

MEDIA RELEASE

Queer Screen's Mardi Gras Film Festival Numbers Though the Roof!

When We Rise and Suited win Audience Awards

Tuesday 7 March 2017: In its most successful run in recent years, Queer Screen's 24th Mardi Gras Film Festival saw audience numbers of 21,000 (a 23 per cent increase from last year and a 280 per cent increase from 2013) attend 100 screenings and events. The Festival is now touring to the Blue Mountains, Parramatta and Canberra.

The number of international guests hosted by the festival quadrupled to 40 with filmmakers, activists, advocates and festival directors attending the Festival in Sydney from all around the world, highlighting its position as one of the most important international LGBTIQ film festivals.

"We certainly showcased Sydney as one of the most diverse and welcoming LGBTIQ film festivals in the world this year," said Paul Struthers, Queer Screen's Mardi Gras Film Festival Director. "This was highlighted when we hosted the Asia Pacific Queer Film Festival Alliance and GLAAD to discuss LGBTIQ representation in the media in Australia and across Asia Pacific. Everyone involved from staff, volunteers, the Board and especially the audience should be very proud of themselves for an amazing Festival".

Highlights of the Festival included:

- Public forum on LGBTIQ representation in the media with key international advocates from GLAAD - in Australia for the first time - alongside local media representatives Benjamin Law and Jordan Raskopoulos
- Open forum with delegates from 18 Asia Pacific Film Festivals to discuss queer cinema and their experiences
- Inspiring Q&A session with Rachel Griffiths and Professor Kerry Phelps at the Australian premiere of *When We Rise*
- Screening of two Oscar winners *Moonlight* and *Piper*
- 1 world premiere, 4 international premieres and 31 Australian premieres

Paul who finishes up at the helm after four years of Directorship alongside Festival Manager James Woolley wished the Festival a very happy future. "We have worked very hard to make sure Queer Screen's Mardi Gras Film Festival is the most diverse, inclusive and thought-provoking Festival that really caters for everyone in our community. It has been a fabulous experience working with a truly incredible group of people".

Lisa Rose, President of Queer Screen added: "Paul and James have really brought our Festival from a good space to an incredibly professional, very successful program that really gives back to the community as well as entertains them. We cannot thank them enough for this wonderful legacy for the Australian LGBTIQ community and we look forward to carrying on their great work".

Queer Screen is delighted to announce the Festival winners.

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My Queer Career – Australia's biggest LGBTIQ Short film prize

Winner Best Film

Spoilers

Directed by Brendon McDonall and produced by Grant Vidgen

This film won \$3,000 cash from the Stephen Cummins Film Trust, \$2,000 in support from JP Media Law, and an automatic entry into the world renowned Iris Prize.

Winner Emerging Filmmaker Award

Adult

Directed by Jamieson Pearce and produced by Liam Heyen and Cyna Strachan.

This film won \$3,200 worth of courses at Sydney Film School

Winner Best Screenplay Award

You Deserve Everything

Directed and produced by Goran Stolevski

Winning \$500 cash from GU Filmhouse

Winner Audience Award

Spoilers

Directed by Brendon McDonall and produced by Grant Vidgen

Prize: \$3,500 worth of support from Spectrum Films

Queer Screen Mardi Gras Film Festival 2017 Audience Awards

Audience Award for Best Narrative Film

Winner: **When We Rise**

Written by Dustin Lance Black, this epic four part series recounts the history of the LGBTIQ rights movement in the US with enthralling performances by Guy Pearce, Mary Louise Parker and Rachel Griffiths to name a few of the stellar cast.

Runners Up:

- (2) **Handsome Devil**
- (3) **Family Commitments**
- (4) **Bear City 3**
- (5) **Angry Indian Goddesses**

Audience Award for Best Documentary Film

Winner: **Suited**

Suited follows bespoke Brooklyn tailors Bindle & Keep as they clothe their transgender clients in suits that not only fit, but are befitting of who they are and how they want to be seen in the world. Powerful and emotional.

Runners Up:

- (2) **Political Animals**
- (3) **Real Boy**
- (4) **Out of Iraq**
- (5) **Freedom to Marry**

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