

MEDIA RELEASE**18 January 2021**

Hollywood director inspires next generation of young filmmakers

This week, visionary director Alex Proyas will release the Director's cut of his acclaimed film, *Dark City* at the [Bangalow Film Festival](#). The festival is proudly supported by [SAE Creative Media Institute](#). Prior to the screening, Alex explored his directorial journey from commercial and music videos for Sting and Crowded House, to Hollywood blockbusters featuring Will Smith and Nicolas Cage.

From an early age films had an impact on Alex's life, when at the age of six he was taken to see *2001: A Space Odyssey* by his parents. "Even at that age, my mind was blown. I just loved the escapism and how you could be transported to another world," Alex said.

As time went on Alex became inquisitive about how movies were made. "I kept bugging my parents to buy me a Super 8 camera. Eventually they gave me one for my birthday, and I started making films with that," Alex said.

Before his transition to feature films and some of his best known work, Alex directed advertisements and music videos for artists including Sting, Fleetwood Mac and Crowded House. This led to an ARIA award for best music video for Crowded House's 'Don't Dream it's Over' in 1987. The success that Alex had with commercials and music videos, he explains, were his "passport to Hollywood films".

"I was lucky to make a number of high-profile music videos that got me to the US. I had already made a low budget feature film in Australia, *Spirits of the Air*, *Gremlins of the Cloud*, but it was the commercials and music videos that got me seen in the feature film world," Alex said.

During Alex's film career he has directed big budget films *The Crow*, *Dark City*, *iRobot*, *Knowing*, and *Gods of Egypt*, and working with some of Hollywood's top actors. It was Will Smith and Nicolas Cage though that left the greatest impression on him.

"Will is hilarious - when we were filming *iRobot*, he kept me laughing to the point where I couldn't concentrate and we'd have to stop filming. He's got a great personality, and loves having fun by doing different impressions of the crew," Alex said.

"Nick was terrific too - when we were filming *Knowing*. He's a surrealist and has a great sense of humour that aligns very much with my own.

“They’re both lovely to work with. They take their jobs very seriously and they fully embrace the story - which makes them good people to collaborate with,” Alex added.

In today’s world of smartphones and the greater affordability of video technology, Alex believes “there’s no justification to not make a film, if you really want to make one. It’s about how much energy you’re able to throw at it, how good a communicator you are at dragging people into your sphere of madness. That means exciting your cast and crew, and getting them on board with the story you’re trying to tell”.

With a unique style to his films, Alex confirms that storyboarding each shot of the film is a crucial part of his process, which all up and coming filmmakers should go through. “These days it’s very alluring to get your phone out and start making shots, without knowing how those shots go together in a scene.

“Storyboarding is something that is really important, especially for young filmmakers. If you’ve got a crew on set, you have to get them to trust you, and how you do that is by doing pre-planning and not making it up as you go,” Alex added.

With the film industry being heavily affected by the COVID pandemic, Alex has used it as an opportunity to develop a film studio that brings all the different disciplines of film under one roof - from shooting and editing to visual effects and sound. The first film that will be produced in the new studio is *Mask of the Evil Apparition* - which comes out later this year.

“Rather than travelling to a physical location, we shoot on green and LED screens, creating the entire look and feel of the set on a computer. It’s a very lean, expedient way of making a film without compromising on quality. I used these same techniques for *iRobot* in 2004. A lot of big productions use the technology, but we’re making it indie friendly,” Alex said.

With the film industry going through changes, Alex believes there are “enormous opportunities” for filmmakers. “It’s about finding out where those opportunities are. I would urge directors to find a way to make films here in Australia.”

Alex Proyas’ Directorial Cut of *Dark City* takes place on Thursday 21 January at 5pm at the Bangalow Film Festival. The festival is proudly supported by SAE Creative Media Institute. To buy tickets for the session [visit the website](#).

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Imagery



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