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NATIONAL QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIAN FILM

Stan's first feature film shot at mansion on 177-year-old Queensland cattle station

By Toby Crockford
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Most of the first feature-length film shot by Australian streaming service Stan, to premiere this month, was shot at a mansion on a 177-year-old Queensland cattle station.

But the two-storey mansion came close to not being the set because the film crew was initially

not allowed to stay onsite overnight.



Susie Porter (left) and Mairi Cameron during filming of *The Second* near Dalby.

Photo: Supplied

The Second will be shown at the Gold Coast Film Festival and includes music from the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, the first time it has provided music for a film.

Director Mairi Cameron said the movie told the story of two estranged female friends who reunite at an isolated property where they spent teenage summers together.

One woman, played by Rachael Blake, is a successful writer who used her and her friend's teenage memories to create the storyline for her popular book.

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When she and her friend, played by Susie Porter, reunite, their conflict escalates and a dark secret from their past is revealed.

The author's publisher (Vince Colosimo) also joins the pair at the property as he encourages his writer to create her second novel.

Ms Cameron said 80 per cent of the film had been shot at Jimbour House, located on Jimbour Station in the Darling Downs, which opened in 1841.



Jimbour House, located about 30 kilometres north of Dalby.

Photo: Supplied

She said the mansion came close to not being the set for the film because it was used to only host bridal parties and the film crew were at first not permitted to stay overnight.

"It wasn't viable at first because there wasn't the kind of money available to do an away shoot during the day and then come home," she said.

"Then they changed their policy and came back to us saying they had 25 rooms there and wanted to make it work.

"They said we could come and live there the whole time we were making the film.

"So the crew ended up sleeping on mattresses on the floor surrounded by costumes and sets."

The Second was funded by Screen Queensland.

"Having Stan marketing the film is really exciting," Ms Cameron said. "I've been involved in other projects and know it's very tough to market Australian films."



Rachael Blake plays the role of the successful writer in *The Second*.

Photo: Supplied

The Brisbane director said she was excited to have the film's Australian premiere at a local venue.

"We want the audience to walk away and debate what they think it is they have just seen because there are twists throughout.

"I've always wanted the audience to walk away with questions, but be excited by the puzzle and mystery."

The Second will be shown alongside a Brisbane virtual reality piece, *A Thin Black Line*, which follows a five-year-old Indigenous girl being evacuated from Darwin during World War II.



The Thin Black Line - an animated documentary produced by Brisbane director Douglas Watkin.

Photo: Supplied

The storyline is based on the experiences of director Douglas Watkin's mother, with the audience experiencing the evacuation through charcoal drawing animation.

"Charcoal represents a lot: the ashes, furnace, war and a house being burned down after a bombing," Mr Watkin said.

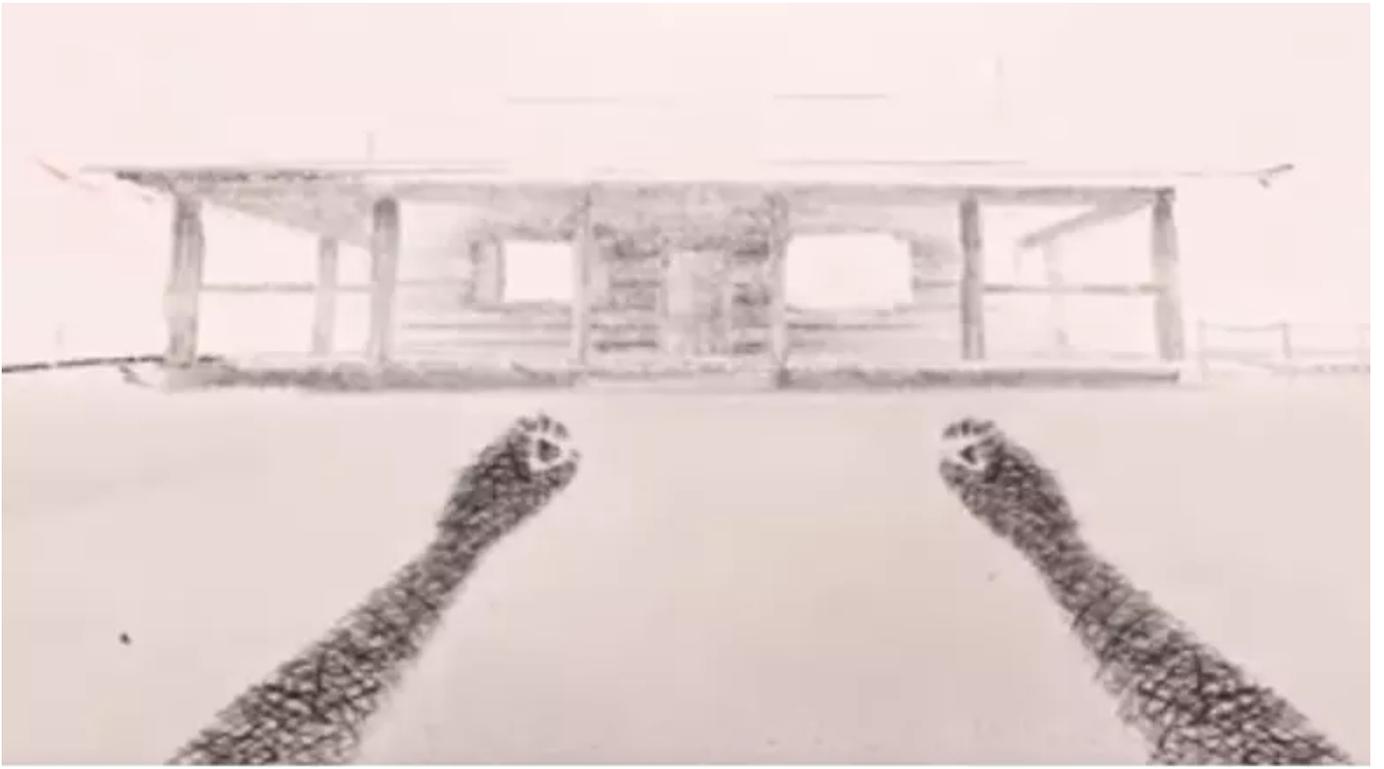
"We wanted to see the artwork being made, see the thin, black lines across the page and watch the other elements coming together."

Mr Watkin's mother was evacuated on a cruise liner before the attack on Darwin and she never returned to the city.

"Virtual reality is the next frontier in storytelling, the bombing of Darwin has never been seen through virtual reality before," Mr Watkin said.

"As a director, you have to remember you don't have control over what people see because everyone will get a totally different experience.

"(The audience) will see different things and pick up on different things."



Mr Watkin believed the scale of the Darwin bombing was often lost when compared with the Pearl Harbour attack.
Photo: Supplied

Mr Watkin said there was nothing more rewarding than showing the animated documentary in front of a local audience.

"It's a pleasure ... there's nothing more rewarding than having a local audience and home-town experience," he said.

The Gold Coast Film Festival runs from April 17-29 with a full program list available [here](#).

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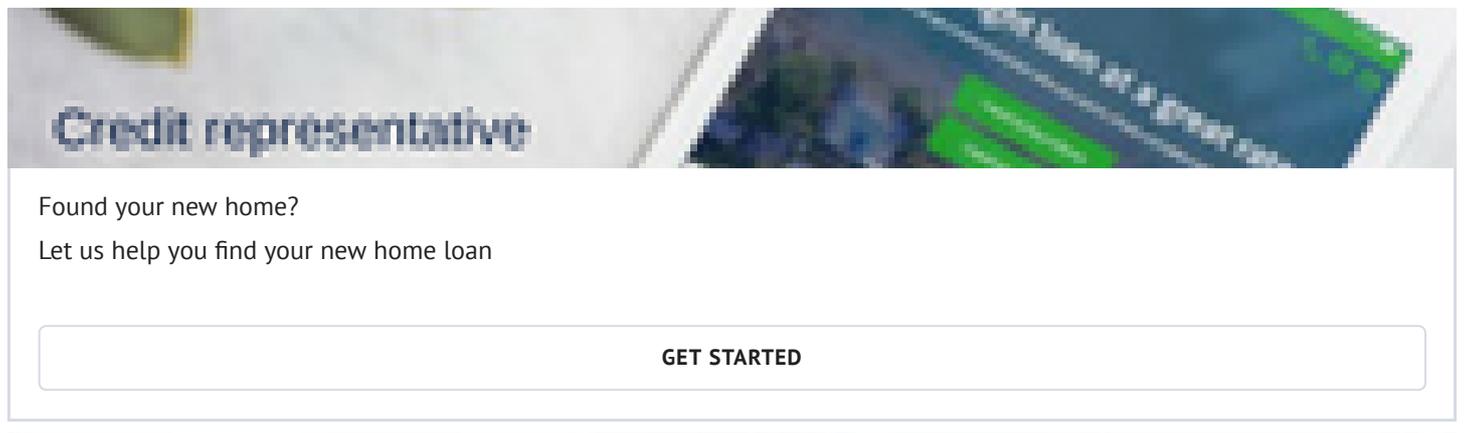


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