

PRESS RELEASE - AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF CINEMA AND TELEVISION ARTS

First Nominees Announced for the 2nd AACTA Awards

Feature Films in Competition Announced for the 2nd AACTA Awards

Strictly embargoed until Wednesday 29 August, 2012

The Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) today announced the first nominees for the 2nd AACTA Awards - Australia's highest screen accolades.

Nominees were announced for the categories of **Best Feature Length Documentary**, **Best Short Animation** and **Best Short Fiction Film**.

The Academy also revealed 24 **Feature Films in Competition** for the 2nd AACTA Awards.

The second Awards season of the Australian Academy follows AACTA's launch in August last year, and the highly successful inaugural AACTA Awards, which were held in January 2012.

The 2nd AACTA Awards will be held in Sydney early in 2013.

The AACTA Awards are supported by the NSW Government, through Destination NSW, and are a key creative industries event on the NSW Events Calendar.

The AACTA Awards are a continuum of the Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards, which have been awarding screen excellence in Australia since 1958.

NOMINEES FOR THE AACTA AWARD FOR BEST FEATURE LENGTH DOCUMENTARY

- ***A Common Purpose***. Mitzi Goldman
- ***The Curse Of The Gothic Symphony***. Veronica Fury
- ***Dr Sarmast's Music School***. Beth Frey
- ***Storm Surfers 3D***. Ellenor Cox, Marcus Gillezeau

This year's nominated feature documentaries are characterised by real life drama and high passion, both within Australia and beyond.

These range from a dramatic and unjust murder trial in Apartheid South Africa (***A Common Purpose***), to a new music school in war-torn Afghanistan (***Dr Sarmast's Music School***), and from world famous surfers risking life and limb on a search for giant waves (***Storm Surfers 3D***), to an orchestra battling a 'curse' in order to climb the 'Everest of classical music' - tackling British composer Havergal Brian's notorious First Symphony (***The Curse Of The Gothic Symphony***).

Damian Trehwella, AFI | AACTA CEO, said that this year's nominated Feature Length Documentaries were of outstanding quality and diversity.

"These four films broaden and deepen our understanding of the world, and increase our empathy for others, while also delighting and entertaining. In doing so, they have each achieved what the best documentaries all strive for."

NOMINEES FOR THE AACTA AWARD FOR BEST SHORT ANIMATION

- ***The Hunter***. Marieka Walsh
- ***LEGO® Star Wars®: The Padawan Menace™***. David Scott, Mark Thorley, Amber Naismith
- ***The Maker***. Christopher Kezelos, Christine Kezelos
- ***Sleight of Hand***. Michael Cusack, Richard Chataway ACS

The painstaking craft of animation is on display in all its variety in this diverse collection of nominees for Best Short Animation.

Academy Award-winning studio, Animal Logic, presents a 22-minute digital animation ***LEGO® Star Wars®: The Padawan Menace™***, applying the latest CGI technology to a nostalgically beloved children's toy, and marrying this with a classic sci-fi movie universe.

At the other end of the spectrum is Marieka Walsh's unique handcrafted sand animation of ***The Hunter***, captured with an antique 35mm camera to tell the story of a hunter searching amongst wolves for a boy feared lost.

The tactile, textural stop motion animation of ***The Maker*** (from Christopher and Christine Kezelos, nominated for Best Short Animation for ***Zero*** in 2010) depicts a strange insect-like creature racing against time to make the most beautiful creation of its life.

Also using the hands-on techniques of classical stop motion animation is ***Sleight of Hand*** – written, directed and animated by Michael Cusack, whose previous films ***Waltzing Matilda*** and ***Gargoyle*** won the AFI Award for Best Short Animation in 1985 and 2006 respectively.

Said Trehwella, "This year's Short Animation nominees are particularly accomplished, and it is gratifying to see some of our previous winners and nominees back with new work. The skill and attention to detail involved with animation is clearly evident in these four very different films, as is expert storytelling at its best."

NOMINEES FOR THE AACTA AWARD FOR BEST SHORT FICTION FILM

- ***B I N O***. Billie Pleffer, Rita Walsh
- ***Dumpy Goes To The Big Smoke***. Mirrah Foulkes, David Michôd, Michael Cody
- ***Julian***. Robert Jago, Matthew Moore
- ***Transmission***. Zak Hilditch, Liz Kearney

This year's Best Short Fiction Film nominees arrive in competition already bearing multiple awards and accolades from Berlin, to Sydney, to St Kilda, to Flickerfest.

Billie Pleffer's ***B I N O*** is a strange, sweet tale of an albino boy (Edvard Hakansson) who realises that happiness is only truly experienced when it is shared. Receiving a special mention at this year's Berlin International Film Festival, ***B I N O*** was also awarded Best Student Short Film at the 2012 Australian Directors Guild (ADG) Awards.

Dumpy Goes To The Big Smoke shows another isolated individual; Dumpy (Emily Tomlins) is a lonely young woman who lives in a caravan with her surly boyfriend (Anthony Hayes), surrounded by cats, and yearning for escape to the big city. A chance encounter with a 'handsome gentleman caller' changes her world. This film has already seen first time director Mirrah Foulkes (best known for her work as an actress in films including ***Crossbow***, ***Spider*** and ***Animal Kingdom***) win the Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Short Film Director at the 2012 Sydney Film Festival. The film was produced by David Michôd and Michael Cody, shot by Adam Arkapaw, edited by Nash Edgerton and sound designed by Sam Petty.

Julian presents another youngster, this time a headstrong ten-year-old boy (Ed Oxenbould) who persists in speaking out against a bully in the grade four classroom, even if it means being sent to the Principal's office for being a 'dobber'. Written and directed by actor Matthew Moore, the slyly funny *Julian* won the Crystal Bear for Best Short Film (Generation Kplus) at the 2012 Berlin International Film Festival, and the 2012 Flickerfest Audience Award.

Written and directed by WA filmmaker Zak Hilditch, *Transmission* is another story of childhood under siege, this time against a bleak apocalyptic backdrop. Following a deadly pandemic, a father (Wayne Davies), tries to prepare his daydreaming nine-year-old daughter (Angourie Rice) to survive without him as they travel through sweltering outback Western Australia attempting to reach the 'safe zone'. Supported by Screen Australia through its Springboard program, the 13-minute *Transmission* was made to support the upcoming feature film *These Final Hours*, now in pre-production in Perth. *Transmission* won the Best Short Film Award at the 2012 St Kilda Film Festival.

AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trehwella said: "Short films have long been seen as the calling card and training ground for feature filmmakers, but these four nominated Short Fiction Films show the inherent value of the short film art form - the ability to depict with brevity and clarity a mood, a character, a moment or a short story. It will certainly be a treat, and a challenge, for AFI and AACTA members to view these films and determine through voting which one will go on to win the prestigious AACTA Award for Best Short Fiction Film at the 2nd AACTA Awards."

NOTES REGARDING NON FEATURE FILM NOMINEES

Juries of respected industry professionals, representing a diverse selection of Australian screen crafts, decided the nominees in these categories. Members of the AFI and AACTA will vote to decide the winners after screenings at the AACTA Awards Screenings (see notes below for more information regarding screenings).

NOTES REGARDING REMAINING NON FEATURE FILM CATEGORIES

The Documentary and Short Film nominations yet to be announced later in 2012 are: the AACTA Award for Best Documentary Under One Hour; the AACTA Award for Best Documentary Series; the AACTA Award for Best Direction in a Documentary; the AACTA Award for Best Cinematography in a Documentary; the AACTA Award for Best Editing in a Documentary; the AACTA Award for Best Sound in a Documentary; and the AACTA Award for Best Screenplay in a Short Film.

FEATURE FILMS IN COMPETITION FOR THE 2ND AACTA AWARDS

Also revealed today are the 24 Feature Films in Competition.*

THE 24 FEATURE FILMS IN COMPETITION FOR THE 2ND AACTA AWARDS ARE:

- *33 Postcards*
- *A Few Best Men*
- *Any Questions For Ben?*
- *Bait 3D*
- *Burning Man*
- *Careless Love*
- *Dead Europe*
- *Hail*
- *Housos vs Authority*
- *Iron Sky*
- *Kath & Kimderella*
- *Killer Elite*
- *The King Is Dead!*

- ***Last Dance***
- ***Lore***
- ***Mental***
- ***Not Suitable For Children***
- ***Santa's Apprentice***
- ***The Sapphires***
- ***Swerve***
- ***Toomelah***
- ***The Wedding Party***
- ***Wish You Were Here***
- ***X***

The Feature Films competing for the 2nd AACTA Awards represent the breadth of talent and the diversity of stories being told within the Australian screen industry.

From crowd-pleasing comedies like ***A Few Best Men***, ***The Sapphires***, ***Not Suitable for Children***, ***Housos vs Authority*** and ***Kath & Kimderella***, to tense and probing dramas like ***Dead Europe***, ***Burning Man*** and ***Wish You Were Here***, there is something for every taste.

Genre thrillers including ***Bait 3D***, ***Swerve***, ***Killer Elite***, ***X*** and ***Last Dance***, sit alongside family animation ***Santa's Apprentice*** and a tongue-in-cheek futuristic sci-fi adventure, ***Iron Sky***. A number of these films are set to reach theatres in the next two months.

Damian Trehwella said: "The goal for a healthy Australian feature film industry has always been to combine festival and critical acclaim with audience appeal. The exceptional collection of Feature Films in Competition demonstrates that this year we are well on the way to achieving this mix, and that despite many challenges, we can celebrate a landmark year in the industry.

"We are thrilled to see many of our former AFI Award-winning directors back with new films in competition.

"P.J. Hogan has reteamed with his ***Muriel's Wedding*** star, Toni Collette, to bring us ***Mental***, Stephan Elliott returns with the irreverent comedy of ***A Few Best Men***, and John Duigan offers a fresh view of young love and modern morality in ***Careless Love***.

"It's also great to see Cate Shortland back with a stunningly beautiful war story in her German language feature ***Lore***, and Rolf de Heer applying his unique blend of humour and pragmatic filmmaking to bring us the comic suburban nightmare of ***The King is Dead!***

"We're also very proud to see Ivan Sen, recipient of the Byron Kennedy Award at the inaugural AACTA Awards, in competition with the eye-opening and brutally beautiful ***Toomelah*** which was screened in Un Certain Regard at Cannes in 2011.

"We are also pleased to see fresh talents enter the fray, like Amiel Courtin-Wilson's poetic and groundbreaking mix of documentary and fiction, ***Hail***, Tony Krawitz's brooding feature debut based on the Christos Tsiolkas novel, ***Dead Europe***, and of course Wayne Blair's exuberant and proudly feel-good musical feature ***The Sapphires***.

"This exceptionally strong slate of Feature Films makes for a highly competitive year, meaning all eyes will be on the 2nd AACTA Awards, announced early in 2013, to see which Australian performers, practitioners and productions have been named our nation's best.

"We thank all of our valued sponsors and partners for their critical support, in particular our strategic partners - the New South Wales government through Destination New South Wales - and our major government sponsor Screen Australia, and look forward to an exciting season ahead," Trehwella said.

NOTES REGARDING FEATURE FILMS IN COMPETITION

*These are the Feature Films deemed eligible to compete, either automatically (having achieved a five capital city cinema release), or through jury pre-selection (two to four capital city release). To be eligible for competition in the 2nd AACTA Awards, these films need to have had a theatrical release in Australia for the first time between 3 November 2011 and 7 November 2012.

Members of AACTA will vote under a two-step voting model to determine the nominees and winners in the various Feature Film categories. For more information on voting, please visit the [AACTA website](#).

Nominees in the Feature Film, Television and remaining Non Feature Film categories (as listed earlier) will be announced later in 2012.

NOTES REGARDING AACTA AWARDS SCREENING

The Feature Films in Competition and Non Feature Nominees announced for the 2nd AACTA Awards will be screened at the AACTA Awards Screenings (open to AFI and AACTA members) in October 2012 in Melbourne and Sydney. More information regarding the screenings will follow soon.

NOTES REGARDING THE AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF CINEMA AND TELEVISION ARTS

Launched by the Australian Film Institute (AFI) on 18 August 2011, the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) is a professional membership body formed to identify, encourage, promote and award excellence in Australian screen productions. The [inaugural AACTA Awards](#) were held in Sydney in January 2012. The AACTA Awards are a continuum of the AFI Awards, which have proudly celebrated Australia's screen excellence and heritage since 1958.

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