



## BFI NETWORK@LFF

**17 filmmakers revealed for unique five day development programme at the BFI London Film Festival**

**With special guest speakers Ben Wheatley, Amy Jump, Madeleine Sami and Ana Scotney**



*(Left to right: first row: Ed Cripps, Alysia Maciejowska, Jess O'Kane, Alex Polunin  
second row: Helen Simmons, Benjamin Farry, Helen Gladders, Andrew Cumming, Adeyemi Michael  
third row: Louise Nesbitt, Laura Kirwan-Ashman, Akinola Davies, Dean Puckett, Luna Carmoon  
fourth row: Sarah Clift, Ella Jones, Billy Lumby*

**Tuesday 25 September 2018:** The BFI today announces the **17 writers, directors and producers** selected for **NETWORK@LFF**, BFI NETWORK's flagship professional development programme which takes place annually at the **BFI London Film Festival (LFF)**. Designed to support and inspire original new voices in film, NETWORK@LFF celebrates diversity in approach and perspective, and seeks out filmmakers looking to disrupt conventions.

Supported by the BFI with National Lottery funding, NETWORK@LFF is now in its fifth year and has built a strong track record with alumni successfully establishing careers, producing award-winning shorts, developing features and finding roles within television and beyond.

This year NETWORK welcomed applications from filmmakers who are taking creative risks, pushing boundaries of narrative and form, and forging new pathways for cinematic storytelling. The 17 participants, selected from **510 applications** (almost double the number received in 2017), have an impressive range of experience across film, television, theatre and artists' moving image. NETWORK@LFF will provide the next step in their burgeoning feature film careers with a programme that boasts masterclasses, screenings, networking and one-to-one sessions with visiting international filmmakers and executives who are screening work at the LFF, who this year include:

**Ben Wheatley**, the powerhouse British auteur responsible for *Kill List*, *Sightseers* and *Free Fire* joins us for a special filmmaker discussion with partner **Amy Jump**. His latest feature, *Happy New Year*, *Colin Burstead* plays in the festival this year.

Screenwriter and Editor **Jump** will be joining Wheatley to talk about her extraordinary work on films such as *High-Rise*, *A Field In England*, and the upcoming action thriller *Freak Shift*.

Writer, director and actress **Madeleine Sami** makes her LFF debut this year with New Zealand comedy *The Breaker Upperers* and will be stopping in to talk with participants about her experience on making her first feature. Sami co-stars in the film with **Ana Scotney**, who will also be in attendance.

Previous guests at NETWORK@LFF include *Call Me By Your Name* director **Luca Guadagnino**, legendary filmmaker **Julie Dash** and BAFTA-winning actor **Daniel Kaluuya**.

**Tricia Tuttle, Artistic Director of the BFI London Film Festival** said: *"We love working with NETWORK@LFF to throw open the riches of the LFF and access to the world's best filmmakers to a talented pool of emerging UK writers, directors and producers. Most great filmmakers are avowed cinephiles and festivals are both a playground and a continuing learning environment; they nurture film knowledge and passion and offer immediate connection between filmmakers, industry and audiences".*

**Lizzie Francke, Senior Executive, BFI Production & Development**, says, *"We're thrilled to welcome this exciting cohort of emerging producers, writers and directors to this year's NETWORK@LFF. Our focus for 2018 is on bold, innovative storytelling and genre filmmaking, and our 17 participants fit the bill perfectly. We can't wait to meet them and watch them progress over the course of the festival and beyond."*

**Prano Bailey Bond**, writer/director and participant of NETWORK@LFF 2017, says:

*"I've been lucky enough to participate in NETWORK@LFF, an amazing scheme that came at a perfect time for me in my career, and within the development of my debut feature. This programme gave me access to direct advice from incredible filmmakers. As well as established directors such as Luca Guadagnino, the scheme also had sessions with successful first time feature directors such as Cory Finley and Rungano Nyoni, who were more freshly off the back of their first long-form shoots. Hearing about their processes and experiences, and asking their advice, was invaluable to me as I approach my own first feature."*

*"NETWORK@LFF created an incredibly positive atmosphere between us as participants - we've all stayed in touch and continue to champion and support one another. Having a brilliant network of peers has been one of the best things to come out of the scheme, as well as getting to meet the BFI team and other execs. It really gave me a place to connect with other filmmakers and industry"*

people, and a space to be really open in discussing my own projects and hearing about the nuts and bolts of how some brilliant films have come to life. I can't rate these experiences any higher!"

**Amrou Al-Kadhi**, writer/director and participant of NETWORK@LFF 2016, says: "This scheme really helped me launch my career as a filmmaker - it got me in the room with commissioners, helped me find confidence, and network with a diverse range of voices. It's a pretty life changing time, not gonna lie!"

BFI NETWORK-funded short film **The Field**, directed by Sandhya Suri and supported by Film London via London Calling 2017, is in competition for the Short Film Award at this year's London Film Festival.

### **The full list of filmmakers taking part in NETWORK@LFF 2018:**

#### **Adeyemi Michael – Director**

Adeyemi is a Grierson and Al Jazeera New Horizon award-winning filmmaker and artist. An MA Directing graduate from the NFTS, his breakout film *Sodiq* premiered at Sheffield Doc/Fest and earned IDA and RTS awards nominations. His short film *Entitled* premiered on Channel 4's Random Acts this summer and plays in London Film Festival's This Is The Sound, This Is The Picture strand. Adeyemi recently directed a short film on the death of teenager Rhyhiem Barton for BBC's *Panorama*.

#### **Akinola Ogunmade-Davies – Writer/Director**

Akinola is a London-based film and video artist whose work is focused on themes of race, identity and gender that exist between West Africa and the UK. He has collaborated with musician Blood Orange for his recent music video *Charcoal Baby*, fashion brand Kenzo and the V&A Museum, and gravitates towards stories that bridge the gap between traditional and millennial communities.

#### **Alex Polunin – Producer**

Alex is a BAFTA Newcomer and SIDF Future producer from Newcastle, who has worked across projects in development and production with the BBC, ITV Studios, Film4, Working Title Films, NBCUniversal, All3Media and Discovery in both the UK and the US. Alex produced the recent BFI Network Pick Of The Month *British By The Grace Of God* and is currently developing a project selected by BBC Films, the BFI and Creative England as part of this year's iFeatures scheme.

#### **Alysia Maciejowska – Producer**

Alysia is a Glasgow-based producer. Her recent credits include the Scottish short *Bunny* and sci-fi *Perfect Worlds*. Alysia is currently growing a slate of shorts and features in development, and has recently teamed up with Camilla Bray (Rosetta / Sixteen Productions) to produce a feature adaptation of Jenni Fagan's *The Panopticon*.

#### **Andrew Cumming – Director**

Andrew is a Scottish filmmaker who studied at the National Film & Television School. His graduation film *Radiance* was nominated for Best Film at the BAFTA Scotland New Talent Awards, his psychological drama *Beneath* won Best Student Film at Courant 3D in France and his short dance film *KAI* has garnered over one million views online. Andrew recently directed three episodes of the

university-set thriller *Clique* for BBC3 and Balloon Entertainment. His debut feature film *The Origin* is currently in development with Film4.

### **Benjamin Farry – Writer**

New Zealand-born writer Benjamin has an extensive background in acting, developing a career in screenwriting along the way and eventually earning a masters at the NFTS, graduating in 2016. In 2017 he developed two short films; *Judith*, a thriller about a notorious serial killer, and dystopian sci-fi *Mayflower*. His first feature film, *Feline*, is currently in development.

### **Billy Lumby – Writer/Director**

Billy is a BAFTA-nominated writer/director from London. His debut short film *God View* has played in film festivals across the world, winning Best UK Short Film at East End Film Festival and the Grand Prize at Asiana International Short Film Festival. *Samual-613*, Billy's London-set short that delves deep into the capital's Hasidic community, received critical acclaim and was nominated for Best British Short Film at the 2016 BAFTAs. Making the move into feature length film, Billy is currently developing his first project with Noor Pictures and BBC Films.

### **Dean Puckett – Writer/Director**

Dean is an award-winning horror filmmaker based in Devon. After a decade of working in documentaries, Dean moved into fiction with the help of Creative England and the BFI, creating three short horror films that have gained worldwide recognition. Currently on the festival circuit, his folklore horror *The Sermon* first premiered at BFI Flare, while stright8 short *Satan's Bite* played at Cannes. Billy is currently developing his first feature *I Feel Blood* through Creative England's iFeatures initiative.

### **Edward Cripps – Writer**

Edward is a London-based writer by way of Yorkshire and Dorset. He is currently adapting Magda Szabó's novels *Iza's Ballad* and *Island Blue* for 198 Films, and he co-wrote the SEFF and London Calling-funded short *Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea*. Previously, Edward has worked on BAFTA-nominated short *The Party* and is currently developing a slate of original film, TV and short genre and drama projects.

### **Ella Jones – Director**

Ella's latest short film *Sarah Chong Is Going to Kill Herself* was made through Creative England's Funny Girls scheme and has screened at London Comedy Film Festival and LA Comedy Fest. Ella has recently completed a BBC Comedy taster with Edinburgh Fringe-winner Rose Matafeo, Lolly Adefope and Emma Sidi. Her first feature, a romantic comedy about polyamory, is in development with Film4.

### **Helen Simmons – Producer/Writer**

Helen has produced several award-winning short films and the BIFA-nominated comedy *Chubby Funny* starring Asim Chaudhry and Augustus Prew. Helen co-runs production company Erebus Pictures, through which she is developing projects with talent like Hope Dickson Leach, Danny Morgan, Josh O'Connor and Lauren Bensted. As a writer, Helen's debut short, *F\*ck*, starring Brett Goldstein, is being developed into a TV series, and she is currently working on a feature length biopic of Betty Friedan.

### **Helen Gladders – Producer**

Helen is a graduate of the NFTS MA Producing for Film & Television course. Since graduating, Helen has joined Dan Films, working with producers Julie Baines and Jonathan Taylor across their slate in development and production. She produced iShorts+ Funny Girls short *Rhonna and Donna* in her time there, and in October 2016 she moved to her own company Gingerbread Pictures. Helen is working with a range of exciting emerging female filmmakers and has projects in development with BFI, BBC Films, Moonriver Entertainment, Wild Mercury and Chernin Entertainment.

### **Jess O’Kane – Writer**

Jess O’Kane is a writer from Sussex and NFTS graduate. Her first film, *Faithful*, played at London Short Film Festival and Edinburgh International Film Festival, and she is developing her first series, *Sundown*, with RED Productions. Jess’s short comedy-horror *The Devil’s Harmony* about an A Capella club with violent tendencies stars Patsy Ferran and is being developed into a feature with Silver Salt Films.

### **Laura Kirwan-Ashman – Writer/Director**

Laura is a screenwriter, filmmaker, and co-founder of female film collective Sorta Kinda Maybe Yeah. Her directorial debut *Magic* won the Eye Want Change smartphone filmmaking competition and she has directed work for Dazed. As a writer, she was chosen for the Betty Box and Peter Rogers Comedy Writing Programme, and the BBC Comedy Writers Room. She is a Channel 4 Commissioning Mentee and is currently developing her first feature with the BFI.

### **Louise Nesbitt – Writer/Director**

Louise Nesbitt is a filmmaker and writer from Northern Ireland with a background in comedy. She recently graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and has recently completed a new short film can be seen on BBC Northern Ireland this winter.

### **Luna Carmoon – Writer/Director**

Luna is a London-based filmmaker whose short film *Nosebleed* will play at London Film Festival this year. A self-taught writer-director, Luna was one of six filmmakers selected to make a film as part of the ShortFLIX initiative searching for underrepresented talent run by Creative England in partnership with NYT and Sky Arts.

### **Sarah Clift – Writer/Director**

Sarah is a filmmaker hailing from Harrogate. She is currently developing two new short films; *Valerie Venus* and *Little Things*, and writing her first feature *In Dependence*. In 2016 Sarah wrote and directed her first short film *La Madre Buena (The Good Mother)*. The film screened at over 70 festivals and received over 38 wins and nominations, from the BIFAs and Gold Cannes Young Director Awards to a nomination for Best Screenplay at the New Filmmakers LA awards. The film received high-profile coverage from The New York Times, BBC World News, BuzzFeed and Huffington Post.

We are pleased to confirm that of the 17 participants involved, 53% are female, 24% are BAME filmmakers and 24<sup>th</sup> are based outside of London.

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.

For more information on NETWORK@LFF visit [network.bfi.org.uk](http://network.bfi.org.uk)

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### **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 CBE.

#### **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.

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