



MEDIA RELEASE

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CinefestOZ 2016 Film Prize Finalist and Screen Legend Announced

CinefestOZ, Australia's premier destination film festival, was delighted to make two special announcements at tonight's Gala Night presentations. *Girl Asleep* was announced the winner of the CinefestOZ \$100,000 Film Prize and the 2016 Screen Legend was awarded to Gillian Armstrong.

Girl Asleep, directed by Rosemary Myers, written by Matthew Whittet and produced by Jo Dyer, has been named the winner of the 2016 CinefestOZ \$100,000 Film Prize, Australia's greatest film prize.

Myers and Dyer were presented with the film prize this evening as part of CinefestOZ's Gala Night celebrations in Busselton, in the South West of Western Australia.

Starring Bethany Whitmore, Harrison Feldman, Matthew Whittet and Amber McMahon, *Girl Asleep* is a journey into the absurdities of the teenage mind. Navigating puberty in 1970s suburbia, Greta doesn't want to grow up. Her mum is embarrassing and her sister disinterested. Geeky Elliott is her only ally. Greta's surprise 15th birthday party is on track to be the worst night of her life – until she's flung into an odd fairy-tale universe with a warrior princess. Filled with wild musical flourishes and moments of colourful theatrics, *Girl Asleep* resists the adult world as much as its lead character.

The film was selected from fellow finalists *Jasper Jones*, *Spin Out* and *The Death and Life of Otto Bloom* – MIFF@CinefestOZ.

The prize is awarded each year to an Australian feature film or feature-length documentary. In 2014 it was awarded to *Paper Planes*, which went on to critical and box office success, and in 2015 to *Putuparri and the Rainmakers*, which went on to screen at Film Festivals in Tahiti and Toronto, made its television debut and has recently been nominated by the Film Critics Circle of Australia for Best Documentary.

Presenting the prize, Premier and Tourism Minister Colin Barnett announced the West Australian Government had secured a new two-year deal to continue sponsoring the event.

“CinefestOZ is a great example of a home-grown West Australian event that has gone from strength to strength with State Government support,” Mr Barnett said. “Last year it attracted more than \$2.73 million into the region which is important for the local economy.

“I am very pleased that the State Government will be supporting this fantastic event for a further two years through Tourism WA and the Royalties for Regions program.”

Minister for Culture and the Arts, the Hon John Day MLA said ““Through Screenwest, the State government has proudly supported CinefestOZ since 2009 and has seen the festival grow from attendances of about 3000 people to being globally regarded, attracting international and national filmmakers and film enthusiasts, year on year.

“Screenwest has partnered with Lotterywest, Tourism Western Australia, Screen Australia, the South West Development Commission and of course, the event organisers, who all help to make this event a reality.”

CinefestOZ received more than 30 submissions for the prize, with the winner decided by a jury of five esteemed members of the film industry. Jury Chair, Australian director Gillian Armstrong, was joined by Sue Taylor, Garry Phillips, Damian Walshe-Howling and Emma Booth.

The jury watched each of the finalists with an audience at CinefestOZ before coming together to deliberate and determine the winner.

On behalf of the Jury, Armstrong said the decision was completely unanimous.

“Thank you very, very much, it’s been a privilege and an honour and a great many things. Never before have I been called a legend. I’ve found the thing that I love to do.”

Chair of CinefestOZ Helen Shervington said, “This has been an outstanding year for Australian film and our audiences have enjoyed them all.”

Gillian Armstrong was recognised for her outstanding achievements as an Australian director, and named the CinefestOZ 2016 Screen Legend.

Armstrong is one of Australia’s most successful and respected filmmakers. Her feature film Directorial debut, *My Brilliant Career*, adapted from the breakthrough Miles Franklin feminist novel, was a huge success both here and abroad, launching the careers of iconic Australian actors Judy Davis and Sam Neill.

Armstrong is also a highly lauded producer, her most recent documentary was nominated for a 2015 AACTA and winning the ATOM award for best Arts documentary for *Women He’s Undressed*, the true life story of Australian costume designer and three time Oscar winner Orry-Kelly.

Some of her other credited features films and documentaries include *Star Struck*, *Mrs Soffel*, *High Tide*, *The Last Days of Chez Nous*, *Little Women*, *Oscar and Lucinda*, *Charlotte Gray*, *Unfolding Florence*, *Death Defying Act* and *Love Lust and Lies*.

Gillian Armstrong said she is delighted and honoured to have been invited back to the South West of Western Australia, this time as the Jury Chair.

With her success has also come extensive recognition at the highest level, having been nominated for the Academy and Golden Globe Awards and receiving awards from the Australian Film Institute; the Film Critics Circle of Australia; the Houston Film Festival; Festival International de Creteil the US National Society of Film Critics; the British Critics Association and the British Academy.

In 2008 she received the Women in Hollywood Icon Award in recognition of her contribution to the film industry and she was the first President of the Australian Director's Guild. She has received many accolades in her career, including an AM for services to the Australian Film Industry, a Doctor of Letters from the University of NSW and the University of Sydney, and an Honorary Doctorate in Film from Swinburne University.

Previous recipients of the CinefestOZ Screen Legend include Hugo Weaving, Jack Thompson, Bryan Brown, David Wenham and filmmaker Fred Schepisi.

CinefestOZ is supported by the State Government through Tourism WA's Regional Events Program, which is funded by Royalties for Regions. Rio Tinto is also a proud Premium Partner. The festival acknowledges its strong partnership with Screenwest, Western Australia's screen funding and development agency.

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Download Screen Legend Images [here](#).

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