

NEXT BFI FILM ACADEMY FUTURE SKILLS TRAINEE PROGRAMME WITH LUCASFILM ANNOUNCED FOR 'STAR WARS EPISODE IX'

**Trainees on *Solo: A Star Wars Story* join cast members Phoebe Waller-Bridge
and Thandie Newton onstage at BFI Southbank tonight**

LONDON – Wednesday, 23 May 2018 EMBARGOED UNTIL 20:00 (GMT). At a special presentation of *Solo: A Star Wars Story* at BFI Southbank tonight the BFI and Lucasfilm announced the next round of the pioneering BFI Film Academy Future Skills programme. Designed to give opportunities for a career in film to under-represented young people from all over the UK, the programme will have places for 30 new young people, the majority who are graduates from the BFI Film Academy, to work as paid trainees in a variety of craft and technical roles on the next Star Wars film, *Episode IX*, in production at Pinewood from July 2018.

This follows a hugely successful pilot of the programme with Lucasfilm on *Solo: A Star Wars Story* in 2017, in UK cinemas from 24th May 2018, which placed 28 trainees in production roles ranging from Sound and Lighting to Art Department and Camera. Some of the trainees discussed their experiences on stage at tonight's event with cast members **Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Thandie Newton**, *Solo* Producer **Simon Emanuel** and **Ben Roberts**, Director BFI Film Fund and one of the architects of the programme alongside Lucasfilm.

The BFI Future Skills programme is an exemplar in industry-led training with a specific focus on giving young people from under-represented backgrounds the opportunity to work in film. In the first programme, 75% of the trainees were women, 45% came from BAME backgrounds, 68% were recruited from outside Greater London, and 36% received free school meals – a socio economic measure. Since completing Future Skills, many of the trainees have gone on to work on other productions including *Artemis Fowl*, *Wonder Woman 2*, *Blinded by the Light*, *Men in Black*, *Dr Doolittle*, *Mary Poppins*, *Pinocchio* and *Star Wars Episode IX*.

Margot James, Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries, said, "It is great to see the British Film Institute continuing to lead the way in creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce for our thriving film industry. Diversity is not only the right thing to do but it also makes good business sense."

Jason McGatlin, Lucasfilm SVP of Physical Production and Executive Producer *Solo: A Star Wars Story* said, *"This programme is so important in bringing more diversity behind the camera, which is vital if we are going to have films that represent the world we live in. The BFI Film Academy trainees took on their roles with great passion and commitment and it's wonderful to see so many of them moving on to future careers in the industry. It's been so successful that we are delighted to be working with the BFI on the next round of the programme with new trainees for Star Wars: Episode IX."*

Amanda Nevill, CEO BFI said, *"I have often said that talent is everywhere, but opportunity isn't. This brilliant and pioneering programme with Lucasfilm proves it's true. I thank them for having the foresight to give these incredibly talented young people a genuine opportunity to develop their skills and confidence and learn from the very best on one of the most iconic film franchises in the world. Film and television is booming but its success depends on bringing more skilled workers to the industry and, crucially, ensuring the workforce is truly diverse and inclusive."*

The programme offers progression, experience and networking opportunities for all the trainees that participate. A dedicated alumni officer is on hand to provide support and care throughout the programme with regular mentorship from respective Heads of Departments (HODs). Roles across physical production will include Production, Art Department, Camera, Costume, Hair & Make-up, Sound, Video DIT and Visual Effects (VFX). In addition to these, new roles will also be sought in the following departments: Grips, Script, Accounts and Special Effects (SFX). Upon completion of the programme, alumni officers, HODs and the BFI work with the individual participants to plan and support their next steps. The aim is that trainees will be recommended for other jobs.

At the end of the second round, almost 60 talented trainees will have completed the pilot BFI Film Academy Future Skills programme, providing us with a deep insight into the challenges and opportunities of recruiting and developing young people for a career in the film industry – a key point in the BFI's Future Film Skills strategy – and offering a proven model for entry-level trainee recruitment.

Future Skills Trainee Alumni – case studies

[Maria Moss, from Manchester](#)

Maria took part in the regional BFI Film Academy at HOME, Manchester, followed by the Craft Skills residential course at the National Film and Television School (NFTS). Maria was an Assistant Director (AD) trainee on *Solo: A Star Wars Story* and went on to work on *Pokemon* and has a confirmed AD position on *Wonder Woman 2*, shooting this summer.

Nathan Lloyd, from Birmingham

Nathan attended the BFI Film Academy at The Company (Birmingham). He was selected as a Camera trainee on *Solo: A Star Wars Story*. He has since gone on to work on the Sky TV Drama *Bulletproof* shooting in Liverpool and Gurinder Chadha's *Blinded by the Light*.

Jordan Feemster, from Colchester

Jordan attended the regional BFI Film Academy at Signals Film Essex followed by the Craft Skills residential at the NFTS. Jordan was a Sound trainee on *Solo: A Star Wars Story*. He has since worked as a Sound Assistant on Amazon Prime's hit show *Outlander* in Glasgow and is going on to work on the next *Men in Black* film on Sound 2nd unit.

The programme is part of the BFI's Future Film Skills strategy, an industry-wide plan launched in June 2017 to encourage people with transferable skills and young people, especially those from under-represented groups, to join a booming industry – film, high-end TV, animation, VR and interactive media – that is recognised the world over for its highly skilled workforce and state-of-the-art facilities. There are significant opportunities for the film workforce, including key areas such as Production Department, Art Department, Construction, Electrical, Camera, Costume, Hair and Make-Up, Post-Production, and Visual Effects, with an estimated **10,000 new entrants** to the industry needed and **30,000 job opportunities** over the next five years.

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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.

About the BFI Film Academy

The BFI Film Academy aims to help train and inspire the next generation of British filmmakers, supporting talented and committed young people aged 16-19 to develop the commercial and cultural knowledge and skills to help make a career in film a reality.

Since 2012, the BFI Film Academy has been offering training for every film industry role, from writing and directing through to production, sound design, editing and camera, and provides learning around film history and cinematic storytelling to inspire an appreciation of film culture in the round.

The BFI Film Academy is supported by the Department for Education in England, the National Lottery, Creative Scotland and Northern Ireland Screen.

www.bfi.org.uk/filmacademy | www.facebook.com/bfifilmacademy

About Future Film Skills

The Future Film Skills Programme was launched by the BFI and the Film Sector Task Force in June 2017 at the House of Commons and identified the need for 10,000 more people working in film, and to provide training for an estimated 30,000 jobs over the next five years. At the heart of the strategy is an industry-led commitment to ensure the workforce is representative and inclusive, with a proactive approach to ensure that opportunities exist for everyone.

Creative Skillset will deliver the majority of the UK-wide Future Film Skills Programme, with £19m of BFI funding through the National Lottery, which will work across the nations and regions to provide opportunities for people at all stages of their career, no matter where they live. Key elements will include an industry endorsed careers service, accredited training courses, fast-tracked apprenticeship standards, and working in partnership with existing education establishments and studios to develop industry-led specialist centres for technical and craft skills in key locations across the UK.

About BFI Diversity Standards

The BFI's five year plan **BFI2022** sets out a goal that all producers active in the UK are encouraged to voluntarily adopt the **BFI Diversity Standards** which focus on disability, gender, race, age and sexual orientation (as they pertain to the Equality Act 2010) and also seek to ensure that people from lower socio-economic groups are better represented. New Bullying and Harassment Guidelines, with a new Set of Eight Principles, were incorporated into the Diversity Standards in February 2018.

About *Solo: A Star Wars Story*

Board the Millennium Falcon and journey to a galaxy far, far away in “Solo: A *Star Wars* Story,” an all-new adventure with the most beloved scoundrel in the galaxy. Through a series of daring escapades deep within a dark and dangerous criminal underworld, Han Solo befriends his mighty future copilot Chewbacca and meets the notorious gambler Lando Calrissian, in a journey that will set the course of one of the *Star Wars* saga’s most unlikely heroes.

The film stars Alden Ehrenreich, Woody Harrelson, Emilia Clarke, Donald Glover, Thandie Newton, Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Joonas Suotamo, and Paul Bettany.

Ron Howard directs “Solo: A *Star Wars* Story,” and Kathleen Kennedy, Allison Shearmur and Simon Emanuel are the producers. Lawrence Kasdan, Jason McGatlin, Phil Lord and Christopher Miller serve as executive producers. Jonathan Kasdan & Lawrence Kasdan wrote the screenplay. “Solo: A *Star Wars* Story” opens in UK cinemas 24th May 2018.