

Partho Sen-Gupta Directs Australian-French Feature *Slam*

Monday 22 May 2017: Screen Australia, Screenwest and France's CNC Cinémas du Monde have funded Australian-French feature *Slam*, a tense thriller from writer/director Partho Sen-Gupta that follows the disappearance of a young Muslim woman in a climate of mistrust and xenophobia.

Partho Sen-Gupta's first feature *Let the Wind Blow* premiered at Berlinale and his acclaimed second feature *Sunrise* screened at film festivals around the world including Tribeca, Busan, Munich, BFI London and Sydney. *Slam* is produced by Michael Wrenn (*Three Summers*, *The Rocket*) for Invisible Republic with Tenille Kennedy (*Bad Girl*) for George Nille & Co and Marc Irmer (*Sunrise*) for Dolce Vita Films, France.

"I wrote *Slam* with urgency and anger in reaction to the world around me nose-diving into hatred and fratricide. But I am very pleased that what has resulted is a poetic appeal to reason, a socially motivated thriller that transcends language and nationality. I am very excited to work with such a talented international cast and crew who were touched by the human story and will collaborate with me to bring my vision to the screen," said writer/director **Partho Sen-Gupta**.

Slam is the story of Ameena, a young Australian of Palestinian origin, who mysteriously disappears one night after her slam poetry performance. An Australian air force fighter is shot down over Syria and the pilot is captured by the Islamic State. The two unconnected events wreak havoc in the quiet suburban life of Ameena's brother Ricky when the media suggest that she is not a missing person but a 'home-grown radical' who has gone to Syria to join the Islamic State. For Joanne, the police officer assigned to the case, the only way to face her personal demons is to discover the truth behind Ameena's disappearance.

"Partho Sen-Gupta has the ability to take a dark subject matter and make an incredibly beautiful film as we saw with his acclaimed feature *Sunrise*," said **Sally Caplan**, Head of Production at Screen Australia. "*Slam* is a timely, suspenseful thriller that will resonate with audiences both in Australia and internationally."

Featuring an international cast including Adam Bakri, star of Oscar-nominated film *Omar*, Rachael Blake (*Sleeping Beauty*, *Lantana*) and Abbey Aziz (*Let it Be Love*), *Slam* will be filmed in Sydney's Western Suburbs. Production is set to begin late 2017, with post-production in Western Australia and France.

"We are delighted that post-production of *Slam* will take place in Western Australia and France," said **Ian Booth**, Chief Executive Screenwest. "*Slam* is an international story being made by an international team. It provides a superb opportunity to showcase Western Australia's creative talent."

Australia and France have had a co-production agreement in place since 1986, resulting in 32 productions to date. As an Australian-French feature *Slam* can explore the official co-production pathway, which provides a valuable opportunity to reach international audiences.

The CNC is an agency of the Ministry of Culture and Communication, established to support and promote film and television in France. CNC's Cinémas du Monde scheme is a selective fund dedicated to high quality international co-productions. *Slam* is the first Australian production to receive funding from the scheme. International films recently supported by Cinémas du Monde include Oscar-nominated *Mustang*, as well as *Hikari* and *A Gentle Creature*, which are in competition at this year's Cannes Film Festival.

Frédérique Bredin, President of the CNC said, "We are delighted to have granted the Aide aux Cinémas du Monde to an Australian-French co-production for the very first time. It is encouraging to see this collaboration between France and Australia and we hope it will lead to more co-productions in the future."

Slam has received production investment funding from Screen Australia with the support of CNC's Cinémas du Monde and Screenwest. The feature will be distributed in Australia by Bonsai Films, with Doc & Film International handling international sales. *Slam* participated in both Cinemart and the Berlinale co-production markets in 2016.



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Hannah Horner, Festival & Sales Manager, Doc & Film International said, "We are thrilled to collaborate with Partho Sen-Gupta and the producers on this film. *Slam* tackles an important issue deeply rooted in our society. At a time where the immediacy of the media is guiding our view of the world, Partho's film will question its hold on us in a captivating thriller."

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