

## 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 Lab** 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*), Alex Proyas (*Dark City*), Greg McLean (*Wolf Creek*), Ana Kokkinos (*Head On*), Desiree Akhavan (*The Miseducation of Cameron Post*), Joe Swanberg (*Drinking Buddies*), Garth Davis (*Lion*), 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*), Emma Booth (*Hounds of Love*), Melissa George (*The Good Wife*) and Kerry Fox (*Shallow Grave*) and major distributors/sales agents Roadshow, Universal, Madman, eOne, Bankside, Charades and 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:
  - **Matthew Bate:** whose 2011 debut feature documentary *SHUT UP LITTLE MAN – AN AUDIO MISADVENTURE* and 2015 feature documentary *SAM KLEMKE'S TIME MACHINE* were both selected for Sundance
  - **Nash Edgerton:** his 2008 feature debut *THE SQUARE* was selected for South by SouthWest;
  - **Mirrah Foulkes:** her feature debut *JUDY AND PUNCH* was selected for Sundance 2019;
  - **Rhys Graham:** whose **Premiere Fund** co-financed narrative feature debut *GALORE* was selected for 2014's Berlinale
  - **Jonathan Auf Der Heide:** who directed a chapter of Berlin-selected **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;
  - **Zak Hilditch:** his **Premiere Fund** co-financed feature *THESE FINAL HOURS* was selected for Cannes 2014 Directors Fortnight
  - **Sophie Hyde:** her feature *ANIMALS* was selected for Sundance 2019 after 52 *TUDESAYS* won the 2014 Berlinale Crystal Bear & Sundance 2014's World Cinema Best Director prize;
  - **Glendyn Ivin:** whose 2009 feature debut *LAST RIDE* was selected for the Rome, Pusan & Toronto Film Festivals;
  - **Natalie Erika James:** her 2020 feature debut *RELIC* was selected for Sundance;
  - **Alethea Jones:** her 2017 feature debut *FUM MOM DINNER* was selected for Sundance;
  - **Ariel Kleiman,** whose 2015 feature debut *PARTISAN* was selected for Sundance;
  - **Justin Kurzel:** who directed a chapter of the Berlin-selected **Premiere Fund** co-financed 2013 portmanteau film *THE TURNING* and whose 2011 feature debut *SNOWTOWN* was selected for Cannes;
  - **Anthony Maras:** whose 2018 feature debut *HOTEL MUMBAI* was selected for Toronto;
  - **Eddie Martin:** whose **Premiere Fund** co-financed feature *HAVE YOU SEEN THE LISTERS* was selected for Rotterdam 2018;
  - **David Michod:** his feature debut box office hit *ANIMAL KINGDOM* won 2010's Sundance Grand Jury Drama prize, swept the AFI Awards & earned an Oscar Best Supporting Actress Nomination, while 2014's *ROVER* was selected for Cannes;
  - **Shannon Murphy:** her 2019 feature debut *BABYTEETH* was selected for Venice and Rotterdam;
  - **Rodd Rathjen:** whose **Premiere Fund**-supported feature debut *BUOYANCY* won the Ecumenical Jury prize at 2019's Berlinale Panorama and was Australia's official entry for the 2020 Oscars;
  - **Grant Scicluna:** whose **Premiere Fund** co-financed feature debut *DOWNRIVER* was selected for 2015's Toronto
  - **John Sheedy:** whose **Premiere Fund**-supported feature debut *H IS FOR HAPPINESS* won the \$100,000 CineFest WA Prize and was selected to open *Generation K-plus* at Berlinale 2020;
  - **Hugh Sullivan,** whose feature debut *INFINITE MAN* was selected for South by SouthWest 2014;
  - **Jackie Van Beek,** whose 2018 film *THE BREAKER UPPERERS* was a smash hit at the NZ Box Office and selected for SXSW;
  - **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;
  - **Ben Young,** whose 2017 feature debut *HOUNDS OF LOVE* was selected for Venice, Tribeca, Busan and SXSW



[www.miffaccelerator.com](http://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 BUOYANCY)**

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 and Director UNDERTOW)**

"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)**