

ARTS ACCESS VICTORIA

THE
OTHER
FILM
FESTIVAL

THE OTHER FILM FESTIVAL 2014 FINAL REPORT



“This is the best film festival in Melbourne”

Waleed Ali, ABC Radio National

This report is available in other formats on request including large print, Braille, audio CD and a summary in plain English.

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“Congratulations on a fabulous festival. The festival was curated at a high level, broad in its ability to appeal to an eclectic audience and in its coverage of the wide range of issues that were addressed, exemplary in the thoughtfulness by which you dealt with the duty of care, and a wonderful model of true accessibility.”

Dr Harry Karlinsky, Vancouver, Canada

Cover image: Artist: Sue Austin © www.wearefreewheeling.org.uk Photo: Norman Lomax
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Other Film Festival is produced and presented biennially by Arts Access Victoria. In 2014 the festival delivered an artistically strong program of international cinema concerning the lived experience of disability, provided global best practice access to all aspects of the festival experience and offered a vibrant and welcoming environment for all patrons.

The festival was staged from Wednesday 3 to Sunday 7 December, with Opening Night coinciding with International Day of People with Disability. The event was held at the Melbourne Brain Centre, Kenneth Myer Building at the University of Melbourne. Over five days the festival presented 21 sessions including screenings, forums, presentations and Q&A's with filmmakers.

The Other Film Festival received 193 entries from 29 countries. The festival selected 26 Australian and international films concerned with the lived experience of disability. There were 12 world premiere screenings and 22 Australian premiere screenings. Total audience numbers across the 2014 festival and touring screenings exceeded 5000.

The festival delivered on its commitment of providing global best practice access to all aspects of the festival, including providing an accessible, inclusive and enjoyable experience for all patrons. All films were captioned and audio-described; all spoken components of the festival were Auslan interpreted and social interpreting was provided throughout the event.

The 2014 Other Film Festival attracted significant national print, broadcast and social media coverage; amassing 45 unique media mentions.

All of the activities described above were guided by the recommendations of the National Arts and Disability Strategy, the letter and spirit of the Disability Discrimination Act, and by the values of social justice articulated in the UN Declaration on the Rights of People with Disability.



"Our minds are blown. We met fantastic people who effortlessly entered our hearts and changed us forever. The festival promised to throw a party where everyone is invited - and that is exactly the way we felt every second"

Alanna Uhrich, festival guest

2. THE EVENT

Opening Night

A packed house of funders, supporters and film festival lovers were treated to a unique opening night event. Speakers addressed the theme of *Included/Excluded* by sharing personally resonant experiences ranging from the poignant to the hilarious. Adam Elliot, the incorrigible MC for the night, made sure no one's contribution to the festival escaped public recognition.

Opening Night at the festival is much more than simply providing the opportunity to showcase some of the best films from the festival and treat everyone to great food and drink; it gives the festival the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to offering great cinema and transformative experiences to all members of the audience without discrimination.



Screening Program

The Other Film Festival 2014 showcased a program of fresh and provocative international cinema. The films were entertaining, emotionally affecting and challenged many commonly held preconceptions about the experience of disability or being deaf.

Highlights of the screening program included *Fixed*, a documentary introducing the brave new world of technological human enhancements, *Out of Mind*, *Out of Sight*, a rare and affecting look inside a forensic psychiatric hospital, and *AKA Doc Pomus*, celebrating the achievements of the world's most unlikely rock and roll icon.

The festival screened 26 Australian and international films made by, with and about people with a disability. The festival's reputation for bringing fresh cinema to a broad audience was enhanced by the fact that there were 12 world premieres and 22 Australian premiere screenings over the five-day event.

From its inception, The Other Film Festival has been guided by the unshakeable belief that authentic cinema reveals us and shapes us. The cinema continues to be a potent communal space with the potential to transport and transform us.

Festival Guests

The selection of guests at the festival continues to be the single most important artistic decision of the festival. While the festival would have liked to have invited dozens of interstate and international guests, all with something valuable to share, the budget permitted just three international guests and eight Australian guests including two support people.

Tommy Edison is a person who has discovered his true role in life. Blind since birth, Edison had always endeavoured to do the same things all his friends did. It wasn't until they were getting their licences and driving cars that he felt, for the first time, a sense of exclusion because of his blindness. These were difficult times for him, even though he was finding success as a local radio traffic reporter in Connecticut, USA. Many years later, he complained to a friend about the exclusion he felt when Hollywood films had too many visual effects and not enough dialogue. His friend challenged him to review the film as a blind person and the rest, as Edison would say, is the YouTube phenomenon that is [blindfilmcritic](#).

His impact on festival audiences and in the media confirmed his capacity to allow people to connect to his experiences as a blind person. This can be bitingly funny and nowhere more so than in his role as one of the three blind judges at the screening of the silent classic, *Nosferatu*. Maxine Beneba Clarke in *The Saturday Paper* wrote:

A live pianist atmospherically accompanies the action. The first contestant: a young man in the front row of the audience, starts narrating.... "There's piano music playing..." Tommy and the other two judges, both also vision impaired, chuckle. "You don't have to narrate the sound!"

*"You asked a lot of questions", he says to another narrator, "that made me want to turn around and look at the screen." The audience giggles... This continues for the duration of *Nosferatu*, audience members competing to take home an iPad, in what turns out to be the live captioning contest to end all live captioning contests.*

Making an impact of a very different kind, Dr Harry Karlinsky is Clinical professor of Psychiatry at the University of British Columbia, Canada. Dr Karlinsky has conducted [Frames of Mind](#), a monthly screening series of films concerning mental illness, for 14 years. These screenings are unique in that, while they are open to the public, they form part of the ongoing academic accreditation for psychiatric health professionals.

Dr Karlinsky reflected on the impact of these screenings with specific reference to *Lars and the Real Girl*, a meditation on community acceptance of difference. More confronting was the screening of *Out of Sight, Out of Mind*, a new Canadian documentary by John Kastner. With unparalleled freedom to record in a major forensic hospital, this film takes us into the grief and incomprehension experienced by people who have committed serious crimes while they have been mentally unwell. The post-screening discussion offered reflections on this powerful film from Professor Ian Everall, Cato Chair of Psychiatry and Head of the Department of Psychiatry at The University of Melbourne, and Dr Pia Brous, a highly experienced psychiatrist and member of the Mental Health Review Board.

Jay Jay Jegathesan, from the University of Western Australia, took his audience into an even more unusual place, the nascent world of avatars operating within the virtual spaces of the Freedom Project. As Jegathesan explained, these cyber worlds have become high democratic and liberating spaces for people with disabilities who may experience social isolation.

Andrew Pullen, accompanied by his partner Thanh, was the subject of the short documentary *The Globe Collector*. Pullen also contributed to the post-screening panel discussion concerning the representation of autism and Asperger's Syndrome on film.

BJ Davis and Scott Smith participated in the panel discussion following the 20th anniversary screening of the documentary *On the Road with Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

Tony Sarre and Emma Bennison, contributed their humour to the blind judging panel for *Nosferatu*, and Christopher Houghton flew in from Adelaide to do a director's Q&A following the screening of his documentary *Sons and Mothers*.

Film Selection

The festival pursues a rigorous approach to programming to ensure that our audience is treated to some of the best films on offer from around the world. All members of the selection panels have lived experience of disability as well as a strong interest in and understanding of contemporary cinema. These members watched almost 200 entries and, after much discussion, selected 26 films for inclusion in the screening program.

The festival has built a strong international network of relationships with more than 20 disability and deaf festivals around the world. The strength of the 2014 Other Film Festival program is due, in no small part, to the generous sharing of resources and recommendations between these festivals.

Forums

The festival staged three informative forums with panels of diverse speakers exploring a wide range of accessibility issues impacting on artists, film practitioners and industry professionals working in digital environments. Red Bee Media partnered with the festival to examine contemporary practices of creating and delivering high quality Audio Description services.

The festival is deeply grateful to all the people who contributed to the forums, panel discussions and performances at the festival. Please see full details in Acknowledgements on Page 9.

Deaf Program

The festival continues to be inclusive and welcoming of the deaf community. In 2014, the festival presented two sessions and a panel discussion concerning the lived experience of being deaf. This was achieved through partnership with Deaf Arts Network and VicDeaf. The Deaf Program was coordinated by Mija Gwyn from Deaf Arts Network.

Aiming to ensure that the entire festival be accessible and inclusive of the deaf community, all films at the festival were either open captioned or subtitled, all speeches and discussions were Auslan interpreted, social interpreters were provided throughout the festival and the website offered an Auslan introduction. The festival also attracted a number of deaf volunteers and hearing people with some proficiency in Auslan.

Deaf culture and generational change were the subject of the revealing post-screening panel discussion after the screening of the Dutch film *I Sign, I Live*. The diverse panel reflected on how new communication technologies and social media have played a role in the demise of the Deaf Clubs, formerly the main social meeting point for members of the community.

One of innovations this year was the creation of packs of *Party Auslan* cards. Produced in partnership with VicDeaf, these packs of eight cards contained introductory social phrases in Auslan to assist hearing and deaf people to better connect at the festival.

Touring Screenings

The festival just loves to tour! In 2014, the festival team presented screenings in Canberra, Ferntree Gully, Footscray and Southbank. These screenings attracted more than 3000 people.

Festival Prize

In 2014, the *Hi Vis* prize of \$1000 was unanimously awarded to Andrew Pullen, who appears in the short documentary *The Globe Collector*. For the first time at the festival, the prize was awarded to the subject of a documentary rather than a director or a film. Pullen was commended for his achievement of making his experience as a person with Asperger's Syndrome highly visible and engaging for a broad audience.

3. ACCESS SERVICES

Venue

The Melbourne Brain Centre was chosen for the 2014 festival event because it offered a contemporary, comfortable and accessible 250-seat theatrette located adjacent to Melbourne's CBD. The venue was directly accessible from the footpath and there was direct lift access from the underground carpark.

The festival also formed a partnership with Dr Dax Kitchen, located next to the theatrette. Dr Dax management worked closely with the festival to ensure that the café offered an accessible and welcoming service to festival patrons.

Captions

Open Captions appear as text elements, generally located in the bottom third of the screen, that provide a description of the essential components of the soundtrack. Captions describe music, sound effects and ambient sounds as well as dialogue and voiceover. All films screened at the festival were either Open Captioned or subtitled if in a language other than English.

Audio Description

Audio Description is the description of the characters, action and settings of a film, inserted in appropriate breaks in the dialogue and soundtrack. Where present, foreign language subtitles are included. Patrons who are blind or low vision listen to this description via a discreet earpiece connected to a small radio receiver. This service allow audience members to experience the film in an independent and well-rounded manner. All films screened at the festival were audio described.

Auslan Services

Auslan interpreters were present throughout the whole festival. They interpreted introductions to films, speeches, forums and panel discussions. Auslan interpreters were also available for social interpreting at the festival club, foyer and at the box office.

Website

The festival website was upgraded to meet or exceed the AA Standard of WCAG 2.0 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). The website exhibits a commitment to aesthetic design, functionality and accessibility.

The website permits all users easy access to information and functionality. Meaningful HTML and alternative text were provided for images and links, allowing people with low vision or who are blind to use text-to-speech software or text-to-Braille hardware. The pages of the website were coded so that users who utilise a keyboard alone or other assistive devices can easily navigate the website. Text throughout the site is enlargeable to enable users with low vision to readily view content.

Additional Access Services

- Festival program was offered in alternative, accessible formats.
- The *Getting There* page included maps, links and comprehensive information covering train, tram, bus and parking.
- Volunteers were fully briefed to assist all guests including people with a disability.
- Ticket prices were maintained at 2010 prices to remove cost barriers.
- Concession price tickets were also offered to people on low incomes.
- Festival acknowledged the Companion Card scheme for all sessions.
- Guide dogs were welcomed (including provision of water bowls).
- Disability awareness training and briefings were provided by Arts Access Victoria's Industry Development Program for festival staff, contractors and volunteers.

4. PUBLICITY & MEDIA

The festival provided a comprehensive briefing to the publicist to ensure that the messaging and language around the experience and representation of disability was clear, engaging and positive.

| Media Mentions | Print | Radio | TV | Online | Total Mentions |
|----------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Victorian | 6 | 14 | 1 | 1 | 22 |
| National | 3 | 5 | 1 | 14 | 23 |
| TOTAL | 9 | 19 | 2 | 15 | 45 |

These 45 media mentions represent excellent quantity and quality of both placement and penetration.

National Coverage

Radio National, ABC News 24, Triple J, The Guardian, The Big Issue, Film Ink, The Saturday Paper, Vision Australia radio

Local Coverage

The Age, Beat magazine, the Herald Sun, ABC 774, RRR, 3AW, 3CR, 3MBS, 3NRG, 3 WBC, 3ZZZ, JOY FM, Southern FM, SYN FM.

Online Coverage

Brisbane Times, Concrete Playground, Eureka Street, Femail.com, Filmink online, Filmreviews.net.au, if.com.au, Mediasearch, Subculture, Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, The Guardian, The Lowdownunder, Urban Cinefile

Media Quotes

The next time you're watching a big budget action movie – a superhero spectacle, perhaps, or a Michael Bay-directed brain haemorrhage – try this out. When a chaotic special effects-stuffed scene is just about to click into top gear, close your eyes. Keep them closed. And only open them only once the scene is over. Then ask yourself: what happened? Did all those audio effects tell a story or were they just a collection of thuds, screeches and explosions?

Tommy Edison's... idea for his channel was born out of frustration. As a film lover, he watched (for want of a better word) as film after film revealed its key plot moments using a visual language he has never been able to translate. "I thought it might be fun to review movies from a blind person's perspective to show sighted people what that frustration is like," says Edison.

And on the subject of attraction and falling in love? "I do it backwards," he says. "People look at a person in a bar or something like that and think: my god I've got to talk to them. Then after you get talking you learn what their mind is like. I do it the other way. I learn somebody's mind first and then I learn what they look like afterwards. I think that's wonderful."

Luke Buckmaster, The Guardian

Edison becomes impassioned as he talks about Audio Description..."The Simpsons stopped at a diner and there was a little sight gag, it was called 'The Buzzing Diner Sign'," Edison imitates the sound of one. "I would never have understood that otherwise. Things like that were opened up to me and I thought that was really cool." Edison is looking forward to experiencing more films with Audio Description at the Other Film Festival.

Eloise Ross, The Big Issue

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Team Culture and Leadership

The festival team don't simply put on a film festival; they are collectively responsible for the culture of the event. When guests and audience members alike unanimously report that they had a fantastic time and felt welcomed into the space, this is because the whole team contributed to creating a warm and inclusive environment.

The festival actively builds team culture in the lead up to the festival. All production team members and volunteers attended the Sharpen Your Senses training sessions provided by the Industry Development Program at Arts Access Victoria. These sessions provided an introduction to disability awareness and inclusive practice within a customer service framework. This training ensures that everyone who attends the festival can have trust that their access requirements will be met in an equitable and dignified manner.

The festival demonstrates its leadership in the sector through the Associate Director Program. This sector capacity-building program commenced in 2012 and provided professional development opportunities for four people with a disability. In 2014, one of those inaugural Associate Directors, Sophie Sherriff, assumed a leadership role in the festival by coordinating the film selection process and planning the high profile panel discussion around the themes of human enhancement raised by the film *Fixed*.

Festival Team

Executive Director, Arts Access Victoria
Festival Director
Festival Manager
Associate Director
Technical Manager
Safety and Risk Consultant
Deaf Program Coordinator
Film Selection Panel

Veronica Pardo
Rick Randall
Emily O'Brien
Sophie Sherriff
Andrew Taylor @ Twilight Cinemas
Bill Coleby @ Coleby Consulting
Mija Gwyn @ Deaf Arts Network
Akash Temple
Mija Gwyn
Sophie Sherriff
Cathy Gallagher @ CG Publicity,
Annette Smith @ Ned & Co
Nicky Dracoulis
Pip O'Brien
Don Kohlmann
Lynn Gordon
Kirri Dangerfield
Delaney Hutchins
Alec Downs @ Red Bee Media
Rowan Wilson @ Caramel Creative
Katie Darbyshire @ Caramel Creative
James Lipari
Tim Dakin
Mija Gwyn
Pamela Debrincat
Ester Tuddenham
Paul Matley
Tom Keeble
Jeremy and his great team at Dr Dax
Wendy O'Neill
Chris Brophy
Jeanette Ryan
Yolley Kalos

Publicity

Comms and Social Media Coordinator
Ticketing and Box Office
Volunteer Coordinator
Auslan Interpreters

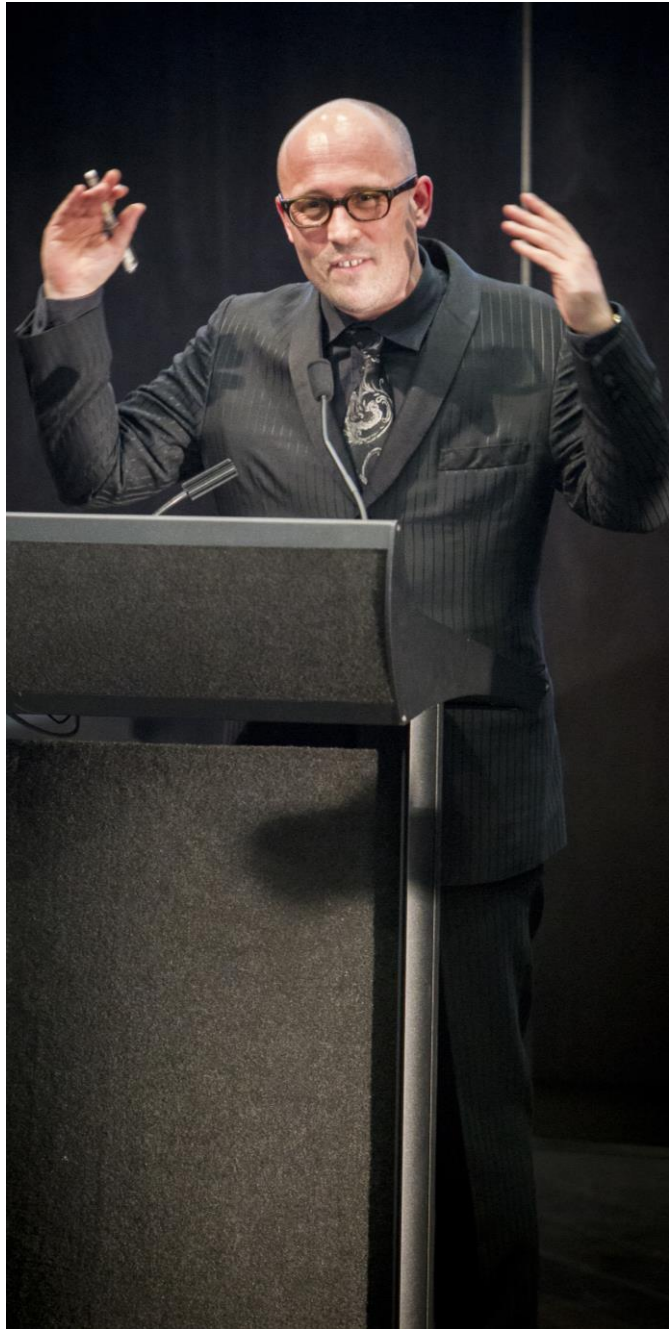
Captioning and Audio Description Partnership
Captioning and Audio Description Coordination
Graphic Design Partnership
Graphic Design
Production Assistant
Sharpen Your Senses trainers

Party Starters

Venue Technical Support
Catering
Manager, Industry Development Program
Operations Manager, AAV
Finance Manager, AAV
Financial Accountant AAV

Presenters, Panellists and MC's

Adam Elliot
Akash Temple
Alan Stewart
Alex Varley
Anthony Julian
Berna Hutchins
Cath South
Christopher Houghton
Dr Dianne Ashworth
Emma Bennison
Emma Norton (MC)
Frances Mathey
Dr Harry Karlinsky
Professor Ian Everall
James Blyth
Jay Jay Jegathesan
Jo Ellis
Dr Kim Vincs
Lara Torr
Dr Lauren Ayton
Leisa Prowd
Maggie Miles
Professor Michael Choong
Mija Gwyn
Dr Pia Brous
Prue Stevenson
Ravi Vasavan
Rhian Hinkley
Rick Randall
Romany Holden
Dr Shane Huntington
Sophie Li
Stefan Schutt
Stewart Carter
Summer DeRoche
Suzanne Derry
Tommy Edison
Tony Sarre
Veronica Pardo
Zoe Dawkins



Performers and Musicians

Babbz (Mamoud Samoun)
Casey Bennetto
Enio Pozzebon
Mark Atkins
Mary Toko
Tony Mazziotta
Wayne Joiner



Volunteers

Ali Qambar
Alice Ansara
Bernie Daly
Bernie Hetherington
Brenda McKinty
Brett Bailey
Briony Hamilton
Caroline Earley
Claudia Wright
Eva Otsing
Georgia Rodriguez
Hamish Christie
Isabella Pirie
Jenni Sharman
Jeroen Kroese
Kate Wallace
Katie Lohner
Llewella Vivian-Taylor
Lucy Macali
Mary Harmer
Merren Ricketson
Myriam Bourez
Peter Stevenson
Phineas Meares
Priya Sudhakar
Prue Stevenson
Robert Brierley
Sarah Kleeman
Simon Troon
Theo Giannoukas
Therese Mahoney
Vincent Bennett
Wendy Boase



Stella Young Memorial

Many of these volunteers also generously contributed their time and expertise to assisting with the memorial event for Stella Young at Melbourne Town Hall two weeks after the festival. Their expertise at creating a welcoming space contributed hugely to the success of this accessible, inclusive, large-scale public event.



The festival also warmly thanks

Aaron Lee, Alan Smith, Andrew Willis, Bernie Hetherington, Bob Willis, Brandt Lee, Brent Phillips, Candy Mitchell, Dale Fairbairn, David Peters, Deb Zipper, Gabriele Urban, Gabrielle Connellan, Ian Row, Jane Crawley, Janelle Whalan, Jo Ellis, Kelli Keating, Lewis Thorne, Liss Gabb, Madeline Getson, Margherita Coppolino, Consul General Mario Ste-Marie, Martin Curnow, Matt Jones, Megan Breen, Michael Parremore, Penelope Lee, Sasha Hough, Sharon Pinney, Sophie Li, Sue Edwards and all the dedicated filmmakers who submitted films to The Other Film Festival.

6. PARTNERS, SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

The festival attracted funding from all tiers of Australian government. We particularly acknowledge Film Victoria for their additional contribution towards access provision. The festival was further supported by partnerships with philanthropic and commercial organisations.



Celebrating 40 years of arts and disability

THE OTHER FILM FESTIVAL

The Other Film Festival is supported by the Australian Government.

Public Partners:



Philanthropic Partner:



Festival Partners:



Festival Supporters:



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Consulate General of Canada

Gouvernement du Canada
Consulat général du Canada



Arts Access Victoria gratefully acknowledges the financial support of:

