

Media Release Embargoed until Monday 2 March

NATUZZI prize winner announced!

The 2009 BigPond® Adelaide Film Festival (BAFF) is delighted to announce **TREELESS MOUNTAIN** by **So-yong Kim** as the winner of the **NATUZZI International Award for Best Feature Film**.

The winner was announced last night, at the closing night of the 2009 BigPond Adelaide Film Festival and Australian premiere screening of Stephan Elliot's new film, **EASY VIRTUE**.

The NATUZZI International Best Feature Award is the first of its kind in Australia and director **So-yong Kim** wins a cash prize of \$AUD25,000.

The seven person jury, comprised of key figures in screen culture and the international art scene and led by Jury President LAURENCE KARDISH, Senior Curator, Department of Film at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, decided between 13 narrative feature films invited into competition including **ALL AROUND US** by Ryosuke Hashiguchi; **A CHRISTMAS TALE** by Arnaud Desplechins; **DEAN SPANLEY** by Toa Fraser; **GOMORRAH** by Matteo Garrone; **JALAINUR** by Zhao Ye; **KISSES** by Lance Daly; **MY YEAR WITHOUT SEX** by Sarah Watt; **MY TEHRAN FOR SALE** by Granaz Moussavi; **THE SKY, THE EARTH, AND THE RAIN** by José Luis Torres Leiva; **STELLA** by Sylvie Verheyde; **TEZA** by Haile Gerima **TREELESS MOUNTAIN** by So-yong Kim; and **ZIFT** by Javor Gardev.

In making their deliberation, the jury was looking for a distinctive voice, bold storytelling, and creative risk-taking—but more than anything, a film that genuinely engaged and transported the viewer.

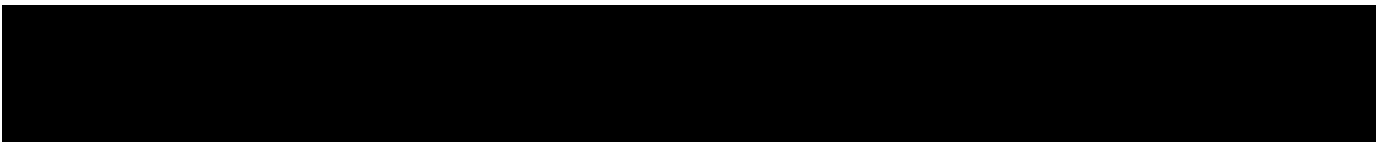
Announcing the jury's decision, Laurence Kardish said, *'After viewing and discussing several strong films in the international competition, the Natuzzi jury awards TREELESS MOUNTAIN by So-yong Kim for its integrity, intensity and humanity. Set in Korea today, this memorable tale of childhood and adaptation could happen anywhere. Rich in its observation of the tensions and humour of everyday life, TREELESS MOUNTAIN is distinguished also by its performances, particularly, the two young girls who play sisters. The film transports and rewards the viewer.'*

Responding to the news, So-yong Kim said *"Filmmaking is a collaborative medium. So, on behalf of everyone who helped make Treeless Mountain we are very honored to receive this award from The BigPond Adelaide Film Festival. Thank you very much!"*

The 2009 BigPond Adelaide Film Festival has been a huge success with twenty two world premieres, including nine features and three documentary features, 62 Australian premieres and 143 films from 49 different countries screened over a wildly exciting 11 days.

Attendances across the main screening program have grown by 30% from 2007, with 18% of sessions SOLD OUT.

BAFF has been visited and enjoyed by numerous key figures in the international film community and stars of the silver screen including Hugo Weaving, Natalie Imbruglia, Rolf de Heer, Scott



Hicks, Bruce Beresford, Matt Day, Sarah Watt, William McInnes, Warwick Thornton, Glendyn Ivin, Kriv Stenders, Peta Wilson and Aden Young.

Some golden moments of the festival have included:

- The huge popularity of the 5 star opening night film MY YEAR WITHOUT SEX leading to a third session being scheduled and promptly selling out
- A resounding standing ovation for Director Warwick Thornton, Producer Kath Shelper and the young stars at the world premiere of the stunning new Australian film SAMSON & DELILAH
- A standing ovation for Kiran Bedi after the Australian premiere of YES MADAM, SIR
- A visitor reduced to tears at Lynette Wallworth's DUALITY OF LIGHT commission at the Samstag Museum (on until 24 April)
- The overwhelming popularity of new Australian films

BAFF Chair, Cheryl Bart said *'This has been the best festival yet. There is a palpable sense of excitement, possibility, spirit and community around BAFF and we've been particularly thrilled with the diverse range of style and genres of the investment fund films.'*

While we've had some really innovative platforms this year – GPS fitted bikes, short films made on mobile phones, full dome films – we have also gone back to our core values of community, conversation, support and great fun. There is definitely something happening in Adelaide.'

For more information please contact Miranda Brown Publicity on +61 3 9419 0931 or miranda@mbpublicity.com.au

****This event could not take place without the underwriting partnership of BigPond and we ask that this is recognised by referring to the event in all coverage as '2009 BigPond Adelaide Film Festival'.**

