



**THREE OF THE UK'S MOST COMPELLING NEW FILMMAKERS
SHORTLISTED FOR UK FILM'S BIGGEST BURSARY
THE £50K IWC SCHAFFHAUSEN FILMMAKER BURSARY AWARD
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE BFI**

- **DANIEL KOKOTAJLO – Writer, Director of *APOSTASY***
- **RUNGANO NYONI – Writer, Director of *I AM NOT A WITCH***
 - **MICHAEL PEARCE – Writer, Director of *BEAST***

Tuesday 19 September 2017: At an event this morning at BFI Southbank, the BFI and IWC Schaffhausen revealed the three finalists vying for the second **IWC Schaffhausen Filmmaker Bursary Award in Association with the BFI** – at **£50,000**, it is the most significant bursary of its kind in the UK film industry. **Oscar®-winning director Tom Hooper** will join **Amanda Nevill**, CEO of the BFI and **Christoph Grainger-Herr**, CEO of IWC Schaffhausen, to select the winner, which will be announced at **LUMINOUS**, the BFI's biennial fundraising gala on 3 October 2017.

The Bursary is presented in recognition of outstanding British talent and is designed to support a writer and/or director at the beginning of their career, bringing them the financial stability and time needed to develop their creativity and focus on future projects without the pressure of deadlines or the distraction of taking paid work – a precious and extremely rare opportunity for a filmmaker.

Amanda Nevill, CEO of the BFI comments: *"This extraordinary partnership and the generosity of our friends at IWC Schaffhausen is enabling us to support exciting up-and-coming British talent in a truly dynamic way. We have an incredible shortlist of filmmakers with hugely different styles and who demonstrate great strength in their creative voices. As a snapshot of UK emerging talent, it is a very vibrant and encouraging picture, but for us as a judging panel, it will be a very difficult decision!"*

Christoph Grainger-Herr, CEO of IWC Schaffhausen, comments: *“Our priority is the support of up-and-coming filmmakers and their projects. Being storytellers ourselves, we deeply appreciate the creativity and passion that the talented directors and writers selected as the finalists for the second Filmmaker Bursary Award have invested into their work to enchant and captivate their audiences.”*

A panel of senior industry figures – **Rose Garnett**, Director of BBC Films, **Sam Lavender**, Deputy of Creative at Film4, **Ben Roberts**, Director of the BFI Film Fund, **Clare Stewart**, Director of the BFI London Film Festival, and **Gaylene Gould**, BFI Southbank’s Head of Cinemas and Events – selected the shortlist of filmmakers. To be eligible for the Bursary Award a writer and/or director must be UK-based and have their first or second film in Official Selection at the BFI London Film Festival in Partnership with American Express®. The high calibre of shortlisted applicants is testament to the creativity alive in British independent filmmaking with the three finalists showing a diversity of voices and presenting original work with a distinctive tone.

Ben Roberts, Director of the BFI Film Fund said: *“It’s been another strong year for British film debuts and Rungano, Dan and Michael embody the ambition, the intelligence and the virtuosity that we are seeing more and more amongst a generation of emerging filmmakers. Congratulations to all them, and all the filmmakers debuting at LFF.”*

Clare Stewart, Director of the BFI London Film Festival said: *“It is not only the Bursary itself that is of significant value, IWC have created an opportunity for the LFF to play a direct role in bringing all the new and emerging UK-based talent with films in the Festival to the attention of key industry decision-makers through the shortlisting process. I thank our partners at IWC, the shortlisting panel and I warmly congratulate the nominated filmmakers.”*

The final three in contention for the **IWC Schaffhausen Filmmaker Bursary Award in Association with the BFI** are:

Daniel Kokotajlo

Writer, Director of APOSTASY screening in the LFF’s First Feature Competition (UK Premiere)

Daniel Kokotajlo is a self-taught film director and writer. Born and raised by a Ukrainian-Italian family in Manchester, UK. His debut feature film, **APOSTASY**, is inspired by his own experiences growing up as a Jehovah’s Witness in the north of England while attending art college. He learnt how to use a camera working as a cameraman at his local greyhound stadium. He is a recent alumnus of the Biennale Cinema College, EIFF Talent Lab, and Creative England’s Talent Centre. He was selected as a Star of Tomorrow by Screen International in 2015.

Daniel Kokotajlo said: *“I’m grateful to have been given the opportunity to make my first feature film, **Apostasy**, and to have been shortlisted for the IWC Filmmaker Bursary Award. The journey to this point hasn’t been easy for me and that’s why this Award would be a real help – it’s a genuine means to sustain filmmakers from working class backgrounds as we continue to hone new, exciting stories.”*

Rungano Nyoni

Writer, Director of **I AM NOT A WITCH screening in the LFF’s First Feature Competition (UK Premiere)**

Rungano Nyoni is a self-taught writer/director born in Lusaka, Zambia and grew up in Wales, UK. Her short films have featured in over 400 film festivals. In 2009 she won a BAFTA Cymru for her short film *The List*. Her subsequent film *Mwansa The Great* was funded by UK Film Council and Focus Features (USA). It was selected at over 100 International Film Festivals, awarded over 20 prizes and nominated for a BAFTA in 2012. In 2015 Rungano was selected for the Nordic Factory, a Finnish/Danish Co Production where she co-directed *Listen*. *Listen* was nominated for a European Film Award 2015 and won the Best Short Narrative Prize at Tribeca Film Festival. Rungano’s debut feature, ***I AM NOT A WITCH***, premiered this year at Cannes Film Festival in the Directors Fortnight Sidebar, and also screened at TIFF ahead of its LFF premiere.

Rungano Nyoni said: *“It’s an honour to be nominated. It’s just so rare to have the opportunity to develop your project under your own terms without having to hustle.”*

Michael Pearce

Writer, Director of **BEAST screening in the LFF’s First Feature Competition (European Premiere)**

Michael’s first feature film, ***BEAST***, premiered at the 2017 Toronto Film Festival in the Platform section. In 2014 Michael was selected to be part of Guiding Lights scheme and was mentored by James Marsh. In 2013 Michael made his first TV drama, *Henry*, through Channel 4’s Coming Up scheme and made the short, *Keeping Up With The Joneses*, through the BFI’s 2012 Shorts scheme, the film was nominated at the 2014 BAFTA and BIFA awards. In 2011 Michael was one of Screen International’s UK Stars of Tomorrow and his feature script was selected to be developed through the Torino Film Lab Script & Pitch Workshops and was then selected to be part of 2012 Frame Work programme. Previously to that Michael’s short film, *Rite*, was nominated at the 2011 BAFTAs and BIFAs, played at over 40 international film festivals.

Michael Pearce said: *“Finding, developing and making that second film is one of the most difficult and significant career challenges a director will face. The IWC Bursary creates an opportunity where*

a filmmaker can forage for that 2nd film without any immediate financial pressures to work on projects they're not passionate about. It's a rare gift, protecting the filmmaker and endowing them with the freedom to continue dreaming in their own unique way."

In a unique partnership that unlocks direct philanthropic support for UK creativity and the future of British film, the Filmmaker Bursary Award was created by Swiss luxury watch manufacturer IWC Schaffhausen and the BFI. IWC Schaffhausen has been a sponsor of the BFI and the Official Time Partner of the BFI London Film Festival since 2014.

Hope Dickson Leach won the inaugural Bursary last year when her debut feature *The Levelling* had its world premiere at the BFI London Film Festival. The film went on to be released in May 2017 to great critical acclaim. Explaining the extraordinary opportunity the Bursary provided her with, Dickson Leach said: *"This last year has been a wild ride. Promoting my debut film as well as exploring future opportunities is all-encompassing, and having the time to invest in this has truly been a privilege. Winning the Bursary not only made it possible for me to make the most of this crucial moment in my career, but also raised my profile. Over the year I have worked hard to find the projects that most excite me and will provide that important step forward for my second feature, and feel lucky to be developing several as a result. I have also had time to work with my colleagues at Raising Films, the campaigning initiative I co-founded for parents and carers in the film industry. The Bursary is a unique opportunity for British filmmakers – the gift of time is surely the most precious thing any filmmaker can receive, and I can say without doubt that it has allowed me to make the most of this critical year in my life."*

Ends

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The BFI London Film Festival

BFI London Film Festival is Britain's leading film event and one of the world's best film festivals. It introduces the finest new British and international films to an expanding London and UK-wide audience and attracts significant international film industry participation. LFF is a compelling combination of diverse films, red carpet glamour, friendly audiences and vibrant exchange. LFF provides an essential profiling opportunity for films seeking global success; promotes the careers of British and international filmmakers through its industry and awards programmes and positions London as the world's leading creative city.

IWC SCHAFFHAUSEN

With a clear focus on technology and development, the Swiss watch manufacturer IWC Schaffhausen has been producing timepieces of lasting value since 1868. The company has gained an international reputation based on a passion for innovative solutions and technical ingenuity. One of the world's leading brands in the luxury watch segment, IWC crafts masterpieces of haute horlogerie at their finest, combining supreme precision with exclusive design. As an ecologically and socially responsible company, IWC is committed to sustainable production, supports institutions around the globe in their work with children and young people, and maintains partnerships with organizations dedicated to climate and environmental protection.

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

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