

WHAT IS ACCELERATOR LAB?

- A part of the Melbourne International Film Festival's **MIFF 37°South Market** suite of industry programs, **Accelerator Lab** is an acclaimed emerging director program that provides a talent "hot-housing" environment for promising short filmmakers preparing to become feature filmmakers.
- Helping tomorrow's hottest filmmaking talent today, up to 25 short film directors (selected from all short film entries to the **MIFF** screening program of the year in question) are chosen for the four-day **Accelerator** program, which exposes participants to a series of talks, workshops, seminars, screenings and discussions on the business and creative aspects of the film industry by leading local and international film practitioners.
- **Accelerator Lab** draws on the international guests (chiefly directors) attending the main **MIFF** screening festival to present their films, as well as **MIFF Premiere Fund** directors and leading experts from Australia's film funding agencies and distribution companies to help the selected short filmmakers hone their skills, craft and contacts for their transition to feature filmmaking. Previous guest speakers include directors Mike Mills (*Beginners*), Robert Connolly (*Paper Planes*), Tony Ayres (*Cut Snake*), Matt Saville (*Felony*), Mark Hartley (*Not Quite Hollywood*), Joe Dante (*Gremlins*), Rolf de Heer (*Ten Canoes*), Ben Lewin (*The Sessions*) and Morgan Spurlock (*Super-Size Me*), plus editors Nick Meyers (*Balibo*) and Matt Villa (*Great Gatsby*), composers Lisa Gerrard (*Whale Rider*) and David Hirschfelder (*Shine*), actors Terry Norris (*Innocence*) and Kerry Fox (*Shallow Grave*) and major distributors/sales agents Roadshow, Madman, eOne, Level K.
- **Accelerator Lab** participants benefit from access and introductions to key local and overseas craftspeople, financiers and creatives in an intimate atmosphere for the workshop while also being plugged into the wider context of Australia's largest film festival whereby they experience films both with large audiences and in selective screenings, and engage a wider array of activities (such as public panel sessions) and networking events (such as functions for the main **MIFF**) that might otherwise not be available to a stand-alone workshop.
- The films of the **Accelerator Lab** participants are screened to the general public in specially-branded **Accelerator Screenings**, as well as DVDs of their films being distributed to the producers and financiers visiting **MIFF 37°South Market**, thereby offering wide and heralded exposure to the work of these emerging filmmakers to audiences and industry decision-makers alike.
- **Accelerator Lab** has proven a popular and sought-after workshop for emerging filmmakers - many of whom have gone onto feature film careers, including:
 - **Julius Avery:** his short film *JERRYCAN* won a special jury prize at 2009's Cannes Film Festival and whose 2014 feature debut *SON OF A GUN* starred Ewan McGregor;
 - **Matthew Bate:** whose 2011 debut feature documentary *SHUT UP LITTLE MAN – AN AUDIO MISADVENTURE* and 2015 feature documentary *SAM KLEMPE'S TIME MACHINE* were both selected for Sundance
 - **Sean Byrne:** whose 2009 **MIFF Premiere Fund** co-financed feature *THE LOVED ONES* was selected for Toronto;
 - **Nash Edgerton:** his 2008 feature debut *THE SQUARE* was selected for the South By SouthWest Film Festival;
 - **Leon Ford:** whose 2010 feature debut *GRIFF THE INVISIBLE* was selected for the Toronto Film Festival;
 - **Rhys Graham:** his **MIFF Premiere Fund** co-financed narrative feature debut *GALORE* was selected for 2014's Berlinale after co-directing feature documentaries *Murundak: Songs of Freedom* and *Words From The City*;
 - **Jonathan Auf Der Heide:** who directed a chapter of Berlin-selected **MIFF Premiere Fund** co-financed 2013 portmanteau film *THE TURNING* and whose 2009 feature debut *VAN DIEMEN'S LAND* was selected for the Edinburgh and Montreal Film Festivals
 - **Zak Hilditch:** whose feature *THESE FINAL HOURS* was selected for Cannes 2014 Directors Fortnight
 - **Sophie Hyde:** whose *52 TUEDSDAY* won the 2014 Berlinale Crystal Bear & Sundance 2014's World Cinema Best Director prize, after her feature documentary *LIFE IN MOVEMENT* bowed at 2011's Adelaide Film Festival
 - **Glendyn Ivin:** whose 2009 feature debut *LAST RIDE* was selected for the Rome, Pusan & Toronto Film Festivals
 - **Tony Krawitz:** his narrative feature debut *DEAD EUROPE* was selected for Thessaloniki 2012 after his feature documentary *The Tall Man* world premiered at 2011's Adelaide Film Festival
 - **Justin Kurzel:** who directed a chapter of the Berlin-selected **MIFF Premiere Fund** co-financed 2013 portmanteau film *THE TURNING* and whose 2011 feature debut *Snowtown* was selected for Cannes
 - **David Michod:** his feature debut box office hit *Animal Kingdom* won the 2010 Sundance Grand Jury (Drama) prize, swept the AFI Awards and earned an Oscar Best Supporting Actress Nomination, while his 2014 feature *THE ROVER* was selected for Cannes
 - **Hugh Sullivan,** whose feature debut *INFINITE MAN* was selected for South by SouthWest 2014;
 - **Curtis Vowell,** whose feature debut *FANTAIL* was selected for Rotterdam 2014;
 - **Taika Waititi,** whose films *EAGLE Vs SHARK* (2007), *BOY* (2010) and *WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS* (2014) were all selected for Sundance and Berlinale



www.miffaccelerator.com

A really carefully-considered and well put together overview of all aspects of filmmaking.

Olivia Peniston-Bird (Accelerator 2010 & Director GRACEFUL GIRLS)

"I had such a fantastic experience being a part of MIFF Accelerator. The contacts I made will all be beneficial. It was so well organised.

Curtis Vowell (Accelerator 2012 & Director FANTAIL)

"You truly feel like you have a back stage pass to the festival and every minute is packed to the brim with screenings, chats, premiere drinks, lunches and panel discussions. There was lots of candid advice about the pitfalls and realities of making films of a bigger budget and the pressure of putting bums on seats to recoup the money. Relationships to sales agents and distributors were also a big talking point and that's an area very rarely covered at film school and it's a big learning curve."

Johnathan auf der Heide (Accelerator 2008 & Director, VAN DIEMEN'S LAND)

I found Accelerator to be a wonderful experience. The speakers were of a very high calibre and extremely generous with their knowledge. It also provided plenty of invaluable networking opportunities and helped me to build relationships that will doubtless prove important in the future.

Hugh Sullivan (Accelerator 2008 & 2012 and Director INFINITE MAN)

I felt completely re-energized after spending those four days together, meeting and hearing from industry heavyweights and unique characters from Australia and other parts of the world. I think I made some friends for life after participating in Accelerator.

Matthew Bate (Accelerator 2010 & Director, SHUT UP LITTLE MAN and SAM KLEMKE'S TIME MACHINE)

I couldn't recommend it enough (and) it was great to return to the festival two years later with my film These Final Hours and share my war stories with the latest batch of Accelerator filmmakers. I have a very solid relationship with MIFF and look forward to bringing my next feature back there.

Zak Hilditch (Accelerator 2011 & Director THESE FINAL HOURS)

Accelerator was a great experience. The best part was getting to know the other filmmakers and discussing at length all things film. Accelerator was very informative because the panel discussions covered all elements of the filmmaking process. It was really well organised and I felt very privileged.

Rodd Rathjen (Accelerator 2011 & 2014 & Director of Cannes Critics' Week-selected short TAU SERU)

Being able to sit in a room for a week with people at a similar level of development and listen to visiting filmmakers talk about their craft, alongside watching their films, is a great way to focus ideas and get your mind bent. It was also great in that, for me, the relationships that came out of those few days have been durable and longlasting.

Rhys Graham (Accelerator 2006 & Director, GALORE)

I was in the Accelerator program with one of my first short films, in a class with David Michôd, Sophie Hyde, Adam Arkapaw, Taika Waititi, to name a few. I had the fear of god struck into me because it was clear even then what they would go on to achieve!

Grant Scicluna (Accelerator 2007 & Director, DOWNRIVER)

Accelerator was intense and exhilarating. I loved being in this hothouse of creative energy, meeting fellow filmmakers, soaking up the stories and advice from industry experts. It was really inspiring.

Miranda Nation (Accelerator 2011 & 2012)

"It was a truly fantastic and unique experience and really helped me focus on what I need to do to progress to the next stage of my career."

Rebecca Peniston-Bird (Accelerator 2013 & 2014)

A well organised and worthwhile program. **Justin Donoghue (Screen Australia)**

An excellent event for emerging filmmakers. **Jude McLaren (New Zealand Film Commission)**