



PRESS RELEASE MARCH 22 011

HEATHER STEWART APPOINTED CREATIVE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROGRAMME, BFI

As the BFI prepares for a new chapter for film, it was today announced that Heather Stewart has been appointed to the newly created position of Creative Director of Public Programme, BFI. Driving the BFI's strategy to deliver an ambitious, unified and clear cultural vision, Heather will be responsible for bringing together all of the BFI's cultural activities, including collections, venues, cinema and DVD releases, publishing and festivals.

Heather starts her new position in May 2011 and will continue to report directly into the Director of the BFI, Amanda Nevill. She was appointed by Amanda and the BFI Governors who currently include Tessa Ross, Controller, Film 4 and Shami Chakrabarti, Director of Liberty.

Heather, who has worked at the BFI for 20 years, was previously Cultural Programme Director, UK Wide, responsible for the BFI's for the BFI National Archive, film and video distribution and sales, and BFI Publishing, including Sight & Sound. In her new role she will now lead the BFI's entire public programme, adding to her portfolio BFI Southbank, BFI IMAX and BFI Festivals.

Amanda Nevill said *'I am delighted that Heather has accepted this new position at the BFI. She is hugely talented and respected throughout the film sector. Thanks to her knowledge, vision and energy she has already transformed the BFI's DVD label, cinema distribution arm and the BFI National Archive – now the busiest film archive in the world. I am confident that Heather will bring together our entire public programme under a single cultural vision and ambition and really maximise the value we give to existing and new audiences.'*

Heather Stewart said *'I feel really honoured to have been given this responsibility of bringing together the programming work of our venue and our festivals, and the work of our distribution arm, with the curation of one the biggest and greatest collections of film and TV in the world. As we develop our plans as the lead agency and funder of film in the UK, it is the perfect moment to put British film firmly at the heart of our programming, understanding our own national cinema in the context of a great programme of international contemporary and historical film.'*

BIOGRAPHY

Heather Stewart has a long association with the BFI from running film societies as a teenager and as a user of the BFI's library and film distribution services for many years. After studying art history, Heather studied film at New York University, before going on to teach film history and theory in Higher and Further Education in the UK. Since she came to work for the BFI she has a track record in developing the BFI's distribution activities from one-off events and small scale distribution and touring of film programmes into an activity which now includes theatrical releasing and a very successful DVD label, and last year delivered the biggest audiences of any of the BFI's activities, with 60% of these audiences outside London as well as an audience of quarter a million at the international festivals and cinematheques.

Heather Stewart, as Cultural Programme Director UK-Wide, was responsible for developing new audiences across the UK through education and other access channels, opening up and developing the BFI National Film & Television Archive and the BFI National Library, and establishing greater co-ordination between the BFI and national and regional partners.

PRESS CONTACTS:

Judy Wells, Head of Press and PR, BFI

Tel: 020 7957 8919 or email: judy.wells@bfi.org.uk

Nick Mason Pearson, Director of Press and Public Affairs, BFI

Tel: 020 7957 8901 or email: nick.pearson@bfi.org.uk