



THE TIMES BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL IS AWARDED £1.8 MILLION FROM THE UK FILM COUNCIL

LONDON – Friday 8 May 2009: The UK Film Council today announced £1.8 million Lottery funding for the Times BFI London Film Festival over the next three years. The money will fund innovative ways to allow audiences across the UK to access and share in the festival, allow the festival to drive forward its ambition to become a recognised destination where the international industry does business, and allow it to compete with other major international festivals.

The investment will significantly boost opportunities for audience access and the international profile of the festival, increasing its value to both the industry and the public by:

- Attracting more European, international, and world premieres;
- Introducing a major public, cross-London event to take the festival city-wide;
- Creating an online virtual presence for the festival to reach to new audiences across the UK and internationally; and
- Raising the profile of the Festival through international coverage and revitalising its awards.

John Woodward, Chief Executive Officer of the UK Film Council said: “Today’s £1.8 million in funding is part of the UK Film Council’s commitment to bring a broader range of film to a wider audience across the UK, offering more people the chance to enjoy and participate in film.”

This initiative complements other UK Film Council activities widening access to film including its Digital Screen Network, providing 240 digital screens across the UK; its Prints & Advertising Fund which brings films such as *Waltz with Bashir*, *Shifty*, *Man On Wire*, *In the Loop*, and *The Lives of Others* to UK audiences that might otherwise not have the opportunity to see them; and Find Any Film, a new website giving users the fastest way to find any film in any legal format, including downloading and streaming, anywhere in the UK.

Sandra Hebron, Festival Director, said: “I’m delighted that the UKFC will be supporting the next exciting stage of the festival’s life. Alongside our plans to raise the international profile and value of the event as a launch pad for films in Europe, initiatives such as the re-focused awards will reward imagination and creativity in film-making, and the development of our online and London wide activities will significantly increase the number of people who can enjoy and engage with the festival. This new investment is crucial in enabling us to take a huge step forward, building on our history to

provide a festival that Londoners and the international film community will regard as an unmissable event.”

Film Minister Barbara Follett welcomed the £1.8 million funding: “The Times BFI London Film Festival is great for Londoners and an important celebration of one of our most vital and vibrant creative industries. This Lottery funding will help to secure London's position as a global centre for filmmaking and production talent.”

The Times BFI London Film Festival is a highly regarded and anticipated event in Europe's cultural calendar, attracting leading international filmmakers, industry professionals and the media together with large public audiences to London for a two week showcase of the best in contemporary world cinema. The 53rd edition of the festival will run from 14-29 October. The full programme will be announced in London on Wednesday 9 September.

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Notes to Editors:

The UK Film Council

The UK Film Council is the Government backed lead agency for film in the UK ensuring that the economic, cultural and educational aspects of film are effectively represented at home and abroad. We invest Government grant-in-aid and Lottery money in developing new filmmakers, in funding exciting new British films and in getting a wider choice of films to audiences throughout the UK. We also invest in training, promoting Britain as an international filmmaking location and in raising the profile of British films abroad.

We aim to deliver lasting benefits to the industry and the public through:

- **creativity** – encouraging the development of new talent, skills, and creative and technological innovation in UK film and assisting new and established filmmakers to produce successful and distinctive British films;
- **enterprise** – supporting the creation and growth of sustainable businesses in the film sector, providing access to finance and helping the UK film industry compete successfully in the domestic and global marketplace;
- **imagination** – promoting education and an appreciation and enjoyment of cinema by giving UK audiences access to the widest range of UK and international cinema, and by supporting film culture and heritage.

The BFI

The BFI cares for the world's most significant archive of film and television. It is also the UK's biggest distributor of cultural cinema – serving over 800 venues and distributing or loaning over 12,000 film titles, as well as managing one of the world's most important DVD labels for cultural film. The BFI promotes greater understanding of cultural and historical world cinema through its festivals, film screenings and releases, books, educational resources, a growing national network of

Mediatheques, online at BFI Screenonline (free to every school in England), and on our YouTube channel, BFIfilms, which has received two million hits in the past 18 months.

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archive, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you. www.bfi.org.uk

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