

***SMASHED* CLEANS UP AT THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SCREEN AWARD**

Embargoed until 9pm Friday 12 May.

The South Australian screen industry came out to celebrate the achievements of local screen makers at the 19th annual SA Screen Awards on May 12, as MP Katrine Hildyard launched the sold-out event and The Guardian's Luke Buckmaster lead proceedings as the Master of Ceremonies.

The big winner was Sean Lahiff's internationally admired ***Smashed***, taking out five awards – **Best Short** (Michael Clarkin), **Best Directing** (Sean Lahiff), **Best Cinematography** (Maxx Corkindale), **Best Editing** (Sean Lahiff) and **Best Sound Design** (Andrew Graue). Clarkin, Lahiff and scriptwriter Dave Haddin were also behind *Too Dark*, a companion piece to *Smashed*, which took out two awards in 2016 (Best Performance and Best Sound Design).

Other winners on the night included Kirsty Stark's ***Walter*** for **Best Comedy**, which was a Runner Up at 2016 St Kilda Film Festival; and Alex Keay's ***Almost Midnight***, won one of the most competitive fields **Best Web Series** - where three series made for ABC I-View battled it out alongside a Media Resource Centre supported work. ***Almost Midnight's*** producer, Alex Keay, was also awarded **Best Emerging Producer**, leading on from her win in 2016 where she and writer/director Stephen Banham won Best Screenplay in 2016 for *Heaps Good Hostel*.

The **Independent Spirit Award** was won by writer/director **Stephanie Jaclyn** in recognition of her driven approach to realising ***Freemales***, a six-episode rom-com web series made by young women for young women. This award caps a stellar start to the year for Stephanie, who recently won a *Helpman Fellowship* to develop her skills and network in London.

Taking home two awards on the night was **Jeremy Nicholas**, winning the **Carclew Young Filmmaker of the Year Award** and **Best Screenplay** for ***Variation On A Theme of Violence***. Producer **Richard Chataway** and director/writer **Michael Cusack** won **Best Animation** for ***Afterall*** - The pair won the same category in 2013 for *Sleight of Hand*.

There was also a lot of new faces on the podium – recent Flinders graduate **Paul Forza** won **Best Non-Narrative** for ***The Elderly Gentleman***; prod/dir/writer **Emily McCallan** won **Best Documentary** for ***Komorebi***, prod **James Whitrow** and director/writer **Ben Cluse** won **Best Drama** for ***Postcards from Nowhere***, **Adam Lemmey** for **Best Music Video** with ***In Your Fire (Wasted Wanderers)*** and **Best Feature** was won by **Nima Raofi** for ***Charlotte***.



“The awards recognised both the changing nature of the industry and the growing breadth of filmmaking in SA, with filmmakers taking up national opportunities while continuing to work locally. Across all nominations there was a diverse range of self-funded and grass-root filmmakers stamping their mark on the industry. Said the MRC Director, Gail Kovatseff

“For the first time in nearly a decade the Best Feature Film category was populated entirely by no budget and crowd-funded projects, highlighting the arrival of a new generation of self-motivated, independent film makers. While filmmakers such as Sean Lahiff, with vast experience in features in craft roles, made major steps forward as lead creatives in award winning shorts.”

A fixture of the screen industry calendar the awards will return to a late March/early April time slot from 2018.

For more information and details: www.mercurycinema.org.au

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