



## **BFI RE-LAUNCHES LIBRARY**

*Free access, increased digitisation, new location at BFI Southbank,  
longer opening hours*

**February 21st 2012** The BFI today announces plans to modernise its Library, the world's largest collection of books, periodicals and other moving image knowledge resources, with a move to a welcoming, new purpose-built space at BFI Southbank. The new Library will be more user-friendly with a redesigned look and feel, free access, longer regular opening hours on weekdays plus a new Saturday service and more digitised content that will be easier and quicker to view.

This significant refurbishment, undertaken by a team of designers led by award winning Coffey Architects, will make the Library more accessible, attract new users, and integrate its considerable resources into its public and cultural programmes. The new design cleverly combines hanging metal mesh, timber bookcases and subtle new lighting to create a rich, vibrant yet welcoming and calm space. The new Library will serve casual visitors as well as serious researchers and be used for other activities such as group visits, events, lectures and workshops. By bringing together the whole BFI offer in one place, from the Mediatheque and Programming, to Education and Collections, the BFI will for the first time ever have a single, coherent offer across the venue.

The BFI Library is committed to increasing digital access to its collections. At launch, the new library will have a suite of state of the art equipment for self-service scanning of paper and microform material available to its users. In addition, the BFI's unique and heavily-used collection of press cuttings (covering film and television from the 1930s up to 2010) is in the process of being digitised, with a significant number available at launch in the new space.

The new Library can be accessed from June 2012 with a formal launch in September 2012, as London's Southbank, already the Capital's cultural epicentre, enjoys its for its busiest summer yet with the Cultural Olympiad and Olympics celebrations creating an unprecedented focus on London.

**Heather Stewart, Creative Director BFI** said *'The BFI's Library is a much loved and vital part of our offer and modernisation will enhance the Library using experience for everyone. With so many public and specialist libraries sadly in difficulties the BFI's investment in its Library demonstrates our commitment to knowledge and our ambition to transform it into the leading centre for film knowledge in the UK, ultimately supporting our mission to make film central to people's lives.'*

NOTE: A library and information service was part of the BFI from its inception in 1933 and housed in the various homes of the BFI since then. Since 1987 the Library has been situated on the ground floor of the BFI's Stephen St office. The new space will be housed in BFI's Southbank's former Gallery space. Building work starts in March 2012 and is expected to continue, with minimum disruption to BFI Southbank's programme and activity, until the launch in June.

The decision was given the green light this month after extensive consultation with Library users and months of investigation into the design, costs, feasibility and business case, including a tender process for architects and contractors.

#### **PRESS CONTACTS:**

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#### **Notes to Editors**

##### **About the BFI Library**

The BFI Library provides information on film, television and, increasingly, new media. Its priority is comprehensive coverage of the moving image in Britain from pre-cinema to the present, but the scope of the collection is international with material held in more than 15 languages.

##### **Membership/access**

From 1 April 2012 access to the BFI Library will be free of charge and all membership categories will be abolished. For Library passes expiring after 31 March 2012 remaining fees can be claimed back by completing a refund form by 30 April 2012. For passes expiring before 31 March 2012 access to the Reading Room is possible by buying an interim pass at Stephen Street for £5.

##### **Design Process**

###### **Architects**

Coffey Architects was selected through a competitive interview process to undertake the design and contract administration of the BFI Library Project in November 2011. Coffey Architects is also taking on the role of leading the consultant team.

This young practice formed in 2005 by Phil Coffey has projects in all sectors including residential, public buildings and urban design and is currently

undertaking work throughout the UK, in China and in Bangladesh. The practice has been awarded a number of prizes including RIBA awards and last year won the RIBA Stephen Lawrence Prize award for the St Patricks School Library and Music Room, in Kentish Town, London . The prize rewards the best examples of projects that have a construction budget of less than £1 million and is intended to encourage fresh talent working with smaller budgets.

Phil Coffey was recently included in the ICOPAL Faces of British Architecture exhibition in Central London alongside, amongst other's Sir Richard MacCormac, Sir Nicholas Grimshaw and David Adjaye.

On the decision to proceed with implementation of the project, Phil Coffey said, *'Coffey Architects have enjoyed working with the BFI who have proven to be an understanding and ambitious client in what is a highly pressurised project. Our relationship with the wider client body, the South Bank venue and the individual librarian staff has been excellent and we are looking forward to the construction phase and a successfully completed project.*

### **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
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences