

Media Release

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Australian Academy Announces Documentary and Short Film Nominees, Marking Strong Start to Sixth Awards Season

The countdown to this year's top Australian screen awards has officially commenced, with the first nominees for the 6th AACTA Awards presented by Presto announced today.

Nominees were announced in three categories – Best Feature Length Documentary, Best Short Animation and Best Short Fiction Film. Nominees for Australia's finest film and television productions of the past year will be announced later in 2016, with winners across all categories to be announced at two major awards events in Sydney, home of the AACTA Awards, in December.

NOMINEES FOR BEST FEATURE LENGTH DOCUMENTARY

- **CHASING ASYLUM.** Eva Orner
- **IN THE SHADOW OF THE HILL.** Dan Jackson
- **REMEMBERING THE MAN.** Nickolas Bird ADG, Eleanor Sharpe ADG
- **SNOW MONKEY.** Lizzette Atkins, George Gittoes

In a strong year for Australian documentaries, this year's nominees for Best Feature Length Documentary see emerging filmmakers vying for an AACTA Award alongside established documentary-making talent.

Oscar winner **Eva Orner** (**TAXI TO THE DARK SIDE**) today received her first AACTA Award nomination for Best Feature Length Documentary for **CHASING ASYLUM** – an exposé into Australia's offshore detention centres and policies. **CHASING ASYLUM** opened the Human Rights Arts & Film Festival in Melbourne earlier this year, and screened in Official Selection at Hot Docs 2016. Orner holds a previous AACTA Award nomination for Best Documentary Television Program for **THE NETWORK**.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE HILL sees a debut into filmmaking for **Dan Jackson**, whose work as producer, director, editor and cinematographer captures a firsthand perspective of living inside Rio de Janeiro's largest slum, as residents fight for justice for a local man they believe was murdered by police. It too screened in Official Selection at Hot Docs, and at a number of other festivals, including Sydney Film Festival and the American Film Institute's AFI Docs.

Hot off the back of **HOLDING THE MAN**, which received six AACTA Awards nominations last year, comes **REMEMBERING THE MAN**, capturing the enduring love story of Timothy Conigrave and John Caleo. This marks the fourth screen production collaboration between **Nickolas Bird** and **Eleanor Sharpe**, and a first AACTA Awards nomination for both. **REMEMBERING THE MAN** has received a number of national and international festival accolades to date, including Audience Awards at Adelaide Film Festival 2015 and the Melbourne Queer Film Festival 2016, where it also received the Jury Award for Best Documentary.

With a career spanning almost two decades as a producer, today marks **Lizzette Atkin's** third AFI or AACTA Awards nomination. Atkins is nominated for **SNOW MONKEY** alongside director **George Gittoes**,

marking Gittoes' first AACTA Awards nomination. **SNOW MONKEY** provides a portrait of daily life in Jalalabad, where Gittoes draws on his art activist background to recruit gangs of war-damaged children to shoot local Pashto-style films. **SNOW MONKEY** arrives at the AACTA Awards following Official Selection at last year's Melbourne International Film Festival and the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam.

NOMINEES FOR THE AACTA AWARD FOR BEST SHORT ANIMATION

- **THE ALBATROSS**. Joel Best, Alex Jeremy, Alex Karonis
- **THE CROSSING**. Marieka Walsh, Donna Chang
- **FEMME ENFANT**. Bonnie Forsyth, Grace Lim
- **OSCAR WILDE'S 'THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE ROSE'**. Angie Fielder, Brendan Fletcher, Del Kathryn Barton

Competition within the Best Short Animation category sees recent University graduates competing alongside past AACTA Award nominees and winners.

Two of the short animation films nominated - **THE ALBATROSS** and **FEMME ENFANT** - were made by 2015 University of Technology Sydney animation honours graduates.

THE ALBATROSS marks a directorial debut by **Joel Best**, **Alex Jeremy** and **Alex Karonis**. It captures a struggling writer's solitary fishing trip, which is interrupted by a strange creature from the bottom of a whisky bottle. The short animation continues on an impressive festival run; following Official Selection in Animafest, Zagreb, last year, **THE ALBATROSS** was a finalist in this year's Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films at the Sydney Film Festival, and received Official Selection at this year's Melbourne International Animation Festival.

Fellow UTS graduates **Bonnie Forsyth** and **Grace Lim** tell the story of a barren artist, Frida, inspired by the story of Frida Kahlo and the female surrealists of the early 20th Century in **FEMME ENFANT**, again marking impressive debuts by emerging filmmakers.

THE CROSSING sees a nomination for writer-director-animator **Marieka Walsh**, who won the AACTA Award for Best Short Animation in 2013 for **THE HUNTER**. A stop-motion animation created out of salt and sand, **THE CROSSING** tells the story of a sea captain who risks the lives of his men when he decides to change course, taking his ship through a violent storm with haunting consequences. **THE CROSSING** screened at Annecy Animation Festival 2016 (France) and was recently awarded the Yoram Gross Animation Award at the Sydney Film Festival. Walsh also holds two AACTA Award nominations for **THE TURNING**, for which **THE CROSSING** producer, **Donna Chang**, was also nominated.

Rounding out the Best Short Animation nominees is **OSCAR WILDE'S 'THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE ROSE'**, which sees two-time Archibald Prize winner and debut filmmaker, **Del Kathryn Barton**, nominated alongside past AACTA Award nominees **Brendan Fletcher (MAD BASTARDS and KULLI FOOT)** and **Angie Fielder (WISH YOU WERE HERE)**. Based on the classic fairytale by Oscar Wilde, this short animation is voiced by some of Australia's leading performers, including **Geoffrey Rush**, **Mia Wasikowska** and **David Wenham**, and comes to the AACTA Awards with a Best Australian Short Film win from last year's Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) and a Crystal Bear nomination from the Berlin International Film Festival.

NOMINEES FOR THE AACTA AWARD FOR BEST SHORT FICTION FILM

- **BLUEY**. Darlene Johnson ADG, Heather Oxenham SPA
- **DREAM BABY**. Lucy Gaffy, Kiki Dillon
- **HEMLOCK**. Yianni Warnock, Charles Williams
- **NATHAN LOVES RICKY MARTIN**. Steven Arriagada, Llewellyn Michael Bates, Bryan Chau

This year sees first-time AFI or AACTA Award nominations for all but one of the filmmakers nominated for Best Short Fiction Film, with **DREAM BABY** writer-director **Lucy Gaffy** having previously received a nomination for **THE LOVE SONG OF ISKRA PRUFROCK**.

BLUEY, starring **Tasia Zalar (THE STRAITS, WENTWORTH PRISON)**, is a moving portrait of a young woman trapped in a cycle of violence, but whose meeting with a mentor through a young offenders' rehabilitation program could change everything. Directed by **Darlene Johnson**, **BLUEY** has had an impressive national and international festival run, counting among its wins the Event Cinemas Australian Short Screenplay Award at the 2015 Sydney Film Festival, and an award for Best Australian Short Film at the Human Rights Arts & Film Festival 2016.

DREAM BABY captures the story of Elvis, a young girl trapped in a remote caravan park who hatches a plan to sell soft drink to fund her way into a posh boarding school in the city – until her Mum finds out. **DREAM BABY**, by writer-director **Lucy Gaffy**, will screen at this year's MIFF.

HOMEBOODIES, which sees a woman engage with a perverted stranger online, and a man take a bath wrapped in Christmas lights, received a nomination at this year's SXSW Film Festival, marking a second consecutive nomination at the Festival for writer-director-producer, **Yianni Warnock**. **HOMEBOODIES** premiered at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, and arrives following an international festivals circuit run which included TIFF.

A finalist for the Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films at the Sydney Film Festival last month, **NATHAN LOVES RICKY MARTIN** sees a first time AACTA Award nomination for producer-director **Steven Arriagada** and producers **Llewellyn Michael Bates** and **Bryan Chau**. This short fiction film tells the story of a ruse by Pauline - a full-time mother and carer for her mentally and developmentally disabled adult son, Nathan - to form a meaningful connection with the man next door.

Nominees in all categories announced today will screen during the 6th AACTA Awards presented by Presto Official Screenings Program. The Program screens throughout August and September at Event Cinemas Bondi Junction in Sydney and Cinema Nova in Melbourne, and online via AACTA TV. Also screening will be the majority of the Feature Films In Competition, which will be announced in August. The Screenings Program is exclusive to and complimentary for AFI members (open to all) and AACTA members (open to industry).

AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trehwella congratulated today's nominees and encouraged screen fans to unite with the screen industry and the filmmakers competing in this year's Awards by attending the Official Screenings Program.

"Our Official Screenings Program is an open invitation to see Australia's finest screen productions of the year.

"Each year our short film nominees in particular highlight the talents of new and emerging filmmakers, and this year is no exception, with a number of nominees straight out of University.

"Australian documentary makers are among the world's best and often most fearless. This year sees a first-time filmmaker, **Dan Jackson**, live in Brazil's largest slum for over year, at times risking his life. Fellow documentary maker **George Gittoes** captures the lives of war-damaged children living in Afghanistan's Jalalabad, and **Eva Orner** ventures into the challenging terrain of detention centres.

"Audiences at home and abroad continue to show high demand for Australian and global stories as told via documentaries, and **REMEMBERING THE MAN** is no exception, providing a new perspective on the enduring love story captured by last year's hugely popular feature film, AACTA Award nominated **HOLDING THE MAN**.

"AACTA proudly makes these outstanding productions accessible to Australian audiences wherever they are via four weeks of in-cinema screenings in Sydney and Melbourne, and online via AACTA TV which can be viewed anytime, anywhere. The Official Screenings Program compliments our year-round Screen

Culture & Industry Development Program, which since launching in 2014 has already seen more than 11,000 general public and industry members attend more than 160 events, screenings, masterclasses and Q&As with cast and crew in Sydney and Melbourne.

“On behalf of AACTA, I congratulate all nominees announced today, and look forward to a robust competition as the countdown to the 6th AACTA Awards presented by Presto in Sydney officially begins,” Trehella said.

The AACTA Awards are proudly supported by the New South Wales Government through its tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

Juries of respected industry professionals, representing a diverse selection of Australian screen crafts, determined the nominees in the three categories announced today.

COUNTDOWN TO COMPETITION AND FURTHER NOMINEE ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR THE 6TH AACTA AWARDS PRESENTED BY PRESTO

Feature Films In Competition will be announced in mid-August 2016. The program for the 6th AACTA Awards presented by Presto Official Screenings Program will also be announced at that time. All remaining Documentary nominees and all Feature Film and Television nominees will be announced later in 2016.

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY AND ACCESS EXCLUSIVE AACTA AWARDS SCREENINGS

The nominated Short Films and Feature Length Documentaries will be shown for AFI and AACTA members at the 6th AACTA Awards presented by Presto Official Screenings Program in Sydney and Melbourne in August/September, and will be hosted online via AACTA TV, accessible to all AFI and AACTA members. AFI membership is open to and encouraged for all. AACTA membership is granted to screen professionals only through an accreditation process. Best Feature Length Documentary winners will be determined by AACTA members via voting, while the winners of the Best Short Animation and Best Short Fiction Film Awards will be voted for by both AACTA and AFI members.

COUNTDOWN TO THE AACTA AWARDS | SYDNEY

The Australian Academy celebrates screen excellence throughout the year culminating in three major Awards events each year. The 6th AACTA Awards presented by Presto | Industry Luncheon presented by Blue Post will be held on Monday 5 December at The Star Event Centre in Sydney. The 6th AACTA Awards Ceremony presented by Presto will be held at The Star Event Centre in Sydney on Wednesday 7 December and televised on Channel Seven, with a special encore screening on Foxtel. The 6th AACTA International Awards will be presented in Los Angeles in January 2017, and will again be telecast on Foxtel, with more information to follow later in 2016.

The AACTA Awards 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 6th AACTA Awards presented by Presto follow five highly successful awards seasons since the launch of AACTA by the Australian Film Institute (AFI) in 2011.

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