

**Film4, Channel 4, the BFI Film Fund, Picturehouse Entertainment and The Film Agency for Wales announce details on**

## **Dark Horse**

**A World's End Pictures and Darlow Smithson Productions film**

Film4, Channel 4 and the BFI Film Fund in association with The Film Agency for Wales, Picturehouse Entertainment, have announced details of Louise Osmond's DARK HORSE, an uplifting feature documentary telling the rags-to-riches true story of race-horse Dream Alliance and the unlikely Welsh syndicate who bred her. DARK HORSE is produced by World's End Pictures and Darlow Smithson Productions.

DARK HORSE tells the larger than life true story of how a barmaid in a former mining village in South Wales bred a racehorse on her allotment that went on to become a champion.

Jan had successfully bred dogs and birds and believed she could do the same with a different animal – though she knew nothing about racing and had never been on a horse. Convincing a handful of locals to part with ten pound a week for her scheme, she found a thoroughbred mare with a terrible racing record for £300, a stallion past his best, put them together and – against all the odds – bred a winner.

It's an audacious tale of luck and chance and beating the odds; a story of how a gaggle of working class folk from the Welsh Valleys took on the racing elite, broke through class and financial barriers, and brought hope and pride back to their depressed community.

DARK HORSE is an inspirational, emotional story with as many heart-stopping moments as any 'jump' race; it's a story about dreams coming true.

Grierson and Emmy award-winning filmmaker Louise Osmond directs. Osmond previously collaborated with Film4 on the critically acclaimed DEEP WATER, and recently directed *Richard III: The King in the Car Park*, the highest rated specialist factual doc in Channel 4's history.

Producing is Judith Dawson, producer/director of the BAFTA-nominated *Death of a School-friend* for BBC Two; *Cracking Up*, BBC Four winner of the MIND best documentary award and writer/producer of the critically acclaimed *Why we went to War for MORE4*.

Film4 and Picturehouse will work closely with Channel 4's racing team to launch the film.

Lizzie Francke, Senior Production Executive with the BFI Film Fund, says: "Dark Horse is one of the first documentaries to come out of our new pitching process and it was great to see it being embraced by the industry. Louise is brilliant at shaping stories out of the real and the extraordinary with a great sensitivity to the characters involved and the drama at stake."

Tessa Ross, Controller of Film and Drama at Channel 4, says: "We're really delighted to be working with Louise and Judith to bring this extraordinary true story to life. As the home of racing, the Channel is a perfect partner for this story about a community that dared to dream, and the beautiful horse that gave it back its hope. We look forward to working with all of our partners to bring it to audiences in cinemas and beyond."

Claire Binns, Director of Programming and Acquisitions at Picturehouse, said: "I really admired *Deep Water*, an incredibly cinematic and powerfully moving documentary, so I jumped at the chance of working with Louise. We are looking forward to collaborating with Louise, Judith and the Film4 team on getting what I know will be a fantastic film out to as wide an audience as possible."

Pauline Burt, Chief Executive, Film Agency for Wales says: "This film is a great example of how sport can produce the sort of stories that seem so incredible that they can't possibly be true. Dark Horse wonderfully captures the spirit of how a group of ordinary people with a dream gate-crashed the sport of kings."

Benjamin Kracun (*For Those in Peril*) is DoP with Joby Gee (*Kissinger*) is editing. The film is currently in production.

Dark Horse is produced by World's End Pictures and Darlow Smithson Productions and co-financed by Film4, the BFI Film Fund and The Film Agency for Wales. Picturehouse Entertainment and 4DVD take UK rights. Anna Higgs and Anna Miralis are Executive Producers from Film4 and Channel 4 respectively. Lizzie Francke is the BFI Film Fund exec on the film.

Dark Horse sees a continued partnership with Film4 and Picturehouse Entertainment following the successful releases of *The Imposter*, *The Stone Roses: Made of Stone*, *A Field in England* and *Pervert's Guide to Ideology*. The film also sees a continued collaboration between Channel 4 and Darlow Smithson Productions, following the recent theatrical documentary *Hawking* and a number of acclaimed and award-winning factual documentaries for Channel 4 including *Richard III: The King in the Car Park*, *How to Build a Bionic Man* and *The Mill*, and with Film4 and Channel 4 on *Touching the Void*.

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**About the BFI Film Fund**

With over £26m to invest in 2013, the BFI Film Fund is the UK's largest public investor in film - supporting first-class film-making through development and production, to distribution and international sales.

Recent releases backed by the BFI Film Fund include Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin*, Ralph Fiennes' *The Invisible Woman*, Amma Asante's *Belle*, Declan Lowney's *Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa*, Roger Michell's *Le Week-End*, James Griffiths' *Cuban Fury*, Kevin Macdonald's *How I Live Now*, Stephen Frears' *Philomena* and Dexter Fletcher's *Sunshine on Leith*.

New films the Film Fund is supporting include Louise Osmond's *Dark Horse*, Rufus Norris' *London Road*, Sarah Gavron's *Suffragette*, James Kent's *Testament of Youth*, Andrew Haigh's *45 Years*, John Crowley's *Brooklyn*, Yorgos Lanthimos' *The Lobster*, Yann Demange's *71*, Daniel Wolfe's *Catch Me Daddy*, Richard Ayoade's *The Double*, Lone Scherfig's *Posh*, Matthew Warchus' *Pride*, John Maclean's *Slow West*, Terence Davies' *Sunset Song*, Duane Hopkins' *Bypass*, Richard Bracewell's *Bill*, Peter Strickland's *The Duke Of Burgundy*, Joanna Hogg's *Exhibition*, Carol Morley's *The Falling*, Lenny Abrahamson's *Frank*, Destiny Ekaragha's *Gone Too Far*, James Kent's *Testament of Youth*, Brian Hill's *Thomas Quick*, John Michael McDonagh's *Calvary*, Beeban Kidron's *INREALLIFE*, Jon Wright's *Our Robot Overlords*, Ken Loach's *Jimmy's Hall*, Ruairi Robinson's *The Last Days On Mars*, Morgan Matthews' *X Plus Y*.

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

[www.bfi.org.uk](http://www.bfi.org.uk)

#### **About Film4**

Film4, headed by Tessa Ross, is Channel 4 Television's feature film division. Film4 develops and co-finances films and is known for working with the most innovative talent in the UK, whether new or established.

Film4 has developed and co-financed many of the most successful UK films of recent years, Academy Award-winners such as Steve McQueen's *12 Years a Slave*, Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*, Martin McDonagh's *In Bruges* and Phyllida Lloyd's *The Iron Lady*; critically-acclaimed award-winners such as Mike Leigh's *Another Year*, Chris Morris' *Four Lions*, Shane Meadows' *This is England*, Ben Wheatley's *Sightseers* and Clio Barnard's *The Selfish Giant*, and the most successful British comedy at the UK box office, Ben Palmer's *The Inbetweeners Movie*.

Film4's upcoming slate includes Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin*, Richard Ayoade's *The Double*, David Mackenzie's *Starred Up*, Lone Sherfig's *Posh*, Lenny Abrahamson's *Frank*, Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard's *20,000 Days on Earth*, Kevin Macdonald's *Black Sea*, Sarah Gavron's *Suffragette*, Todd Haynes' *Carol*, Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth*, Debbie Tucker Green's *Second Coming*, Mike Leigh's *Mr. Turner*, Ken Loach's *Jimmy's Hall*, Alex Garland's *Ex Machina*, Yann Demange's *'71*, Damon Beesley and Iain Morris's *The Inbetweeners Movie II* and Anton Corbijn's *A Most Wanted Man*.

For further information visit [www.film4.com/productions](http://www.film4.com/productions)

#### **About Darlow Smithson Productions**

Darlow Smithson Productions is one of the world's leading factual production companies and has an excellent track record in producing theatrical release documentaries. It is the recipient of more than 50 awards including recognition from prestigious organisations such as BAFTA, The Royal Television Society, The Grierson Trust and the US Academy of Television Arts and Science. Its credits include the award winning *Touching the Void*, *Deep Water*, *Thriller in Manila*, *Falling Man* and *The Beckoning Silence*.

The company's latest theatrical release, *Hawking* was chosen to headline this year's SXSW Film Festival in Austin Texas. Darlow Smithson has a proven track record in successfully bringing documentaries with cinematic ambition to the big screen and reaching the widest audience possible.

The company has extensive experience of raising finance from a range of sources including broadcast, distribution and licence fees, International co-production treaties, other television funds and managing large budgets and resources to maximise value for the screen. It also has an excellent working relationship with various theatrical distributors including, Vertigo, Pathe, IFC and with international sales agent Protagonist.

#### **About World's End Pictures**

Louise Osmond and Judith Dawson created the Company ten years ago [in 2004] to research and develop documentary and feature film projects. WEP discovered and developed the *Dark Horse* project over many months and has been absolutely committed to it from the very beginning.

#### **About The Film Agency for Wales**

The Film Agency for Wales supports and nurtures Welsh film making talent, works to broaden the reach of cinema and uses film to benefit education and regeneration in Wales.

#### **About Picturehouse Entertainment**

Picturehouse Entertainment is the distribution arm of Picturehouse Cinemas, the owner and operator of 21 Picturehouse Cinemas and programming agent for a further 49 venues across the UK.

Since its launch in 2010, Picturehouse Entertainment has distributed a diverse range of high profile alternative content to cinemas throughout the UK and internationally. This includes live satellite broadcasts of seasons from the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Bolshoi Ballet and the National Theatre, and one-off events such as Stephen Fry's talk, *The Fry Chronicles*, *David Bowie is* happening now transmitted from the V&A's sell-out exhibition, and *Doctor Who*' 50th anniversary episode screened in cinemas simultaneously with the BBC broadcast.

Picturehouse Entertainment's feature film releases include BAFTA winner *The Imposter*, Shane Meadows' *The Stone Roses: Made of Stone*, Ben Wheatley's *A Field in England* and *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* featuring Slavoj Žižek. Upcoming releases include Jeremy Saulnier's *Blue Ruin* and Stacie Passon's award-winning *Concussion*.