

MEDIA RELEASE

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www.screenaustralia.gov.au

Australia makes history at Asia's leading film festival

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Pusan International Film Festival has announced its program for 2009 and, in an Australian first, seven films have been selected. The festival, which takes place in Korea, has risen to prominence as the primary Asian launch pad for independent feature films, and is recognised as a key annual event on the festival circuit.

World Cinema, a section that presents highlights of recent films from new and established directors, will screen *The Waiting City* (d: **Claire McCarthy**), *My Tehran for Sale* (d: **Granaz Moussavi**), *Last Ride* (d: **Glendyn Ivin**), *Balibo* (d: **Robert Connolly**), Cannes hit *Bright Star* (d: **Jane Campion**) and feature claymation *Mary and Max* (d: **Adam Elliot**). The Pusan invitation is the latest accolade for the films, which have already each attracted the attention of elite international festival programmers. *Mary and Max* opened the 2009 Sundance Film Festival, *Bright Star* featured in Competition at the Cannes Film Festival, while *The Waiting City*, *My Tehran for Sale*, *Last Ride* and *Balibo* are part of the 17-strong Australian line-up at this year's Toronto International Film Festival.

The final film in selection is *Coffin Rock*, the feature film debut for director **Rupert Glasson**, which will screen as part of Midnight Passion – a section dedicated to genre films.

Running alongside the festival is the Pusan Promotion Plan, a pre-market where filmmakers and producers can meet with potential co-producers and financiers and, in turn, investors and co-producers can find a diverse selection of the latest top-quality Asian projects.

The 14th Pusan International Film Festival will run 8–16 October 2009. Over 350 films from 70 countries will screen throughout the nine-day event. The Pusan Promotion Plan will run 11–14 October 2009.

Balibo

www.balibo.com

Production Company: Balibo Film Pty Ltd

Director: Robert Connolly

Writers: Robert Connolly, David Williamson

Producers: John Maynard, Rebecca Williamson

Australian Distributor: Footprint Films

International Sales: ContentFilm International

Cast: Anthony LaPaglia, Oscar Isaac, Gyton Grantley, Damon Gameau, Nathan Phillips, Mark Leonard Winter, Thomas Wright, Bea Viegas

Synopsis: As Indonesia prepares to invade the tiny nation of East Timor, five Australian-based journalists go missing. Four weeks later, veteran foreign correspondent Roger East is lured to East Timor by the young and charismatic José Ramos-Horta to tell the story of his country and investigate the fate of the missing men. *Balibo* is a political thriller that tells the true story of crimes that have been covered up for over 30 years.

Bright Star

www.brightstarthemovie.com

Production Companies: Jan Chapman Productions, Brightstar Films Ltd

Writer/Director: Jane Campion

Producers: Jan Chapman, Caroline Hewitt

Australian Distributor: Hopscotch Films

International Sales: Pathé International

Cast: Abbie Cornish, Ben Whishaw, Paul Schneider, Kerry Fox

Synopsis: John Keats, the romantic poet, wrote the love poem 'Bright Star' for his 18-year-old next-door neighbour, Fanny Brawne. This is the story of their first love.

Coffin Rock

www.coffinrockthemovie.com

Production Company: ultrafilms No 2 Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Rupert Glasson

Producers: David Lightfoot, Ayisha Davies

Australian Distributor: All Interactive Entertainment

International Sales: Bankside Films

Cast: Robert Taylor, Lisa Chappell, Sam Parsonson

Synopsis: In a remote fishing town, happily married Rob and Jess have been trying to have a baby for three long years and Jess is becoming desperate. In a drunken mistake, she sleeps with Evan, a young stranger come to town whose interest in her borders on the obsessive.

Last Ride

www.lastridemovie.com

Production Company: Last Ride Pty Ltd

Director: Glendyn Ivin

Screenplay: Mac Gudgeon (from the novel by Denise Young)

Producers: Nicholas Cole, Antonia Barnard

Australian Distributor: Madman Entertainment

International Sales: ContentFilm International

Cast: Hugo Weaving, Tom Russell, Anita Hegh, John Brumpton, Kelton Pell, Sonya Soares

Synopsis: A desperate father and his 10-year-old son are on the run from the law. Their journey into the ravishing beauty of the desert and the human heart, pits them against the elements and each other.

Mary and Max

www.maryandmax.com

Production Company: Melodrama Pictures Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Adam Elliot

Producer: Melanie Coombs

Australian Distributor: Icon Films

International Sales: Icon Entertainment International

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 claymated 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 Horowitz, 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.

My Tehran for Sale

Production Company: Cyan Films

Director Granaz Moussavi

Producers: Julie Ryan, Kate Croser, Granaz Moussavi

Cast: Marzieh Vafamehr, Amir Chegini, Asha Mehrabi

Synopsis: Marzieh is a young female actress living in Tehran whose theatre work is banned by the authorities. At an underground rave, she meets Iranian born Saman, now an Australian citizen, who offers her a way out of her country and the possibility of living without fear.

The Waiting City

Production Company: Waiting City Films Pty Ltd

Writer/Director: Claire McCarthy

Producers: Jamie Hilton, Claire McCarthy

Australian Distributor: Hopscotch Films

International Sales: H2O Motion Pictures

Cast: Radha Mitchell, Joel Edgerton, Isabel Lucas

Synopsis: The Waiting City is a mystical-infused love story set against the intoxicating, epic backdrop of Calcutta, India.