

Fresh start for East Timor's film scene

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The feature *Beatriz's War* hopes to start something big in its homeland; Clara Ponsot pops in.

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Beatriz (Irim Tolentino) searches for Tomas among the dead in *A Guerra da Beatriz* (*Beatriz's War*).

Beatriz's War to sow seeds of film culture in Timor

With assistance from Australian filmmakers, East Timor's first movie already looks like returning money to its investors. That's heartening news given that profits from *Beatriz's War* will help develop a film industry in that war-ravaged nation. The Tetun-language drama, about a couple torn apart during the Indonesian occupation, has its local premiere at next week's Adelaide Film Festival before a cinema release early next year. While the cash budget was roughly \$200,000, Australian co-director Luigi Acquisito believes *Beatriz's War* looks like a \$3 million to \$4 million film. "The idea from the beginning was to create a film culture in a country that had none, where many people are illiterate, and also to help nurture a film industry," he says. "That is very slowly starting to happen." Acquisito, who co-directed the film with East Timorese Bety Reis, says more than 30,000 people have watched it in outdoor screenings in East Timor.

Italian starlet Clara Ponsot pops in for a chat

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Italian actress Clara Ponsot, seen here in *Cosimo and Nicole*, is visiting Australia.

Rising actress Clara Ponsot, who plays a passionate Frenchwoman who embarks on a torrid affair in *Cosimo and Nicole*, should be a popular guest at the Italian Film Festival over the next week. In Melbourne, where the festival is underway, she will be at a Q&A session at the Palace Como on Friday. In Sydney, where it opens next Wednesday, she will be at a Q&A at the Palace Verona the following day. The festival's closing night attraction is Fellini's *Roma*.

Wadjda and The Rocket on track for Oscar noms

As entries closed for the next year's foreign-language Oscar, two films with Australian connections are considered genuine chances of being nominated. Not just Australia's official selection, writer-director Kim Mordaunt's *The Rocket*, but Saudi Arabia's *Wadjda*, which writer-director Haifaa Al Mansour shot after studying film at Sydney University. Both are warm-hearted dramas about spirited 10-year-olds. *The Rocket*'s US distributor, Kino Lorber, is confident of adding to its four foreign-language nominations in the past six years. "We had hoped there might be some funding from some source in Australia," says president Richard Lorber, flagging the value of screenings, an awards publicist and an advertising campaign. "But nothing has materialized to date." Screen Australia is believed to be considering how it can help.



Haifaa Al Mansour, Saudi Arabia's first female filmmaker, has had her film *Wadjda* entered in the best foreign language film category for the Academy Awards. Photo: Kate Geraghty

Variety to honour Nicole Kidman for work with women

With one famous actress known for her humanitarian efforts about to shoot a movie in Australia, another one who grew up here is being honoured in the US. Confirmation that Angelina Jolie will soon film the World War II drama *Unbroken* in Queensland and NSW has finally come after extended negotiations over incentives. Having two states dealing with Universal Pictures' lawyers didn't exactly speed up the process. Meanwhile, *Variety*'s annual Power of Women luncheon will honour Nicole Kidman for her work with UN Women, alongside studio executive Amy Pascal and actors Amy Poehler, Charlize Theron and Kerry Washington.

Gatsby ads in early awards chase

As the awards season warms up – the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts is



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about to start its voter screenings in Melbourne and Sydney – the first nominations are coming out in the US. In the Key Art Awards, which recognise advertising and communications, the punchy TV ads and trailers for Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* have received six nominations.

Patrick team answer a few questions

With the thriller remake *Patrick* reaching cinemas in a fortnight, the filmmakers are fronting up for Q&A sessions too. In Melbourne, director Mark Hartley and writer Justin King will speak at the AFTRS's Friday On My Mind at the Australian Centre For The Moving Image on Friday October 4. In Sydney, Hartley and producer Antony Ginnane will speak at a Popcorn Taxi screening at Event Cinemas, Bondi Junction on Wednesday October 9.

Indian pair show three docs in festival

Three Indian documentaries by acclaimed filmmakers Anjali Monteiro and K.P. Jayasankar are screening at Sydney's Parramasala festival over the long weekend: *Our Family*, about a transgendered community in Tamil Nadu; *Like Here Like There*, on Fakirani Jat musicians in Kachchh; and *The Bond*, about community committees in Mumbai. "We are delighted to be showcasing our work at Parramasala, which promises to be a truly exciting opportunity to reach out to the Asian Diaspora within the context of an arts festival that is community oriented," the filmmakers say. The films are screening at the Riverside Theatres.

St Kilda Film Festival calls for entries

The St Kilda Film Festival is calling for entries for next year's event. A highlight should be the competition for Australia's Top 100 Short Films, with prizes worth \$40,000 for the winners. Filmmakers under 21 can enter the Under the Radar competition. Details: <http://www.stkildafilmfestival.com.au>.

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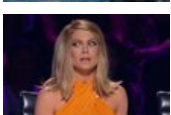
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