



BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

7 – 18 October 2015

in partnership with



59th BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2015 AWARD WINNERS

**Celebrating filmmakers in Official Competition, First Feature Competition,
Documentary Competition and Short Film Competition**

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

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

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

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

Cate Blanchett received the *BFI Fellowship*, presented by Ian McKellen

****embargoed until 22:30 GMT 17 October, 2015****

London – 17 October 2015: The 59th BFI London Film Festival in partnership with American Express® announced this year's Festival Awards' winners at its high profile Awards ceremony, at Banqueting House, Whitehall, this evening. Hosted by musician and broadcaster Jarvis Cocker, guests included Alex Cooke, Allen Leech, Brian Woods, Christine Vachon, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Daisy Jacobs, Desiree Akhavan, Elizabeth Karlsen, Finola Dwyer, Harriet Walter, Iain Forsyth, James Vanderbilt, James Kent, Jane Pollard, Joe Wright, Kate Dickie, Kathleen Kennedy, Kristin Scott-Thomas, Mabel Cheung, Martin Freeman, Patricia Cheng, Pawel Pawlikowski, Runa Islam, Shezad Dawood, Sandy Powell, Sylvia Chang, Stephen Woolley, Topher Grace, and Ian McKellen, who presented the BFI Fellowship to this year's recipient Cate Blanchett.

OFFICIAL COMPETITION WINNER – BEST FILM: CHEVALIER - Athina Rachel Tsangari

Recognising inspiring, inventive and distinctive filmmaking, the winner of the ***Best Film Award***, went to Tsangari's CHEVALIER, a biting, playful dissection of the male ego, featuring six men on a boat. The award was announced by president of the Official Competition jury, Pawel Pawlikowski, whose *Ida* won the LFF Best Film prize in 2013.

Pawel Pawlikowski said "*Chevalier is a study of male antagonism seen through the eyes of a brave and original filmmaker. With great formal rigour and irresistible wit, Athena Rachel Tsangari has managed to make a film that is both a hilarious comedy and a deeply disturbing statement on the condition of western humanity*".

Pawlikowski's fellow jurors were Christine Vachon (producer of CAROL, this year's American Express Gala), the BAFTA-winning and Oscar® & Golden Globe nominee Chiwetel Ejiofor, the BAFTA-winning and Oscar® nominee Kristin Scott-Thomas, and Chinese director and screenwriter Mabel Cheung whose A TALE OF THREE CITIES, featured in this year's programme.

FIRST FEATURE COMPETITION WINNER – SUTHERLAND AWARD: Robert Eggers for THE WITCH

The long-standing **Sutherland Award** is presented to the director of the most original and imaginative first feature in the Festival, and this year's winner is Robert Eggers' *THE WITCH* about a 17th century New England family torn apart by tension and the suspicion of witchcraft. The nominations were introduced by actor Allen Leech and the winner announced by jury president, director/screenwriter Desiree Akhavan, whose feature debut, *Appropriate Behaviour* featured in the 2014 LFF programme.

Desiree Akhavan, said *"This year's Sutherland Award nominees were a bold group of beautifully crafted first features. Of the nominated films, one stood apart as the announcement of a new voice in contemporary cinema. A horror film that felt as though it were reinventing the genre with each frame and truly shocking moments that evoke both terror and empathy. With an impressive command of cameras as well as truly heartbreaking performances - it presented a fresh, feminist take on a timeless tale"*

The jury also commended **Martin Butler & Bentley Dean's** *TANNA* saying *"It's a rare skill to give a voice to a typically marginalized community that doesn't condescend or patronize and for this reason the jury would like to give special mention to Tanna"*.

Akhavan's jury comprised BAFTA-nominated director and Fine Artist Clio Barnard, who won the *Sutherland Award* in 2010 for her feature debut *The Arbor*, James Kent, the director of last year's Centrepiece Gala supported by the Mayor of London, *Testament of Youth*, actor Allen Leech (*The Imitation Game*), and chief film critic of The Times, Kate Muir.

DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION WINNER – GRIERSON AWARD: SHERPA, directed by Jennifer Peedom

The **Grierson Award** for the best documentary recognises outstanding feature-length documentaries of integrity, originality, technical excellence or cultural significance. The award went to Peedom's gripping and urgent documentary which indelibly captures tragedy and mayhem on Mount Everest. Grierson trustee and documentary filmmaker **Alex Cooke** announced the winner.

The jury said *"We are taken into the lives, homes and families of the Sherpas, who have for too long been overlooked and exploited, dependent for their livelihoods on an increasing number of tourists who sometimes regard them as little more than owned slaves. We're left with an appreciation of the sacrifices the Sherpa community have made for over 6 decades. We applaud this impressive film for giving voice to a previously voiceless community, and we hope it reaches the wide, general audience that it deserves"*.

The Documentary Competition jury were documentary filmmaker and ex-director of EIFF **Mark Cousins**, whose *I AM BELFAST* was presented at the Festival, with fellow jurors, award winning documentary filmmaker **Brian Woods**, Guardian head of documentaries and previous deputy director of Sheffield DocFest, **Charlie Phillips** and London-based artists and filmmakers **Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard**, whose first documentary feature *20,000 Days on Earth*, won directing and editing awards at Sundance last year and the Douglas Hickox Award for Best Debut Director at the BIFAs.

SHORT FILM COMPETITION WINNER – BEST SHORT FILM AWARD: AN OLD DOG'S DIARY, directed by Shai Heredia and Shumona Goel

This year saw the inaugural presentation of the **Best Short Film Award** which recognises short form works with a unique cinematic voice and confident handling of chosen theme and content. The award went to *AN OLD DOG'S DIARY*, a lyrical film portrait of Francis Newton Souza, one of the key Indian artists of the 20th-century, inspired by his personal writings, letters, drawings and possessions., the award was presented by Shezad Dawood and Daisy

Jacobs and collected by Chantal and Dev Pinto of the Xandev Foundation on behalf of directors Shai Heredia and Shumona Goel.

Daisy Jacob, jury president said “**An Old Dog’s Diary is as poetic and soulful as its subject. It offers a fresh and original way of documenting the life of an artist. It looks beautiful, sounds beautiful, but, more than that, it tells us about the beauty of the human spirit.**”

Jury president **Daisy Jacobs** is an Academy Award® nominee, whose *The Bigger Picture* featured in last year’s Festival and won the BAFTA for Best Short Animated Film. Her fellow jurors were the multi-media conceptual artist and filmmaker **Shezad Dawood**, short film producer and senior film programme manager at British Council **Will Massa**, director **Tom Green**, whose *Monsters: Dark Continent* marked his feature debut at last year’s Festival and British visual artist, filmmaker and Turner Prize nominee **Runa Islam**.

BFI FELLOWSHIP Cate Blanchett (as previously announced)

This year’s **BFI Fellowship** was presented to **Cate Blanchett** by her friend and co-star of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* films **Ian McKellen**.

Earlier in the evening Blanchett attended the UK Premiere of TRUTH, which screened as the Fellowship Special Presentation film in honour of the award. Based on the book “Truth and Duty” by Mary Mapes, TRUTH tells the incredible story of Mary Mapes, an award-winning CBS News journalist and Dan Rather’s *60 Minutes* producer and the risks she took to expose a story on the then President George W. Bush.

Blanchett also attended the Festival for Todd Haynes’ CAROL, presented as this year’s American Express Gala.

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Note to Editors:

The bronze **Star of London Award** was commissioned especially for the Festival and designed by leading sculptor Almuth Tebbenhoff.

About the BFI Fellowship

The BFI Fellowship is awarded by the BFI Board of Governors and it is presented for outstanding achievement in film and television. Since 1983, a total of 80 Fellowships have been awarded – the full list is a roll-call of the leading lights of the world of film and television. The Fellowship of the BFI (British Film Institute) was created in 1983 to coincide with the BFI’s 50th anniversary. On that occasion the British film industry gathered in the Guildhall for a televised event at which the first group of Fellows were created - Marcel Carné, David Lean, Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger, Satyajit Ray and Orson Welles.

Since its creation, the BFI Fellowship has been awarded to key figures in British cinema including Peggy Ashcroft, Dirk Bogarde, Helena Bonham Carter, Judi Dench, Stephen Frears, Alec Guinness, Mike Leigh, Christopher Lee, Laurence Olivier, Vanessa Redgrave and Maggie Smith. Also recognised have been such film industry luminaries as Jack Cardiff, Dilys Powell, Sydney Samuelson and Jeremy Thomas, and some of the giants of world cinema, including Michelangelo Antonioni, Bernardo Bertolucci, Isabelle Huppert, Abbas Kiarostami, Akira Kurosawa, Elem Klimov, Jeanne Moreau, Al Pacino and most recently Mel Brooks.

The BFI Fellowship also celebrates achievement in the world of television with such names as Alan Yentob, Jeremy Isaacs, David Rose, Michael Parkinson, Lynda La Plante, Lord Bernstein and Verity Lambert all receiving the award.

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Film clips/trailers, written materials and LFF press releases please go to the below FTP:

<ftp://ftp.premiercomms.com>

Username: LFF_PRESS

Password: OWL86Y4m

Film images can be found at: www.image.net

BFI Press Office:

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Festival Information & Ticket Booking

Telephone Bookings: 020 7928 3232 between 10:00 – 20:30

Online: www.bfi.org.uk/lff

In person: BFI Southbank Office: 11:00 – 20:30

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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