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MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY ANNOUNCES FIRST NOMINEES FOR 4TH AACTA AWARDS

The countdown to Australia's top screen Awards has officially started, with the first nominees for the 4th Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) Awards announced today.

Nominees were announced in the **Best Short Animation** and **Best Short Fiction Film** categories for the 4th AACTA Awards, which will also see Australia's best film, television and documentaries awarded in Sydney in January 2015.

Feature Films in Competition and nominees for the AACTA Award for Best Feature Length Documentary for the 4th AACTA Awards will be announced in the coming weeks, and all Feature Film, Television and the remaining Documentary nominees will be announced later in 2014.

NOMINEES FOR THE AACTA AWARD FOR BEST SHORT ANIMATION

- ***GOD SQUAD***. Nicholas Kempt, Troy Zafer
- ***Grace Under Water***. Anthony Lawrence
- ***Love In The Time Of March Madness***. Robertino Zambrano, Melissa Johnston
- ***The Video Dating Tape of Desmond Ray, Aged 33 & 3/4***. Steve Baker

This year's Best Short Animation nominees arrive at the AACTA Awards with a host of Festival screenings behind them, both national and international.

The Video Dating Tape of Desmond Ray, Aged 33 & 3/4, which screened at SXSW 2014 and St Kilda Film Festival 2014, is by writer-director Steve Baker, a previous Tropfest and AFI Award winner. This darkly funny short film portrays Raymond, a loner with a penchant for peeing in the rain, as a likeable, if not likely, dating prospect.

Also funny and touching is ***Love In The Time Of March Madness*** - a 'tall short' about a 6'4" woman whose success on the basketball court is at odds with her luck in love. This film is based on a short story which originally featured on *Salon.com*, and screened earlier this year at Tribeca Film Festival.

GOD SQUAD plays on the gritty police drama genre, animating deities of various past and present religions to play cops and criminals. A full series of this short is currently being developed for SBS with support from Screen Australia.

Marking the only stop motion animation in this year's Best Short Animation nominations, ***Grace Under Water*** depicts the story of a stepmother confronted with her past as she tries to bond with her stubborn and enigmatic stepdaughter, Grace. Shot stereoscopically for 3D, the skill of the stop motion craft is neatly captured by featuring water and water effects. This short marks the second collaboration between producer-director Anthony Lawrence and writer Chrissie McMahon following their stop motion short ***Looking For Horses*** in 2002, which was awarded special distinction at ANNECY International Animation Festival. ***Grace Under Water*** also screened at ANNECY earlier this year.

AFI | AACTA CEO, Damian Trehwella, said:

“The Academy is pleased to see previous award winners nominated again in this category, attesting to the skill and accomplishment of these talented animators, and building on Australia’s reputation for excellence in this craft. It is also impressive to see these films resonate with audiences here and abroad on the strength of their accomplished storylines; a testament to strong collaborations between directors and writers, as well as the talents of those who both wrote and produced these impressive short animations.”

NOMINEES FOR THE AACTA AWARD FOR BEST SHORT FICTION FILM

- ***Florence Has Left The Building***. Mirrah Foulkes, Alex White
- ***Grey Bull***. Khoby Rowe, Eddy Bell
- ***The iMom***. Ariel Martin, Anna Fawcett
- ***Welcome To Iron Knob***. Dave Wade, Alexandra Blue

Marking a strong year for Australian Short Fiction Film, two nominees (***Grey Bull*** and ***Welcome To Iron Knob***) have already received two Awards each following Festival screenings.

Grey Bull was awarded Best Australian Short at Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) 2014, and Best Direction Short Film at Sydney Film Festival (SFF) 2014. ***Grey Bull*** depicts the story of a South Sudanese refugee confronted by his spiritual roots and at odds with his new life in Australia, following his decision to rescue a bull he believes to be his spiritual totem from his abattoir workplace.

Welcome To Iron Knob was also awarded at SFF this year, taking out the Event Cinemas Short Screenplay Award, and was awarded Best Film, Best Cinematography at St Kilda Film Festival 2014. This quirky short hints at the dead-pan humour at home in a small, sleepy town whose residents are keen to cover up an accidental shooting of a stranger by a young boy, in order to resume life as they know it.

A strong Festival presence has also preceded an AACTA nomination for ***The iMom***, following Official Selection at this year’s Flickerfest, SFF and MIFF. Featuring Marta Dusseldorp and Matilda Brown, ***The iMom*** provides a pithy insight into the possibilities, and potential repercussions, of leaving parenting to robots.

Impressive competition in the Short Fiction Film category is capped off with ***Florence Has Left The Building***. This nomination marks director Mirrah Foulkes’ third year running as an AACTA Award nominee; her directorial debut saw ***Dumpy Goes To The Big Smoke*** nominated for Best Short Fiction Film at the 2nd AACTA Awards, and Foulkes was nominated for Best Supporting Actress for ***The Turning*** at the 3rd AACTA Awards. ***Florence Has Left The Building***, the story of a woman celebrating one last hurrah with an Elvis impersonator in an aged care home, features Foulkes’ fellow ***Animal Kingdom*** co-star Jacki Weaver, who was last year awarded Australia’s highest screen accolade; the AACTA Raymond Longford Award.

AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trehwella said:

“With a slate of national and international festival Awards and screenings between them, and diverse, entertaining and thought-provoking subject matter, competition in the Short Fiction Film category for the 4th AACTA Awards is very strong. The Academy is also pleased to see acclaimed Australian talent Jacki Weaver featuring in one of this year’s nominated Short Fiction Films, fostering the collaborative spirit of supporting emerging talent for which the Australian screen industry is celebrated.

“AACTA was pleased to launch a new initiative earlier this year, Social Shorts, in support of short filmmaking. Social Shorts shines a spotlight on all Short Animations and Short Fiction Films entered into the 4th AACTA Awards, aside from the nominees announced today, by screening and curating them online for members of the public, as well as AFI and AACTA members, to view and vote. Further information shall be announced in the coming months.

“We wish all Short Fiction Film and Short Animation nominees announced today the very best for the 4th AACTA Awards, and eagerly await to see which Feature Film, Television and Documentary nominees will join them in the countdown to Australia’s most prestigious screen Awards in Sydney in January.”

Winners will be announced at the 4th AACTA Awards in Sydney in January 2015.

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

NOTES REGARDING SHORT FILM CATEGORY 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 4th AACTA Awards Screenings (see notes below for more information regarding screenings).

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY, ACCESS EXCLUSIVE AACTA AWARDS SCREENINGS AND VOTE

The eight Short Film nominees will be shown for AFI and AACTA members at the AACTA Awards Screenings in Sydney and Melbourne in October, as well as hosted online via AACTA TV, accessible to all AFI and AACTA members. All AFI and AACTA members are eligible to vote in Short Film categories. AACTA membership is granted to screen professionals only through an accreditation process. AFI membership is open to and encouraged for all.

COUNTDOWN TO NOMINATIONS

Documentary, Television and Feature Film Nominees will be announced in Sydney, the home of the AACTA Awards, later in 2014.

COUNTDOWN TO THE AACTA AWARDS | SYDNEY 2015

The Australian Academy celebrates screen excellence throughout the year culminating in three major events during January. The AACTA Awards Luncheon presented by Deluxe and the AACTA Awards Ceremony and Official After Party are held in Sydney and are proudly supported by the NSW Government, through its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW and are a key creative industries event on the NSW Events Calendar

The 4th AACTA Awards follow three highly successful Awards seasons since the launch of AACTA by the Australian Film Institute (AFI) in 2011.

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