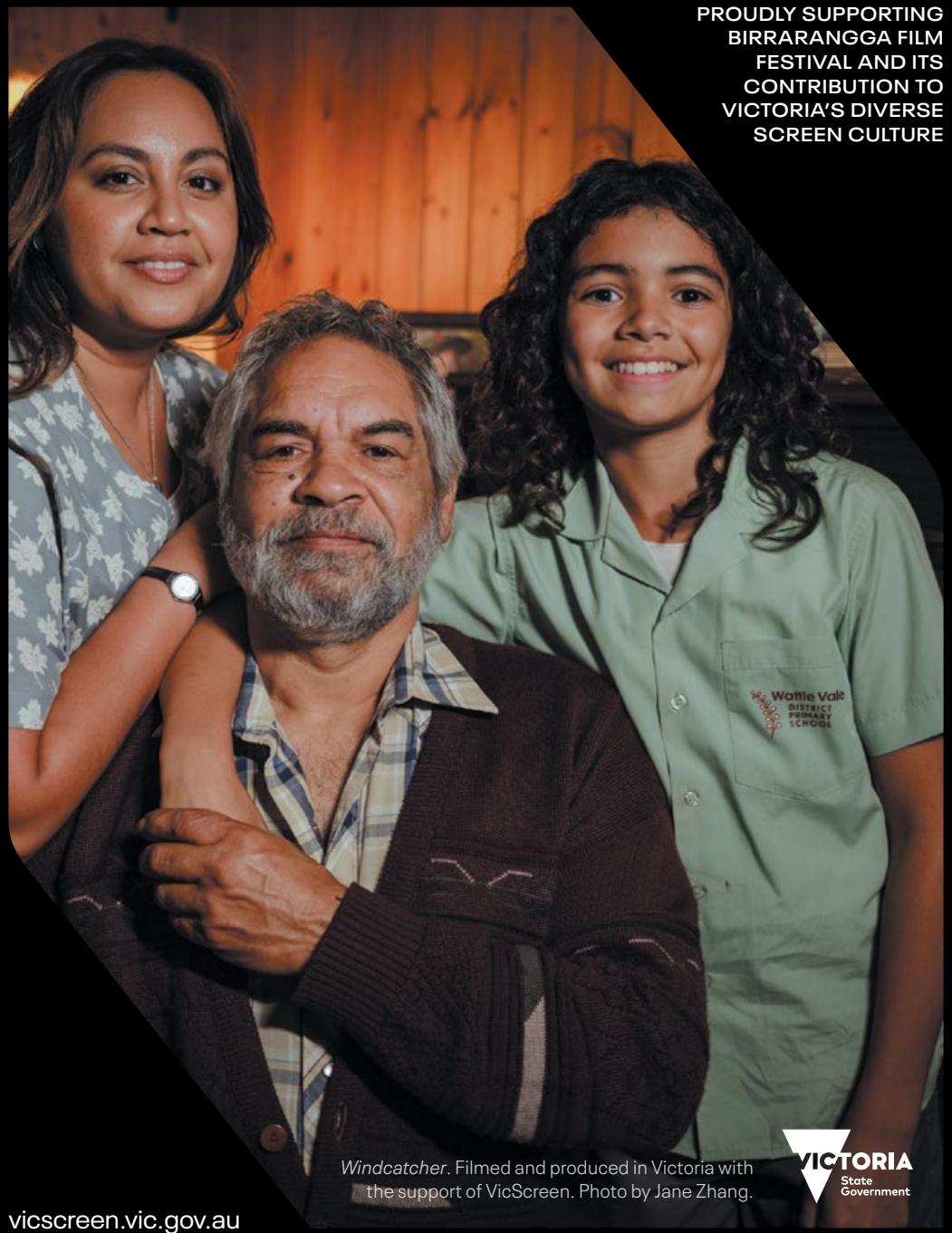
Indigenous films from across the globe.
BIRRARANGGA FILM FESTIVAL
13–18 March 2025
Naarm
TELLING OUR STORIES OUR WAY

VICSCREEN

PROUDLY SUPPORTING BIRRARANGGA FILM FESTIVAL AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO VICTORIA'S DIVERSE SCREEN CULTURE



Windcatcher. Filmed and produced in Victoria with the support of VicScreen. Photo by Jane Zhang.

VICTORIA State Government

vicscreen.vic.gov.au

WOMINJEKA

Welcome

Message from the Minister for Creative Industries

This year Birrarangga Film Festival returns bigger than ever before to share the stories and artistry of First Peoples filmmakers and screen professionals from Victoria, across the country and around the world.

Screening over 150 films in just six days, this year's program showcases the talents and perspectives of First Peoples storytellers from Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Canada, Finland, Norway, Kenya, Fiji, Peru, Taiwan and beyond. This is an extraordinary opportunity for audiences and the local screen industry to experience an incredible array of films and to dive deeper through panel discussions, performances, masterclasses, networking events and more.

The Victorian Government has proudly backed Birrarangga from the very beginning. We share the Festival's commitment to nurturing First Peoples leadership, and with Treaty underway here in Victoria, events like Birrarangga play an important role in celebrating First Peoples culture and talent, and truth-telling. Congratulations to Tony Briggs, the Birrarangga team and the many filmmakers, actors and screen talent involved.

Hon Colin Brooks MP
Minister for Creative Industries

Birrarangga Film Festival Staff

Artistic Director – Tony Briggs
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Program Producer – Steven Trosti
Associate Producer – Isabel Dilena
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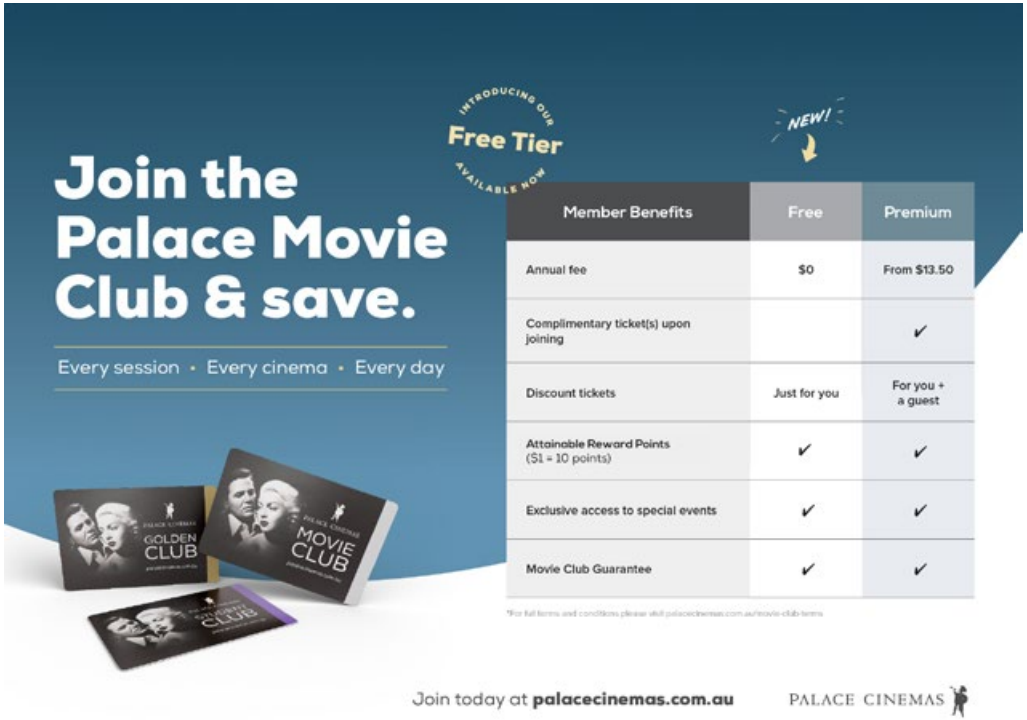
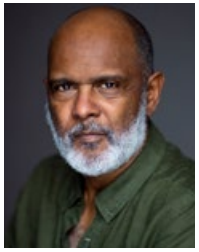




ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Welcome to the 2025 Birrarangga Film Festival! As we gather on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, I am deeply optimistic about the transformative power of Indigenous storytelling in today's world.

Our festival is a vital space for dialogue and reflection, connecting human experiences with the struggles of First Nations peoples in Australia and globally. We celebrate narratives that address the shared challenges within Indigenous communities. By honouring our resilience and complex identities, we highlight the connections that unite us and draw strength from our collective histories and hopes for the future.

Through the lens of cinema, we witness the extraordinary diversity and strength of Indigenous perspectives—from the ancient knowledge of our Elders to the bold visions of emerging storytellers who are redefining narrative sovereignty. The past few years have sparked unprecedented conversations around Indigenous rights and recognition, including the ongoing struggle for Treaty in Australia and the recent hīkoi in Aotearoa defending the Treaty of Waitangi.

What inspires me most is how our communities continue to share stories that speak truth to power and illuminate the joy, resilience, and deep cultural connections that sustain us.

This year's program reflects these themes through influential works that challenge, celebrate, and inspire. We have curated a selection of films that showcase the breadth of Indigenous creativity—from intimate personal journeys to sweeping historical epics and thought-provoking documentaries to groundbreaking dramatic works.

Each film contributes to a broader narrative of cultural renaissance and artistic excellence. Naarm, with its rich multicultural fabric and growing recognition of First Nations perspectives, provides the perfect setting for this celebration of Indigenous cinema. Sharing these stories strengthens community bonds and fosters a deeper understanding of our humanity.

I welcome you to the 2025 Birrarangga Film Festival with great pride and hope. May these films open hearts, spark conversations, and inspire pathways toward a future where Indigenous voices are celebrated, respected, and heard.

Tony Briggs
Yorta Yorta/Wurundjeri
Artistic Director
Birrarangga Film Festival

OPENING NIGHT

Je'Vida

Thurs 13 March 6.30pm
F $65 | C $50 | Blak Tix $35
The Capitol RMIT
113 Swanston St
Melbourne

The first film shot entirely in the Skolt Sámi language, tells the story of a Sámi woman in Finland facing the past she struggled to hide. Iida is a woman hardened by decades of shame, carrying the weight of a life defined by prejudice because of her Sámi heritage. Confronted by the pain of her past, she sets out for Lapland alongside her niece, Sanna, to clear out their long-held family home in preparation for its sale. Iida's instinct is to burn anything and everything connected to her heritage. However, as she ruminates on her history, Iida finds herself facing a powerful reckoning – and the possibility of reclaiming an identity she had denied herself.

Director: Katja Gauriloff (Sami)
Writers: Katja Gauriloff, Niillas Holmberg
Finland | 2024 | 103 mins
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: First Horse
It's 1826, and Aotearoa is on the cusp of colonisation. A young Māori girl's encounter with a dying man and his horse exposes her to the best and worst of her rapidly changing world.
Director: Awanui Simich-Pene (Māori) | Aotearoa

The Convert

Fri 14 March 5pm | LIDO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

When a lay preacher arrives at a British settlement in 1830s New Zealand, his violent past is drawn into question and his faith put to the test as he finds himself caught in the middle of a bloody war between Māori tribes.

Director: Lee Tamahori (Māori)
Writers: Lee Tamahori (Māori), Shane Danielsen
Aoetearoa | 2023 | 120 min | English & Māori
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: istén:'a
A poetic retelling of a visit from the artist's mother, istén:'a explores dreamspace as a meeting place for us and our late loved ones, who we always remain tethered to.
Director: KJ Edwards (Kanien'kehá:ka, mixed-settler)

Bring Them Home Aiskótáhkapiyaaya

Fri 14 March 9.15pm | LIDO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Bring Them Home/Aiskótáhkapiyaaya chronicles a decades-long initiative by members of the Blackfoot Confederacy to bring wild buffalo (Blackfeet: iinnii) back to the Blackfeet Reservation. A thriving wild buffalo population would not only reconnect Blackfeet with a central part of their heritage, spirituality and identity, but would provide economic opportunities and healing for the community. Along the way, however, the initiative faces obstacles from ranchers who see the buffalo as a threat to the cattle ranches.

Directors: Ivan MacDonald (Blackfeet), Ivy MacDonald (Blackfeet)
USA | 2024 | 84 min | English
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Ruoktojohka - Home River
In 2017, three Sámi women broke the law to protect their traditions. The Sámi people had fished the Deatnu River as a livelihood and spiritual practice for centuries until Finland enforced unprecedented restrictions on the river.
Director: Kati Eriksen (Sami) & Scott Thornton

Yintah

Fri 14 March 6.30pm | KINO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

YINTAH, meaning “land”, is a feature-length documentary on the Wet’suwet’en nation’s fight for sovereignty. Spanning more than a decade, the film follows Howilhkat Freda Huson and Sleydo’ Molly Wickham as their nation reoccupies and protects their ancestral lands from several of the largest fossil fuel companies on earth.

Directors: Jennifer Wickham (Wet’suwet’en), Brenda Michell (Wet’suwet’en) & Michael Toledano
Canada | 2023 | 125 min | English
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Nipi utaiamun
Healing and poetic essay on our intergenerational relationship with water.
Director: Uapukun Mestokosho McKenzie (Innu)

Eallogierdu - The Tundra Within Me

Fri 14 March 9.15pm | KINO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

After living for many years in Oslo, Lena moves back to Sápmi in Northern Norway with her young son to explore Sami gender in an art project. While researching in the wintry tundra, she falls in love with reindeer herder Máhtte - whose mother, the head of the family, disapproves of the relationship. As decisions from the past come to haunt her, Lena struggles to find out whether her and Máhtte’s lifestyles can ever be compatible.

Director & Writer: Sara Margrethe Oskal (Sami)
Norway | 2023 | 95 min | Sami with English subtitles
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: Ohskennón:ten Owí:ra / Little Deer
On Christmas Eve, 1967, two young Indigenous girls are forced to battle the elements and work together in order to return home to their families after a daring escape from a brutal residential school.
Director: Jonathan Elliott (Mohawk)

Red, White & Brass

Fri 14 March 7.15pm | Westgarth
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Maka, a Tongan superfan, will do whatever it takes to get tickets to the Tonga v France Rugby World Cup game - even if that means promising to deliver a brass band for the pre-match entertainment. Only problem is, the band doesn’t exist and Maka has four weeks to make one. Inspired by a true story.

Director: Damon Fepulea’i (Tongan)
Writers: Halaifonua Finau (Tongan), Damon Fepulea’i (Tongan)
Aoetearoa | 2023 | 93 min | English & Tongan
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Marlu Man
An Aboriginal man who is pushed to his limits by a racist society creates the gammonest superhero alter-ego; Marlu Man.
Director: Zac James (Wongi, Yamatji, Murri)

We Were Dangerous

Sat 15 March 2pm | LIDO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

In 1954 New Zealand Nellie, Daisy and Lou attend an institution for delinquent girls on an isolated island. The trio rail against the system, finding strength in their friendship. But this is challenged when the school’s matron divides them.

Director: Josephine Stewart-Te Whiu (Māori)
Writers: Josephine Stewart-Te Whiu (Māori), Maddie Dai
Aoetearoa | 2024 | 82 min | English & Māori
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: Pō’ele Wai
While navigating between survival and her connection to the land, a weaver experiences a transformation when she finds out her drinking water has been poisoned by fuel leaking into O’ahu’s watersheds.
Director: Tiare Ribeaux (Kanaka ‘Oiwi)

The Knowing

Sat 15 March 6pm | LIDO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Acclaimed journalist Tanya Talaga brings her evocative storytelling from the page to the screen with her search for a long-lost matriarch named Annie, solving an 80-year-old family mystery. With lush cinematography and evocative storytelling, Anishinaabe journalist Tanya Talaga embarks on a deeply personal search to find out what happened to her great-great-grandmother in The Knowing.

Directors & Writers: Tanya Talaga (Anishinaabe) & Courtney Montour (Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk))
Canada | 2024 | 88 min |
English & Cree
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: pî-kiwîk
pî-kiwîk, will bring viewers on a heartfelt journey of how reconnecting to one's culture and family can be life-changing, grounding and how it can provide a sense of belonging, pride and purpose.
Director: Keisha Erwin (2S nihithaw (Woods Cree))

Ellos eatnu - La elva leve Let the River Flow

Sat 15 March 2pm | CLASSIC
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Based on true events that inspired a generation of young Norwegians, writer/director Ole Giæver's elegant, multi award-winning historical drama follows a young woman who is unintentionally drawn into a protest against a dam that may flood Indigenous Sámi land.

Director & Writer: Ole Giæver (Sami), Norway | 2023 | 124 min |
North Sami with English subtitles
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Meet Me at the Creek
In order to revitalize cultural traditions, a Cherokee elder fights to restore the 'irreversibly damaged' Tar Creek.
Director: Loren Waters (Cherokee)

Ka Whawhai Tonu

Sat 15 March 4.30pm | CLASSIC
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Set in Aotearoa New Zealand in 1864, Ka Whawhai Tonu tells the story of a pivotal battle in the first New Zealand land wars in the Waikato region. A battle fought with impossible odds between Māori and the Colonial forces. This heroic conflict is told through the eyes of two young teenagers forced to take control of their own destiny amidst the chaos of the battle and their escape.

Director: Michael Jonathan (Māori)
Writers: Tim Worrall (Māori)
Aoetearoa | 2024 | 114 min |
Māori with English subtitles
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: Birds in the Earth
Birds in the Earth is a short film based on dance, telling a bit of a melancholic story about Sámi people's rights in today's Finland, the Sámi being the Indigenous people of Northern Europe.
Director: Marja Helander (Sami)

The Legends of the Eternal Snow

Sat 15 March 1pm | KINO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

In the vast snowy expanses of Yakutia, a drama unfolds. An older man, Khabyy, along with two companions, must deliver the young Kiluk as a bride for an old prince. Taken from her parents' yurt in exchange for a rich dowry, she longs to escape back home, but Khabyy is harsh and unrelenting. Only the young Nyukus tries to ease her plight. As they travel, feelings develop between them.

Director: Alexei Romanov (Sakha)
Writers: Lyubov Borisova (Sakha), Alexey Romanov (Sakha)
Russia | 2024 | 80 min |
Sakha with English subtitles
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: Ahi and the Stars
A Māori boy from the Coast seeks answers to his Mum's disappearance after their move to Auckland ends in a mysterious tragedy. With the coming of Matariki and Hine-nui-te-Pō, all will be revealed.
Director: Angela Cudd (Māori)

Vaychiletik

Sat 15 March 7pm | KINO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

This film is a fragment of Juan Javier Pérez's father's life, a story Juan has known since childhood. Through his dreams, José received a gift given by the gods. A gift that brings consequences. Now that he is at a mature age in life, José would like to rest, but he is not allowed. Vaychiletik explores this fierce yet beautiful reality, forged from the dreams of the Mayan people of Mexico.

Director & Writer: Juan Javier Pérez (Tsotsil from the Maya people)
Mexico | 2021 | 83 min | Spanish with English subtitles
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: We are not speaking the same language
Thinking back on her only phone call with her maternal grandmother, Danika explains her connection to her Indigenous identity (and her grandmother) through beadwork.
Director: Danika St-Laurent (Ojibwe-Cree, Saulteaux)

The Lost Tiger

Sat 15 March 11am | WESTGARTH
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Teo carries with him a mysterious crystal necklace, the only clue left by those who abandoned him. An adventure for the whole family, The Lost Tiger is the first animated feature from Australia to be written and directed by an Indigenous woman.

Director: Chantelle Murray (Bardi)
Writers: Chantelle Murray (Bardi) & Philip Tarl Denson
Australia | 2025 | 82 min | English
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: The Queen's Flower
A magical take on a true story, The Queen's Flowers is an animated short adventure for kids that follows Emma, a native Hawaiian girl in 1915 Honolulu, as she makes a special gift for the last monarch of Hawai`i, Queen Lili`uokalani.
Director: Ciara Leina'ala Lacy (Native Hawaiian)

The Mountain

Sat 15 March 4pm | WESTGARTH
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Sam, a fearless young girl raised outside of her Māori culture, is determined to fulfil her mission of connecting with her mountain in the hope they can heal her from the cancer she battles. Along the way she meets some misfits and new kids in town.

Director: Rachel House (Ngati Mutunga, Te Atiawa and Ngai Tahu)
Writers: Rachel House & Tom Furniss
Aotearoa | 2023 | 89 min | English & Maori
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Whistling Woods
Snacks, board games, staring at their phones - these kids have done everything they can to stave off boredom. Except something they were told NEVER to do - whistle into the dark dark woods and lure the dark spirits within.
Director: Barry Bilinsky (Métis, Cree & Ukrainian)

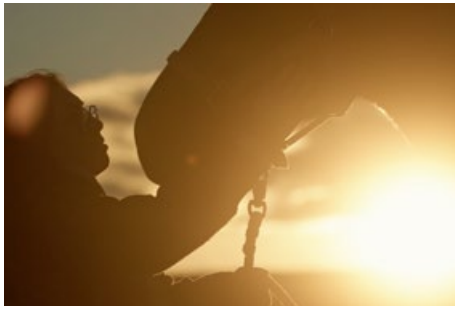
Telling Our Story Part 1 & 2

Sat 15 March 4.30pm | Treasury Theatre
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Part 1: Territory & Part 2: Identity
Abenaki, Anishinaabe, Atikamekw, Cree of Eeyou Istchee, Innu, Inuit, Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), Mi'kmaq, Naskapi, Huron-Wendat, and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) tell us in their own way and from their perspective, their worldview, their connection to the Land, their values, their spirituality and their stories.

Director & Writer: Kim O'Bomsawin (Abenaki Nation)
Canada | 2023 | 104 min | English, French, Abenaki, Anishinaabemowin, Atikamekw, Cree, Innu-aimun, Inuktitut, Kanyen'kéha, Mi'kmaq, Naskapi, Wendat, Wolastoqey
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Enchukunoto (The Return)
Laissa Malih, the first female Maasai filmmaker, returns to the community her parents left behind in this personal look at how the lands of her forefathers are being reshaped by climate change.
Director: Laissa Malih (Maasai)



Aitamaako'Tamisskapi Natosi: Before The Sun

Sat 15 March 1pm | VCA Cinema
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

An intimate and thrilling portrait of a young Siksika woman Logan Red Crow and the deep bonds between her father and family in the golden plains of Blackfoot Territory as she prepares for one of the most dangerous horse races in the world...the Indian Relay.

Director: Banchi Hanuse (Nuxalk)
Writers: Banchi Hanuse & Tanya Maryniak
Canada | 2023 | 89 min |
English, Blackfoot & English Subtitles
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Ancestral Threads
Triggering historical trauma, former model, Joleen Mitton is on a mission to use fashion as medicine for Vancouver's Indigenous community.
Director: Sean Stiller
(William's Lake First Nation (T'exelc), part of the Secwépemc Nation.)

Taki Rua Theatre - Breaking Barriers

Sat 15 March 3.15pm | VCA Cinema
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers tells the story of our unofficial Māori national theatre and the 30 year struggle to create a truly bicultural force in live theatre and society, and the wāhine toa and activists who agitated for a better world. From humble beginnings, Taki Rua presents a depth of talent powerful enough to take thevoice of Māori across the nation and to the world.

Director & Writer: Whetū Fala (Nga Rauru Kitahi, Te Ati Haunui-a-Paparangi, Ngati Maniapoto, Ngati Maru ki Taranaki, Samoa, Rotuma)
Aotearoa | 2024 | 80 min |
English, Maori & English Subtitles
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Armea
Steeped in symbolism and no larger than a child's hand, the diminutive bird known as the Armea is found in only one place on Earth: the Pacific island of Rotuma.
Director: Letila Mitchell (Rotuman)

Veins of the Amazon

Sat 15 March 6pm | VCA Cinema
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

A century ago, steamships were the only means of transport for commodities and native people navigating the Amazon river, reminiscences of the colonial traces of Fitzcarraldo and the atrocities committed during the rubber extraction in the XIX century.

Directors & Writers: Alvaro Sarmiento (Quechua), Terje Toomistu (Quechua) & Diego Sarmiento (Quechua)
Peru | 2021 | 72 min |
Spanish & English Subtitles
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Nimeshkanaminan
Two young Innu women take up the old roads of the past to revive the identity of their Nation; a tribute to the Elders, the territory and the Innu people.
Director: Laura Fontaine (Innu) & Yasmine Fontaine (Innu)

Uproar

Sun 16 March 5pm | LIDO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Uproar is the story of 17-year-old Josh Waaka (played by Julian Dennison). Set in Dunedin in 1981, a rugby-obsessed country is divided over the arrival of the South African Springboks team, sparking nationwide protests. Under pressure from home and school to conform, Josh, who has never felt like he fits in anywhere, is inspired by the protests and by a newfound passion for performing to find his own voice. A sequence of events sees Josh embrace his community and his Māori heritage, taking him and his family on a journey towards healing.

Directors: Hamish Bennett(Te Arawa, Ngapuhi, Kai Tahu) & Paul Middleditch
Writers: Hamish Bennett & Sonia Whiteman
Aotearoa | 2023 | 110 min |
English & Maori
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Tayal Forest Club
In this coming-of-age tale from Taiwan's first Indigenous female director, two Tayal youth learn to navigate life's challenges.
Director: Laha Mebow(Tayal)

Twice Colonized

Sun 16 March 8pm | LIDO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Renowned Inuit lawyer Aaju Peter has led a lifelong fight for the rights of her people. When her son suddenly dies, Aaju embarks on a journey to reclaim her language and culture after a lifetime of whitewashing and forced assimilation. But is it possible to change the world and mend your own wounds at the same time?

Director: Lin Alluna Writer: Aaju Peter (Greenland Inuk)
Canada | 2023 | 90 min |
English, Inuktitut & Greenlandic
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: L'Innu du futur
An ode to the land in relation to my double identity as an urban Indigenous person. A story that is both personal and poetic.
Director: Stéphane Nepton (Innu)

The Haka Party Incident

Sun 16 March 2pm | KINO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

On May 1st, 1979, a group of young Māori and Pasifika activists, He Taua, confronted a gathering of University of Auckland engineering students as they rehearsed their 'mock' haka for their capping parade. The fracas that followed prompted the nation to confront systemic racism and instigate change for a better and more equal partnership between Pākehā and Māori.

Director & Writer: Katie Wolfe (Ngati Mutunga Ngati Tama, Ngati Toa Rangatira)
Aotearoa | 2024 | 90 min |
English & Maori
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: Qu'est-ce que je te montrerai?
In the tradition of direct cinema, "What Will I Show You" is an intimate documentary in which a grandfather and his grandson discuss the past and future of Innu culture.
Director: Elie-John Joseph (Innu)

The New Boy

Sun 16 March 4.45pm | KINO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Set in 1940s Australia, "The New Boy" is the story of a nine-year-old Aboriginal orphan boy (Aswan Reid) who arrives in the dead of night at a remote monastery run by a renegade nun (Cate Blanchett), where his presence disturbs the delicately-balanced world in this story of spiritual struggle and the cost of survival.

Director & Writer: Warwick Thorton (Kaytej)
Australia | 2023 | 116 min |
English
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: Rapido
A young boys fascination with war comics comes closer to home than he ever imagined.
Director: Richard J Curtis (Ngati Rongomai, Ngati Pikiao, Te Arawa)

Singing Back The Buffalo

Sun 16 March 8pm | KINO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Award-winning Cree filmmaker Tasha Hubbard's (nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up, Birth of a Family) feature length film Singing Back the Buffalo follows Indigenous visionaries, scientists and communities who are rematriating the buffalo to the heart of the North American plains they once defined, signaling a turning point for Indigenous nations, the ecosystem, and all of our collective survival.

Director & Writer: Tasha Hubbard (Cree)
Canada | 2024 | 99 min |
English
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: The Past and The Future of The Arctic
The film will explore the few positives, and many negative aspects of the warming.
Director: Hans Pieski (sämmiláš)

Free Leonard Peltier MIFF Co-presentation

Sun 16 March 5pm | Westgarth
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Leonard Peltier, one of the surviving leaders of the American Indian Movement, has been in prison for 50 years following a contentious conviction. A new generation of Native activists are committed to winning his freedom before he dies.

A special Southern Hemisphere Premiere Co-presentation screening with Melbourne International Film Festival.

Directors & Writers: Jesse Short Bull (Oglala Sioux Tribe) & David France
USA | 2025 | 110 min | English
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: Northern Comfort: A Drive Around Town
A short documentary on life in Northern Quebec and the differences in living conditions between local Crees and non-Natives.
Director: Melanie Lameboy (Eeyou (Crie-Cree))

Telling Our Story Part 3 & 4

Sun 16 March 6.45pm | Treasury Theatre
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Part 3: Spirituality & Part 4: Rebuilding Abenaki, Anishinaabe, Atikamekw, Cree of Eeyou Istchee, Innu, Inuit, Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), Mi'kmaq, Naskapi, Huron-Wendat, and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) tell us in their own way and from their perspective, their worldview, their connection to the Land, their values and their spirituality.

Director & Writer: Kim O'Bomsawin (Abenaki Nation)
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Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Ma ŋaye ka Masaala a se ka Wɔmɛti- From God To Man
Filmmaker Lansana Mansaray goes back to his ancestral village in this first-ever documentary about the Limba people of Sierra Leone.
Director: Lansana Mansaray (Limba)

CENTREPIECE GALA

Origin with live performance by Stan Walker

Sat 15 March 6.30pm
F $65 | C $50 | Blak Tix $35
The Capitol RMIT
113 Swanston St
Melbourne

ORIGIN chronicles the tragedy and triumph of Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Isabel Wilkerson as she investigates a global phenomenon of epic proportions. Portrayed by Academy Award nominee Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor (King Richard), Isabel experiences unfathomable personal loss and love as she crosses continents and cultures to craft one of the defining American books of our time. Inspired by the New York Times best-seller Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents, ORIGIN explores the mystery of history, the wonders of romance and a fight for the future of us all.

Director & Writer: Ava DuVernay
USA | 2024 | 141 mins
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: Just Beneath The Surface
On a fishing trip, a man struggles with a strange and menacing ocean. Will he fight against nature's forces, or submit to its power?
Director: Jimmy John Thaiday (Peiudu) | Australia

FESTIVAL CALENDAR

Feature Shorts In Conversation

AM 11 12 PM 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

THUR 13

OPENING NIGHT Je'Vida The Capitol

FRI 14

Ivan Sen Masterclass Sofitel
The Convert LIDO
Bring Them Home LIDO
REframed TT
Sapmi TT
Lucky Us TT
Yintah KINO
Tundra within Me KINO
Red, White & Brass Westgarth

SAT 15

Kyndoo Wilam TT
Age of AI Panel TT
Wayibu TT
Telling Our Story TT
The Lost Tiger Westgarth
We Dangerous LIDO
The Mountain Westgarth
Origin Gala Event with Stan Walker Live The Capitol
Before the Sun VCA
Taki Rua Theatre VCA
Veins of Amazon VCA
The Legends KINO
Vaychiletik KINO
Let the River Flow CLASSIC
Ka Whawhai Tonu CLASSIC
The Knowing LIDO

SUN 16

ÁRRAN 360° NANT STUDIOS DOCKLANDS
Kyindoo Wilam TT
Iti Pounamu TT
Endurance TT
Our Stories Panel TT
Telling Our Story TT
LIMBO VCA
Itu Ninu VCA
Mahccan VCA
Boil Alert VCA
The Haka Party KINO
The New Boy KINO
Singing Back Buffalo KINO
Uproar LIDO
Twice Colonized LIDO
Free Leonard Westgarth

MON 17

Sugarcane KINO
Our Warrior Westgarth
Seeds LIDO
Tautuktavuk TT
Mama Kino

TUES 18

CLOSING NIGHT Tinā ACMI C1

Limbo

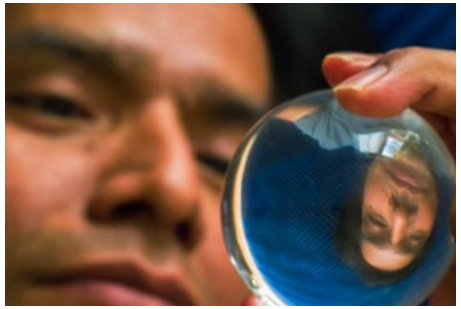
Sun 16 March 12pm | VCA Cinema
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

A detective arrives in a small Australian outback city to research a twenty-year-old unsolved homicide of a neighborhood Aboriginal lady. Forming bonds with the sufferer's fractured household, Travis unravels a collection of arduous truths, highlighting the complexities of loss and injustice skilled by First Nations Australians.

A VicScreen sponsored event.

Director & Writer: Ivan Sen (Gamilaroi)
Australia | 2023 | 108 min | English
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: Ajá (Water)
This essay makes an exploration and reinterpretation of the chontal people's mystic ceremony of rain pleading.
Director: Dennis Noel López Sosa (Chontal & Inuk)



Itu Ninu

Sun 16 March 3pm | VCA Cinema
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

In the not-so-distant future of 2084, Ángel finds himself as a climate migrant trapped in an undisclosed city, where surveillance reigns supreme. Amidst a bleak and oppressive existence, Ángel makes a living by cultivating plants, preserving the fading wisdom of seeds that once bloomed freely.

Director: Itandehui Jansen (Mixtec)
Writer: Armando Bautista Garcia (Mixtec)
Mexico | 2023 | 72 min | Mixtec, Spanish & English Subtitles
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: The Difference Between Pipi & Pupu
An estranged son, Tai, is called home to his father's deathbed. He must find the courage to confront a family secret and resolve the conflict between him and his father Putty, before it's too late.
Director: Tajim Mohammed-Kapa (Ngapuhi, Ngati Rehia)

Máhccan - Homecoming

Sun 16 March 5.15pm | VCA Cinema
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Set in the Museum world in a turning point, where the national museums have to deal with their colonialistic history. The National Museum of Finland returned thousands of everyday objects taken from the indigenous Sámi people back to them. Filmmaker Suvi West takes the audience behind the scenes of the museum world, revealing a visual, philosophical, and spiritual realm.

Directors: Suvi West (Sami) & Anssi Kömi
Writer: Suvi West (Sami)
Norway & Finland | 2023 | 76 min | Sami & English Subtitles
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Son of Sāmoa
Through Tatau, Laman explores his disconnection from family and community while learning the importance of belonging and how to navigate that through cultural traditions.
Director: Laman Time (Samoan)

Boil Alert

Sun 16 March 7.30pm | VCA Cinema
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

An Indigenous woman goes on a journey through First Nations reservations to shine a light on the devastating struggle for clean water and discovers herself in the process. This poignant exploration illuminates the human dimension of the water crisis in indigenous communities, as well as the impact it is having upon Native identity.

Directors: Stevie Salas (Mescalero Apache) & James Burns
Canada & USA | 2024 | 104 min | English
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Babanil
A dreamlike expression of the Director's intergenerational connection to Country. A connection available to everyone who loves and cares for a place.
Director: Marlikka Perdrisat (Nyikina Warrwa and Wangkumara Barkindji)

Windcatcher

Mon 17 March 1.30pm | Treasury Theatre
Free Screening for Schools only

Sun 23 March 4pm | Fed Square
Free Screening

Ten-year-old Percy Boy Collins and his eclectic crew of friends outsmart a gang of bullies to triumph at their school's athletics carnival, emerging as heroes of their own epic adventure.

Director: Tannith Glynn-Maloney (Kaytetye and Luritja)
Writer: Boyd Quakawoot (Yawibara)
Australia | 2024 | 80 min | English
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: Tuia Ngā Here
16-year-old Hiwa who returns to her rural home from boarding school to discover her grandfather is terminally ill and unable to continue his lifes work of land conservation.
Directors: Kura Turuwhenua (Kāi Tahu, Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Porou) & Heriata Rurehe (Ngāti Porou, Ngātu Kahungunu, Ngāti Toarangatira, Ngāti Tukorehe, Ngāti Raukawa)

Seeds

Mon 17 March 8pm | LIDO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Ziggy is offered her first gig as an online influencer, promoting for Nature's Oath, a seed and fertilizer company. When her cousin summons her back to the rez, she is forced into a battle to save her people's legacy, finding her power along the way.

Director & Writer: Kaniehtiio Horn (Mohawk)
Canada | 2024 | 82 min | English
Unclassified- Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: Hokia
A strained family dynamic unravels on a road trip to an unknown destination. On this tense journey, Hokia weaves a poignant narrative of understanding and the complexity of familial bonds.
Director: India Fremaux(Ngati Rangiteaorere, Te Rarawa)

Sugarcane

Mon 17 March 5pm | KINO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

In 2021, evidence of unmarked graves was discovered on the grounds of an Indian residential school run by the Catholic Church in Canada. After years of silence, the forced separation, assimilation and abuse many children experienced at these segregated boarding schools was brought to light, sparking a national outcry against a system designed to destroy Indigenous communities.

Directors: Julian Brave NoiseCat (Canim Lake Band Tsq'escen, Lil'Wat Nation) & Emily Kassie
Canada & USA | 2024 | 111 min | English
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: Djalbuyan Nahra
Taken from her community, Nahra returns home to confront past traumas and reconnect with her people, land, and waters after 8 years away.
Director: Jahvis Loveday (Bundjalung and Djiru)

Mamá

Mon 17 March 7.45pm | KINO
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

As a Mexican Tsotsil I grew up between the sacrality both of Guadalupe Virgin and Mother Earth. As a son, I grew up among the derision of not having a father and blaming my mother for it. 'Mom' is a dialogue between mother and son exploring their contradictions, knowing and recognizing each other, and reflecting on naturalized violence and its reproduction.

Director & Writer: Xun Sero(Tzotzil people of Mitontic)
Mexico | 2022 | 80 min | Spanish, Tzotzil (Mayan language) & English Subtitles
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: baban darrang (mother tree)
baban darrang reflects on Mandy Nicholson's journey of seeking out and connecting with knowledge throughout her life.
Director: Genevieve Grieves (Worimi)

Our Warrior - The Story of Robbie Thorpe

Mon 17 March 7.30pm | Westgarth
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

A story of resistance across generations, the power of family and the unrelenting struggle for justice in a country that remains in denial. Controversial and uncompromising, Australian Aboriginal political activist Robbie Thorpe stands as part of a long line of Indigenous resistance to invasion. Robbie draws the threads of two centuries of oppression together by relentlessly focusing our attention on the core injustices. His messages are critical to modern Australia.

Director: Anthony Kelly
Writers: Robbie Thorpe (Krauatungalung (Gurnai) & Djapwurrung (Gunditjmara)) & Anthony Kelly
Australia | 2025 | 53 min | English
Unclassified – No age restrictions

Preview Short: In My Hand
In My Hand is a compelling true story that explores personal and historical struggles of the Sámi people.
Director: Marja Helander (Sami) & Liselotte Wajstedt (Sami)

Tautuktavuk (What We See)

Mon 17 March 6pm | Treasury Theatre
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Blurring the line between narrative and non-fiction, Uyarak and her eldest sister Saqpinak, embark on a difficult healing journey after a traumatic event that reminds them of the importance of community, culture, and family.
The film explores issues of domestic violence and substance abuse from the perspective of two Inuit women.

Directors & Writers: Lucy Tulugarjuk (Inuk) & Carol Kunnuk (Inuk)
Canada | 2023 | 82 min | Inuktitut & English Subtitles
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: Pītiti
When a mischievous Māori boy jumps a fence and pinches a peach from his neighbour's tree, he sets off a clash that will change him forever.
Director: Tajim Mohammed-Kapa (Ngapuhi, Ngati Rehia)

CLOSING NIGHT

Tinā

Tues 18 March 6.30pm | ACMI Cinema 1
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

TINĀ is an inspiring drama, a light-hearted rhythmic tear-jerker, and the story of Samoan teacher Mareta Percival. Struggling after the death of her daughter in the Christchurch earthquakes, Mareta reluctantly takes on a role as a substitute teacher at an elite private school and is surprised to find children in desperate need of guidance, inspiration, and love. Using the symphony of her culture to empower her students, she forms a choir, bringing them together while unexpectedly rediscovering her passion again for being a teacher and mother.

Director & Writer: Miki Magasiva (Samoan)
Aotearoa | 2025 | 124 min | English
Unclassified – Restricted to persons 15+ unless accompanied by an adult

Preview Short: Lea Tupu'anga - Mother Tongue
A speech therapist misrepresents her language skills and is challenged by her Tongan patient to reconnect with her heritage.
Director: Vea Mafile'o (Tongan)

ÁRRAN 360°

Sunday 16 March 10am | 12.30pm | 3pm | 5.30pm | 8.30pm
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13 | 3 Pass $45 | 5 Pass $75
Unclassified – No age restrictions

NANT Studios
Docklands Studios

Premiering at Venice Biennale in 2022, six unique Sami filmmakers from all over Sápmi were selected to create new works for ÁRRAN 360° presented on a 360 degree screen. Together, they made visible the willingness to explore and investigate new mediums for Sami storytelling, and stood for cinematic and digital pioneering work. The 360-degree format has previously been primarily used as a visual technique, and to a small extent has been tested in the development of story-driven films with a clear narrative. Six new films from six Sami filmmakers, shot with a unique camera rig consisting of six cameras presented on a 360 degree screen at NANT Studios in Docklands. Presented in partnership with the International Sami Film Institute.

Films

OVIAS
Director/Writer: Ann Holmgren Aurebekk
A young woman embarks on a journey into a dreamlike parallel world to discover that every small action we do in this world has a direct resonance in a myriad of other realms.

EALLU GIRDNU - Reindeer Corral
Director/Writer: Elle Márjá Eira
Standing in the heart of the girdnu (reindeer corral) surrounded by reindeer moving in a circular motion, the viewer will experience a sense of the great forces that exist at the heart of reindeer herding.

MUOHTAČALMMIT
Director/Writer: Hans Pieski
The enormous power of water and people's dependence on it will be considered in this surreal video artwork.

EADNI– Mother
Director/Writer: Liselotte Wajstedt
Háldi is a forest animal who can lure children into the forest. Is it just part of Sami mythology or is it as real as you and me?

ÁFRUVVÁ – Mermaid
Director/Writer: Marja Helander
Áfruvvá is a Sami sea creature, the ghost of a drowned person. Longing for warmth, she emerges from the sea to a world devoid of humans and experiences humanity through an abandoned museum.

DAATE DIJJIEN
Director/Writer: Siljá Somby
After a sacred Sami drum is abducted by a Christian priest, we are taken on a journey beyond space and time that reveals more about the drum's innate power.

ÁRRAN 360° 2.0

Sunday 16 March 11.30am | 2pm | 4.30pm | 7pm
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13 | 3 Pass $45 | 5 Pass $75
Unclassified – No age restrictions

NANT Studios
Docklands Studios

Premiering at Bodø2024 European Capital of Culture, ÁRRAN 360° enters a new phase, ÁRRAN 2.0, presenting five new 360-degree films. This first-of-its-kind film project features original 360-degree films created by leading Sámi filmmakers from across Sápmi. The 360-degree format has previously been primarily used as a visual technique, and to a small extent has been tested in the development of story-driven films with a clear narrative. Five new films from Sami filmmakers, shot with a unique camera rig consisting of six cameras presented on a 360 degree screen at NANT Studios in Docklands. Presented in partnership with the International Sami Film Institute.

Films

DUIDDO
Director/Writer: Siljá Somby
Rássegáldu and its hidden mythical presence bear witness to ancient holistic beliefs about humanity and its connection to nature.

IN MY HAND
Directors/Writers: Marja Helander & Liselotte Wajstedt
A compelling true story, narrated by Niillas Somby, that explores the personal and historical struggles of the Sámi people. The film navigates between imprisonment, protests, and surreal encounters, providing a unique insight into one man's extraordinary journey. It concludes with a powerful call to action for the preservation of nature.

OVIAS 2
Director/Writer: Ann Holmgren
We have all heard of SAIVO, but what is the otherworld of their world? A short visual exploration of the world of OVIAS in the genre of Indigenous Futurism.

MÁILMMITTKUS
Directors/Writers: Hans Pieski & Arttu Nieminen
A surreal journey to the complex relationship between Indigenous peoples and the unstoppable force of technological progression. The film depicts different stages of technological advancement and their effects on Indigenous peoples.Modern technology is often seen as a downfall of sustainable ways of living on the land. Still, according to many historians, the Sámi have themselves, at least partly, embraced and welcomed the technical revolution also in the past.

PCA-TV 270
Directors/Writers: Ken Are Bongo & Joar Nango
The architecture around us not only tells us who we are but also who we aspire to be. Contemporary architecture lacks self-reflective and critical discussions. To understand contexts, we need to examine the built environment around us.

BIRRARANGGA SHORTS

REframed NDN Animation

Fri 14 March 6pm | Treasury Theatre
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

A program of Animated shorts from Canada curated by Terril Calder. One of the foremost Métis media artists practicing in Canada today, Terril is a multi-disciplinary creator born in Fort Frances, Ontario. Calder's Métis lineage is from the Red River Settlement and the Orkney Cree Métis. While her current practice is focused on stop-motion projects, which she writes, directs, crafts and animates, Calder also has an extensive background in performance art, visual art and media art.

Stories From Sápmi

Fri 14 March 7pm | Treasury Theatre
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

A selection of Sápmi shorts curated by Anne Lajla Utsi, CEO of the International Sami Film Institute. Anne Lajla belongs to the Sámi people and is a founder & CEO for the International Sami Film Institute (ISFI) since 2009. Utsi has worked in the film and media industry for 25 years as a film director, film festival manager, journalist, and producer. She has served as an advisor for Walt Disney Animation Studios and as leader of the Sámi cultural expert group working with the filmmakers of Frozen 2.

Lucky US

Fri 14 March 5pm | Treasury Theatre
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

A selection of Indigenous Queer shorts from Canada curated by Jason Ryle. Jason is an independent producer, curator and story editor, and the International Programmer for Australia, New Zealand, and Global Indigenous Cinema at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). Through his mother, he is Anishinaabe and a member of Obushkudayang/Lake St. Martin First Nation in Manitoba, and has spent his career working within the Indigenous media arts community.

Kyindoo Wilam Bubup

Sat 15 March 11am | Treasury Theatre
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Kyindoo Wilam Bubup (Learning Place for children): A selection of animations and short films from across the world. This is a place where children, teenagers and adults can come to watch and learn. Stories that are beautifully expressed with honesty and warmth yet highlighting the negative impact of colonisation and the profound strength through the connection to culture by Indigenous people.

BIRRARANGGA SHORTS

Wayibu Dhumba

Sat 15 March 2.45pm | Treasury Theatre
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Wayibu Dhumba means 'little talk or short stories' in Woiwurrung, the language of the Wurundjeri people. A selection of Australian short films curated by our Artistic Director Tony Briggs. Come on a journey with us and share in the yarns from mob across Australia.

Kyindoo Wilam Wayalak ba Burnay

Sun 16 March 11am | Treasury Theatre
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

Kyindoo Wilam Wayalak ba Burnay (Learning Place for Teenagers): A selection of animations and short films from across the world. This is a place where teenagers and adults can come to watch and learn. Stories that are beautifully expressed with honesty and warmth yet highlighting the negative impact of colonisation and the profound strength through the connection to culture by Indigenous people.

Iti Pounamu

Sun 16 March 12.45pm | Treasury Theatre
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

A selection of shorts curated by Heperi Mita and Awanui Simich-Pene from Aotearoa. This is a play on the proverb "Ahakoa he iti he pounamu" - which literally translates to "Although it is small, it is precious" (pounamu is the Māori word for jade which constitutes the majority of Māori jewelry). Hepi is a Māori film maker and film archivist from New Zealand. His documentary MERATA: HOW MUM DECOLONISED THE SCREEN premiered at Sundance Film Festival. Awanui Simich-Pene is a filmmaker and television director of proud Māori and Croatian descent.

Endurance – Stories That Heal, Stories That Hold

Sun 16 March 2.45pm | Treasury Theatre
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13
3 Film Pass $45 | 5 Film Pass $75

A selection of Indigenous short films from across the Globe curated by our Artistic Director Tony Briggs.

BIRRARANGGA IN CONVERSATION

Sovereign Code: First Nations in the Age of AI

Sat 15 March 12.30pm | Treasury Theatre
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13 |
3 Pass $45 | 5 Pass $75

A panel discussing First Nations in the age of AI moderated by Jason Ryle with Director Whetū Fala, futurist David Pledger, Professor Angie Abdilla and BFF Artistic Director Tony Briggs.

Telling Our Stories, Our Way

Sun 16 March 4.30pm | Treasury Theatre
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13 |
3 Pass $45 | 5 Pass $75

Join our International screen leaders in a discussion that explores the idea of Story Sovereignty and examines the age-old question of “who gets to tell Indigenous stories and why?”

BIRRARANGGA MASTERCLASS

Ivan Sen Masterclass

Fri 14 March 5pm | Sofitel - Arthur Streeton Auditorium
F $22 | C $17 | Blak Tix $13 |
3 Pass $45 | 5 Pass $75

Join us for a 3-hour Masterclass with award-winning Director Ivan Sen. Presented in collaboration with VicScreen, this Masterclass will cover many facets of the filmmaking process- writing, directing, cinematography, editing and music composition. Ivan is an auteur and will discuss all of his filmmaking practices.

A VicScreen sponsored event.

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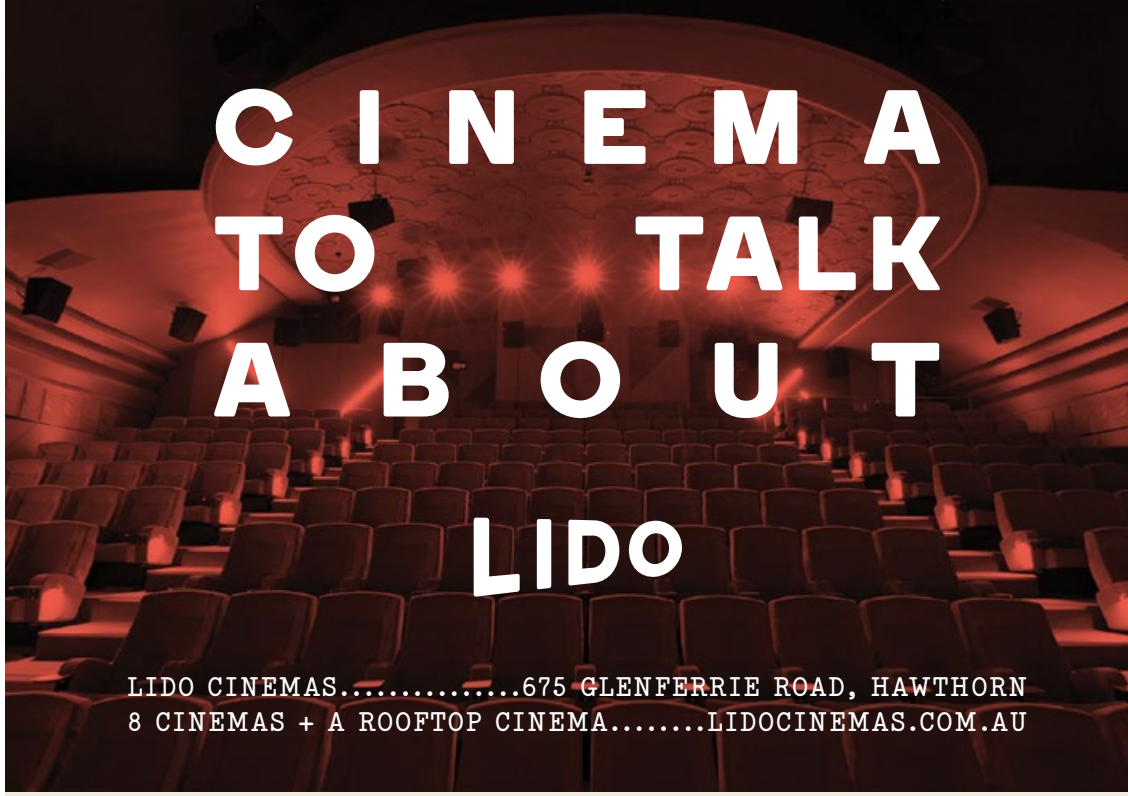

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‘The artwork depicts a Indigenous woman in film. Happy, strong and talented telling her story her way.’

– Oumoula Mackenzie

Festival Merchandise

See our range of merchandise at venues and on our website featuring the amazing artwork of Oumoula Mackenzie, this year’s festival artist.

birrarangga.world