Sky Country for a tree change. But for teenage Imogen Day (Autry Hayden-Wilson) and her parents Samantha (Scottie Thompson) and Will (Nick Farnell), the move to Montana is an escape from quite a unique kind of bullying. Desperate to make a new life for herself, Imogen must overcome new tormentors, old secrets, and a strange presence in the attic in this coming-of-age tale, wrapped in a ghost story.

Film: The Go-Betweens: Right Here

Guests: Kriv Stenders and Lindy Morrison (OAM)

Date: Sunday 3 September

Further details: *The Go Betweens: Right Here* is the Closing Night Gala of the Brisbane International Film Festival. Part memoir and part concert film, this inspiring documentary by Kriv Stenders (*Red Dog*) charts the rockers' path to greatness and examines the passionate, creative and sometimes fraught bond between musicians Robert Forster and the late Grant McLennan and the price they paid for pursuing their art. From their formation at the University of Queensland in the Joh Bjelke-Petersen years, this film follows Forster and McLennan on a great musical adventure that saw two incarnations of the band over more than three decades, with all the attendant successes, failures, romances, break-ups, betrayals, triumphs and tragedies.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BncEmI_OXx4

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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