

BFI APPOINTS MARY BURKE AS SENIOR PRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE

- *Reporting to Ben Roberts, the BAFTA and BIFA-winning producer takes a key role in the BFI Film Fund, the largest public film fund in the UK*
- *Joins from Warp Films, where she is currently Executive Producer and has played an integral role in building brand Warp since the company's inception*
- *Will creatively support and actively champion the UK's thriving and world-class independent filmmaking community*

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11am GMT

LONDON – Monday 15 June 2015: The BFI today announces the appointment of Mary Burke to the key role of Senior Production and Development Executive at the BFI Film Fund.

Mary will take a senior editorial role at the BFI - identifying and supporting a diverse range of new British feature film projects, and working closely with writers, directors and producers across development and production.

With a wealth of production experience across film, television and multi-platform projects, Mary has built an outstanding creative network of contacts across the UK and internationally and enjoys close relationships with some of the UK's most exciting directors. A recipient of two BAFTAs and two BIFAs, Mary's producer credits include *Bunny and the Bull*, the 2009 feature debut from Paul King who went on last year to direct *Paddington*, the UK's most successful independent film of 2014; *Submarine*, the feature BAFTA and BIFA-winning debut of Richard Ayoade, which premiered at Toronto International Film Festival in 2010; Paul

Wright's *For Those in Peril* which premiered in Critics' Week at Cannes in 2013; *Berberian Sound Studio*, the critically acclaimed and multi award-winning second feature from Peter Strickland which premiered at Edinburgh in 2012; and Chris Waitt's feature documentary *A Complete History of My Sexual Failures*, which premiered in the World Cinema Documentary Competition at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival.

Currently Executive Producer and Board member at Warp Films, where she has worked in a variety of production and development roles since the company's inception in 2002, Mary is responsible for attracting, generating and developing outstanding commercial ideas for original television dramas and films. At Warp, Mary provides a nose-to-tail service, taking film and television projects from idea creation or commission through production and into the market – a holistic approach to talent and project development that she will continue at the BFI.

Mary Burke said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to make a real contribution to shaping the landscape of British film – I could not be happier to be joining Ben and the BFI team. After 13 years, I will miss my talented and dedicated family at Warp – we shared so many amazing experiences that I will carry with me into my future work. I know first-hand the enormous impact that BFI investment has on the careers of writers, directors and producers here in the UK. I look forward to returning that support in the years to come."

Director of the BFI Film Fund, Ben Roberts said: "I feel very lucky to have Mary joining the team, she will be a great friend and ally to filmmakers. We want her to bring all of her fire and creativity to the BFI. It's going to be – in her words –awesome."

CEO of Warp Films, Mark Herbert said: "It took me 10 years and many films to go from runner to producer. Mary joined Warp and through tenacity, skill and above all having great taste, Mary managed to go from runner to producer in about 17 minutes. She has helped shaped my company and her DNA runs right through it. When she told me she was leaving my heart sank but then I was filled with immense pride. The BFI has made a great choice."

Paul King, director and co-writer of *Paddington* and writer/director of *Bunny and the Bull*, said: "When I first met Mary, it was immediately obvious that she had boundless energy and enthusiasm for cinema, and over the years I discovered that she also has the persistence and determination low budget film making requires. We both learnt a huge amount during our time

together and it's been a pleasure to see her go onto enjoy such great success. I wish her all the best at the BFI."

Reporting to Director of the BFI Film Fund, Ben Roberts, Mary will work alongside fellow BFI Senior Production and Development Executives, Lizzie Francke and Natascha Wharton, Head of International, Isabel Davis and Head of UK Audiences, Ben Luxford. With over £30 million of Lottery funding to invest each year, the BFI is the UK's largest public investor in film, and the BFI Film Fund supports first-class British filmmaking from talent and project development, through production, to audience development across exhibition, distribution and international sales.

Films supported by the BFI Film Fund which have recently screened at international film festivals include Sean McAllister's *A Syrian Love Story*, which this month won the Grand Jury prize at Sheffield Doc/Fest; Yorgos Lanthimos' *The Lobster* which premiered In Competition at Cannes in May; Andrew Haigh's *45 Years* which premiered in competition at Berlin Film Festival in February where it won two Silver Bear awards; and John Maclean's *Slow West*, John Crowley's *Brooklyn*, Louise Osmond's *Dark Horse* and Jerry Rothwell's *How to Change the World* which all premiered at Sundance in January.

Highly anticipated films backed by the BFI include Sarah Gavron's *Suffragette*, recently announced as the opening night film for this year's BFI London Film Festival and featuring a stellar cast including Carey Mulligan, Helena Bonham Carter and Meryl Streep; Ben Wheatley's *High Rise*; Terence Davies' *Sunset Song*; John Michael McDonagh's *War On Everyone*; Andrea Arnold's *American Honey*; Colm McCarthy's *She Who Brings Gifts*; and Pete Travis' *City of Tiny Lights*.

– Ends –

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead organisation 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 Greg Dyke.

