



## BFI NETWORK@LFF

**17 filmmakers revealed for unique five day development programme at the BFI London Film Festival**



*(Left to right: first row: Adura Onashile, Irune Gurtubai, Jenn Nkiru, Trim Lamba  
second row: Julia Brown, Sean Dunn, Omar El-Khairy*

*third row: Harry Lighton, Moin Hussain, Morayo Akandé, Mark Chapman, Rory Waudby-Tolley, Prano Bailey-Bond  
fourth row: Simon Cartwright, Patrick Campbell, Ruth Paxton, Sarah Butcher )*

**Monday 25 September 2017:** The BFI announces the **17 writers, directors and producers** selected for **NETWORK@LFF**, BFI NETWORK’s flagship professional development programme which takes place annually at the **BFI London Film Festival (LFF)** on 4-9 October 2017. Designed to support and inspire original new voices in film, NETWORK@LFF celebrates diversity in approach and perspective, and seeks out filmmakers looking to disrupt conventions.

Supported by the BFI with National Lottery funding, NETWORK@LFF is now in its fourth year and has built a strong track record with alumni successfully establishing careers, producing award-winning shorts, developing features and finding roles within television and beyond.

This year NETWORK welcomed applications from filmmakers who are taking creative risks, pushing boundaries of narrative and form, and forging new pathways for cinematic storytelling. The 17 participants, selected from **260 applications**, have an impressive range of experience across film, television, theatre and artists’ moving image. NETWORK@LFF will provide the next step in their burgeoning feature film careers with a programme that boasts masterclasses, screenings,

networking and one-to-one sessions with visiting international filmmakers and executives who are screening work at the LFF, who this year include:

- **Luca Guadagnino**, the Italian multi-award winning writer/director of *I am Love* and *A Bigger Splash*, whose latest feature, *Call Me By Your Name*, has its UK Premiere as the Mayor of London's Gala at LFF
- US writer/director **Cory Finley**, whose debut feature, *Thoroughbreds*, is screening in official competition at LFF. The film is his debut feature after starting his career as a playwright in New York
- Writer/director **Rungano Nyoni**, whose debut feature, *I Am Not a Witch*, is shortlisted in the First Feature Competition at LFF, following its World Premiere at the Cannes Film Festival. Born in Zambia and raised in Wales, Nyoni is BFI NETWORK alumni
- Brazilian **Marco Dutra**, co-writer/co-director of *Good Manners*, which screens in official competition at the LFF
- **John Trengove**, South African writer/director of *The Wound*, which is shortlisted in the LFF's First Feature Competition

**Clare Stewart, BFI London Film Festival Director**, says, *"I am delighted that our NETWORK@LFF initiative will once again be creating a unique space for emerging producers, directors and writers to meet, learn and be inspired by many of the international filmmakers and industry professionals who come to London for the Festival. It is testament to the impact of the BFI Film Fund's broader initiative that in this, the fourth year of NETWORK@LFF, no less than eight films screening at the Festival have been developed with support through BFI NETWORK, whether that be through labs at the Festival or direct funding."*

**Matimba Kabalika, Talent Development Manager, BFI NETWORK**, says, *"We're really excited to be shaking things up with this year's edition of NETWORK@LFF. The call for risk-takers, iconoclasts and bold cinematic voices has been answered loud and clear. The 17 filmmakers selected to take part in the programme represent dynamic, emerging UK voices, and we look forward to seeing where they will go from here."*

**David Alexander**, writer/director and participant of NETWORK@LFF 2016, says: *"NETWORK@LFF was a game changing experience for me. I always felt like an outsider to the industry, but nevertheless the BFI supported me and gave me a chance. The experience energised and uplifted me both creatively and personally, and led to a commission to direct a new film for NOWNESS. I can't speak highly enough of the process."*

**Amrou Al-Kadhi**, writer/director and participant of NETWORK@LFF 2016, says: *"I developed a number of connections at NETWORK@LFF which directly furthered my career – I linked up with NOWNESS where I made a film this year [Victoria Sin, premiering at LFF], and it was where I initially spoke to BBC Films, which has since commissioned my first feature film script. I was also really encouraged to mine my own experiences to find the stories I should tell. Unlocking that and really exploring my own unique position as a genderqueer Iraqi-Egyptian in Britain has helped enormously with securing commissions."*

There are eight films premiering in this year's LFF by filmmakers supported through the **BFI NETWORK**. From NETWORK alumni, *Kingdom of Us* directed by Lucy Cohen is screening in Documentary Competition and *I Am Not a Witch* directed by Rungano Nyoni is shortlisted for First Feature Competition, plus shorts *Robot and Scarecrow* directed by Kibwe Tavares and *Victoria Sin* directed by Amrou Al-Kadhi. As well as BFI NETWORK funded shorts *1745* directed by Gordon Napier, *Real God's Require Blood* directed by Moin Hussain, *The Full Story* directed by Daisy Jacobs and *Wren Boy* directed by Harry Lighton.

## **The full list of filmmakers taking part in NETWORK@LFF 2017:**

### **Adura Onashile - Writer**

Adura is a Glasgow-based writer and director. She has premiered two productions, *HeLa* and *Expensive S\*\*t*, at The Edinburgh Fringe festival, winning a Fringe First and TOTAL and Amnesty nominations. Both shows toured nationally and internationally supported by British Council and Creative Scotland. She currently has a feature film, *Girl*, in development with Glasgow producers (and BFI Vision Award recipients) Barry Crerar, and has recently been awarded development support from the Scottish Film Talent Network (SFTN).

### **Harry Lighton - Writer/Director**

Harry is a London-based writer/director. His short, *Sunday Morning Coming Down*, has screened at festivals including BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival and was nominated for Best British short at the 2017 Iris Prize. His next short, *Wren Boys*, was funded through Film London's London Calling scheme and is nominated for the Short Film Award at this year's LFF. Harry recently wrapped *Leash*, funded through Enter the Pitch and is currently developing several feature projects.

### **Irune Gurtubai - Producer**

Irune's debut feature, *Pikadero*, screened at over 40 international festivals following its premiere at the San Sebastian International Film Festival. It won various awards, including a FIPRESCI and the Michael Powell Award at the Edinburgh International Film Festival. *Pikadero* has been theatrically released in a number of European countries. Gurtubai has recently worked at London-based production company Altitude Film Entertainment in development and acquisitions. Prior to that, she produced short films including *Patata Tortilla*, which won two BAFTA New Talent Awards. She has also worked as a line producer and script developer.

### **Jenn Nkiru - Director**

Jenn is an artist and an MFA graduate of Howard University. Her first film, *En Vogue*, shot by Bradford Young & Arthur Jafa, screened internationally to critical success. Recent credits include a documentary series on music subcultures, a campaign with photographer Rankin where he selected Nkiru as one of 20 of the "industry's top directors and most creative talent" and a forthcoming short film for NOWNESS. Nkiru has previously been long listed for the Brilliant Filmmaker 1.4 Award, Aesthetica Art Prize and was a winner at the of the 2016 Encounters Film Festival.

### **Julia Brown - Director**

Julia is a London-based director from Belfast, Northern Ireland, working across film and audio-visual installations. Their works stem from personal experience and involves deconstructing traditional patriarchal narrative structures and sensory experiences. Blurring the lines between documentary and fiction, their work is highly emotional and politically charged.

### **Mark Chapman - Writer/Director**

Mark is a filmmaker and artist based in Newcastle upon Tyne. His moving-image work has been selected for numerous festivals including the Edinburgh International Film Festival, Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, IKFF Hamburg, São Paulo International Short Film Festival and Encounters. Previously, he was selected for the Berlinale Talent Campus at the Berlin International Film Festival. Mark also teaches film production at Northumbria University.

### **Moin Hussain - Writer/Director**

After being selected by the Directors Guild of Great Britain to take part in a scheme for new talent, Moin's first short film, *Holy Thursday*, was funded by Creative England and went on to screen internationally. His latest short, *Real Gods Require Blood*, premiered in this year's Critics' Week at

Cannes, with other presentations at the Sitges Film Festival and the Edinburgh International Film Festival. It is nominated for the Short Film Award at this year's LFF.

#### **Morayo Akandé - Writer**

Morayo began her career as an actor, before transitioning to writing. Her debut short film, *1745* – in which she also starred – was funded by the Scottish Film Talent Network via Creative Scotland and BFI NETWORK. Longlisted for the Sky Arts Academy Award 2016, receiving a Jury Special Mention at the Edinburgh International Film Festival 2017, and screening in this year's LFF, *1745* is now being developed into a feature supported by Creative Scotland. Akandé is also working on another short, which she will direct as a lead up to making her first feature, the psychological thriller *Amity*.

#### **Omar El-Khairy - Writer**

Omar is a former Leverhulme Associate Playwright at the Bush Theatre. His plays include *Burst*, *Sour Lips*, *The Keepers of Infinite Space*, *The Chaplain* and *Homegrown*. His first short film, *No Exit*, received its world premiere at the Dubai International Film Festival 2014 and screened internationally. His documentary, *Naz*, is currently in development with Postcode Films and Hakawati. He is developing television projects with Studio Lambert and Dancing Ledge Productions, and he has started work on a feature-length screenplay.

#### **Patrick Campbell - Producer**

Patrick co-founded production company Nakba FilmWorks with writer/director Mahdi Fleifel in 2010. Since then he has produced the award-winning feature doc *A World Not Ours* and the 2016 Berlin Silver Bear-winner *A Man Returned*, as well as *The Welfare of Tomás Ó Hallissy* (Berlin International Film Festival 2017) and *A Drowning Man* (Official Competition, Cannes), a short fiction piece from Fleifel. He is currently developing fiction and documentary features in the UK and Ireland.

#### **Prano Bailey-Bond - Writer/Director**

Prano is an award-winning writer/director. She has made a number of short films, including the horror-thriller *Nasty*, which has collected awards globally, screening at over 100 festivals. She recently worked with Film4 on *Shortcut*, made as part of their Fright Bites short film series for All4. Prano is currently developing two features with Silver Salt Films – *Censor*, in development with Ffilm Cymru Wales and Creative England, and *Womb*, which was selected for the Ffilm Cymru Wales 'Cinematic' development scheme.

#### **Rory Waudby-Tolley - Writer/Director**

Rory is an animator and filmmaker from London. He graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2015, and his graduation film, *Mr Madila*, has played at international film festivals including Flickerfest, Premier Plans, Palm Springs and Fantoche, winning more than ten awards. He is represented for commercial animation by Beakus, and is interested in using animation to interpret reality, playing with the line between the mundane and the fantastical for comedic effect.

#### **Ruth Paxton - Writer/Director**

Ruth is an award-winning Scottish writer/director with a strong body of short drama, experimental and music-related films. She is working across a number of projects including feature horror *Fifteen Wolves* in development with BFI Vision Award recipients Barry Crerar, and its sister short *Be Still My Beating Heart*, recently commissioned for production via the Scottish Film Talent Network, shooting in winter. Ruth is represented by Casarotto Ramsay & Associates.

#### **Sarah Butcher - Producer**

Sarah is a producer and director. She is co-director of award winning interactive theatre company non zero one, whose work includes *Let's Take a Walk* (Barbican Centre), *You'll See Me [Sailing in*

*Antarctica*] (National Theatre) and *Mountaineering* (Roundhouse). Her first short film, *Exit Route*, was selected for the LOCO London Comedy film Festival in 2017. She is currently developing two feature films, *Helter Skelter* written by Tom Weston Jones and *The Queen of the Isle of Wight* written by Barney Norris.

**Sean Dunn - Writer/Director**

Sean is a writer/director whose films have played at film festivals such as Locarno, Sundance, New Orleans and the Chicago International Film Festival. He is interested in telling stories which have a universal reach and relevance, but which are grounded in Scotland and the wider UK. A graduate of Columbia University in New York, Sean specialised in screenwriting and directing, and is currently developing his first feature.

**Simon Cartwright - Writer/Director**

Having originally been drawn to film by his love of animation and drawing, Simon has worked with many different techniques. His short film, *Manoman*, premiered at Cannes and went on to screen at a number of festivals including Sundance and SXSW as well as being nominated for the Best Short Animation BAFTA and the BIFA for Best British Short. He is currently working on a live action short funded by Creative England.

**Trim Lamba – Writer/Director**

Trim is a British Indian filmmaker from London. His Snapchat-based drama short *Cracked Screen*, celebrated as ‘groundbreaking’ and ‘the new era of filmmaking’, received several honours and screened at Cannes Lions as part of the 27th Saatchi and Saatchi New Directors Showcase. Lamba recently completed his Masters from the University of Oxford and is currently developing a drama series and two shorts that will carve out new modes of storytelling.

BFI NETWORK is central to the BFI’s strategy to discover and support the next generation of feature filmmaking talent, no matter where they live in the UK. Writers, directors and producers who have yet to have a feature film produced and/or released are supported through a hands-on approach that is tailored to their specific needs. This includes funding for feature film development, short films and pilots as well as bespoke editorial and professional development support. NETWORK partners also host regular masterclasses, workshops and other talent development programmes across the country. The BFI works with partners Creative England, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Film London, Northern Ireland Screen and the Scottish Film Talent Network in delivering the NETWORK.

For more information on NETWORK@LFF visit [network.bfi.org.uk](http://network.bfi.org.uk)

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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 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.

### **Clare Stewart biography**

Clare Stewart's 20 year programming career has encompassed leadership roles as Festival Director, Sydney Film Festival (2006-2011) and the inaugural Head of Film Programs at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image in Melbourne (2002-2006) as well as various roles at the Australian Film Institute (1996-2001), including Exhibition Manager, and programmer and Committee Member of the Melbourne Cinémathèque (1995-2002). She has been BFI Head of Festivals and BFI London Film Festival Director since October 2011.

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