

PRESS RELEASE: AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF CINEMA AND TELEVISION ARTS

- Wednesday 21 September 2011 -

New Festival of Film sees exciting start to Australian screen awards season

Australia's best films are set to screen in a new festival designed to showcase and critique the past year's cinematic success stories.

The Samsung AFI | AACTA Festival of Film brings together film-lovers and filmmakers to view, discuss and judge each of the films vying for Australia's highest screen accolade – an Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) Award.

The Festival, to be held in Sydney and Melbourne from 6 October until 14 November, will showcase 21 Feature Films, as well as the 12 Non Feature nominees for Best Short Fiction Film, Best Short Animation and Best Feature Length Documentary in contention for the inaugural Samsung AACTA Awards, which will be held in January 2012.

AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trehwella said: "Through AACTA, we not only celebrate Australia's best screen practitioners, but also engage audiences with our great stories; the Samsung AFI | AACTA Festival of Film provides a perfect platform for this at an exciting time for our screen industry.

"This year we have chosen a festival format to showcase the films competing for Australia's highest screen accolade, with the aim of generating greater audience reach and engagement with the fantastic film content our industry is producing.

"Having increased awareness of our screen industry through the recent launch of AACTA, we now encourage audiences to see the films vying for an Australian Academy Award by attending our Festival of Film, and by following the journey of these films through to the Awards ceremony in January 2012."

AFI Chairman, Alan Finney, said: "The Samsung AFI | AACTA Festival of Film provides a fitting introduction to what is bound to be another outstanding awards season, and we are delighted to announce that the number of Feature and Non Feature Films in Competition are both up on last year.

"From a Feature Film perspective, we see the return of internationally established directors through to bright new talents, as well as an extensive range of genres, from psychological thrillers to offbeat romances.

"From a Non Feature Film perspective, we see the breadth and depth of Australian filmmaking talent on show, with diverse subject matter ranging from the concert hall to the Outback, and from WWII to the world's first 'viral' pop-culture sensation."

A Festival highlight will be the opening night in Sydney, which will see a special screening of *The Hunter*, starring Willem Dafoe, Frances O'Connor and Sam Neill. The screening will be introduced by Producer Vincent Sheehan, Director Daniel Nettheim and actress Morgana Davies.

Another Festival highlight will be special anniversary screenings of two modern classics, *Lantana* and *Proof*.

First premiered 10 years ago, *Lantana* won seven AFI Awards including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor (Anthony LaPaglia), Best Actress (Kerry Armstrong) and Best Adapted Screenplay. The retrospective screening in Melbourne on 16 October will feature a Q&A session with cast members Kerry Armstrong and Vince Colosimo, whilst the Sydney screening on 30 October will feature a Q&A session with Director Ray Lawrence.

The film ***Proof*** was awarded Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor (Hugo Weaving) and Best Supporting Actor (Russell Crowe) at the 1991 AFI Awards. The Sydney anniversary screening on 23 October will feature a Q&A session with Writer / Director, Jocelyn Moorhouse, while Lynda House, Producer, will join Moorhouse at the Melbourne screening on 15 October.

The Samsung AFI | AACTA Festival of Film screenings are complimentary to attend for AFI and AACTA members. Tickets are also available to the general public to purchase via the AACTA website.

The Festival provides an opportunity for AFI and AACTA members to critically appraise the films in competition, and forms an important part of the Awards voting process.

Trewhella said: “The Festival provides an opportunity for all Australians to get involved with the excitement of the inaugural Samsung AACTA Awards, and experience Australian filmmaking at its best.

“We hope to see the Festival of Film become an annual event on the calendar of all Australian audiences in support of our local screen industry. We encourage members of the public and of the screen industry to join us as members in order to vote and have their say in awarding Australia’s best screen content.”

A trailer of the Samsung AFI | AACTA Festival of Film can be viewed on the AACTA website (events section): www.aacta.org

Feature Films in Competition

The Samsung AFI | AACTA Festival of Film includes films by internationally established directors Fred Schepisi (***The Eye Of The Storm***), Simon Wincer (***The Cup***) and Michael Rymer (***Face To Face***), as well as the feature debuts of bright new talents, including Justin Kurzel (***Snowtown***), Ben C. Lucas (***Wasted On The Young***) and Julia Leigh (***Sleeping Beauty***).

An abundance of storytelling styles and genres are in evidence, ranging from the happy resurgence of the family film (***RED DOG*** and ***Legend Of The Guardians: The Owls Of Ga'hoole***), to offbeat romances (***Summer Coda*** and ***Griff The Invisible***), Westerns (***Red Hill***) and inventive horror films (***The Loved Ones***). Psychological thrillers (***Caught Inside***, ***Blame***, ***The Hunter***), an action adventure movie (***Sanctum***) and comedies (***A Heartbeat Away***, ***Big Mamma's Boy***) are also present; and rounding out the impressive showcase are powerful dramas (***Oranges And Sunshine***) and Indigenous stories to uplift and enlighten (***Here I Am, Mad Bastards***).

Non Feature Nominees

Nominees for the AACTA Award for Best Short Fiction Film are:

- ***Adam's Tallit*** Justin Olstein, Marie Maroun
- ***Cropped*** Bettina Hamilton, Dave Wade
- ***The Palace*** Kate Croser, Anthony Maras, Andros Achilleos
- ***The Telegram Man*** James F. Khehtie, Victoria Wharfe McIntyre

Nominees for the AACTA Award for Best Short Animation are:

- ***Forget Me Not*** Emily Dean
- ***The Missing Key*** Garth Nix, Anna McFarlane, Jonathan Nix
- ***The Moment*** Justin Wight, Kristian Moliere, Troy Bellchambers, Shane McNeil
- ***Nullarbor*** Alister Lockhart, Patrick Sarell, Katrina Mathers, Merrin Jensen, Daryl Munton



Nominees for the AACTA Award for Best Feature Length Documentary are:

- ***Life In Movement*** Sophie Hyde, Bryan Mason
- ***Mrs Carey's Concert*** Bob Connolly, Helen Panckhurst, Sophie Raymond
- ***Shut Up Little Man! An Audio Misadventure*** Sophie Hyde, Matthew Bate
- ***The Tall Man*** Darren Dale

Samsung AFI | AACTA Festival of Film dates and venues:

Sydney – Opening Night and Season Launch – Thursday 6 October – Hoyts Entertainment Quarter
Sydney Screenings from October 6 to November 10 at Hoyts Entertainment Quarter.

Melbourne – Opening Night and Season Launch – Tuesday 11 October – ACMI Cinemas
Melbourne Screenings from October 11 to November 14 at Cinema Nova and ACMI Cinemas.

For all information regarding the Samsung AFI | AACTA Festival of Film, including session times, how to access tickets and production notes for all films screening in the Festival, please visit the events section of the AACTA website: www.aacta.org

If you're passionate about movies, become a member of the AFI. Join online at www.afi.org.au or call 1300 139 697. If you're a member of the screen industry, you may qualify to become a member of AACTA: visit www.aacta.org for more information.

Notes to Editors:

The Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) was established in August 2011 with the primary role of recognising, awarding, encouraging and promoting Australian screen excellence. AACTA is the industry engagement arm of the Australian Film Institute (AFI). The AACTA Awards are a continuum of the Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards, which have been awarding screen excellence in Australia since 1958.

In the inaugural year of the Samsung AACTA Awards, to be held in January 2012, AFI members (film and television enthusiast members of the public) have the opportunity to vote within the categories of Best Short Animation and Best Short Fiction, and AACTA members (accredited screen professionals) can vote across all award categories.

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