



# BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

7 – 18 October 2015

in partnership with



## 59<sup>TH</sup> BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL DRAWS A STELLAR YEAR TO A CLOSE

**London – Sunday 18 October 2015:** The 59<sup>th</sup> BFI London Film Festival in partnership with American Express®, closed tonight with the European Premiere of STEVE JOBS, and announced 157,000 attendances across film screenings and events, and an additional UK-Wide audience of over 10,000.

**Festival Director, Clare Stewart said:** *“I’m very proud of what we achieved with this 59th edition of the Festival. We have had terrific filmmakers in attendance and generated significant profile for films in selection which have moved, challenged and inspired audiences. Importantly, the Festival has been rich and memorable in amplifying the focus on gender equality and diversity in the film industry at the same time as stimulating discussion about how film connects with broader creative industries. We approach the 60th edition in great shape and excited about what the future holds for filmmaking and the Festival.”*

**Red carpet attendees included:** The Opening Night Gala of SUFFRAGETTE was attended by cast Carey Mulligan, Helena Bonham Carter, Anne-Marie Duff, Brendan Gleeson, Ben Whishaw, Romola Garai, Meryl Streep and Samuel West – the Closing Night Gala of STEVE JOBS was attended by cast Michael Fassbender, Kate Winslet, Jeff Daniels, Michael Stuhlbarg and Katherine Waterston – other acting talent attending the Festival red carpets included for A BIGGER SPLASH Ralph Fiennes - for BLACK MASS Johnny Depp, Benedict Cumberbatch - for BROOKLYN Saoirse Ronan, Emory Cohen - for CAROL Cate Blanchett, Rooney Mara - for HIGH-RISE Tom Hiddleston, Sienna Miller, Elizabeth Moss, James Purefoy, Peter Ferdinando, Enzo Cilenti, Augustus Prew, Stacy Martin - for THE IDOL Mohammed Assaf - for THE LADY IN THE VAN Maggie Smith, Alex Jennings, Alan Bennett - for THE LOBSTER Rachel Weisz, Colin Farrell, Ben Whishaw, Olivia Colman, Ariane Labed, Michael Smiley - for THE PROGRAM Ben Foster, Chris O’Dowd - for ROOM Brie Larson - for SUNSET SONG Agness Deyn, Peter Mullan - for TRUMBO Bryan Cranston, Helen Mirren, John Goodman, Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje - for TRUTH Cate Blanchett, Tophér Grace, and for YOUTH Michael Caine, Harvey Keitel, Rachel Weisz, Paul Dano, Paloma Faith

**Directors attending Galas, Special Presentations and films in Official Competition included:** Lenny Abrahamson, Hany Abu-Assad, Sean Baker, Mir-Jean Bou Chaaya, Danny Boyle, Esther May Campbell, Scott Cooper, John Crowley, Jonás Cuarón, Terence Davies, Stephen Frears, Cary Fukunaga, Sarah Gavron, Luca Guadagnino, Davis Guggenheim, Lucile Hadžihalilović, Todd Haynes, Nicholas Hytner, Yorgos Lanthimos, Guy Maddin, Deepa Mehta, László Nemes, Jerzy Skolimowski, Simon Stone, Ondi Timoner, Johnnie To, Athina Rachel Tsangari, James Vanderbilt, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Ben Wheatley and S. Graig Zahler – they were among the 743 directors and filmmakers presenting their work across the LFF programme over half of which came from international territories.

At the annual **BFI London Film Festival Award** last night the LFF competition winners announced were:

CHEVALIER - Athina Rachel Tsangari, won *Best Film Award*

THE WITCH - Robert Eggers, won *Sutherland Award* (Best First Feature)

SHERPA - Jennifer Peedom, won *Grierson Award* (Best Documentary)

AN OLD DOG'S DIARY - Shai Heredia and Shumona Goel, won *Best Short Film Award*

In a year when the Festival focused attention on women in film, three of the 4 awards comprising the LFF competition sections were won by films directed by women.

This year the *BFI Fellowship* was received by Academy Award®-winning actress Cate Blanchett, and presented by Ian McKellen, the Fellowship is the highest accolade the BFI can bestow.

Declared as the year of the strong woman, LFF 2015 welcomed Academy Award®-winning actor and advocate Geena Davis who delivered the Keynote address at the **Global Symposium on Gender in Media**, hosted by the LFF in collaboration with the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media and Women in Film and Television (WFTV).

Insightful **Screen Talks** were given by international leading lights of film including celebrated directors, actors and industry professionals: Geena Davis, Walter Salles & Jia Zhangke, Saoirse Ronan, Laura Rosenthal, Todd Haynes and Paolo Sorrentino.

This year's new **LFF Connects** series of thought-provoking high-impact talks exploring the future of film and how film engages with other creative industries featured the innovative iconoclasts: Christopher Nolan and Tacita Dean for LFF Connects: Film - Guy Maddin for LFF Connects: Art Louis Theroux with Simon Chinn for LFF Connects: TV - Chris Milk for LFF Connects: Creative Technologies - Alistair Hope for LFF Connects: Games and Laurie Anderson for LFF Connects: Performance/Music.

Over 10,000 people across the UK attended simultaneous screenings of Opening Night film SUFFRAGETTE and the Closing Night film STEVE JOBS, as part of the Festival's ongoing commitment to put the UK audience at the heart of the Festival-going experience. While the Opening Night red carpet action live streamed online, was viewed by over 6,000 fans.

The Surprise Film was the highly anticipated ANOMALISA from co-directors Duke Johnson and Charlie Kaufman who attended an audience Q+A with actor David Thewlis.

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**Press information about the 59<sup>th</sup> BFI London Film Festival:**

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **The 59<sup>th</sup> BFI London Film Festival**

The Festival screened a total of 240 fiction and documentary features, including 17 World Premieres, 8 International Premieres, 39 European Premieres and 18 Archive films (5 of which are world restorations), and screenings of 183 live action and animated shorts, all from 72 countries.

Taking place over 12 days, the Festival's screenings were at venues across the capital, from the West End cinemas – Vue West End and the iconic Odeon Leicester Square; central London venues – BFI Southbank, BFI IMAX, Picturehouse Central, the ICA, Curzon Mayfair, Curzon Soho, Cineworld Haymarket and Ciné Lumière; and local cinemas – Ritzy Brixton, Hackney Picturehouse, Curzon Chelsea, Vue Islington and Rich Mix. Additional screenings and events took place at Tate Modern.

### **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 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 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 twenty 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 Cinemas and Festivals since October 2011.



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