

BFI SUPPORTS FUTURE GROWTH OF 20 VISIONARY UK FILM COMPANIES

- **BFI announces Vision Awards of up to £2.8m across 20 film companies with a vision for cultivating creative excellence and growing their businesses**
- **Wide range of production companies supported across the UK**
- **Animation studios benefit for the first time – four companies supported to capitalise on opportunities from UK’s new tax relief for animation**

London, Wednesday 1 May 2013: The BFI today announces the 20 UK film production companies selected from over 170 applicants to receive **BFI Vision Awards 2013-15** (see below for full list). Designed to help grow strong and sustainable UK film businesses, each company will receive a Vision Award of up to £200k over two years, with the financial and creative autonomy they need to develop an exciting slate of film projects, grow their business and bolster their company profile nationally and internationally.

The successful companies each demonstrated a clear strategic vision for their future growth as well as a commitment to nurturing a diverse range of new voices and fresh ideas from across the UK, with a focus on creative excellence running through all the proposals. The open and competitive application process saw over 170 applicants shortlisted down to 34 who then undertook rigorous interviews with a panel of senior executives from the BFI before the 20 successful companies were chosen. Six, almost a third of those selected, are based outside London, eight feature women in leadership roles, and for the first time – and in acknowledgement of new opportunities afforded by the recently introduced UK tax credit for animation – animation studios were eligible to apply, with four selected from an impressive list.

Ben Roberts, Director of the BFI Film Fund comments: “Each of the companies selected had a strong vision for the future growth of their business and we feel they’re poised to build their profile nationally and internationally, many of them by capitalising on their

filmmaker relationships and creative instincts, coupled with an entrepreneurial flair. We think it's an exciting and eclectic mix, and I'm really pleased we could support UK animation studios for the first time. This sizable investment in development will help to build the foundations of future growth and success for UK film."

Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture, Communications and the Creative Industries, comments:

"Today's announcement is wonderful news for the companies selected, and represents a tremendous investment in the next generation of UK Film makers. Film already makes a significant contribution to our economy, and as a driver of growth it is important that the industry is sustainable – something these awards are aimed at helping to ensure."

The first Vision Awards were launched in 2008 and saw 15 companies benefit from awards of up to £75,000 per year for two years. The scheme enabled a number of companies to scale up their business and firmly establish their international reputation through the production of critically-acclaimed and commercially successful films including *The King's Speech* (produced by See-Saw Films) and *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* (Blueprint Pictures), in turn helping to bolster the profile of UK film on the world stage.

The BFI widened the field for companies applying for the Vision Awards 2013-15 to attract emerging producers with at least one (previously two) credited feature film releases to their name, and introducing different criteria for animation companies. The BFI originally set out to support 15 companies, anticipating up to 10 awards of up to £100,000 per year for two years and up to five further awards of up to £50,000 per year for two years.

After receiving over 170 applications, conducting 34 interviews and seeing first hand the ambition and diverse range of compelling creative proposals from a number of emerging producers, the BFI's selection panel decided a more impactful intervention would come from boosting a greater number of companies at the lower level. The BFI therefore pledged additional funding, making 12 awards of up to £50,000 per year, and thereby providing vital support for grassroots filmmaking activity from exciting emergent UK film businesses. In addition, eight awards have been made at the upper level of up to £100,000 per year.

The BFI Film Fund, the UK's largest investor in film development, injects over £4m per year into the development of new British feature films. The Vision Awards, worth up to £2.8m over the two years 2013-15, provide additional business development support designed to help to tackle the challenge faced by many production companies, which struggle to find the financial resources necessary to maintain momentum on development activity across a full slate of projects.

By equipping these 20 production companies with the financial and creative autonomy required to build an effective slate of projects – often a lengthy process involving a high degree of financial risk – they can deliver a steady stream of quality projects into the marketplace, thereby helping them continue to grow into effective and sustainable businesses.

The BFI's interview panel comprised Director of the BFI Film Fund, Ben Roberts; BFI Creative Director, Heather Stewart; BFI Film Fund Senior Executives, Chris Collins, Lizzie Francke and Natascha Wharton; and BFI Business Affairs Executive, Jodie Orme.

BFI Vision Awards 2013-15: £100,000 awards (in alphabetical order):

42 M&P

Rory Aitken, Ben Pugh, Josh Varney, Kate Buckley

Film credits include: *Shifty*, *Welcome To The Punch*. Upcoming: *Monsters: Dark Continent*

42 are taking a unique and entrepreneurial approach to forming a UK film business, bringing talent management and production under one roof.

COWBOY FILMS

Charles Steel and Alasdair Flind

Credits include: *The Last King of Scotland*, *Fire In Babylon*, *Marley*. Upcoming: *How I Live Now*.

Across its narrative features, feature documentaries, and TV drama, Cowboy have impressed with a track record of introducing and working with filmmakers and writers of outstanding quality.

INDEPENDENT

Luc Roeg & Andrew Orr

Credits include: *We Need To Talk About Kevin*, *Moon*

By successfully straddling production, international sales, and UK distribution, Independent can expertly strategise and oversee a film's journey through production, international festival selection and eventual release into the marketplace. With a strong commitment to new and emerging UK talent, Independent provide a unique and important offer for the UK market.

LUPUS FILMS (*animation*)

Ruth Fielding, Camilla Deakin

Credits include: *The Snowman And The Snowdog* Channel 4. Upcoming: Raymond Briggs' *Ethel & Ernest* (feature).

Lupus intends to apply their first-class artistry to recognisable and well-loved properties (such as Raymond Briggs'), to spearhead a revival of 2D animation in the UK and establish themselves as a formidable, and uniquely, British animation film company.

NEXUS PRODUCTIONS (*animation*)

Christopher O'Reilly, Charlotte Bavasso, Claire Jennings

Oscar-nominated, and winner of three Cannes Lions Grand Prix and two Black D&AD Pencils, Nexus have a track record in developing animation talent and have partnered with award-winning producer Claire Jennings (*Wallace and Gromit: Curse of the Were Rabbit* and *Coraline*) as they move into features. The company has also established Nexus Interactive Arts, a division that creates innovative storytelling experiences across digital media, including app-based storytelling, gaming and interactive web films.

PASSION PICTURES and RED BOX FILMS (*documentary*)

John Battsek and Andrew Ruhemann - Passion Pictures

Simon Chinn - Red Box Films

Combined credits include BAFTA and Oscar-winning and nominated: *One Day in September* (Passion), *Man on Wire* (Red Box), *Project Nim*, *The Imposter*, *Searching for Sugar Man*.

Working in partnership Red Box Films and Passion Pictures have impressed with their instincts for documentary features which are both critically and commercially successful. The companies are poised for growth into narrative and animated features.

WARP FILMS

Mark Herbert, Robin Gutch

Credits include: *Four Lions*, *Submarine*, *This Is England*. Upcoming: Yann Demange's '71 and Paul Wright's *For Those in Peril* soon to have its World Premiere at Cannes

A previous Vision Award recipient, and having recently celebrated 10 years of distinctive British storytelling, Sheffield and London-based Warp has continued to demonstrate ambition and a capacity for growth. The panel was excited by Warp's intention to expand into higher budget films and original cinematic comedies.

WILDGAZE FILMS

Finola Dwyer, Amanda Posey

Credits include: *Quartet*, *An Education*. Upcoming: Pascal Chaumeil's *A Long Way Down* based on Nick Hornby's best-selling novel

With little previous Lottery investment, Wildgaze have proven themselves able to raise significant budgets for their brand of quality, and commercially-successful, features. Dustin Hoffman's directorial debut *Quartet* has so far grossed over £8m in the UK, and close to \$55m globally.

BFI Vision Awards: £50,000 awards (in alphabetical order):

BLUE-ZOO ANIMATION (*animation*)

Oli Hyatt, Tom Box, Adam Shaw

BAFTA-winning Blue-Zoo have produced quality animation for SKY, BBC, Nickelodeon, Freemantle, Cartoon Network and Disney. They communicated many of the issues facing the UK animation sector and the panel felt that this level of support, and an ongoing relationship with the BFI Film Fund, would help the company to deliver its sustainable, profitable and international model for producing Animated Films in the UK.

FLICKERPIX (*animation*)

Joel Simon, David Cumming, Tim Bryans

Award-winning Northern Ireland-based animation studio has identified a gap in the market for low-to-medium budget stop motion animated feature films, and in their shorts work has successfully blended stop motion characters with 2D backgrounds to

great effect, in an innovative and cost-effective way. The panel were delighted by their ambition to become the Roger Corman Productions of comedy stop-motion animation movie making, creating a thriving and creative powerhouse in their Hollywood studios.

FLY FILM

Kate Ogborn, Lisa-Marie Russo

Credits include: *The Spirit of '45*, *Swan Down*, *Self Made*, *The Deep Blue Sea*.

Fly have delivered an impressive range of projects spanning documentary, artist's film, and auteur work and have been a nurturing environment for more challenging material. They have the appetite, experience and people skills to effectively develop and support a cross section of creative talent.

FORWARD FILMS

Kate Myers and Tracy Brimm

Credits include: *Grabbers*, *Skeletons*

Forward impressed as a two-woman company with ambitions to redefine British film, re-shape genre and nurture new and emerging UK filmmakers and voices, always with a strong focus on their path to market.

INFLAMMABLE FILMS

Diarmid Scrimshaw

Credits include: BAFTA-winning *Tyrannosaur*

A Yorkshire-based feature film company with a strong track record and a proven ability to create and nurture talent relationships, Inflammable are building an exciting slate of commercial, high quality projects.

JW FILMS

James Wilson

Credits include: *Attack The Block*, *The Pervert's Guide To Ideology*. Upcoming: *Under The Skin*

JW Films excited the panel with a passion for film and a philosophy that artistic quality and innovation makes for good business; that groundbreaking filmmaking will further the UK's internationally recognised film culture; and that great cinema leads the audience and is not led by it.

ORIGIN PICTURES

David Thompson

Credits include: *The Awakening*. Upcoming: *Mandela* and *X+Y*

A previous Vision Award recipient, Origin demonstrated a commitment to discovering and supporting new and original talent. The panel were particularly excited by Origin's plans for a writers' room for emerging and diverse writing talent, to help generate ideas and offer opportunities to benefit from mentoring at Origin.

RAINY DAY

Rebekah Gilbertson, Nicole Carmen-Davis

Credits include: *The Edge Of Love*. Upcoming: *Panda Eyes*, *Miss Shirley Bassey*

An entrepreneurial female team with considerable success to date in securing private finance from a range of sources to support their projects. Rainy Day have strong ties to Wales with most of their films shot in or featuring strong Welsh elements, and also a strong development focus on films for children and teens, with several projects aimed at this market currently on their slate.

ROAST BEEF PRODUCTIONS (*documentary*)

Havana Marking, Mike Lerner, Martin Herring

Credits include: Sundance award-winning *Afghan Star*, *Hell & Back Again*, *Pussy Riot – A Punk Prayer*. Upcoming: *Smash & Grab: Story of the Pink Panthers*

Roast Beef's documentaries have popularised 'big' subjects with a compelling, funny, and thrilling approach. They have had four films at Sundance, won six Sundance Awards, two Grierson Awards, a Prix Italia and received an Oscar® nomination, attracting funding from numerous international co-producers.

ROOK FILMS

Andy Starke, Ben Wheatley and Amy Jump

Credits include: *Kill List*, *Sightseers*. Upcoming: *A Field In England*

In its relatively short life, Bridport-based Rook has made a number of original, smart, inventive – and beautifully British – features which have attracted significant attention at international festivals, and established Ben Wheatley as one of the UK's foremost

talents. Now Rook are expanding to develop and produce features with other significant new filmmakers, including Peter Strickland.

STRAY BEAR FILMS

Ivana Mackinnon

Credits include: *The Scouting Book For Boys*, *The Descent 2*

A young producer with vision and aptitude, Ivana Mackinnon has set her sights on a gap in the market for films that are ‘commercial with a twist’ and is looking especially for strong female elements: well-drawn female characters; female genre movies; and movies that allow a strong female directorial voice. Having spent time as Film4’s Diversity Development Producer, Mackinnon also has experience in finding exciting and surprising voices and perspectives.

THIRD FILMS

Samm Haillay, Duane Hopkins

Credits include: *Better Things*. Upcoming: *Bypass* (currently in production)

Newcastle-based Third's objective is to reignite UK cultural cinema, developing bold director-led films that transcend simple genre types. The company cites Denmark and Australia as examples of territories where cultural filmmaking has re-emerged to critical and commercial significance.

– Ends –

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NOTES TO EDITORS

BFI Film Fund

With a strong emphasis on new voices and fresh ideas, the BFI Film Fund – the UK’s largest public film fund with a budget set to rise to £24m by 2017 – nurtures and invests in a

diverse mix of filmmakers, aiming to enrich British film culture, increase the economic value of UK film and help define Britain and its storytellers in the 21st century.

The BFI Film Fund champions creative excellence and boldness of vision, investing Lottery funding in the development, production and completion of short and long form projects and supporting filmmakers at every step of their journey to create distinctive and entertaining films.

Films recently supported by BFI Film Fund include Yann Demange's *71*, Declan Lowney's *The Alan Partridge Movie*, Amma Asante's *Belle*, Neil Jordan's *Byzantium*, John Michael McDonagh's *Calvary*, Daniel Wolfe's *Catch Me Daddy*, James Griffiths' *Cuban Fury*, Richard Ayode's *The Double*, Destiny Ekaragha's *Gone Too Far*, Kevin Macdonald's *How I Live Now*, Ralph Fiennes' *The Invisible Woman*, Ruairi Robinson's *Last Days on Mars*, Roger Michell's *Le Weekend*, Sophie Fiennes' *The Pervert's Guide To Ideology*, Stephen Frears' *Philomena*, Clio Barnard's *The Selfish Giant*, Ken Loach's *Spirit of '45*, Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin*.

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 now 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.

