



BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES NEW FORMAT FOR 2020 EDITION

Virtual LFF & LFF in Cinemas

- ***The first ever edition of the Festival to be widely accessible across the UK***
 - ***50 Virtual Festival Premieres to be enjoyed at home***
- ***Up to 12 special previews of eagerly anticipated upcoming films screening in cinemas around the UK***
 - ***New Audience Choice Awards introduced for 2020 Edition***
 - ***Free talks, events, short films***

LONDON – Thursday 2nd July, 2020, 13:00 : The BFI London Film Festival in partnership with American Express today reveals its plans for the upcoming edition of the Festival from 7th-18th October 2020. In the most accessible version of the festival to UK audiences yet, film lovers will be given an opportunity to connect for a unique and innovative festival experience, enjoying both live and digital screenings across the 12 days of the Festival.

Adapting to the extraordinary challenges of the year, the Festival will deliver up to 50 Virtual Festival Premieres in a programme that offers audiences the opportunity to see the best new cinema from around the world and with that same texture LFF's audiences love, including fiction, documentary, animation, artists' moving image, and restored classics from the world's archives. Every film will be presented with an intro or Q&A, and the programme will also include a range of free-to-access additional works and events to include: an international short film programme, Screen Talks with major filmmakers and actors, salons and roundtables and a brand new Virtual Exhibition of XR and Immersive Art.

Industry and Media delegates will have access to a rich professional programme, also delivered digitally.

In another new innovation, twelve highly anticipated new films from the programme will screen in previews across the UK, in partnership with UK-wide cinemas networks that deliver great independent and cultural films for audiences all year long, including London's BFI Southbank.

BFI London Film Festival Director, Tricia Tuttle said: *"Like many other live events around the world, we've had to make changes to our plans in response to a global pandemic, factoring in safety concerns and restrictions – some known, some still unclear. But as we've undergone this planning we've also witnessed historical international protests, an urgent reminder of just how much we need to do to combat racism and inequality."*

This year has also given us an opportunity to think creatively about how we make the Festival more accessible. It was vital to us that we get back to cinemas, and are looking forward to working with independent and cultural venues across the UK who are such an essential part of our film ecosystem.

The Virtual LFF programmes and these cinema screenings take the Festival out across the UK, giving people opportunities to engage in different ways.

It's a pleasure each year to speak with audiences who share the ways filmmakers have made them laugh, think, weep, or shifted their way of seeing. Through a number of partnerships and platforms, we can't wait to share many of this year's extraordinary new films - from around the world, from artists of different backgrounds and with many bold distinctive filmmaking voices."

At the heart of the 2020 edition, **Virtual LFF** features 50 screenings online, with each film scheduled to premiere at a particular time and include additional elements such as exclusive Q&A's with filmmaking talent and programmers, online salons and discussions around films. Many of the films will include subtitles and Audio Description for audiences with access requirements.

The feature film programme will be complemented by a wide range of digital talks and events which will be free to access, including LFF Screen Talks, which offer in-depth conversations with some of the world's most influential filmmakers and major on-screen talent. Short films from around the world will also be free to view and the Festival's previously announced XR and Immersive Art strand will also debut this year, with works that can be experienced in a variety of ways online, with and without headsets.

Through **LFF in Cinemas**, the 2020 edition of the BFI London Film Festival will also work with UK exhibitors to offer a great range of new programming as they welcome audiences safely back. Anticipating many cinemas will be open during the Festival window, the LFF will partner with exhibitors in the BFI Film Audience Network and other key cinemas and venues around the UK to offer audiences up to 12 exclusive previews from the Festival. These films will also preview at the Festival's flagship venue BFI Southbank and select other London cinemas over the Festival period.

As a one-off for this edition, we'll ask our audiences to take the place of the Festival's official jury. Viewers attending Virtual LFF will be invited to vote on Audience Awards in four categories: Best Fiction Feature, Best Documentary Feature, Best Short Film, and Best XR. The winners will be announced in a live online ceremony on the final weekend of the Festival. Now in its fifth year, The IWC Schaffhausen Filmmaker Bursary Award in association with the BFI returns, benefitting an outstanding first or second time British writer, director, or writer/director. The recipient of the award will receive £50,000, which is the most significant of its kind in the UK film industry and awarded annually.

The 2020 Edition of the LFF will retain its distinctive strands which offer audiences many ways of exploring the programme: Love, Debate, Laugh, Dare, Thrill, Cult, Journey, Create, Family, Treasures and Experimenta. The new XR and immersive Strand will also be delivered online and will be free to access, with audiences able to explore a virtual gallery, experience different XR projects and join in bespoke talks and events.

The LFF Press & Industry Programme will also move online – UK and International delegates will have access to preview screenings via a secure viewing library, opportunity to attend online buyers and sellers' meetings and enjoy a delegate exclusive programme of talks and events. The Critics Mentorship Programme – designed to encourage a more representative range of critical voices, and new talent programmes run in conjunction with BFI Network, BFI Film Academy and BAFTA will also return this year, providing access and support for aspiring and emerging creatives and new industry professionals.

The full programme will be announced at an online launch on 8th September 2020.

-ENDS-

PRESS CONTACTS

DDA Press Team

Email: LFFPress@ddapr.com | +44 (0) 20 7932 9800

Press and PR Director, BFI: Judy Wells

Email: Judy.Wells@bfi.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the BFI

The BFI is the UK's lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a cultural charity that:

- Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of World Cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online
- Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world
- Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers
- Works with Government and Industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

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.

For the 2020 edition, the BFI London Film Festival is waiving the standard press accreditation fee.

Tricia Tuttle Biography

Tricia Tuttle's appointment as Director of BFI Festivals follows her role as Artistic Director of the 62nd Edition of the BFI London Film Festival and five successful years as Deputy Head of Festivals at BFI, including BFI Flare and BFI London Film Festival. Moving from North Carolina in 1997 to complete a joint MA at BFI and Birkbeck, University of London in Film and TV Studies, Tricia's passion for film has seen her work as a programmer, lecturer, writer and journalist. Her career has spanned a five year tenure at BAFTA, starting in 2008 and with her appointment as Film Programme Manager in 2011; programming the BFI London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival (the pre-cursor to BFI Flare) and as Event Producer at London's The Script Factory. Highly regarded by the BFI and industry, Tuttle has been instrumental in evolving BFI Festivals, continuing to expand audience reach year on year and introducing impactful initiatives such as BFI Flare's FiveFilms4Freedom, in partnership with the British Council.



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