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P R E S S K I T

INTO THE SHADOWS

DIRECTED AND WRITTEN BY ANDREW SCARANO | PRODUCED BY ANDREW SCARANO AND PHIL HIGNETT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHIL HIGNETT | EDITED BY PHIL HIGNETT AND ANDREW SCARANO
CONSULTANT PRODUCER ANDREW PIKE | ORIGINAL MUSIC SCORE JARRED DOUEAL
ANIMATION BY OWEN LONGSTAFF AND DANIEL O'KEEFE | AUDIO POST-PRODUCTION BY NIMIC

A SCARNETT PRODUCTION RELEASED BY RONIN FILMS



www.intotheshadowsmovie.com | www.roninfilms.com.au

INTO THE SHADOWS

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON AT THE MOVIES

Here it comes! The new independently made Australian movie that reveals how the corporate formatted mega-multiplexes squashed your friendly local independent cinema. Twenty screens in Sydney alone have closed in the past 10 years! And it features film industry executives making jaw-dropping statements in a movie they would never put into a multiplex!

But, **Into The Shadows** argues that all is not lost. Ever inventive, our filmmakers are looking at new ways of getting Australian films to Australian audiences, by-passing the mainstream industry.

***A Ronin Films Release
From October 29 in quality cinemas***

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INTO THE SHADOWS

“INTO THE SHADOWS is not only a fantastic film, it’s an important one – for anyone who despairs at the state of our nation’s film industry, who laments the dominance of the multiplex over the independent theatre, and asks – why? And more to the point – what can we do about it?”

- Melbourne Underground Film Festival program

SYNOPSIS

INTO THE SHADOWS is a new independently made Australian movie that reveals how the corporate formatted mega-multiplexes squashed your friendly local independent cinema. Twenty screens in Sydney alone have closed in the past 10 years! It features film industry executives making jaw-dropping statements in a movie they would never put into a multiplex!

INTO THE SHADOWS explores behind the big screen to meet the filmmakers, distributors and exhibitors who bring Australian films to us, the audience. Away from the bright lights, the red carpets and the paparazzi, an awful truth is discovered. The cinema was once a place where Australian culture thrived: audiences were educated, entertained and inspired by Australian stories, characters and landscapes. But now, alarmingly, out of the \$895.5 million spent at the Australian box-office in 2008, only \$36.6 million (3.8%) was spent on Australian films. Australian films are clearly not connecting with the cinema-going audience. Why?

The film begins by tracing the history of Australian cinema, from the production boom in 1910-12, declining steadily to the barren post-war years. The film investigates the regeneration of the domestic production industry, championed by a dedicated few, in the late 1960s. Bruce Beresford, Phillip Adams and Alan Finney recount what the atmosphere was like in the 1960s and 1970s while distributors and exhibitors, Andrew Pike (Electric Shadows), Chris Kiely (Valhalla), Natalie Miller (the Longford) and Antonio Zeccola (Palace) reveal how important the independent art-house cinemas were in contributing to the re-birth of the Australian film industry.

The closure of many of these independent art-house cinemas in recent years, typified by the demise of Electric Shadows in Canberra in 2006, exacerbates the difficulties that producers have in reaching cinema screens on a fair and equitable basis. Many exhibitors, past and surviving – question the efficacy of the industry’s Code of Conduct, and talk with remarkable candour about unfair trade practices. Mainstream distributors, rarely seen or heard in a public forum, reveal some astonishing truths about the business of film.

Meanwhile, the number of Australian films remaining unreleased continues to grow.

But all is not lost. A new generation of Australian filmmakers continue to make films and continue to push at the boundaries of the cinema trade, finding their own way to get their films to the general public.

INTO THE SHADOWS

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In mid-2006 my grandfather, Keith Mann, reminded me that my local independent cinema, Electric Shadows, was closing down in December. Keith had been the Chief Projectionist there for 25 years but still, I did not share his concern until later that year when we discussed it again and it truly dawned on me. My local independent cinema that had shown me a glimpse into the diverse world of film would soon be closed forever.

I phoned Andrew Pike, the owner of Electric Shadows, and asked if I could document the closing month of the cinema as a tribute to the local cultural icon. After our initial discussion we came to an agreement that Phil Hignett (my co-producer) and I could have full access to record the closing month of the cinema and in return Andrew would have footage of his beloved cinema.

As Phil and I interviewed patrons, staff and friends and family of Electric Shadows, a silent truth emerged, that this was not simply the closing of an old worn out art-house cinema but rather the passing of an era: when choc-tops were handmade, the foyer was a social hub full of discussion, and projecting film was an art-form of its own. We soon learnt that many other independent cinemas around Australia had closed (Valhalla, Lumiere, Longford to name a few) within a few years of each other. This was a story that needed exploring and Phil and I felt it had to be told.

We applied to film agencies for funding, and while we always hoped for a lucky break, we almost got used to opening the envelopes to discover a NO inside. Undeterred, we applied for a credit card and persuaded Ronin Productions to allow us to use their camera and lighting kit as in-kind support. With some credit in our pocket and a camera at the ready, Phil and I travelled around Australia interviewing some of the most high profile Australian film industry insiders, to explore with them the past, present and future of Australian cinema.

Along the way, Phil and I often felt like giving up. Our relationships with friends, family and work were tested. I ended up quitting my job as a producer in local TV and Phil shortly followed. With more time available we were able to round up the last of our interviewees and in March 2008 began the gruelling editing process.

We were editing on Phil's (dying) Powerbook Mac but after some chats with my father he assisted us in purchasing a new Macbook Pro and Phil's father built a backyard office and so we continued. Phil would chisel away at the footage while I would write the film out in chapter form. A few months later Phil cut the footage from a 6-hour cut to a 3-hour rough cut. At this point, Phil followed his girlfriend to London and I continued, with on-going support and encouragement from Andrew Pike and Ronin. Finally in May 2009, **INTO THE SHADOWS** was complete!

Andrew Scarano
Producer/Director
INTO THE SHADOWS
August 2009

INTO THE SHADOWS

SELECTED QUOTES

Ken G. Hall, producer, director (speaking in 1966):

Don't forget that between 1931 and 1940 when the war stopped us, 75 Australian financed films had been made. Since that time, up to now, 15 or 16 all-Australian films have been made. Now this is wrong. Something has to be done about it.

Alan Finney, producer, actor, distributor (talking about the revival of interest in a film production industry in the late 1960s):

It came out of that Carlton feeling, that belief that we could do it – that as well as going down and seeing films from the US and films from Britain, that we could do the same thing. Everything was possible. I mean it was incredible at La Mama when the plays of David Williamson started to take off and that whole explosion of interest in Australian theatre, that whole interest in actors who could speak with an Australian accent and not sound as though they'd come from the drawing rooms of East London, and I think we thought the same with film.

Phillip Adams, producer (talking about the 1960s):

I became fixated on the idea that there ought to be an Australian film industry. This a fairly lonely view to take because no-one really wanted one: the government didn't want to pay for one; the exhibitors didn't want to show the damn things if there was an Australian film because they were just an embarrassment and they had all their lovely American films piling up, cans everywhere, so they didn't want Australian films; the ABC was incredibly hostile because they liked to make their own in-house product – they didn't want outsiders coming along with documentaries or dramas. ... So we talked John Gorton into taking the steps towards a film industry.

Bruce Beresford, director (talking about the 1970s):

People actually said to me to me – no-one will go and see Australian films because they don't want to hear people talking with Australian accents. So I said, but they all hear people talking with Australian accents every day of their lives! I mean why would it worry them in a film!

Paul Coulter (talking about the emergence of new independent art-house cinemas in the 1970s):

So you have a burgeoning of cultural exhibition around the country at the same time as there was great vitality going on in the production industry.

Paul Coulter (talking about the 1990s):

Suddenly people (i.e., the majors) were paying attention to different sorts of films and seeing there's money there in this: some of these little cinemas are actually doing quite well. They'd see the figures we were making, that other independent cinemas were making, and then think, well, we want that: we want it all.

Bob Connolly, Documentary Director:

It's those independent art-house cinemas like Electric Shadows (Canberra), like the Valhalla (Sydney), like the ones in Melbourne, that are utterly vital. And the fact that they're getting squeezed out is a tragedy.

Troy Lum, Distributor:

I'm a big supporter of independent cinema in terms of not art-house films but cinemas actually owned by people. There was a great tradition in Australia and all over the world actually where you'd have cinemas that were owned in country towns and the Dad would be the projectionist and Mum would be tearing tickets out the front, and there was real showmanship in what was coming into a town. So if you owned the cinema in a country town you were kind of the bastion of what the town got to see. So there was a certain personality in what you did. That is dying – dying because major distributors and major exhibitors are pushing those smaller players out of the market.

Margaret Pomeranz, Film Critic:

I think it's pathetic that we're standing here begging for crumbs to save this place (the Chauvel Cinema, Sydney) for film culture in New South Wales. It is shameful that we have just this little place. Yes, I want the trains to run on time, I want the hospitals to work, let's get the basics right. But at the same time, you've got to nourish our souls.

Andrew Pike, former exhibitor:

I think there are young people growing up today who have no idea that the cinema experience is something other than the multiplex experience, or the DVD experience, or the internet experience, or heaven forbid, the mobile phone experience.

Anthony Buckley, producer:

That's what's missing very much in exhibition at the moment in this country and other countries: there's no showmanship.

Chris Haywood, actor:

This last decade, to my mind, has been the dark ages of film in Australia. Dark, because there's very little gone up on the screen.

Brendan Cowell, actor:

An American will come into the room and he'll say "I want to have sex with her; I'm going to kill him; I'm going to steal that; and then I'm going to buy that car." That's like the first two minutes of the movie: you know what the guy wants, and the rest of the movie you just follow him going to get what he wants. Whereas in Australian films, the guy'll go "I don't mind that car, I wouldn't mind rooting her but I don't really care if I don't." You know, it's a very lackadaisical, laconic nature, which is so inherent to our culture. ... What a protagonist should be, if they don't get what they want, it's a huge crisis, whereas in Australia if they don't get what they want, it's kind of all right. And that's the problem.

Anthony Buckley, producer:

I get the show-reels every year from AFTRS (Australian Film, Television and Radio School) and the conservatism is nauseating.

Stephen Basil-Jones, distributor:

Australia is ranked number 6 or 7 in box-office ranking terms around the world. We certainly punch well above our weight. We've only got a 20 million population and we're number 6 or 7 in the world. I mean that is an extraordinary feat. But we are number 49 or 50 on the rankings for revenue back from films. In other words we are the poorest ranked territory, number 50 if you like, on the rankings list.

Clayton Jacobson, director of KENNY:

When KENNY had made 5 million dollars at the box-office, I still owed my investor 250,000 bucks. ... What hope have you got!

Bruce Beresford, director: (*nb: this interview took place before production of Mao's Last Dancer)

I haven't made a film now in Australia for 13 years or 14 years. I'm about to do one now, but I haven't made one in all that time. I've tried to set up half a dozen but I've never succeeded. I've gone in with scripts and they say, "Oh no, we don't like this, we don't like that." It's much easier for me to get a film set up overseas.

Peter Broderick, American industry analyst:

The bad news for filmmakers is that it's harder to get a movie into the world than it is to make one in the first place.

You make a film in Australia and you're interested in people seeing it in France. What happens? Ten grumpy French distributors watch your movie and if none of them are persuaded it's going to make them money, no-one in France gets to see the movie. It's such a ridiculous model, I can't even say it with a straight face, but it's been the model in place for 80 years.

The old rules no longer apply but in many cases the old rulers haven't figured it out yet, so filmmakers have opportunities to make up the new models, and to be on the frontiers and to reach people in new ways.

Dee McLachlan, director:

Films get attached to distributors and the movie gets made, and then the support process completely disappears.

John L. Simpson, distributor, producer:

So many independent cinemas are used to receiving instructions: take this under these terms, or we'll drive you out of town, run you out of business. That's how organised crime works. There's a power relationship with organised crime that says with a big stick, you can only have this under these terms. If you don't take it, I threaten you. For me, that's a terrible way to do business. But that's the model out there in distribution land.

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FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Andrew Scarano - Director/Writer/Co-Producer/Editor

Andrew completed his degree in Multi-Media Communications in 2006 and worked as a television commercial producer with Southern Cross Broadcasting in Canberra for six months in 2007 before resigning to pursue the completion of **INTO THE SHADOWS**. Andrew's grandfather, Keith Mann, was chief projectionist at Electric Shadows in Canberra for 25 years and it was this close connection that led Andrew to take on such a challenging project. Andrew has made numerous short films, two of which he produced for a Top 4 contestant in Project Greenlight Australia, 2006, one of which starred the late Charles "Bud" Tingwell. Andrew is passionate about the importance of Australian cinema culture and is looking forward to continuing the debates triggered by the release of **INTO THE SHADOWS**.

Phil Hignett - Co-Producer/Editor/Cameraman

Phil completed his degree in Multi-Media Communications in 2006 and has worked as an editor, cameraman and co-producer for the National Recording Studio (NRS) in Canberra. He was commissioned to work on Series 9 of the Earthwalkers TV Show and traveled to India and Malaysia to co-produce and edit. In 2005, Phil worked for Premium TV in London editing and producing official Premiership and Championship Football highlights for mobile phone and Internet content. He co-produced and edited an independent feature film in 2006 and has produced numerous short films, two of which he produced for a Top 4 contestant in Project Greenlight Australia 2006, one of which starred the late Charles "Bud" Tingwell. During post-production of **INTO THE SHADOWS** Phil moved to London where he now resides.

Dr Andrew Pike, OAM - Consulting Producer

Andrew has been involved in the Australian film industry since the late 1960s. He is also a historian and co-authored the book, *Australian Film 1900 - 1977* (published by Oxford University Press). His film distribution company, Ronin Films, specialises in Australian productions, and has been responsible for many major releases including *STRICTLY BALLROOM*, *SHINE* and *ROAD TO NHILL*. His company also operated the Electric Shadows Cinema in Canberra for 27 years. As a filmmaker, Andrew has produced many documentaries including *ACROSS THE PLATEAU* (2007), by Chinese director Zhang Zeming. He also directed two recent feature-length documentaries, *THE CHIFLEYS OF BUSBY STREET* (2008) and *EMILY IN JAPAN* (2009). He was a Founding Member of the Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive, Inc., and has served on the boards of the Australian Film Commission and the National Film and Sound Archive. Andrew became a mentor and consultant producer to Andrew Scarano and Phil Hignett on the historical accounts and industry knowledge for **INTO THE SHADOWS**.

INTO THE SHADOWS

INTERVIEWEES

[IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER]

PHILLIP ADAMS
STEPHEN BASIL-JONES
BRUCE BERESFORD
PETER BRODERICK
ANDREA BUCK
ANTHONY BUCKLEY
SIBYLLA BUDD
BOB CONNOLLY
ROBERT CONNOLLY
PAUL COULTER
BRENDAN COWELL
ROLF DE HEER
ANDREW DENTON
ALAN FINNEY
ANTONY I. GINNANE
MARK GOODER
KEN G. HALL
RICHARD HARRIS
ANTHONY HAYES
SCOTT HICKS
CLAYTON JACOBSON
CHRIS KIELY
RACHAEL LUCAS
TROY LUM
TRACEY MAIR
SUE MASLIN
DEE MCLACHLAN
GEORGE MILLER
NATALIE MILLER
MARK PESCE
ANDREW PIKE
ROBERT REEVE
GLENYS ROWE
MARK SARFATY
MICHAEL SELWYN
KATE SHAW
JOHN L. SIMPSON
MEGAN SPENCER
MURALI K. THALLURI
RICHARD WOLSTENCROFT
ANTONIO ZECCOLA
and
KEN G. HALL

INTO THE SHADOWS

LOST CINEMAS 1999-2009

[an incomplete list]

SYDNEY:

Walker Cinema North Sydney
Mandolin
Dendy Martin Place
Dendy George Street
Encore
Globe, Stanmore
Valhalla, Glebe
Village, Double Bay
Mecca, Kogarah
Footbridge
Fairfield
Roxy Parramatta

NSW: CENTRAL COAST

Kensington, Newcastle
Regal, Birmingham Gardens
Lyrique, Newcastle
Ritz, Kincumber

MELBOURNE:

Carlton Movie-House
Lumiere Cinemas
Longford Cinema

ACT:

Electric Shadows, Canberra
Center Cinema, Canberra
Cosmopolitan Twin, Canberra

BRISBANE:

Schonell Cinemas [re-opened 2009]