

## Media Release



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### BIFF 2020 TO OPEN WITH AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE OF HIGH GROUND, PATRONS ANNOUNCED

The [Brisbane International Film Festival](#) returns to cinemas in October, opening with the Australian premiere of Stephen Maxwell Johnson's *High Ground*, and with one of the film's editors Jill Bilcock AC and actor Jack Thompson AM as the Festival's 2020 Patrons.

Presented by the [Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art \(QAGOMA\)](#) through its Australian Cinémathèque, and in partnership with venues across Brisbane, BIFF 2020 will screen new release features and documentaries, special events, a short film competition and much more, from 1 to 11 October.

QAGOMA Director Chris Saines said he was delighted to welcome multi-award-winning Australian actor Jack Thompson, and Academy Award-nominated film editor Jill Bilcock as Patrons of BIFF 2020.

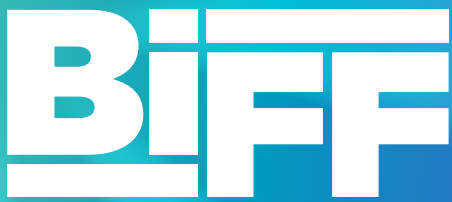
'It's an honour to have the support of two celebrated screen industry veterans with such extensive local and international experience, and we are looking forward to screening a selection of their career highlights in the Festival,' Mr Saines said.

Amanda Slack-Smith, the Festival's Artistic Director and Curatorial Manager, Australian Cinémathèque, QAGOMA, said opening night film *High Ground* was a moving story set in the early twentieth century, inspired by Australia's untold history, exploring family and legacy as it grapples with the country's past.

'Starring Simon Baker, Jacob Junior Nayinggul, Jack Thompson, Aaron Pedersen, Witiyana Marika, Caren Pistorius, Esmerelda Marimowa and Sean Mununggurr, it is the second feature film from Stephen Maxwell Johnson, director of *Yolgnu Boy*,' Ms Slack-Smith said.

'Set in the extraordinary Northern Territory, *High Ground* tells of a terrible crime covered up until twelve years later when those involved are forced to reckon with the devastation it caused.'

BIFF 2020 will close on 11 October with the world premiere of *Firestarter: The Story of Bangarra*, a compelling and vivid documentary about the evolution of Bangarra Dance Theatre and its Artistic Director Stephen Page.



# BRISBANE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 1-11 OCTOBER 2020

## MEDIA INQUIRIES

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Directed by Wayne Blair (*The Sapphires*, *Top End Wedding*) and Nel Minchen (*Matilda & Me*), *Firestarter* interweaves moving interviews with Bangarra dancers and Stephen, Russell and David Page with vibrant home movie footage of the Page family growing up in Brisbane. It's an insightful portrait of one of Australia's most dynamic and successful arts organisations and celebrates the transformative importance of the arts.

Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said BIFF 2020 was a major highlight in the state's calendar of must-do arts and cultural events.

'The Queensland Government and Screen Queensland are proud supporters of BIFF 2020 and, with COVID-19 precautions in place, we are thrilled to be one of the first major film festival in Australia welcoming audiences back to theatres for an unmissable 11 days of cinema,' Ms Palaszczuk said.

In addition to a wide selection of global features and documentaries, BIFF 2020 features five curated cinematic strands: Power of Pictures, Transcendence, Release, Belonging and Homecoming, with the latter strand showcasing *Combat Wombat 2020*, the delightful second animated feature in the 'Sanctuary City' trilogy by Brisbane-based production company Like A Photon, and *A Moment in the Sun*, a captivating documentary on the development of the locally-built solar assisted Solar Tandem bicycle in the 1980s, led by Dr Ugur Ortabasi, founding director of the University of Queensland's Solar Energy Research Centre.

### Other Festival highlights:

- A restoration of the 1915 silent Italian film classic, Mario Roncoroni's *Filibus* with live music accompaniment by David Bailey on the Gallery's 1929 Wurlitzer Organ. *Filibus* takes audiences on the journey of a heroic female sky pirate who steals a priceless Egyptian statue and evades the police.
- The BIFF 2020 Food + Film experience draws on *The Truffle Hunters 2020*, a visually sumptuous documentary that follows a group of eccentric truffle hunters and their beloved dogs as they search for one of the world's most prized ingredients. Following the screening, a one-night-only, two-course truffle-infused menu will be served by the Gallery's Executive Chef Doug Innes-Will. Tickets to this unique dining experience at GOMA Restaurant are limited.

- BIFF 2020 Shorts will capture the rich, varied world of short filmmaking. Shortlisted for the BIFF 2020 Short Film Awards these works by emerging and seasoned filmmakers from across Australia and the world screen in programs throughout the Festival. The Awards are judged by a panel of industry professionals with winners announced at the BIFF Closing Night party on 11 October. The Award categories are: **Screen Queensland Short Film Award** (value \$7500), **Best Festival Short Film** (\$2000), **Best Australian Short Film** (\$1000), **Special Jury Award** (\$1000) and **Creative Achievement Award** (\$1000).
- BIFF 2020 exhibition 'Cut It: Collage to Meme', developed by Ellie Buttrose, Curator, Contemporary Australian Art, QAGOMA will be presented in Gallery 2.1 at GOMA. Using the lenses of news reporting and entertainment media to explore collage, montage and sampling as enduring methods in art, 'Cut It' contemplates our voracious consumption of images and shifting relationship to contemporary iconography. Drawing on the vernacular of newspaper and posters, photography and videos, mash-ups and memes, 'Cut It' demonstrates the ongoing influence of art history on contemporary visual culture.

BIFF 2020 will be presented at QAGOMA's Australian Cinémathèque, the only facility of its kind in an Australian art museum, and at valued partner venues Dendy Cinemas Coorparoo, The Elizabeth Picture Theatre, New Farm Six Cinemas, Reading Cinemas Newmarket and the State Library of Queensland — all part of a city-wide celebration of film.

The complete BIFF 2020 Festival program will be live with tickets on sale from late August. Stay up to date by subscribing to the BIFF enews at: [www.biff.com.au](http://www.biff.com.au). Follow BIFF 2020 on social media @bneintlfilmfest and via the hashtag #BIFFest2020.

BIFF 2020 is supported by the Queensland Government through Screen Queensland and the Australian Federal Government through Screen Australia.

