

Tuesday, 21 January 2020

Production begins on Screen NSW 2020 Screenability shorts ahead of Sydney Film Festival premiere

Creatives Anthea Williams, Adam Bowes, Emily Dash and their teams are busy working on *Screenability* short films that will premiere at the 67th Sydney Film Festival in June 2020.

Selected under the *Screenability Filmmakers Fund* from Screen NSW, the three shorts *Safety Net*, *Diving In* and *Groundhog Night*, detailing stories of life emergencies, caring for family members, overcoming obstacles and love, are now in production and will be ready for final delivery by March 2020.

Now in its fourth year, the fund is part of a suite of initiatives under Screenability NSW, an open-ended policy commitment by Screen NSW to work with industry to grow participation in the screen sector by Australians with disability.

The three selected short films are each being filmed and post-produced in NSW through the assistance of a \$30,000 grant from Screen NSW as well as executive producer support from Lucinda Reynolds from Made Up Stories.

Head of Screen NSW, Grainne Brunson said, “Since launching in 2016, the Screenability initiative has supported 16 screen practitioners with disability through internships and the production of the *Screenability* finalists’ films.

“This year’s successful teams are extremely talented, and Screen NSW is excited to share their unique and sincere stories. We are looking forward to seeing the final productions in March and their world premieres at the Sydney Film Festival in June.”

Lucinda Reynolds, Creative Executive at Made Up Stories, has confirmed that she will work as the Executive Producer on all three shorts. Made Up Stories is a production company committed to producing content with women squarely at the centre of its stories and behind the camera. The company is founded and run by award-winning producer of the HBO limited series *Big Little Lies* and feature films *Wild*, *Gone Girl* and *The Nightingale*, Bruna Papandrea and Steve Hutensky (producer of *The Nightingale*, *The Dry* and *Little Monsters*), alongside Jodi Matteson (producer of *Little Monsters*, *The Dry* and *Penguin Bloom*).

Lucinda Reynolds said, “I’m really excited by the talent driving these short films. I had a very genuine response to each of the selected scripts and their central characters which offer a strong performance vehicle and authentic insight.”

ENDS

Eligibility for the fund called for filmmaking teams that had at least one key creative (writer, director or producer) identifying as a person with disability (including people with sensory or physical impairments, including deaf people, hidden impairments, intellectual impairments, learning difficulties or mental health conditions) and with an intention to develop a career in screen content creation.

The 2020 Screen NSW *Screenability Filmmakers Fund* projects are:

SAFETY NET (10 minutes)

Synopsis: Thirteen-year-old Terry is in emergency care with guardians after his mother's arrest. Cheeky and living with a disability, he's able to outwit one guardian while finding exactly the connection he needs from the other.

Genre: Drama

Company: Mischief Media

Key Creatives: Anthea Williams, Julian Larnach and Naomi Just

Creative Mentor/Producer: TBC Director Mentor for Anthea Williams

Producer: Naomi Just

Writer: Julian Larnach

Director: Anthea Williams

Shooting location/s: Sydney

Mentor: TBC Director Mentor for Anthea Williams

Key Creative Team Summary:

Anthea Williams

An accomplished award-winning theatre director, Anthea is branching out to screen content after undertaking a number of initiatives, including #SheDirects with Create NSW, Developing the Developer at Screen Australia, and Screen Australia's Talent+ which saw her work at Causeway Films (*The Babadook*, *The Nightingale*). She was awarded Best Director of a mainstage production for Belvoir's production of *Hir* in 2017, and in 2018 Best Cabaret for Griffin's *Since All Died* at the Sydney Theatre Awards.

Julian Larnach

A Sydney-based playwright, Julian won the inaugural Emerge: Riverina Playwrights Commission and the commissioned play, *Beneath An Oxbow Lake*, premiered in Griffith in 2015. His monologue, *Something I Prepared Earlier*, was produced for the ATYP's Voices Project and published by Currency Press. His play *Flight Paths* premiered at National Theatre of Parramatta in 2018 directed by Anthea Williams. In 2017, Julian's musical *Folk Song* premiered Outback Theatre for Young People; and *In Real Life* premiered at Darlinghurst Theatre Company. He was a member of Sydney Theatre Company's inaugural Emerging Writers Group from 2017-2019. Julian is currently developing several new plays including writing the stage adaptation of an award-winning Australian novel.

Naomi Just

A screen professional with over twenty years' experience in the film and television industry, Naomi has produced comedy, drama, documentary, animation and children's programs. Naomi's credits include ABC blue chip documentary series *The Life Series*, the three-time AACTA nominated sitcom *Sammy J & Randy In Ricketts Lane*, and *Ronny Chieng: International Student*. *Safety Net* will be Naomi's first production under her new mantle Mischief Media.

DIVING IN (8 minutes)

Synopsis: Set in 2007, 20-year-old competitive swimmer and double-above-knee amputee named Alex is madly in love with Jen, a girl who works at the local pool. However, he's terrified to ask her out. When his friends play a mean prank on him, he is forced to overcome obstacles and conquer his own self-doubt to finally get the girl, or at the very least, ask her on a date.

Genre: Comedy

Company: Jess Murphy Productions
Key Creatives: Adam Bowes, Nina Oyama and Jessica Murphy
Creative Mentor/Producer: Director Craig Anderson for Adam Bowes
Producer: Jessica Murphy
Writer/Co-Director: Adam Bowes
Writer/Co-Director: Nina Oyama
Shooting location/s: Georges River Area, Sydney

Key Creative Team Summary:

Adam Bowes

Adam was a Co-Director on the *NDIS Fails* Sketch for *Tonightly*. Adam also works regularly as an actor – his credits include *Hacksaw Ridge*, *Winchester*, *Rostered On*, and *The Angus Project*.

Nina Oyama

Nina was a Co-Director of the *NDIS Fails* Sketch for *Tonightly* and Director of *The Angus Project Pilot* which was nominated for Australian Directors Guild Award. Nina is an award-winning writer, director and comedian. Her writing has been seen on *You're Skitting Me*, *The Chaser's Election Desk*, *Tonightly with Tom Ballard* and *Squinters Season 1 & 2*.

Jess Murphy

Producer Jess Murphy has several short films to her credit, with her latest *The Complex* screening at Flickerfest 2020. She is currently working as an associate producer for Warner Bros and has worked as a PA for Disney and Bloomtime Media.

GROUNDHOG NIGHT (13 minutes)

Synopsis: Gary's so used to caring for his disabled daughter Jess, he can do it in his sleep. But when the in-laws come to stay, everyone will get a wake-up call.

Genre: Comedy/ Drama

Company: Bus Stop Films

Key Creatives: Emily Dash, Dianna La Grassa and Genevieve Clay-Smith

Creative Mentor/Producer: Writer Becca Johnstone For Emily Dash

Producer: Dianna La Grassa

Co-producer: Tracey Corbin Matchett

Writer: Emily Dash

Director: Genevieve Clay-Smith

Co-Director: Rawley Reynolds

Shooting location/s: Sydney

Key Creative Team Summary:

Emily Dash

Emily Dash is a multi-disciplinary artist working across theatre, music and screen, collaborating with Australian Chamber Orchestra, PACT Collective, Can You See Me? Theatre, creating the shows *The Waiting Room* and *Water Angel* for the Sydney Opera House Studio. She was part of a multi-artform installation *The Spinning Room* as part of Front Up Emerge Exhibition at the Cutaway at Barangaroo. Her first short film was *I Am Not A Work of Art* was selected as part of Metro Screen's Screenability Program, *The Cards I'm Dealt* was shortlisted for Tropfest in 2016, and she wrote *The Milky Pop Kid* which screened

at Sydney Film Festival and globally in 2017. She has recently completed AFTRS Talent Camp 2019 with *Pearly Gates*, Screen Australia SBS Digital Originals with *Odd Bods*.

Dianna La Grassa

Dianna has a number of short film credits in documentary and drama and in 2019 produced VR project *The Last Act*. She works closely with the team at Bus Stop Films across the vocational and educational operation of the school.

Genevieve Clay-Smith

Genevieve is a filmmaker, creative director, social entrepreneur and passionate advocate for inclusive filmmaking. She is award-winning writer/director whose work has been showcased at the United Nations and at over 200 film festivals and events world-wide. She has over 10 years' experience working in the creative industry across an array of diverse media platforms with her primary passion being film. One of Genevieve's many passions is Bus Stop Films, which she co-founded and brought to national attention with her winning Tropfest entry *Be My Brother* (2009). She is the former CEO of Bus Stop Films and has built the organisation into a sustainable social enterprise.

Co-Director – Rawley Reynolds

Rawley is a long-standing Bus Stop Films student with extensive experience on film sets and television series. He has worked across a number of roles, predominately in the camera and 1st AD space and is looking to make his mark on Australian film and television.

Tracey Corbin-Matchett

Tracey Corbin-Matchett is an inclusion and diversity champion, and CEO of Bus Stop Films. She has strong industry connections and lived experience of disability. She has produced many events including “Magda Szubanski in conversation with US writer, producer and director Rose Troche” and “Bruna Papandrea in conversation with Matilda Brown”.

Tracey has led many projects seeking social justice and greater inclusion and diversity, especially in the screen industry. She launched Women in Film and TV's Raising Films Australia strategy, and previously worked with Screen NSW on strategic initiatives including Screenability, to foster employment opportunities for people with disability in the screen sector, and She Shoots, which focused on opening pathways for women in camera and sound roles.