



BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

5 – 16 October 2016

in partnership with



CATE BLANCHETT PRESENTS

HOPE DICKSON LEACH– Writer, Director of THE LEVELLING

WITH THE £50K IWC FILMMAKER BURSARY AWARD

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE BFI

LONDON, 9.30PM 4TH OCTOBER 2016: The first ever **IWC Filmmaker Bursary Award in Association with the BFI** was awarded tonight to **Hope Dickson-Leach**, writer and director of **The Levelling**, who will receive £50k, the most significant bursary of its kind in the UK film industry. The award was presented by **Cate Blanchett** at a star studded gala dinner at London's Rosewood hotel, hosted by Rob Brydon and accompanied by the sounds of the London Philharmonic Concert Orchestra. Luminaries from the worlds of film, music, fashion and culture joined forces to celebrate this unique bursary held on the eve of the opening of the **BFI London Film Festival**, in partnership with American Express®. **THE LEVELLING** will screen in LFF's Official Competition strand (European Premiere) at Picturehouse Central on Friday 7th October at 6.30pm.

Award winning actress and BFI Fellow Cate Blanchett said *"I am so pleased to be here to celebrate four remarkable and unique film makers being supported at the beginning of their career by the BFI and IWC. I wish all the filmmakers involved great future success."*

Amanda Nevill, CEO of the BFI and bursary final judge said: *" All four shortlisted candidates were so strong that it was heart-breaking to be forced to select only one. It's a great joy to bring their films to new audiences in the festival. Hope Dickson-Leach is a hugely promising director and The Levelling demonstrates her assured transition into feature filmmaking with a story about women in British society, exploring complex family relationships at a point of crisis. Developing and making a film is an expensive and time consuming business and this bursary is truly a gift of time. Congratulations Hope!"*

Georges Kern, CEO of IWC Schaffhausen and bursary final judge said: *“We are so pleased to have awarded this first bursary award in the UK to a filmmaker who shows so much promise and such clear talent. We are very proud of our collaboration with the BFI to be a part of Hope’s journey as she continues to create exciting and ground breaking work.”*

Hope Dickson-Leach, winner of the IWC Bursary Award in association with the BFI, said *“Winning this means everything - my life has just changed in two minutes. Being a mother of two children and a filmmaker is really tricky and I’ve now been given the gift of time. This generous bursary from IWC Schaffhausen and the BFI means that I can now develop my second feature. Being awarded this, having been judged by my peers, is doubly fantastic. Thank you to IWC Schaffhausen, the BFI and the judges for celebrating all of our work and for choosing me!”*

Edinburgh based Hope completed her MFA in filmmaking at Columbia University where she made three short films that played at festivals worldwide. While in New York she was assistant to Todd Solondz on his film, PALINDROMES. Hope’s award-winning thesis short film, THE DAWN CHORUS, was selected for Sundance, Edinburgh, London and many other festivals. Screen International made her a Star of Tomorrow in 2007 and Filmmaker Magazine named her one of the ‘25 New Faces of Independent Film’. Since her return to the UK, she has made further acclaimed short works for Channel 4, Film London, the UK Film Council and the National Theatre of Scotland. Her debut feature THE LEVELLING, produced by Wellington Films, funded by BBC Films, the BFI and Creative England as part of the iFeatures scheme, has just premiered at Toronto International Film Festival ahead of its LFF presentation. She is also currently developing several other features and is a co-founder of Raising Films - a campaign to make the film industry more parent-friendly.

The Bursary Award is presented in recognition of outstanding British talent and is designed to support a writer and/or director at the beginning of their career, bringing them the financial stability and time needed to develop their creativity and focus on future projects without the pressure of deadlines or the distraction of taking paid work – a precious and extremely rare opportunity for a filmmaker.

To be eligible for the Bursary Award a writer and/or director must have been UK-based and have their first or second film in Official Selection at the BFI London Film Festival in Partnership with American Express®. The high calibre of shortlisted applicants is testament to the vibrant creativity alive in British independent filmmaking and really demonstrated a diversity of voices and styles, working across comedy, horror, drama, and artist film and video to present original work with a distinctive tone.

In a unique partnership that unlocks direct philanthropic support for UK creativity and the future of British film, the Filmmaker Bursary Award was created by Swiss luxury watch manufacturer IWC Schaffhausen and experts from the BFI. IWC Schaffhausen has been a sponsor of the BFI and the Official Time Partner of the BFI London Film Festival since 2014.

Amanda Nevill, CEO of the BFI, Georges Kern, CEO of IWC Schaffhausen, and Sir John Hurt were the final judges on the filmmaker who benefits from this extraordinary opportunity.

A prestigious Shortlisting Panel including director Gurinder Chadha (*Bend It Like Beckham* and upcoming *Viceroy's House*), Joe Oppenheimer, Acting Head of BBC Films, and Rose Garnett, Head of Development at Film4, alongside Bursary Award architects Clare Stewart, Director of the BFI London Film Festival and Ben Roberts, Director of the BFI Film Fund, selected the four finalist filmmakers.

The other three finalists in contention for the award were:

- **Joseph a. Adesunloye – Writer, Director of WHITE COLOUR BLACK screening in LFF's Journey strand (World Premiere)**
- **Alice Lowe – Writer, Director of PREVENGE, screening in LFF's Laugh strand (UK Premiere)**
- **Paul Anton Smith – Director of HAVE YOU SEEN MY MOVIE? Screening in LFF's Experimental strand (World Premiere)**

The IWC Schaffhausen Filmmaker Bursary Award in Association with the BFI follows a long tradition of the brand's commitment to and support of the film industry – evidenced by its established partnerships with the Tribeca Film Festival, the Dubai International Film Festival, Zurich Film Festival, the Beijing International Film Festival and the Singapore International Film Festival, as well as the brand's long-standing relationships with high profile film talent, including Christoph Waltz and Cate Blanchett, all of which demonstrates IWC's ongoing passion for film.

Ends.

FURTHER INFORMATION

BFI

Judy Wells

Head of Press and PR

Tel. +44 (0)207 957 89 19

Mobile +44 (0)79 84 18 05 01

E-mail judy.wells@bfi.org.uk

Tina McFarling

Media Advisor, Corporate, Industry and Partnerships

Tel. +44 (0)207 957 4797

Mobile +44 (0)7879 421578

E-mail tina.mcfarling@bfi.org.uk

IWC UK

Amy Turner
UK PR and Communications Manager

Tel. +44 (0)203 810 52 01

Mobile +44 (0)7760 505 758

E-mail amy.turner@iwc.com

IWC Schaffhausen

Clemens von Walzel
Department Manager Public Relations

Mobile +41 (0)79 173 27 58

E-mail clemens.vonwalzel@iwc.com

Internet www.iwc.com/press

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IWC SCHAFFHAUSEN

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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.

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.

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