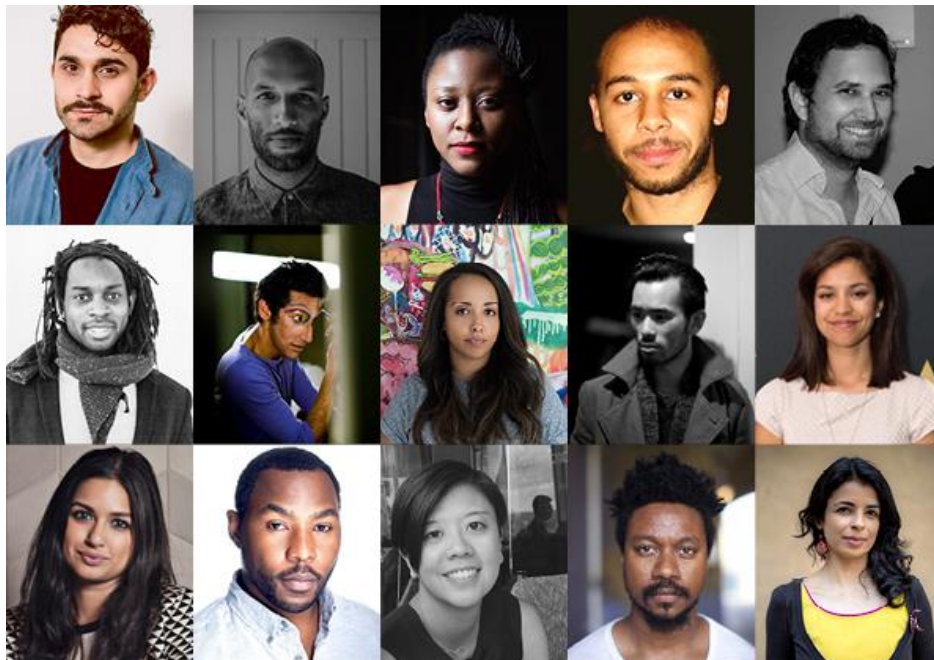




## NET.WORK@LFF at the 60<sup>th</sup> BFI London Film Festival



*(Left to right: first row, Aleem Khan, Matt Houghton, Chika Anadu, David Alexander, Toby Fell-Holden; second row, Kibwe Tavares, Amrou Al-Kadhi, Nadia Latif, Sing J. Lee, Melissa Iqbal; third row, Rachna Suri, Gbolahan Obisesan, Selina Lim, Nathaniel Martello White and Sandhya Suri)*

### Friday 23 September 2016.

The BFI announces today the **15 writers and directors** taking part in the ground-breaking **NET.WORK@LFF** professional development programme at this year's BFI London Film Festival. In a move that is a further expression of the BFI's commitment and positive action towards increasing opportunity and inclusivity in film for talented filmmakers, this year's NET.WORK@LFF focuses on emerging filmmakers from BAME backgrounds from across the UK.

NET.WORK@LFF also mirrors the Festival's thought-provoking headline industry event, the **LFF Black Star Symposium** (Thursday, 6 October), which will be opened by the highly acclaimed British actor and producer David Oyelowo, a passionate and articulate advocate for action in changing the framework of opportunities for black talent.

During the course of the internationally-focused five-day NET.WORK@LFF programme (6-10 October) which is supported by the BFI with National Lottery funding, the 15 emerging writers and directors will be participating in masterclasses, screenings, networking and one-to-one sessions with visiting international filmmakers and executives whose films are screening at the Festival including:

- Director **Amma Asante** whose latest feature *A United Kingdom*, starring David Oyelowo and Rosamund Pike, is this year's Opening Gala at the LFF;
- **Julie Dash** (*Daughters of the Dust*), pioneering filmmaker, author and member of the LA Rebellion film movement of African and African-American filmmakers who graduated from AFI and UCLA and created a black cinema alternative to Hollywood;
- **Tracy 'Twinkie' Byrd**, Casting Director on *Southside with You*, *Fruitvale Station* and *Stomp The Yard*;
- **Mohamed Diab**, director of *Clash*, which screens in Official Competition at the Festival, and which opened Un Certain Regard at Cannes 2016;
- **Michele Turnure-Salleo**, who as founder and head of the highly respected San Francisco Film Society's Filmmaker360 department helped guide hundreds of independent filmmakers and award-winning film projects through development, production and distribution including *Fruitvale Station* (Sundance 2013) and *Love is Strange* (Sundance and Berlin 2014); and
- **Julia Oh**, who co-produced Andrea Arnold's critically acclaimed *American Honey* which has its UK premiere at the Festival as the Festival Special Presentation, and produced Sebastián Silva's Berlin Teddy award-winning *Nasty Baby*.

**Julie Dash** will open this year's NET.WORK programme as the keynote speaker as well as presenting her film *Daughters of the Dust*. There will be further private screenings and Q&A sessions, and industry-focused discussions with key industry figures including **Negeen Yazdi** (President of International Production, The Weinstein Company) and **David Flynn** (Motion Picture Literary Agent, United Talent Agency).

**Clare Stewart, BFI London Film Festival Director**, says, "*The BFI London Film Festival is committed to supporting emerging UK film talent and we are proud to take that further this year by promoting real action on diversity. We want to create positive change – for filmmakers, the industry and audiences – not only by presenting opportunities for debate like the LFF Black Star Symposium, but by creating tangible opportunities for emerging black, Asian and minority ethnic filmmakers to meet, learn and be inspired by many of the international filmmakers and industry professionals who come to London for the Festival.*"

**Lizzie Franke, Senior Production Executive for the BFI**, says, "*We are delighted to be welcoming 15 participants to NET.WORK@LFF representing some of the finest new writers and directors coming out of the UK who have already proven themselves with award-winning shorts, low budget features, theatre and TV work. On the cusp of what we believe will be great feature film careers, the group will*

*have a unique opportunity during this five day programme within the Festival to meet and learn from the best of world-class filmmaking talent visiting the Festival.”*

The full list of filmmakers taking part this year is:

**Aleem Khan**

Aleem’s short film, *Three Brothers*, was nominated for a BAFTA in 2015, and he was one of Screen International’s Stars of Tomorrow in 2015. He is now developing a couple of feature length screenplays one of which, *After Love*, is in development with The Bureau Film company and has development funding from Creative England.

**Amrou Al-Kadhi**

Amrou’s first short which he wrote and starred in, *Nightstand*, was exec produced by Stephen Fry and picked up for distribution by Peccadillo Pictures. He is currently in development on two other shorts as a writer/director, and working up to making his first feature, *Leather & Sweaters*, which is currently in development.

**Chika Anadu**

Chika was part of the Cannes Cinefondation residency programme (2010/11) working on her first feature script *B For Boy* which premiered in First Feature Competition at the BFI London Film Festival (2013). The film won the Audience Award at the AFI Film Festival (2013), and the Special Jury Prize at the Seattle International Film Festival (2014). *B for Boy* is now available on Netflix and iTunes.

**David Alexander**

David has made several shorts including *Growing* which won awards from *Time Out* and screened at over 30 film festivals around the world. Previously a participant in the talent labs at the Berlin Film Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival and the Tribeca Film Festival, he has directed for artists George The Poet and Kate Tempest and is currently developing his first feature film with Dark Pictures and Creative England.

**Gbolahan Obisesan**

Gbolahan is a Genesis Fellow of the Young Vic Theatre and is currently writing an original feature, *We Get Around* for Emu Films/Film4. He recently directed *Cutting It* for the Young Vic and is also under commission to Eclipse Theatre Company.

**Kibwe Tavares**

Kibwe was named one of the top 20 new directors at the Saatchi & Saatchi 2014 New Directors’ showcase. His short *Jonah* won the Kurosawa award and Bronze Medal at the 24fps International Short Film Festival and was nominated for the Grand Prix at Cork and at Sundance. His graduation film, *Robots of Brixton*, won the Special Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. He currently has three features in development with Film 4, Element, DNA, DMC Film.

**Matt Houghton**

Matt is currently signed to PULSE for commercials and has had short films screened at the London Short Film Festival, Sheffield Doc Fest, Rushes Soho Shorts and the East End Film Festival. Matt’s latest short film, *Dear Araucaria*, was made in partnership with The Guardian won the Audience Award at Sheffield Doc/Fest 2015 and was released in 2015 to much acclaim.

**Melissa Iqbal**

Melissa completed an MA in Screenwriting at the National Film and Television School in 2014. Her graduation script, *The Death Engine*, won the prestigious Academy Nicholl Fellowship, was on the highly regarded Brit List and is now in development with Warp Films. She has adapted a YA novel for Warner Bros US and has another spec, *Shore*, in development with Midnight Road. Most recently, she was part of a writers room for Charlie Brooker's *Black Mirror* (which headlines this year's LFF Connects Television event) and is currently writing a TV pilot for Sky Atlantic and the Wellcome Trust.

### **Nadia Latif**

Nadia is a theatre director working almost exclusively in new writing. She has worked with writers including Brad Birch, Somalia Seaton, Omar El-Khairy, Inua Ellams, Ella Hickson, Kristiana Colon, Naomi Wallace, and Ben Ockrent at venues and companies including the Royal Shakespeare Company, Almeida, Headlong, Royal Court and Soho Theatre. Her work also includes some short documentaries.

### **Nathaniel Martello White**

Nathaniel is a writer, director and actor. His first play was *Blackta (Young Vic)*, he is currently directing *Torn* at the Royal Court and has a project with Creative England's Emerging Talent Fund. As an actor his credits include *People, Places & Things*, *Edward II* (National), *Death in Paradise (TV)* and *The Internet is Serious Business*. He has recently completed three short films - *SLAP*, *CLaAM* and *MARS Tingz*.

### **Rachna Suri**

Rachna is a director working across genres, tackling complex themes through personal stories. A Screen International Star of Tomorrow in 2015, Rachna's feature and television slate includes projects with Paddy Campbell, Charlie Covell and Company Pictures. Previous credits include *Playing Ball* (BBC) and *Our Lad* (Channel 4). She has also worked for Universal Films and New Line Cinema, the Google Creative Lab and trained with the National Youth Theatre.

### **Sandhya Suri**

An award-winning film-maker and graduate from the National Film and Television School. Her first feature documentary, *I for India* screened in competition at Sundance Film Festival, was released in cinemas across the UK and Canada and garnered several awards. This year Suri was selected for both the Sundance Screenwriters and Directors Lab with her first fiction feature *Santosh*.

### **Selina Lim**

Selina Lim is a BAFTA and BIFA nominated screenwriter and writer *Keeping up with the Joneses* starring Maxine Peake and Adeel Akhtar and directed by Michael Pearce, supported by the BFI. Selina's latest project is a 15-minute short film *Playing Ball* which was commissioned by the BBC Drama as part of the Original Drama Shorts 2015 from BBC iPlayer. She is currently working on a short with BBC Three/Green Door and one with Antagonist/Tread Softly Films.

### **Sing J Lee**

Sing J Lee is currently signed to Partizan Worldwide directing music videos, commercials and content including for acts including Muse, Charli XCX, Chvrches, Pharrell and Years & Years. He is currently developing several short films and a feature script.

### **Toby Fell-Holden**

Toby's short *Balcony* won a Crystal Bear at Berlin (Generation 14plus) Flickerfest, along with a nomination for Best British Short at the BIFAs. He is currently working on his first feature as well as

other screenplays with director Ramin Bahrani and producer Afolabi Kuti in New York and London, respectively.

The BFI NET.WORK is central to the BFI's strategy to discover and support the next generation of feature filmmaking talent, no matter where they live in the UK. Writers, directors and producers who have yet to have a feature film produced and/or released are supported through a hands-on approach that is tailored to their specific needs. This includes funding for feature film development, short films and pilots as well as bespoke editorial and professional development support. NET.WORK partners also host regular masterclasses, workshops and other talent development programmes across the country. The BFI works with partners Creative England, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Film London, Northern Ireland Screen and the Scottish Film Talent Network in delivering the NET.WORK.

For more information on NET.WORK@ LFF visit [network.bfi.org.uk](http://network.bfi.org.uk)

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#### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

##### **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 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 Josh Berger CBE.

### **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 20 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 Festivals and BFI London Film Festival Director since October 2011.

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