

## **BFI LAUNCHES COMMISSION ON INDEPENDENT FILM CHAired BY LIONSGATE'S ZYGI KAMASA TO INVESTIGATE HEALTH OF THE UK INDEPENDENT FILM SECTOR**

**LONDON - 11 July 2017.** The BFI is launching a **Commission on UK Independent Film** to look at the health of the UK independent film industry and make evidence based recommendations on what should be done to improve conditions for its long-term future, in particular for stronger growth at home and internationally. Establishing the Commission is a key priority for the industry as identified in the BFI's new five-year plan for UK film, **BFI2022**

The BFI Commission will be chaired by **Zygi Kamasa**, CEO Lionsgate UK and Europe, who will examine and report on the current environment for UK independent film inviting evidence and contributions from cross-industry specialists from the production, sales, distribution and exhibition sectors over the next four months. Its conclusions will be published in Autumn 2017.

A wave of bold and adventurous filmmakers has led to a fresh cultural vibrancy in British independent cinema, most visibly evident on the international stage at the world's leading film festivals and with the increased level of film production activity in the UK. However, the challenges facing independent UK film are more pronounced than ever. The Commission will work closely with industry partners including PACT, UKCA, the FDA and other stakeholders to explore how UK film might take advantage of creative and commercial opportunities in the changing landscape across film, TV and digital, and look at what else can be done to support the diversity and growth of the independent sector.

**Josh Berger, BFI CEO** says: *"Film in the UK is booming and the role of the BFI is to ensure that independent film – the incubator of creativity - flourishes in this environment. That's why we made a commitment to look at the health of independent film one of our first priorities in our 5 year plan BFI2022. We are delighted Zygi Kamasa will be leading the BFI UK Independent Film Commission as Chair and we look forward to hearing from a range of voices, drawing from their experience and expertise."*

**Zygi Kamasa**, CEO Lionsgate UK and Europe and Chair of the Independent Film Commission says: *"I am very happy to accept the BFI's invitation to Chair this Commission, and look forward to working with them and our new board who have the depth of knowledge and experience to identify and consider the most critical issues facing our sector now and in the future."*

The BFI publishes the latest research data and market intelligence on UK film here - <http://www.bfi.org.uk/education-research/film-industry-statistics-research>

The full list of Commission members will be published on [www.bfi.org.uk](http://www.bfi.org.uk) in July 2017.

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**About the BFI**

The BFI is the lead body 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 serving 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 National 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.

**Zygi Kamasa, Chief Executive Officer Lionsgate UK**

Zygi Kamasa is Chief Executive Officer of Lionsgate UK & Europe. During his tenure, he has built the company into a leading theatrical distributor, a premier independent film brand and a profitable and diversified force in the UK filmed entertainment marketplace.

Lionsgate UK's expanding distribution operations encompass such massive recent film successes as the global box office phenomenon *La La Land*, winner of six Academy Awards, the blockbuster *Hunger Games* franchise, the smash *Expendables* series, the *Saw* films, the highest-grossing long-running horror series of all time, and the *Olympus has fallen* action franchise.

The Company also has a long and distinguished track record of releasing major award winners in the UK such as the double Oscar-winning war drama *Hacksaw Ridge*, Summit Entertainment's Academy Award-winning Best Picture *The Hurt Locker* and George Clooney's multiple Oscar-nominated *Good Night, and Good Luck*.

A leading proponent of investment in British independent film and television, Mr. Kamasa has also shepherded the financing of over 30 British films, including notable UK successes as the critically-acclaimed *The Railway Man*, starring Colin Firth and Nicole Kidman, the multiple Oscar-nominated romantic drama *Brooklyn*, and the UK box office smashes *Bend It Like Beckham* and *Eddie the Eagle*.

Lionsgate UK is also ramping up its television business with recent partnerships with UK production companies Primal Media, Kindle Entertainment and Potboiler Television, a collaboration on the hit Channel 4 TV series *Damned*, as well as a first look deal with TV production company Bona Fide Films and the recent hiring of leading industry executive Steve November as creative director of its television operations.

Mr. Kamasa started his film career in 1993 as founder and Managing Director of television production company Scorpio Productions, which was based at Pinewood Studios. In 1998, he and Simon Franks established the independent film distributor, Redbus Film, which they sold to Lionsgate in October 2005, where it was renamed Lionsgate UK.