



Press release

Embargoed until 14.00 Tuesday 9th July, 2019

British Council / BFI announce LGBTQ+ short film commissions under banner #MOREFilms4Freedom

Three new short films from cross-cultural collaborations exploring LGBTQ+ stories will be commissioned by partners BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival, the British Council, and BFI NETWORK.

Applications are open for the pilot programme #MOREFilms4Freedom, which will facilitate urgent, creative collaborations reflecting LGBTQ+ intersectionality, global human rights, and diaspora identity.

It builds on the #FiveFilms4Freedom digital campaign, which originated in 2015 as a partnership between BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival and the British Council, and which has generated views from nearly 14 million people in 202 countries and principalities. In previous editions of the campaign, a gap was found in projects and stories originating in countries within the African continent and the Middle East. In response, #MOREFilms4Freedom will support stories that have at their heart an element of collaboration between UK-based LGBTQ+ identified filmmakers and filmmakers or storytellers from countries in those regions.

To secure a commission, filmmaking teams will need to demonstrate their collaborative international approach, and include an experienced, UK-based producer capable of delivering projects with an international component. In addition, the core members of the team will need to have realised two or more short films that have had industry recognition.

Three films will be selected and awarded a grant of up to £10,500 each, to cover all stages of production, delivery of materials, and team travel. In addition, each team will work with Executive Producer, Loran Dunn (former Screen Star of Tomorrow, BFI Vision awardee, and producer, *A Deal With The Universe*) whose support will be provided alongside their funding, to mentor both team and project from script through to edit.

The three selected films will be commissioned by September 2019 and are due for delivery in February 2020. They may be eligible to screen at next year's BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival in March, as well as to participate in the 2020 #FiveFilms4Freedom campaign, upon completion.

Briony Hanson, Director of Film, British Council said:

“Our #FiveFilms4Freedom campaign has been eye-opening in the way people from across the globe have embraced the films in their millions. The programme is deliberately international and designed to show that LGBTQ+ lives are universal wherever you are in the world, but throughout the programme's life we have searched to find stories from the Middle East and African continent to include, without success. This new commissioning pilot allows us to broker connections between talented UK-based filmmakers and filmmakers from those regions interested in exploring LGBTQ+ stories. We hope that we will both unearth some fascinating universal stories and kickstart some lasting cross-cultural creative relationships.”

Tricia Tuttle, Director of Festivals, BFI said:

“We're so excited to be building on the incredible successes of both #FiveFilms4Freedom and BFI NETWORK @ FLARE MENTORSHIPS in partnership with BAFTA, to offer this unique opportunity for the UK's LGBTQ+ filmmaking community to collaborate with international peers. We can't wait for audiences to see the results of these collaborations early next year.”

Deadline for applications is midnight BST Tuesday 6 August 2019.

Further details on the call for submissions can be found here: <https://www.bfi.org.uk/flare/morefilms4freedom>

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About #FiveFilms4Freedom

#FiveFilms4Freedom is the world's widest-reaching LGBTQ+ online film campaign. The campaign is run by the British Council in partnership with BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival, and has been running since 2015 www.britishcouncil.org/fivefilms4freedom

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We work with over 100 countries in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Each year we directly reach over 65 million people and more than 660

million people via broadcasts and publications. We make a positive contribution to the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government www.britishcouncil.org

About BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival

BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival is the UK's longest running LGBTQ+ film event. It began in 1986 as Gay's Own Pictures. By its 3rd edition it was tagged the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and since then has grown to become the largest LGBTQ+ film event in the UK, and its most anticipated. The Festival changed its name to BFI Flare in 2014 to reflect the increasing diversity of its films, filmmakers and audience. The festival is programmed by Jay Bernard, Michael Blyth, Zorian Clayton, Brian Robinson and Emma Smart, led by Festivals Director, Tricia Tuttle. The full programme of BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival includes feature films, an industry programme, selected films on BFI Player VOD service, a series of special events and archive screenings.

About BFI NETWORK:

BFI NETWORK is the BFI's UK-wide talent development programme, supporting new filmmakers to make short films, develop first features and advance in their careers.

About the BFI

The BFI is the UK's lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a cultural charity that:

- Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of World Cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online
- Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world
- Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers
- Works with Government and Industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally

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