



FLICKERFEST 2026

35th INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

Festival: 23rd January - 1st February 2026, Bondi Beach, Sydney, Australia

Tour: February - October 2026, 40+ venues Australia-wide

Now celebrating its 35th year, FLICKERFEST Short Film Festival returns to Bondi this summer, before touring the nation!

KEY INFORMATION

23rd Jan - 1st Feb, 2026, Bondi Beach Touring Nationally, Feb - Oct (40+ dates)

FLICKERFEST RELEASES ITS 2026 PROGRAMME

This summer, Flickerfest, Australia's largest Short Film Competition and the only one with Academy® Qualification and BAFTA recognition, will once again grace our shores, rolling out the red carpet at Bondi Beach from the 23rd January to the 1st of February.

Celebrating its 35th year, this not to be missed ten-day event will showcase a handpicked selection of Australia's and the world's most exciting short films under the stars and in the theatre at the Bondi Pavilion, presenting a stunning season showcasing our most exciting emerging cinema talent.

The 2026 programme is now live and showcases around **200 exceptional shorts**, across **23 dedicated festival programmes**, handpicked from a record-breaking **3,700+ entries**, from over **100 countries**, with many enjoying their world and Australian premieres. Flickerfest's prestigious Academy® Qualifying Competitions of **111** short films, include **42 World Premieres**, **41 Australian premieres** and **19 NSW premieres**, giving audiences a first look at the most outstanding short films on offer. These shorts are fiercely vying for a number of prestigious prizes, including the Flickerfest Award for **Best International Short Film**, the *Yoram Gross Award* for **Best International Animation**, the *Panasonic Lumix Award* for **Best Australian Short Film** and the *Flickerfest Award* for **Best Documentary** - all of which are Academy® Qualifying.

Take a trip across Australia and around the world from the comfort of your cinema seat and be amongst the first to discover ground breaking stories from across the globe, with short filmmaking at its most fearless and fabulous.

From home soil, **60 Australian films** have been officially selected for the *Best of Australian* Competition. **36** International films will compete in the *Best of International* Competitions, whilst **15 thought-provoking** Documentaries make up the *Best of Documentary* Competition. A further **100** films will also feature across Flickerfest showcase sessions.

Alongside the films in competition, audiences will also be delighted with programs including **FlickerUp** - a celebration of youth filmmaking from filmmaker 18 and under across Australia, **Rainbow Shorts** - amazing LGBTQI films, a **First Nations Showcase** celebrating First Nations talent and stories, **FlickerKids** - special showcases of kids and family friendly films, **LoveBites** - films about the trials and tribulations of relationships and **Short Laughs** - presenting the world's most hilarious comedy films.

Flickerfest director Bronwyn Kidd says: *"With a record of over 3700 entries received, Flickerfest 2026 will again deliver an outstanding programme celebrating our most talented contemporary storytellers, both here in Australia and from around the world. With so many outstanding films to choose from I am so excited to present our audiences with programmes that applaud bold, inspiring, creative & unforgettable short films from talent who are destined to shape the future of cinema"*

Following the festival in Sydney, Flickerfest will share a selection of festival highlights and award winners on tour to over 40 venues across Australia between February and October, 2026.

For further information head to www.flickerfest.com.au



WAVERLEY COUNCIL



Celebrating 35 Years - flickerfest.com.au

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KEY EVENT DETAILS

What - *FLICKERFEST, Australia's most respected and only Academy® Award qualifying International short film festival, screens the best short films from Australia and the world, all guaranteed to make you laugh, cry and gasp with delight. This year, Flickerfest will once again be hosted at its home of almost three decades, the stylish Bondi Pavilion for indoor and outdoor screenings. The panoramic beachside festival bar is open daily before each session and into the night.*

When - 23rd January - 1st February 2026 (Touring Nationally Feb - Oct, 40+ dates)

Where - Bondi Pavilion, Bondi Beach NSW 2026

Cost - starting from \$22 for a session ticket (<https://flickerfest.com.au/ticket-info/>)

Flickerfest 2026 Programme Highlights Summary

Flickerfest is thrilled to reveal some **highlights** of just a few of the incredible films that have made the cut in our Academy® Award qualifying Australian competition, showcasing the depth & enormous talent that exists in our local film industry.

Flickerfest Alumni and director **Jesse Vogelaar** returns for the world premiere of his new short film **The Suit**. This sharp and hilarious comedy brings together a stellar cast, featuring award-winning actress **Kat Stewart** (*Five Bedrooms, Offspring, Underbelly*), rising star **Harvey Zielinski** (*White Fever, Deadloch, Spreadsheet*), and much-loved comedian **Colin Lane** (*Fisk, Utopia, The Adventures of Lano & Woodley*).

Flickerfest is also delighted to present **BUBBA**, a deeply intimate and tender new work from alumni director Nina Buxton. Returning to the festival nearly a decade after the success of her short film *WOOF!*, which premiered at Flickerfest in 2016 and earned her the award for *Best Editing in an Australian Short Film*, Nina brings her distinctive storytelling voice to the screen once again with this heartfelt and compelling film.

Flickerfest are also thrilled to premiere acclaimed actor, director and writer **Matt Day's** new short **Baby Shower** starring **Hugo Weaving** (*The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert, The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King & The Fellowship of the Ring, V for Vendetta, The Matrix*), **Contessa Treffone** (*Totally Completely Fine, One More Shot, Here Out West, Doctor Doctor*) and **Helen Thompson** (*Elvis, Kangaroo Jack, Colin from Accounts, Gettin' Square*). Shot in a single day and set in one location, **Baby Shower** is a dark comedy that takes a wholesome family ritual and turns it on its head. A proud Flickerfest alumni, this marks **Matt Day's** third film to screen at the festival.

In the Academy® Award qualifying international competition, watch out for the Australian premiere of **They** a beautiful animation and the directorial debut by Oscar winning actress **Renee Zellweger**, where in a town overrun by grumbling citizens a hopeful hero and his trusty dog hatch a plan to encourage better days. Flickerfest is also thrilled to present the world premiere of **Three**, a provocative and darkly humorous short, by first time director, award winning Scottish actor and director Robert Carlyle (*Trainspotting, The Full Monty*). Also not to be missed is **A Friend of Dorothy**, starring screen legend Miriam Margolyes (*The Age of Innocence, Little Dorrit*) and Stephen Fry (*Black Adder, The Hobbit, Narrator Harry Potter audiobooks*) in this heart warming story about finding unexpected friendship.

The Oscar qualifying Documentary Programme showcases intimate and compelling true stories, including the standout **Return of the Champ**. Directed by Damien Power, the film follows Indy 500 champion Will Power and his comedian brother Damien as they confront a lifelong rivalry to reconnect before it tears them apart. Damien describes it as deeply personal, with everyone playing themselves and delivering strikingly natural performances.



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The Rainbow Shorts programme celebrates bold and diverse queer voices, including the exciting Scottish short *Sleazy Tiger*. Directed and written by James Ley and featuring iconic actor Alan Cumming.

FlickerKids presents the Australian premiere of *Forevergreen*, a shortlisted Oscar contender. The animated short tells the story of an orphaned bear cub who finds a home with a fatherly evergreen tree, until his hunger for trash leads him into danger. Directed by Nathan Engelhardt and Jeremy Spears, the film is a charming and adventurous tale for audiences of all ages.

Australian Programme Highlights

THE SUIT

Australia | 11:58 | 2025

World Premiere

DIR: Jesse Vogelaar

WRI: Scott Limbrick

PROD: Lawrence Phelan

Synopsis: A couple engaged in a bizarre legal proceeding confront the source of their problem. Starring Kat Sewart, Harvey Zielinski and Colin Lane.

DIR. Bio: Jesse is a writer and director in Melbourne. He debuted as a baby on a small farm in Cambridge, Aotearoa/New Zealand to two newly arrived Dutch immigrants. Over the last two years, Jesse has made a mark with a signature style of off-beat and absurd short-form work, coupled with a relentless need to make more all of the time. His narrative shorts have screened on his home turf at Flickerfest Short Film Festival and travelled from Palm Springs International Shortfest to PÖFF. They've also been picked up for broadcast on SBS & CANAL+. He directed the ABC & Screen Australia supported "Ruby Rai P.I.". In 2016 his short film, "You Lose", went viral and Junkee called it "Australia's Greatest Work of Art"

[MEDIA LINK](#)

BUBBA

Australia | 12:55 | 2025

Australian Premiere

DIR: Nina Buxton

WRI: Hannah Samuel

PROD: Hannah Ngo

Synopsis: A woman wants to escape from her abusive relationship at any cost, except if it means leaving her pet dog behind.

DIR. Bio: Nina is an award-winning film and television director from Melbourne, Australia. She is known for her passion for telling intimate and suspenseful stories from the female perspective. Nina's VCA graduating short film 'WOOF!' premiered at Flickerfest in 2016 where she won the award for 'Best Editing in an Australian Short Film'. Her second short film 'MWAH' premiered at Melbourne International Film Festival in 2017. Both films have screened at many festivals around the world including Flickerfest Palm Springs International Film Festival, Munich Film Festival, New Orleans Film Festival, St Kilda Film Festival. In 2023 Nina directed her first network television drama 'PAPER DOLLS' for Paramount + and Network 10. This same year Nina went on to direct the final episodes of the children's coming of age series 'PLANET LULIN' for the ABC. In 2025 Nina completed her third short drama film 'BUBBA', which was supported by the Filmmaker Fund from Rooftop Films in New York and was runner up in the 2022 Monte Miller Australian Writer's Guild awards for Australia's best unproduced scripts. She also directed the third season of the Emmy award winning Netflix series HEARTBREAK HIGH.

[MEDIA LINK](#)



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BABY SHOWER

Australia | 12:30 | 2025

World Premiere

DIR: Matt Day

WRI: Matt Day

PROD: Heather Mitchell

Synopsis: Heidi's baby shower descends into chaos when her estranged father (Hugo Weaving) crashes the party. Also starring Helen Thompson and Contessa Treffone.

DIR. Bio: Matt Day is an acclaimed Australian actor, writer, and director with a celebrated career spanning film, television, and theatre. Best known for his performances in *Muriel's Wedding*, *Love and Other Catastrophes*, *Sweet Country*, and *Rake*, Matt has established himself as one of Australia's most versatile and respected talents. His work as a filmmaker has also earned widespread recognition, his shorts, including *The Mother Situation*, *Paris Syndrome*, *Perry, Wish, Beat*, and *Title Card*, have screened at festivals worldwide, including , Palm Springs, London, Edinburgh, Stockholm, Toronto, and Flickerfest, winning numerous awards along the way.

[MEDIA LINK](#)

TUESDAY TUESDAY

Australia | 15min | 2025

DIR: Lianne Mackessy

WRI: Lianne Mackessy, Emily Sheehan

PROD: Catherine Van der Rijt

A support worker spends one final shift with her client living with younger-onset dementia and must face the complicated feelings that come with letting him go. Stars Peter Phelps and Gillian Nguyen

WORLD PREMIERE

Dir Bio Lianne Mackessy is a multi-passionate creative whose body of work spans acting, screenwriting and directing. As an actor, Lianne has appeared in numerous Australian television series and independent feature films. As a filmmaker, Lianne's debut short film *Not a Wallflower* (writer/director), had its premiere at MIFF in 2020, and the following year Lianne was selected to attend the MIFF Accelerator Lab, alongside the most promising emerging directors in Australia. In 2021 Lianne co-wrote the award-winning short documentary *What Was It Like?* which is currently streaming on ABCiview. Lianne co-wrote and performed in the short romantic comedy *Hopeful Romantic*, which premiered at Flickerfest 2023.

[Media Link](#)

PACKED AWAY

Australia | 16min | 2025

DIR: Michala Banas, Finegan Sampson

WRI: Michala Banas

PROD: Max Kearsley, Tess Adams

Em (Michala Banas) and her father (John Banas) need to pack away her mothers belongings after her passing. A fairly simple act, but a difficult one. And her father really seems to be coping well. Or is he?...

NSW PREMIERE

Dir Bio Michala Banas is a multi-award-winning film, television and theatre actor. With a remarkable career spanning over four decades, Michala has starred in over 90 films, television and theatre productions. Michala has been a fixture on Australian television, starring in shows like 'Always Greener', 'McLeod's Daughters', 'Winners and Losers', 'Halifax Retribution', 'Nowhere Boys', 'Upper Middle Bogan', 'Gold Diggers' and most recently 'A Remarkable Place to Die', to name a few. Michala has also made her mark in film with roles in 'That's Not My Dog', 'Ned', 'Scooby-Doo', and 'Nowhere



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Boys: The Book of Shadows'. In 2025, she will appear alongside Liam Neeson in the upcoming Amazon Prime feature 'Road To The Sky'. Packed Away is her directorial film debut.

Finegan Sampson is a multi-award winning emerging writer and director, celebrated for his nuanced exploration of human nature and emotionally charged storytelling. His directorial debut short film, 'Teach Me How to Cry', received multiple national accolades. Starting his career in film at the age of four as an actor, Fin has spent most of his life immersed in storytelling. He co-founded OneHouse Productions, where he has directed an eclectic range of award-winning work. His latest project, 'Packed Away', marks his second step into narrative filmmaking, reuniting him with acclaimed Australian actor Michala Banas, whom he previously directed in 'Teach Me How to Cry.'

[Media Link](#)

International Programme

THEY

United Kingdom | 8min | 2025

AUSTRALIAN PREMIER

WRI: Renée Zellweger, Paul Smith

DIR: Renée Zellweger

PROD: Tora Young

Synopsis: As townsfolk rage in their fog of negativity, our hero and his dog aim to encourage a return to better days! The opposite effect leads to an unexpected calamity which galvanizes the masses.

DIR. Bio: Born in Texas in 1969, actress Renee Zellweger first gained widespread attention for her role in Jerry Maguire (1996) and later Bridget Jones's Diary (2001), which earned her an Oscar nomination for Best Actress. She was nominated for another Academy Award for her performance in Chicago (2002), and won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for Cold Mountain (2003). Following a hiatus from acting, Zellweger returned with Bridget Jones's Baby in 2016 and later earned accolades for her portrayal of Judy Garland in Judy (2019) and The Thing About Pam (2022). In February 2025 Zellweger will reprise her role as Bridget Jones in Bridget Jones - Mad About the Boy.

[MEDIA LINK](#)

THREE

United Kingdom | 23min | 2025

WORLD PREMIERE

DIR: Robert Carlyle

WRI: Isaac Gryn, Patrick McPherson

PROD: Stefan Demetriou, Isaac Gryn, Amy James

Synopsis: When a young man is invited into the home of an older couple late at night, a tantalising game of control and chemistry begins. As drinks are poured and tension reaches fever pitch, the desires and deception of this unlikely trio are revealed. Three is a provocative and darkly funny short exploring themes of sex, power and privilege.

DIR. Bio: Robert Carlyle is an award-winning Scottish actor and director known for his intense, versatile performances. He gained international acclaim with Trainspotting and The Full Monty (BAFTA Best Actor) and has appeared in The World Is Not Enough, 28 Weeks Later, and Once Upon a Time. As a director, he made his feature debut with The Legend of Barney Thomson (2015) and most recently directed the short film THREE (2025). Appointed OBE in 1999, Carlyle is celebrated for his authenticity, wit, and depth on screen.

[MEDIA LINK](#)



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A FRIEND OF DOROTHY

United Kingdom | 21min | 2025

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

WRI/DIR: Lee Knight

PROD: James Dean, Max Harlow, Scottie Forte

Synopsis: A lonely widow's (Miriam Margolyes) quiet life is upended when a teenage boy accidentally kicks his football into her garden. Also starring Stephen Fry.

DIR. Bio: Lee Knight is an actor, writer, and director with a passion for storytelling across stage & screen. As an actor, Lee recently appeared as Rosencrantz alongside Sir Ian McKellen in 'Hamlet' (2024) on Amazon Prime, 'Vigil 2' on BBC1, 'The Stolen Girl' on Disney+ and the upcoming series 'Talamasca' on ABC+. His other screen credits include 'Harry Potter & the Goblet of Fire', 'Sherlock', 'The Last Letter from Your Lover', 'The Trial of Christine Keeler', and BBC's 'The North Water'. 'A Friend of Dorothy' marks his debut as a short film writer/director.

[MEDIA LINK](#)

Documentary Programme

RETURN OF THE CHAMP

Australia | 20min | 2025

WORLD PREMIERE

WRI/DIR/PROD: Damien John Power

Synopsis: A documentary-hybrid about Will Power—a world champion and Indy 500 winner—and his comedian brother Damien, who must finally face the rivalry that has shaped their lives in order to reconnect before it breaks them apart.

DIR. Bio: Damien John Power is a multi award winning stand up comedian and film maker. He's performed all over the world and brings two decades of writing and performance skills to his films giving them a naturalistic and spontaneous feel. At home in comedy, Return of the Champ represents his first drama film.

[MEDIA LINK](#)

Rainbow Shorts Programme

SLEAZY TIGER

United Kingdom | 14min | 2024

DIR/WRI: James Ley

PROD: Jack Cowhig, Laura McBride

Synopsis: Hopeless but horny romantic Alan is determined to do things differently on his date with vegan hottie Blair who he thinks might be his future husband. But when Blair gives Alan a jar of homemade kimchi, Alan gets aroused and finds himself in Horny Hell, struggling to find the line between metaphor and reality and even reckoning with his inner Alan Cumming on his quest to get back to his date. Starring legendary Scottish actor Alan Cummings.

DIR. Bio: James Ley is a Glasgow-based award-winning playwright and director. His play *ODE TO JOY (HOW GORDON GOT TO GO TO THE NASTY PIG PARTY)* won a Scotsman Fringe First (2022) and was nominated for a 2023 CATS Award. Other works include *WILF*, *LOVE SONG TO LAVENDER MENACE*, *HOLD ME CLOSER BUNNY BAXTER*, and co-writing *MAGGIE & ME*. His new queer Scottish short film *SLEAZY TIGER*, funded by Screen Scotland, Short Circuit, and BFI NETWORK, stars iconic Scottish actor Alan Cumming. A 2024 National Theatre Studio writer on attachment and BAFTA Connect member, James is also developing TV projects and two feature films.

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Flickerkids Showcase

FOREVERGREEN

USA | 13min | 2025

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

DIR/WRI: Nathan Engelhardt, Jeremy Spears

PROD: Steph Gortz, Jennifer Gandrup Sackheim

Synopsis: An orphaned bear cub finds a home with a fatherly evergreen tree, until his hunger for trash leads him to danger. Shortlisted for the 2026 Oscars.

DIR. Bio: Nathan Engelhardt is an Animator who has worked on films like Wreck-It Ralph, Big Hero 6, Zootopia, Frozen 2, Encanto, Rio and more. Most recently, Nathan has written and directed an independent animated short film called "Forevergreen," which will be his directorial debut.

Jeremy Spears is an Annie Award Winning Story Artist and has helped create beloved characters and stories for films such as Encanto, Wreck-It Ralph, Zootopia, Moana, and Frozen. In his free time, he creates unique wooden sculptures in his Whittle Woodshop. His latest passion project is directing the independent animated short film "Forevergreen."

[MEDIA LINK](#)

ABOUT FLICKERFEST

As Australia's leading Academy® Qualifying short film festival, the shorts in competition at Flickerfest are fiercely vying for a number of prestigious prizes including the Flickerfest Award for Best International Short Film, the Yoram Gross Award for Best International Animation, the Flickerfest Award for Best Australian Short Film and the Flickerfest Award for Best Documentary. Plus a host of other hotly contested prizes, which recognise the various craft areas inherent in making a great short film.

Now in its 35th year, Flickerfest is supported by some of the biggest and most respected names in the Australian film industry. See just a few comments from some of the country's film industry royalty.

"It was more than 30 years ago that a few actor friends and myself began our first Theatre Company in what was then the upstairs theatre at the Bondi Pavilion. From there, supported by people in the industry, we were able to get our start, so it's a great thing that just outside the forecourt, Flickerfest now gives a similar opportunity for short filmmakers to have a stage upon which they can present their short films in our local neighbourhood."

- Baz Luhrmann, Director and Flickerfest Supporter

"The Short Film is a place to experiment and push boundaries. Flickerfest allows emerging voices to be seen and heard, and established voices the chance to revitalise. It's fitting that such a cutting edge, internationally recognised film festival takes place in an unconventional and vibrant setting: under the stars, on the beach, in Australia."

- Cate Blanchett, Oscar winning actress and Flickerfest Supporter

"Being a Sydney local is not the only reason I've eagerly attended Flickerfest for many years. It's the only international short film festival and it's under the stars. Rare and romantic. I hope we can all enjoy this important showcase for years to come."

- Claudia Karvan, Actress and Flickerfest Patron



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