

MIFF Accelerator Lab

A key component of the Melbourne International Film Festival's suite of industry programs, the MIFF Accelerator Lab is an acclaimed talent 'hothouse' for emerging short film directors to hone their skills, craft and contacts as part of their transition to feature filmmaking.

Over five days, up to 25 filmmakers gain access to talks, workshops, seminars, screenings and discussions on the business and creative aspects of the film industry, as delivered by leading film practitioners from Australia and abroad. Accelerator Lab draws from the international guests attending MIFF, the Premiere Fund's slate of directors, as well as leading experts from local film funding agencies and distribution companies. Participants can look forward to:

- an environment that is at once intimate and integrated within Australia's largest film festival
- introductions to key local and overseas craftspeople, financiers and creatives
- experiencing films both with large audiences and in selective screenings
- a wide array of activities (such as public panel sessions) and networking events (such as dedicated functions) that might not otherwise be available in standalone industry workshops

Participants are selected from all short film entries to the MIFF program of the year in question. Their films are screened to the general public as part of the specially branded *Accelerator Shorts* package giving their work wide exposure among audiences and industry decision-makers alike. Among Accelerator Lab's expansive cohort of alumni are such names as Taika Waititi (*Boy*; *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*; *Jojo Rabbit*), Justin Kurzel (*Snowtown*; *Nitram*), Sophie Hyde (*Animals*; *52 Tuesdays*), David Michôd (*Animal Kingdom*; *The Rover*) and Mirrah Foulkes (*Judy & Punch*).

Previous guest speakers include:

- directors Mike Mills (*Beginners*), Isabella Eklöf (*Holiday*), 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*), Noora Niasari (*Shayda*), 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*)
- 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*)
- major distributors/sales agents Roadshow, Universal, Madman, eOne, Bankside, Charades and LevelK

Testimonials

*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.*

– Zak Hilditch (alum, Accelerator Lab 2011; director, *These Final Hours*)

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 (alum, Accelerator Labs 2011 and 2014; director, *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 long-lasting.

– Rhys Graham (alum, Accelerator Lab 2006; director, *Galore*)

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 (alum, Accelerator Labs 2011 and 2012; director, *Undertow*)

A well organised and worthwhile program.

– Justin Donoghue (Screen Australia)

An excellent event for emerging filmmakers.

– Jude McLaren (New Zealand Film Commission)