



## **THE 62<sup>nd</sup> BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES THE 2018 OFFICIAL COMPETITION SELECTION**

**Lenny Abrahamson announced as Jury President**

**Public invited to award presentation at special screening of the  
winning film for first time**

**LONDON, Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> August:** The 62nd BFI London Film Festival in partnership with American Express® is delighted to announce the contenders for the Official Competition. The Best Film Award recognises inspiring, inventive and distinctive filmmaking and this year's line-up showcases the enormous depth and diversity of talent working in the global film industry today, with 50% of the films from a female director or co-director.

The Festival is also thrilled to welcome as Jury President Academy Award®-nominated director of ROOM (LFF Official Competition 2015), Lenny Abrahamson, whose long-awaited film adaptation of Sarah Waters' horror novel THE LITTLE STRANGER will be released this September. For the first time, the winner of the Best Film will receive their Award in front of a public audience at a special screening on Saturday 20th October at Vue Leicester Square.

The 10 films in Official Competition are:

BIRDS OF PASSAGE (PÁJAROS DE VERANO) dirs. Cristina Gallego, Ciro Guerra  
DESTROYER dir. Karyn Kusama  
HAPPY AS LAZZARO (LAZZARO FELICE) dir. Alice Rohrwacher  
HAPPY NEW YEAR, COLIN BURSTEAD. dir. Ben Wheatley  
IN FABRIC dir. Peter Strickland  
JOY dir. Sudابه Mortezaei  
THE OLD MAN & THE GUN dir. David Lowery  
SHADOW (YING) dir. Zhang Yimou  
SUNSET (NAPSZÁLLTA ) dir. László Nemes  
TOO LATE TO DIE YOUNG (TARDE PARA MORIR JOVEN) dir. Dominga Sotomayor

Encompassing a mixture of oddball comedies, genre-bending kaleidoscopic dramas, entertaining crime capers, haunting ghost stories and nail-biting thrillers, this year's inspiring, inventive and distinctive selection is both diverse and global, representing films from the United Kingdom, Italy, Hungary, Colombia, USA, Austria, China and Chile.

The Festival continues to shine a light on women behind the camera, with half of the films in competition showcasing the work of female directors or co-directors (Karyn Kusama, Alice Rohrwacher, Sudabeh Mortezai, Dominga Sotomayor and Cristina Gallego, directing with Ciro Guerra). Ben Wheatley makes a welcome return to the Festival, and receives his first nomination in the Official Competition with the World Premiere of his latest feature, alongside second-time nominee and fellow UK director Peter Strickland, whilst other world-class directors David Lowery and Zhang Yimou round out the selection, alongside second-time nominee László Nemes.

Building on the huge popularity of the annual Surprise Screening, one of the fastest-selling tickets at the LFF, this year's Official Competition also brings a unique and exciting opportunity to Festival attendees. In an audience first, the winning competition film will now be available to book in advance as an additional surprise screening. This will be held at the Vue Leicester Square on Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 7.00pm, and will be preceded by the presentation of the Festival's official award, the bronze Star of London, in the presence of Artistic Director Tricia Tuttle, Jury Chair Lenny Abrahamson and the winning filmmaker.

The Festival is delighted to bring audiences and film fans into the heart of the Official Competition, making them a part of the Awards celebration and increasing their chances to see the very best new films on offer, all of which are key to the Festival's mission of inclusion and accessibility for all. The Festival also invite audiences to share responses to films seen in Competition throughout the Festival at #MyLFFAward.

We are also delighted this year to welcome luxury Italian eyewear brand Persol as supporter of our Awards. Persol has had a strong link with cinema since the swinging 60's when Italian actor Marcello Mastroianni wore the 649 model in 'Divorce, Italian Style' and "King of Cool" Steve McQueen donned a pair of, now iconic, folding 714 model in the 1968 hit 'The Thomas Crown Affair'.

**Tricia Tuttle, BFI London Film Festival Artistic Director says:** "The LFF celebrates the breadth of cinema, and this is crystallised in the ten films competing for Best Film at the 62<sup>nd</sup> BFI London Film Festival. Representing a tantalizing range of styles, these films tell stories from around the globe – from 3<sup>rd</sup> Century China to post-Pinochet Chile to contemporary Britain - and transport viewers to worlds both real and imagined. These works are by turns, socially and politically urgent, muscularly thrilling, evocatively personal, spectacular, kinky and wildy inventive. It's also a real pleasure to see that half of these films come from female directors."

**Lenny Abrahamson, Jury Chair comments:** "I am delighted to continue my relationship with the BFI London Film Festival. It's an honour to be this year's Jury Chair and I very much look forward to deliberating with my fellow jurors on what is sure to be some of the most exciting, thought-provoking and original work in this year's selection of films."

Official Competition titles will screen nightly across the Festival in the two premier screens of the Vue Leicester Square, the LFF's new home in 2018 for the Official Competition section, with a red carpet-style reception for the attending filmmakers each evening.

Titles shortlisted for this year's Official Competition:

BIRDS OF PASSAGE sees co-directors Cristina Gallego and Ciro Guerra (*Embrace of the Serpent*, LFF 2015) return to the Festival with their latest offering – a sprawling, spiritual exploration of family conflict and tribal warfare, laced with heady symbolism and surrealist flashes. Set during the marijuana bonanza, a violent decade that saw the origins of drug trafficking in Colombia bear witness to the thrilling rise and fall of the indigenous Wayuu clan in remote Colombia. A mystical meditation on colonialism, tribalism and modernism.

Nicole Kidman is astonishing, and almost unrecognisable, in Karyn Kusama's (*The Invitation*, LFF 2015) brooding thriller DESTROYER. Kidman plays Erin, a jaded police detective haunted by her past and still reeling from the trauma of her experience years later, who is forced to confront her demons in order to close the case that almost destroyed her. The film also stars Sebastian Stan, Tatiana Maslany and Toby Kebbell.

Alice Rohrwacher (*The Wonders*, LFF 2014) returns to the Festival with HAPPY AS LAZZARO. A delightfully singular time and genre-bending rumination on the fate of innocence when faced with corruption and greed. Set in rural Italy, this is the tale of Lazzaro, a beautiful peasant so sweet natured he is often mistaken for simple-minded. A magnificent blend of Italian class struggle, folk tales, biblical allegory and pop culture reference, Rohrwacher deservedly shared the Best Screenplay award at Cannes for this kaleidoscopic work.

The World Premiere of HAPPY NEW YEAR, COLIN BURSTEAD. is Ben Wheatley's triumphant return to the Festival after *Free Fire* (LFF 2016). A poignantly funny and razor-sharp observation of English family dysfunction. Colin has rented a stately country home for his extended family's New Year celebrations. He's the centre of attention until his estranged brother David unexpectedly arrives, throwing the family dynamic far off orbit. Starring Joe Cole, Charles Dance, Mark Monero, Hayley Squires, Asim Chaudhry, Doon Mackichan, Bill Paterson, Neil Maskell and Sam Riley.

Peter Strickland (*The Duke of Burgundy*, LFF 2014) returns to the Festival with IN FABRIC, starring Marianne Jean-Baptiste and Gwendoline Christie. A haunting ghost story, laced with lashings of oddball humour and set against the backdrop of a busy winter sales period in a strange department store, it follows the life of a cursed dress as it passes from person to person, with devastating consequences.

JOY, directed by Sudabeh Mortezaei (whose debut feature *Macondo* competed for the LFF's Sutherland Award in 2014), presents a vital and hugely affecting drama that tackles the vicious cycle of sex trafficking in modern Europe. It follows the life of Joy, a young Nigerian woman, who works the streets to pay off debts to her exploiter Madame, while supporting her family in Nigeria and hoping for a better life for her young daughter in Vienna.

Iconic director Zhang Yimou presents SHADOW, set during China's Three Kingdom's era (AD 220-280). Blood spills in this visually stunning feature, as a great king and his people will be expelled from their homeland, with jaw-dropping combat scenes. Director Zhang presents mind-blowing visual design that revolutionises the colour palette, using water, calligraphy and graphic interpretations of yin and yang.

Academy Award© winner László Nemes follows up his critically acclaimed debut *Son of Saul* (Official Competition nominee LFF 2015) with his feverishly ambitious second feature, SUNSET. Set in 1913, nearing the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and on the eve of the First World War. Írisz Leiter is a hat maker who returns to Budapest years after her parents, respected milliners, sent her to be fostered under mysterious circumstances. A fugue-like meditation on the end of an empire; the brilliantly willful Írisz is our witness to the flickering innocence of a Europe about to be plunged into hell.

THE OLD MAN & THE GUN, directed by David Lowery, stars Robert Redford, in what will be his final big screen performance after recently announcing retirement. A brilliantly entertaining crime caper, based on the true story of Forrest Tucker, the self-styled 'Houdini' whose many audacious prison breaks included an Alcatraz flight in a homemade kayak, and whose last robbery was committed when he was 79. Offering bittersweet reflections on time and age, THE OLD MAN & THE GUN is a testament to a free-spirit who steadfastly refused to go quietly. The film also stars Sissy Spacek and Casey Affleck.

TOO LATE TO DIE YOUNG is a woozily gorgeous evocation of life on the fringe of society. Set during the summer of 1990, after Pinochet's fall, democracy has returned to Chile. Three youngsters drive up to a woodland commune below the Andes, where they idle the summer away while their parents debate the future. In their isolated community, Sofia, Lucas and Clara face their first loves and fears while building up for New Year's Eve. Youthful desire, ennui and mischief have rarely felt so tangible. The film is directed by Dominga Sotomayor.

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**For further press information and general enquiries about the 62<sup>nd</sup> BFI London Film Festival:**

***Please note the different festival sections, contacts and accreditation for 2018***

**FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES ABOUT OFFICIAL COMPETITION TITLES:**

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**OPENING/CLOSING AND HEADLINE GALAS, SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS and ASSOCIATED SCREEN TALKS:**

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## **MAIN FESTIVAL PROGRAMME AND STRAND GALAS, LFF AWARDS, EVENTS and FILMMAKER TEAS:**

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## **GENERAL ENQUIRIES and FESTIVAL ACCREDITATION**

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**BFI Head of Press and PR: Judy Wells**

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## **Festival Information & Ticket Booking**

BFI Members' priority booking opens 10.00am, 6 September – join at [www.bfi.org.uk/join](http://www.bfi.org.uk/join)

Public booking opens 10.00am, 13 September

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

Online: [www.bfi.org.uk/lff](http://www.bfi.org.uk/lff)

In person: BFI Southbank Office: 10:00 – 20:30

## **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.

### **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 diverse films, 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.

### **The Star of London**

The Star of London is the official award presented by the BFI London Film Festival to the winners of its competitive categories. It is made of bronze and was designed for the Festival by Sculptor Almuth Tebbenhoff.

### **Tricia Tuttle Biography**

Tricia Tuttle's appointment as Artistic Director follows five successful years as Deputy Head of Festivals at BFI, including BFI Flare and BFI London Film Festival. Moving from North Carolina in 1997 to complete a joint MA at BFI and Birkbeck, University of London in Film and TV Studies, Tricia's passion for film has seen her work as a programmer, lecturer, writer and journalist. Her career has spanned a five year tenure at BAFTA, starting in 2008 and with her appointment as Film Programme Manager in 2011; programming the BFI London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival (the pre-cursor to BFI Flare) and as Event Producer at London's The Script Factory. Highly regarded by the BFI and industry, Tuttle has been instrumental in evolving BFI Festivals, continuing to expand audience reach year on year and introducing impactful initiatives such as BFI Flare's FiveFilms4Freedom, in partnership with the British Council.



### **About Persol**

Persol is an eyewear brand which boasts a 100-year heritage, its name synonymous with exquisite materials and artisanal Italian craftsmanship. Long at the confluence of the everyday and the extraordinary, Persol glasses were originally conceived to help tram drivers navigate the streets of Turin but they have since become the favourite of actors, artists and the cultivated and curious.

Persol has had a strong link with cinema since the swinging 60's when Italian actor Marcello Mastroianni wore the 649 model in 'Divorce, Italian Style' and King of Cool Steve McQueen donned a pair of, now iconic, folding 714 model in 1968 hit 'The Thomas Crown Affair'. These days Persol is the brand of choice of contemporary movies stars such as Bradley Cooper, Daniel Craig and Lea Seydoux.

[persol.com](http://persol.com)



### **About Amex Invites**

American Express connects Cardmembers to the kinds of rewarding experiences and opportunities that matter to them and their businesses. Through Amex Invites, Cardmembers have access to presale tickets, as well as the best seats and exclusive offers at some of the UK's most sought-after entertainment events via partnerships with a range of entertainment institutions including AEG, Live Nation, Somerset House, The British Film Institute and The National Theatre. Amex Invites is just one example of the powerful backing that American Express provides its customers.

### **About American Express**

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