

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT CLOSING NIGHT GALA

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SYDNEY, NSW, AUSTRALIA, June 16, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The 71st Sydney Film Festival tonight awarded the prestigious Sydney Film Prize to Italian filmmaker Paola Cortellesi for her film *There's Still Tomorrow*, a moving, empowering melodrama about an industrious woman in post-WWII Rome. Cortellesi directs and stars in the film, which became a box office phenomenon in Italy, outperforming the likes of *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*.

The winner of the \$60,000 cash prize for 'audacious, cutting-edge and courageous' film was selected by a prestigious international jury headed by Bosnian writer and director Danis Tanović.

The announcement was made at the State Theatre ahead of the Australian Premiere screening of Cannes hit *The Substance*.

The awarding of the largest prize pool in Sydney Film Festival history also included Australian filmmaker James Bradley, awarded the Documentary Australia Award's \$20,000 cash price for *Welcome to Babel*, which charts Chinese-Australian artist Jiawei Shen's plans to create an epic work.

The inaugural recipient of the largest cash prize for First Nations filmmaking, the \$35,000 First Nations Award proudly supported by Truant Pictures, is New Zealand filmmaker Awanui Simich-



Sydney Film Festival1



SFF Opening Night Cinema

Pene's First Horse, a short film that follows a young Māori girl in 1826, a time when Aotearoa was on the cusp of colonisation.

The 2024 recipient of the \$40,000 Sustainable Future Award, the largest environmental film prize in the world, is American filmmaker Alina Simone for her film Black Snow, a moving documentary about a Siberian eco-activist, who fights for her community in a remote Russian mining town.

Five short film prizes were awarded for The Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films. The \$7,000 Dendy Live Action Short Award was awarded to Die Bully Die, directed by Nathan and Nick Lacey. The \$7,000 Yoram Gross Animation Award was awarded to Darwin Story, directed by Natasha Tonkin. The \$7,000 Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Director was presented to Pernell Marsden, director of The Meaningless Daydreams of Augie & Celeste.

The AFTRS Craft Award for Best Practitioner (a \$7,000 cash prize) went to Chloe Kemp, screenwriter of Say. The Event Cinemas Rising Talent Award, with a cash prize of \$7,000 was awarded to Bridget Morrison, lead actor of Say.

THE SYDNEY FILM PRIZE

On awarding the Sydney Film Prize to Italian filmmaker Paola Cortellesi's *There's Still Tomorrow*, the Jury said in a joint statement:

"We had the honour and great pleasure to experience the 12 outstanding films that comprised this year's Official Competition. At times loud and bombastic, while at others, fiercely intimate, this selection is a testament to theatrical cinema's contemporary power.

We commend the entire team at Sydney Film Festival for this year's wonderfully curated selection of films. We congratulate every filmmaker here, with gratitude to their tireless work. Each film in Competition embraced the human spirit with uncompromising artistry, unafraid. Sitting together with the audience at the gorgeously preserved State Theatre, for us this was a path breaking journey of new encounters that conjured cinematic traditions from around the world.

We award the prize to a film that welcomes audiences into one of the historic cradles of cinema. Set in post-War Italy, Paola Cortellesi's debut feature, *C'è ancora domani* (*There's Still Tomorrow*) feels intensely relevant today. We relive every woman's struggle for equality through Cortellesi's "*Delia*," we face the brutal cycles of domestic violence with an immense empathy that ultimately proclaims and affirms the virtues of democracy. *C'è ancora domani* deftly weaves humour, style, and pop music into a dazzling black-and-white cinematic event, then it delivers an ending that will take your breath away."

A box office phenomenon in its native Italy, where it outperformed *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*, *There's Still Tomorrow* is a moving, empowering melodrama about an industrious woman (played by the director herself) in post-WWII Rome.

The Festival Jury was comprised of Bosnian writer and director Danis Tanović as Jury President, joined by Indonesian director Kamila Andini, Australian producer Sheila Jayadev, US producer Jay Van Hoy, and Australian director Tony Krawitz.

Previous winners: *The Mother of All Lies* (2023); *Close* (2022); *There Is No Evil* (2021); *Parasite* (2019); *The Heiresses* (2018); *On Body and Soul* (2017); *Aquarius* (2016); *Arabian Nights* (2015); *Two Days, One Night* (2014); *Only God Forgives* (2013); *Alps* (2012); *A Separation* (2011); *Heartbeats* (2010); *Bronson* (2009); and *Hunger* (2008).

The \$10,000 Sydney-UNESCO City of Film Award, bestowed by Screen NSW to a trail-blazing NSW-based screen practitioner, went to producer Debbie Lee.

City of Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore AO said, "Film delights and excites, and this year's Sydney Film Festival brought people together to help them both escape and explain reality through the power of cinema.

"The City is a proud sponsor of the Sydney Film Festival, as we believe a rich and diverse Arts culture is an essential part of every city.

"Congratulations to everyone involved in staging this festival, and thank you to all the theatre-goers who supported this wonderful event."

Sydney Film Festival CEO Frances Wallace said, "Our 71st Sydney Film Festival has been an extraordinary success, with a remarkable turnout of film enthusiasts attending over 400 screenings, special events, and talks. This year, we showcased over 230 exceptional films from around the world, and our audiences eagerly participated in the festivities, resulting in nearly 150 sold-out sessions throughout the Festival."

Sydney Film Festival Director Nashen Moodley said, "This year, we have been privileged to showcase remarkable films from around the world, each bringing its unique voice and vision to our screens, much like the captivating Sydney Film Prize winner *There's Still Tomorrow*."

"This has been another resoundingly successful year for the Festival. It was heart-warming to see thousands of film fans finding warmth and comfort in our many screenings, coming together to experience the very best cinema from around the globe.

"Over the past 12 days, we have shared excitement, gasped at unexpected jump scares, discovered new insights about distant places, and celebrated the talents of incredible filmmakers who continue to share vital, moving stories," said Moodley.

Matt Fraser

Original Spin

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