

picturing home

DIRECTED & PRODUCED BY ANNETTE COHEN EDITED BY MARCUS GILLEZEAU MUSIC BY GUY GROSS
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD WILMOT CINEMATOGRAPHY ELIYA COHEN & ANNETTE COHEN SOUND DESIGN BY DAMIAN JORY
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ELLENOR COX CO PRODUCERS MARCUS GILLEZEAU & RICHARD WILMOT

FUJIFILM CITY OF SYDNEY

Fink Film



MEDIA RELEASE

TUESDAY 23 MARCH 2021

DOCUMENTARY EXPLORING HOMELESSNESS PREMIERE'S AT DENDY CANBERRA

A documentary which tells the story of a formerly homeless woman is being screened at Dendy Cinemas in Civic this Thursday, 25 March.

Former Canberran, Director Annette Cohen said the film was shot over a period of three years, following Jai towards her ultimate dream of putting on a solo photography exhibition.

"With the pandemic and economic crisis, homelessness is getting worse everywhere, including cities like Canberra. The release of the film is very timely," Annette said.

After a chance meeting with a data scientist who gets her into a homeless photography competition, 40-year-old Thai born Jai Jaru's life takes an interesting turn.

"Jai is a remarkable woman, an ideal documentary subject – interesting, articulate, funny and extremely open.

"It is a beautiful film that reminds us of the importance of connection, hope and ultimately the power of creativity and purpose."

This is Annette's directorial debut film.

"Many people went above and beyond to make this film happen.

"Multi award-winning composer Guy Gross fell in love with the project and, like so many others, was extremely generous with his time considering our limited budget.

"The creative industries have been smashed because of Covid," Annette says.

"I have worked for many years towards a career making documentaries, it is my passion. But the timing couldn't have been worse with most of last year's film festivals pared down significantly or cancelled all together.

"However, I'm really excited to announce we have successfully negotiated an ABC broadcast on Compass next month."

The film will also be made available online in the coming weeks.

“For me the most interesting human beings are the ones we don’t hear much about... those who through their life struggles have risen to the challenges of life and found empowerment and hope.

“Jai inspired me constantly throughout the filming of this story. She ran away from Adelaide to Sydney at the age of 20, hoping to ‘jump of the Harbour Bridge’, but instead ends up homeless and on the streets on and off for twenty years.”

Jai slept on the streets, in carparks, behind churches and on trains. She moved from street to hostel to refuge and back, dragged down in despair of mental illness and physical suffering.

Periodic break downs saw her end up back in hospital, over and over again, only to be spat back out onto the streets of Sydney.

At the culmination of filming, Jai celebrated two years without a hospital admission, but this was short lived. For many homeless, it is often an endless cycle of ups and downs.

“We need to be more compassionate and more understanding of these people. They are mostly kind, gentle human beings, who have come across some misfortune, often mixed with mental health issues.

“As Jai points out in one scene in the film – they are not ‘mad and dangerous!’

“The point of the film is to raise awareness, empathy and acceptance of these individuals.

“What struck me most while making this film was the notion that this could be me... it could be anyone. We are all only a few steps away from homelessness at any point in our lives.

The film was generously sponsored by Fujifilm, and the City of Sydney Council.

“As creative artists in this country we have to fight to make these projects come to fruition. I gave up a career in the Canberra public service to become a film maker and it has been a very long and frustrating road.

“But I still believe documentary has the potential to change people’s lives and to change the world. I want nothing more than to continue to tell these stories.”

The film was Written, Edited and Co-produced by Emmy award winning Producer Marcus Gillezeau and Executive Producer Ellenor Cox. Composed by Guy Gross, Director of Photography and Co-producer Richard Wilmot and Cinematography by Annette Cohen and Eliya Cohen. Sound by Damian Jory.

Picturinghome.com.au

******MEDIA ENQUIRIES: ANNETTE COHEN 0410 592 618*******

A FILM BY ANNETTE COHEN

WRITTEN BY MARCUS GILLEZEAU

20 years homeless
20 photos
a solo exhibition



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