

MEDIA RELEASE

THURSDAY 12 APRIL 2018

AUSSIE FILMS AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD

Four Australian films have beaten over 1,500 international entries to take honours in the 2018 SCINEMA International Science Film Festival as announced today.

The Kingdom, the untold story of how fungi shaped our world; **Grassroots**, a story of Aussie battlers fighting climate change; **iRony**, an adaptation of an award-winning poem and ABC's **Catalyst: The Secret to Making Better Decisions** received awards for Best Film, Best Documentary, Best Short Film and Award for Scientific Merit respectively.

These were among nine winners chosen out of 1,539 entries from 102 countries, for awards in Best Film, Best Short Film, Best Documentary, Best Director, Best Experimental Film, Best Animated Film, Award for Technical Merit, Award for Scientific Merit and a Special Jury Award.

Established in 2000, SCINEMA International Science Film Festival is the largest science film festival in the southern hemisphere. Presented by Australia's Science Channel and supported by major sponsor BBC Earth, SCINEMA provides a platform for filmmakers, professional, amateur and student, to showcase their science films, series and documentaries.

"It's great to see so many original, creative and emotionally confronting science stories," said Prof Alan Duffy, Lead Scientist for The Royal Institution of Australia and 2018 SCINEMA Festival judge. "These films stay with you long after the credits roll. You really want to share what you've learnt with everyone you know."

Prof Duffy, along with fellow SCINEMA Festival judges including award-winning Australian film director, Maya Newell; ABC iview manager, Sally O'Donoghue; editorial director of the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers, Alison Leigh; and co-founders of SCINEMA Damian Harris and Cris Kennedy, unanimously agreed the calibre of films entered this year has set a new benchmark for the Festival.

The winning films will be shown exclusively at Festival premiere screenings in Palace Cinemas across Australia from 31 May-21 June 2018.

"The Festival premiere screenings are open to the public and will feature the best entries of 2018," said Prof Duffy. "A special selection of shortlisted films will also be available for our community screenings to be held during National Science Week in August."

"Over 40,000 film buffs and science lovers participate in the Festival each year making it a great platform for sharing amazing, innovative science stories and concepts to an engaged audience," said Prof Duffy.

Australia's Science Channel is Australia's first dedicated publishing platform for science stories. Bringing together compelling video, audio and written content from Australia's top Universities, Research Institutions and Scientific Organisations as well as the independent production sector, this ground-breaking web platform is free to all Australians. Australia's Science Channel is developed and operated by The Royal Institution of Australia.

MEDIA RELEASE

Tickets to the Festival premiere screenings will be on sale from 9 May 2018. For more information on venues and festival dates visit <http://scinema.australiascience.tv/>

*Tickets to the Festival premiere screenings are available to media for promotional giveaway.

For more information contact **Julie LeMessurier, 0417 855 696, jlemessurier@riaus.org.au**

The 2018 SCINEMA International Science Film Festival award winners include:

SCINEMA BEST FILM

The Kingdom - How Fungi Made Our World written and directed by Annamaria Talas and Simon Nasht and produced by Susan MacKinnon (Australia) and Anne Pick and Bill Spahic (Canada)

Some fungi will save us, others will threaten us and we are just beginning to understand which is which. The great untold story of how fungi shaped all life on land.

Jury comment: *This film takes us on a wonderfully creative journey from the beginning of time to the present, revealing the hidden world of fungi with beautiful cinematography.*

SCINEMA BEST DOCUMENTARY

Grassroots by Frank Oly (Australia)

A story about farmers, the soils they work and a piece of powerful knowledge that nearly slipped through their fingers. Grassroots follows Guy Webb and his friends, unlikely heroes on a quest to bring a genuine climate change solution to the world.

Jury comment: *This story of farmers turned accidental activists is one you want to share with everyone you know. It shows that Science shouldn't remain in the arena of labs and academics – instead it shows that people who need this technology can go out and fight for it.*

SCINEMA BEST DIRECTOR

Timelapse by Aleix Castro (Spain)

What would you say if you could work a whole month in a single second? Welcome to the future of neural implants. A new way of understanding work has arrived, but factory worker Laura is not convinced.

Jury comment: *The Director has crafted a compelling, yet harrowing world in this imaginative portrayal of the future of work, a discussion we need to have now as a society before the future arrives.*

MEDIA RELEASE

SCINEMA BEST SHORT FILM

iRony by Radheya Jegatheva (Australia)

An adaptation of award-winning poem, 'Seven Billion' by Radheya Jegatheva, iRony explores the relationship between humanity and technology...told from the perspective of a phone.

Jury comment: *This multilayered film explores a very topical and timely issue, and no other films came close to this level of creativity. An incredibly confronting and powerful discussion of technology, showing how emotive a science documentary can be.*

SCINEMA AWARD FOR BEST EXPERIMENTAL FILM

Astroturf by James Uren and Nidhi Gupta (United Kingdom)

Experimental short film juxtaposing the minutiae of human life and the incredible size of the universe, using the strange sound effects of recordings from satellites in space.

Jury comment: *This clever film takes the old adage 'in space no one can hear you scream' and turns it on its head.*

SCINEMA AWARD FOR BEST ANIMATED FILM

KCLOC by Ninaad Kulkarni (USA)

"What does time mean to you?" KCLOC, a 3D animated documentary, explores people's perceptions of time.

Jury comment: *With exquisite animation this film manages to take something common to all of us that we don't stop to think about into something fun, witty and nuanced. Take some time to enjoy it.*

SCINEMA AWARD FOR TECHNICAL MERIT

Virtual Humans by Guillermo Marin and Fernando Cucchiatti (Spain)

Imagine a future where a complete copy of you can be created, and used to monitor, study, and enhance your health. A future not far from now.

Jury comment: *This film is a technically stunning example of the power and versatility of supercomputers, helping us see our body in ways we never have before.*

SCINEMA AWARD FOR SCIENTIFIC MERIT

Catalyst: The Secret to Making Better Decisions by David Symonds (Australia)

Mathematician Lily Serna believes maths can provide the answer to life's tough decisions and she shows us how in this episode of Catalyst.

Jury comment: *To make the most abstract of mathematical concepts and logical reasoning both accessible and informative while still remaining humorous and relatable is an extraordinary effort.*

MEDIA RELEASE

SCINEMA SPECIAL JURY AWARD

Planet Earth 2: Grasslands by Chadden Hunter (United Kingdom)

Grasslands cover one quarter of all land and support vast gatherings of wildlife, but to survive here animals must endure the most hostile seasonal changes on the planet.

Jury comment: *Visually stunning, with writing to aspire to, BBC Earth and the stories they tell are truly one of the jewels of documentary making in the world. This wonderful effort is no exception.*

Australia's Science Channel is Australia's first dedicated publishing platform for science stories. Bringing together compelling video, audio and written content from Australia's top Universities, Research Institutions and Scientific Organisations as well as the independent production sector, this ground-breaking web platform is free to all Australians. Australia's Science Channel is developed and operated by The Royal Institution of Australia.