
MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian screen productions set to shine at Sundance

Tuesday 9 December 2008: The 2009 Sundance Film Festival will feature six Australian screen productions including four shorts and an installation piece. The festival opens January 15 with the previously announced Australian feature, *Mary and Max* (d: Adam Elliot).

Sundance's Shorts Competition will this year showcase *Lessons from the Night* (d: Adrian Francis), *Netherland Dwarf* (d: David Michôd), *Miracle Fish* (d: Luke Doolan) and *Jerrycan* (d: Julius Avery).

Short documentary *Lessons from the Night* will have its world premiere at Sundance. The film follows its subject, Maia, as she reflects on life, work and toilet bowls as she goes about her nightly cleaning round. It was produced through Melbourne's Open Channel as part of the low-budget Raw Nerve Initiative – a joint venture with Screen Australia for emerging filmmakers.

Miracle Fish follows the story of a boy who wishes everyone in the world would go away. He wakes up to find that his dream may have become a reality. Doolan is best known as an editor (*The Square* and numerous shorts) and long-time collaborator of the Edgerton brothers, whose shorts have previously screened at Sundance. *Miracle Fish* was self-financed with support from Italian Pay TV channel QOOB TV with post-production support from Screen Australia.

Also selected and financed by QOOB TV is *Netherland Dwarf*, the second short film of David Michôd to feature at Sundance in two years.

Following its Official Selection at this year's Cannes Film Festival, where it was awarded the Jury Prize for short film, the final Australian film in selection is *Jerrycan*. The film was privately financed with Screen Australia post-production funding.

The 2009 edition of New Frontier will showcase the cinematic installations and presentations of 15 artists, collective artists and scientists during the festival. It will include **Lynette Wallworth's** installation *Evolution of Fearlessness*. An intimate, interactive installation that responds to touch, *Evolution of Fearlessness* is a sequel to Wallworth's *Unheard Voices: Invisible by Night*. Together the two works deal with loss and its aftermath, survival and, beyond that, hope and strength.

The 25th annual Sundance Film Festival runs 15–25 January 2009, in Park City, Utah.

See next page for film details.

Shorts**Jerrycan**

(13.5 mins)

Production Company: Avery & Parkyn

Writer/Director: Julius Avery

Producer: Stuart Parkyn

Co-Producer: Matt Downey

Cast: Tristan Burke, Walter Currie, Kyle Taylor, Nick Tomas and Dylan Thomas

Synopsis: Five bored kids with nothing to do decide to blow something up. Paper, scissors, rock seals the fate of Nathan, who risks everything after he is bullied into making a life and death decision.**Lessons from the Night**

(8.5 mins)

Production Company: Feather Films

Writer/Director: Adrian Francis

Producer: Melanie Brunt

Cast: Maia Wallner

Synopsis: As dusk approaches and workers stream out of the city, Maia is about to begin her day. She reflects on life, work and toilet bowls as she goes about her nightly cleaning round through silent, empty spaces.**Miracle Fish**

(17 mins)

Production Company: Druid Films

Writer/Director: Luke Doolan

Producer: Drew Bailey

Cast: Karl Beattie, Brendan Donoghue, Tara Morice

Synopsis: Eight-year-old Joe has a birthday he will never forget. After friends tease him, he sneaks off to the sick bay, wishing everyone in the world would go away. He wakes up to find his dream may have become a reality.**Netherland Dwarf**

(15 mins)

Production Company: Aquarius Films

Writer/Director: David Michôd

Producer: Angie Fielder, Polly Staniford

Cast: Jack Egan, Ewen Leslie, Mirrah Foulkes, Justin Rosniak

Synopsis: Harry really wants a rabbit. Harry's dad really wants his wife back. And somehow in the middle of all this wanting, they've forgotten that they already have each other.**Installation****Evolution of Fearlessness**

By: Lynette Wallworth

Production Management: Zoe Turner

Technical Director: Kamal Ackarie

Sound Design: Greg White

Cinematography and Lighting Design: Michael Williams

Interactive System Designers: Matthew Gardiner and Pete Brundle

Feature**Mary and Max**

(92 mins)

Production Company: Melodrama Pictures Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Adam Elliot

Producer: Melanie Coombs

Australian Distributor: Icon Films

International Sales: Icon Entertainment International

Finance: Screen Australia, Adirondack Pictures, Film Victoria, SBS

Cast: with voices of Toni Collette (Mary), Philip Seymour Hoffman (Max), Eric Bana (Damien) and Barry Humphries (The Narrator)

Synopsis: *Mary and Max* is a claymated feature film from the creators of the Academy Award®-winning short animation *Harvie Krumpet*. It is a simple tale of pen-friendship between two very different people: Mary Dinkle, a chubby, lonely eight-year-old girl living in the suburbs of Melbourne, and Max Horowitz, a 44-year-old severely obese Jewish man with Asperger's Syndrome living in the chaos of New York.

Spanning 20 years and two continents, Mary and Max's friendship survives much more than the average diet of life's ups and downs. Like *Harvie Krumpet*, *Mary and Max* is innocent but not naïve, as it takes us on a journey that explores friendship, autism, taxidermy, psychiatry, alcoholism, where babies come from, obesity, kleptomania, sexual difference, trust, copulating dogs, religious difference, agoraphobia and much, much more.