



**ColouriseBIFF** was a successful and significant collaboration between Indigenous organisation Uniikup Productions Ltd. (the umbrella organisation for Colourise Festival) and Brisbane International Film Festival. It is an appropriate and important act of diplomacy that Indigenous people welcome and engage with visitors to country, orientating them to the physical, spiritual, political and social environment into which they have entered. The Colourise BIFF event created the space and place for this to occur in a dignified and ceremonious way, and for Colourise/Uniikup to gain the necessary experience of event management at this level. It is a primary aim of Colourise to contribute to the international appeal and sophistication of cultural events in Brisbane, through prescient and appropriate engagement of the aesthetic and intellectual capability of the local Indigenous arts community and population. Colourise looks forward to on-going development of its collaboration with BIFF, Musgrave Park Cultural Centre and other partners and venues in 2008 and beyond.

#### 2007 HIGHLIGHTS

In **2007** the Colourise Festival event was extended whereby Colourise partnered with BIFF to create a fringe program focused on the work and practices of community filmmaking. This event featured the hosting of a Seminar, *Focus on Community Filmmaking* which included International guests from the Abenaki nation in Canada, Mayan people of Yucatan, Mexico and from Zimbabwe. The event program consisted of a women's Weaving Ceremony created in partnership with the Jiran Women's Initiative, to honour the work of world renowned Abenaki filmmaker, Alanis Obomsawin, on the day of International recognition of Indigenous People; timely screenings of *Hidden Agenda*, Director Ken Loach's Irish-British political expose, along with *Corruption in Government*, Aboriginal Journalist John Newfong's (dec.) public lecture critiquing successive Australian governments' handling of Aboriginal Affairs; and a screening program of the works of community filmmakers, the highlight of which was Sergio Novelo Barco's *The Wish to Continue Being* portraying the social and political conditions and aspirations of Mayan people of Yucatan, Mexico.

#### 2008 HIGHLIGHTS

The **ColouriseBIFF 2008 program** was curated in partnership with BIFF Executive Director Anne Demy-Geroe from a selection of work she had accessed for the Festival. Colourise had flagged the idea of a retrospective of the work of prominent Indigenous filmmaker Richard Frankland but his work schedule, completing his first feature film, restricted his engagement with ColouriseBIFF this year. Colourise proposed to BIFF (which successfully raised funds), for ColouriseBIFF to host Native American, Methow community spiritual leader, Spencer Martin, who had brought about the production of the documentary *Two Rivers Pow Wow*. The program documented the successful process of reconciliation in the town of Twisp in Washington State. The short documentary screened with *Two Rivers Pow Wow* was produced in Western Australia, and directed by Indigenous filmmaker Debbi Carmody, who BIFF also invited to present her film at the Festival. *Courting with Justice* documented the purpose, meaning and procedure of Aboriginal customary law. Both films fulfilled the ColouriseBIFF objective of promoting community filmmaking that challenged stereotypes of people societies, knowledge and philosophies.

Other films on the ColouriseBIFF program also fulfilled this objective, in particular Jeni Thornley's Tasmanian documentary, *Island Home Country* and the Sydney short drama *Fear*, which were screened together. *Island Home Country* has set a benchmark with the need for filmmakers to position themselves within the historic and contemporary social and political context of Aboriginal and Australian relations in order to produce authentic Australian stories. Jeni Thornley was also an invited guest of ColouriseBIFF and was accompanied by Aboriginal artist Penny Saxon who featured in her documentary. *Fear*, created by new young filmmaker, Katie Hides, contributed to this benchmark by revisiting the generally accepted idea of a benign Australian settler history.

Tom Murray's *In My Father's Country* followed in the tradition of an ethnographic approach to documenting the tensions and accomplishments of remote area communities, sustaining tradition and adapting to modernity; and in so doing portrayed the great strength and longevity of Aboriginal people and culture. Vincent Ward's documentary feature *Rain of the Children* was a complex mix of Maori Tuhoe culture the personal story of Tuhoe woman, Puhī. Tribal Producer Nancy Tait was invited as a guest to present the film, accompanied by elder Jane Tawhai. Members of the Maori community in Brisbane were invited to attend the screenings and held a ceremony in their honour at the Palace Centre screening. Maori short films *War Party – Taua*, and *The Sound of Cry* complimented the New Zealand contribution to the ColouriseBIFF program.

The opening of ColouriseBIFF, with a welcome to country by traditional owner and custodian Stan Smith of the Jaggera people and an introduction to country by Eurahaly-i man, Chris Hubbard, set the tone for a positive and thoughtful exchange at the ColouriseBIFF Seminar. The seminar *Focus on Film as Formative Media* was to open and excite discussion on the formative nature of films and their effect upon society in a globalised world. Guests were Spencer Martin, Debbie Carmody, Nancy Tait, Jeni Thornley, Penny Saxon, Adoor Gopalakrishnan (India), and Andrew Pike (Australia), with an almost capacity audience at GoMA Cinema B. The seminar was followed by a welcome gathering at the Festival Club in the Regent's Theatre with bush food refreshments provided by Dilly Bag and event and hospitality trainees who were engaged through Nancy Bamaga and Bridgeworks. The gathering provided an ideal opportunity for international networking and engagement with the Brisbane Indigenous community; an opportunity not usually available at such events.

Christine Peacock presented most ColouriseBIFF films at their screenings at GoMA and hosted question and answer sessions. She also provided local community engagement for the ColouriseBIFF national and international guests who visited prominent community elders and people, and were interviewed by Tiga Bayles at Radio 4AAA 98.9FM, Brisbane's unique Indigenous owned and controlled station. Christine also provided film commentaries for the Festival program catalogue and documented ColouriseBIFF program and events on the Colourise website at [www.colourise.com.au](http://www.colourise.com.au).

## 2009 HIGHLIGHTS

The success of the 2007 and 2008 partnership has generated the integration of the *ColouriseBIFF* program into the annual BIFF event whereby, in promoting Indigenous filmmaking, Colourise brings into focus philosophical, social, political and cultural values at local, national and international levels, challenging stereotyping of people, societies, knowledge and philosophies. In this way *ColouriseBIFF* makes a contribution to the maturity and social well-being of the Brisbane population. Colourise also provides employment and training opportunities for local Indigenous event management people, musicians, artists and caterers, which will increase as the event grows in popularity.

Feature films *Birdwatchers*, Brazil, *Los Heredos*, Mexico, *Yarwng*, Raima Valley, India, *Strength of Water*, Hokianga, Maori; and short films *Bourke Boy*, Australia, and *Chief*, Samoa, (refer program attached) achieved the same success with Festival audiences, as films screened in 2007 and 2008. The welcome to country, followed by the seminar *Shoot Local, Screen Global* complimented these films, with filmmakers providing the context and background information to their films. The after seminar gathering at the BIFF Festival Club in the Regent Theatre featured local Indigenous musicians Georgia Corowa and Sandra Paulson and catering by Murri-Way (refer program).

### **Participants**

Guests of *Colourise*BIFF 2009 were Briar Grace Smith (New Zealand) the writer of *Strength of Water* and Fr. Joseph Pulinthanath (India), Director of *Yarwng*. *Colourise*BIFF also assisted with ticketing for the family of Angelina Hurley, the local Aboriginal writer of the short film *Aunty Maggie*, which screened on the opening night in the main program. Aspiring local Aboriginal filmmakers Angelina Hurley, Tamara Whyte and Luke Briscoe joined the international guests on the Seminar panel.

### **2010 and beyond .....**

**A new Brisbane International Film Festival Director in 2010 saw the demise of the partnership between Colourise Festival and BIFF and a distinct Indigenous filmmaking perspective as part of the program. There was no interest by the new management in maintaining the relationship or program development initiative. This was extremely short sighted and a retrogressive attitude to what could have been a positive cultural and social outcome for film festivals across Australia.**