BFI ANNOUNCES TWO KEY NETWORK APPOINTMENTS –
JESS LOVELAND NAMED HEAD OF BFI NETWORK,
MATHIEU AJAN JOINS AS BFI NETWORK TALENT EXECUTIVE AT FILM LONDON

- NETWORK is the BFI’s growing film talent development programme
- £2.5m of BFI National Lottery funding providing support to emerging filmmakers across the UK
- Regional Talent Executives working to develop new filmmakers, based in leading film organisations and venues around the country

Thursday 8 November 2018. Jess Loveland has been appointed the new Head of BFI NETWORK, the BFI’s talent development resource which helps filmmakers early in their careers with short film development funding, industry-backed professional development, and community-building and networking support.

Jess is currently one of two BFI NETWORK Talent Executives for Film Hub North and will continue to be based in the North East in her new role, reporting to BFI Deputy CEO Ben Roberts.

In addition, Mathieu Ajan is joining the team as a second BFI NETWORK Talent Executive working out of Film London alongside Talent Executive Josic Cadoret. Mathieu Ajan runs Bounce, the popular youth-powered pop-up cinema dedicated to supporting and showcasing new filmmaking talent and tackling the lack of representation in the film industry.

Jess will begin in her role in January, and Mathieu will start in his role this month.

Since its formation in 2012, BFI NETWORK has provided vital support to a growing number of emerging writers, directors and producers, delivering on a continued commitment outlined in the BFI’s five year strategy BFI2022 and supported by National Lottery funding. Last year, Rungano Nyoni became the first filmmaker supported by BFI NETWORK (through BFI NETWORK Wales) and subsequently the BFI Film Fund and Ffilm Cymru Wales to win a BAFTA for her debut feature I Am Not A Witch, the UK’s Best Foreign Language submission for the 2019 American Academy Awards.

Working closely with the BFI Film Fund team, the BFI NETWORK Talent Executives and national partners offer funding, editorial support and professional guidance to help talent progress from making shorts to developing long-form stories, including features.

The seven Talent Execs in England are based in the BFI Film Audience Network organisations and venues, offering creative meeting spaces and audience platforms for filmmakers. As part of a national framework, they also advise on full scope of funding and training opportunities available to develop careers across the screen industries, and broker professional and creative relationships with peers.

In her new role, Jess will be responsible for overall management and future growth of BFI NETWORK including its digital platform and cornerstone professional development programmes, including NETWORK@LFF, NETWORK@Flare and BFI NETWORK x BAFTA Crew. She will work closely with BFI Film Fund colleagues, the BFI NETWORK Talent Executives, the NETWORK partners in Scotland, Wales and
Northern Ireland, as well as current and future BFI Vision Award producers who are engaging with new talent. Jess will also look to build new industry partnerships for NETWORK alongside existing work with Doc Society, BAFTA and BIFA.

Prior to joining BFI NETWORK, Jess Loveland worked as Development Executive for Dublin-based Blinder Films across their feature film and television slate. She has also previously worked for Creative England and BFI NETWORK as Development and Production Executive, finding and developing new and emerging filmmaking talent and supporting filmmakers through the development and production of shorts and feature film projects. Jess was a freelance script reader and editor for five years working with companies such as BBC Drama, Northern Ireland Screen, the Bush Theatre and New Writing South and programmes the comedy strand for the Aesthetica Short Film Festival.

In less than a year, Mathieu has built key partnerships for Bounce with WeWork, Rich Mix and the Genesis Cinema and provided financial support and training opportunities to young people without resources or access. He also founded and will continue to operate Teardusk, a social enterprise which nurtures creative young people by working with organisations and creating opportunity for talent along the way. As a director, producer and photographer Mathieu is also well versed in the creative, technical and development aspects of filmmaking.

Ben Roberts, BFI Deputy Chief Executive Officer, said: “We are delighted to have Jess take on this role leading the NETWORK - which she knows so well - and continue to grow it as a resource for industry and filmmakers everywhere. It’s a testament to her fantastic work at Film Hub North and the BFI NETWORK execs around the UK. We are also delighted to welcome Matt to the team. He is an inspiration with the projects he has set up and which have made a demonstrable impact in supporting and showcasing filmmaking talent.”

Jess Loveland, Head of BFI NETWORK said: I am so thrilled to have this exciting opportunity to grow and develop the BFI NETWORK. Having worked within the NETWORK for several years, I know that there is a wealth of new and emerging writers, directors and producers across the country and we have an incredibly passionate and motivated team of execs to support them develop their voices, grow their careers and contacts, and bring their unique stories to life. I look forward to working closely with them and our partners to discover and nurture the next generation of filmmakers within the pioneering framework of BFI NETWORK.”

Jordan McGarry, Head of Talent Development & Production at Film London said: “I’ve been a fan of Matt’s work since we first met some years ago. His achievements with Bounce are impressive and inspiring, and his vision and fresh thinking make him an outstanding addition to our team at Film London and the wider team of BFI Talent Execs. We’re all extremely lucky to have him and I can’t wait for him to start.”

Mathieu Ajan, BFI NETWORK Talent Executive at Film London said: “I’ve had the honour of showcasing amazing storytellers at Bounce, the community has really grown and after every screening I’m left inspired. The BFI NETWORK is a fantastic platform which will really impact a lot of filmmakers’ careers, the team at Film London are brilliant and I can’t wait to get started as a Talent Executive to nurture and champion new talent.”

Jess and Mathieu join the other members of the BFI NETWORK Talent Executive team: Thomas Wightman, Film Hub South East; Alice Cabanas, Film Hub South West; Alice Ramsey, Film Hub North; Alexzandra Jackson, Film Hub Midlands; Josic Cadoret for Film Hub London; and the existing talent development executives in Northern Ireland Screen, FfilmCymru Wales and the Scottish Film Talent Network who all
help to deliver BFI NETWORK. The BFI Doc Society Fund also runs a programme for new and emerging documentary filmmakers, as part of BFI NETWORK.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About BFI NETWORK
Made possible through National Lottery funding, BFI NETWORK exists to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers. We collaborate with film organisations and leading cultural venues across the UK to provide funding for short films, support for the development of first features, as well as a range of professional and creative development programmes.

Find out more and watch supported work: www.bfinetwork.org.uk @bfinetwork

About the BFI Film Audience Network
Supported by National Lottery funding, the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), is central to the BFI’s aim to ensure the greatest choice of film is available for everyone. Established in 2012 to build wider and more diverse UK cinema audiences for British and international film, FAN is a unique, UK-wide collaboration made up of eight Hubs managed by leading film organisations and venues strategically placed around the country. FAN also supports talent development with BFI NETWORK Talent Executives in each of the English Hubs, with a mission to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers.

BFI FAN Film Hubs are:
- Film Hub Midlands is led by Broadway, Nottingham working in partnership with the Birmingham-based Flatpack
- Film Hub North is led collectively by Showroom Workstation, Sheffield, HOME Manchester and Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle
- Film Hub South East is led by the Independent Cinema Office in collaboration with Saffron Screen in Saffron Walden and The Depot in Lewes
- Film Hub South West is led by Watershed in Bristol
- Film Hub Scotland is led by Glasgow Film Theatre
- Film Hub Northern Ireland is led by Queen’s University Belfast
- Film Hub Wales is led by Chapter in Cardiff
- Film Hub London is led by Film London

About the BFI
At the BFI we support, nurture and promote the art of film, television and the moving image. A charity, funded by Government and earned income, and a distributor of National Lottery funds, we are at the heart of the UK’s fast growing screen industries, protecting the past and shaping their future across the UK. We work in partnership with cultural organisations, government and industry to make this happen. We bring our world-class cultural programmes and unrivalled national collections to audiences everywhere, and promote learning about our art-form and its heritage. We support the future success of film in the UK by nurturing new voices and fresh ideas, enriching independent British film culture, challenging the UK’s screen industries to innovate and defining Britain and its storytellers in the 21st century.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.