
INDUSTRY ALERT

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Australian Shorts films claim international festival awards

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Four Australian films have recently been awarded a total of six awards from two major international festivals – the Berlin International Film Festival and the Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival.

Berlin has awarded the feature animation ***Mary and Max*** (d: Adam Elliot) a Special Mention in the Generation 14plus program, and given a Special Mention to short film ***Jerrycan*** (d: Julius Avery) in the Generation Kplus program.

Both films have had great success to date on the international festival circuit with ***Mary and Max*** selected to open the 2009 Sundance Film Festival – a first for an Australian film. ***Jerrycan*** was awarded the 2008 Jury Prize – Short Film at the Cannes Film Festival and has gone on to be selected into some of the most reputable festivals. These include the 2009 Rotterdam International Film Festival and the Sundance Film Festival where it was awarded an Honourable Mention in Short Filmmaking.

Regarded as one of the largest and most prestigious short film festivals in the world, Clermont-Ferrand bestowed awards on two Australian films. ***The Ground Beneath*** (d: René Hernandez) was selected to screen in the International Competition and was awarded the Mediatheques Award, Youth Jury Mention and Press Mention. ***My Rabbit Hoppy*** (d: Anthony Lucas), selected into the Lab Competition, was awarded the Canal + Award.

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 claymation 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 Horovitz, 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.

Shorts

The Ground Beneath

(20 mins)

Production Company: Passion Pictures

Writer/Director: René Hernandez

Producer: Kristina Ceyton

Cast: Tom Green, Rahel Abdulrahman, Jade LeBrocq, Paul Tassone

Synopsis: *The Ground Beneath* follows the emotional journey of a young teenager, Kaden, who lives a life of fear and threat. His friendship with Casey, the girl from school, and Lewis, a boy who spends time in his street, becomes a chance for change and self-discovery.

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.

My Rabbit Hoppy

(3 mins)

Director/Writer: Anthony Lucas

Producers: Anthony Lucas, Julia Lucas

Directors of Photography: Anthony Lucas, Henry Lucas

Editor: Anthony Lucas

Cast: Henry Lucas, Peggy Lucas

Synopsis: A Show-and-Tell school project about a pet rabbit goes horribly wrong.