

# THE SHORT FILM TOOLKIT

VERSION 1.0

(2022)

A collection of filmed conversations with filmmakers, short film funders and festival programmers



BAFTA



BRITISH  
COUNCIL

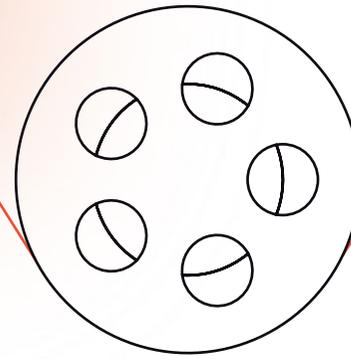


NETWORK



THE  
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LOTTERY

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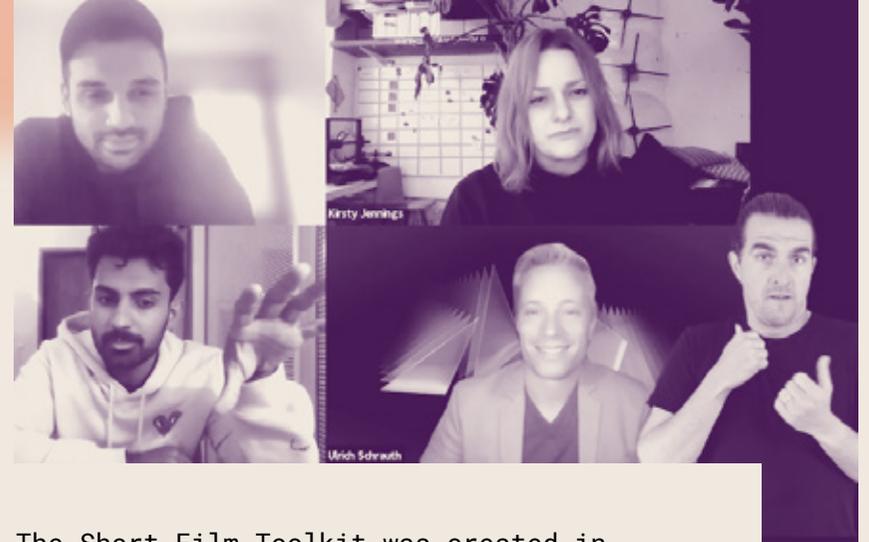
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# THE SHORT FILM TOOLKIT: Introduction

The Short Film Toolkit is a resource of filmed conversations featuring filmmakers, funders, festival programmers and distribution experts exploring short filmmaking in the round.

You will find open and honest conversations containing practical advice on everything from application writing, to the importance of striking marketing material. You'll learn that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to navigating the short film landscape, and that every filmmaker and project is different.

Nevertheless, throughout the sessions several themes recur. Regardless of genre or form, the filmmakers interviewed are clear-eyed about the challenges of getting work funded and seen but inspiring on the importance of persistence. There is universal consensus on the value of making work that is true to you, irrespective of budget or creative restraint. Cultivating your network is also vital: pick your creative collaborators carefully and invest in the relationships with your peer group. Most importantly, look after yourself and never give up!



The Short Film Toolkit was created in partnership by the British Council, BAFTA and BFI NETWORK using funds from The National Lottery. In this document you will find links to watch each of the 15 recorded conversations. Each video is closed captioned and has an accompanying BSL interpretation. To switch on the closed captions, click the CC button in the playbar of the video and select "English". This document also includes written summaries of each of the recorded conversations. In all cases we are extremely grateful for the time and candour of the contributors and the session hosts.

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The Short Film Toolkit is an ever-growing resource and we will be updating it regularly, adding more conversations. If you have some feedback, or you have an idea about something new we could include in future editions of the Toolkit, please let us know!



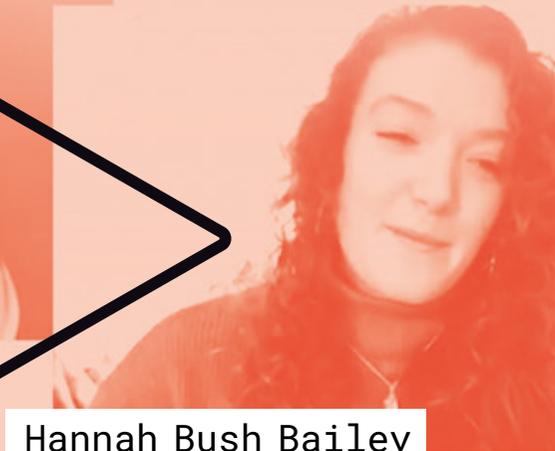
[films@britishcouncil.org](mailto:films@britishcouncil.org)

Image credit: Sparsh Ahuja, Erfan Saadati and Kirsty Jennings discuss VR and Immersive filmmaking with Ulrich Schrauth for the Short Film Toolkit. BSL interpretation by Terptree.

SHORT  
FILMMAKER  
INSIGHTS



Stroma Cairns



Hannah Bush Bailey

# Documentary

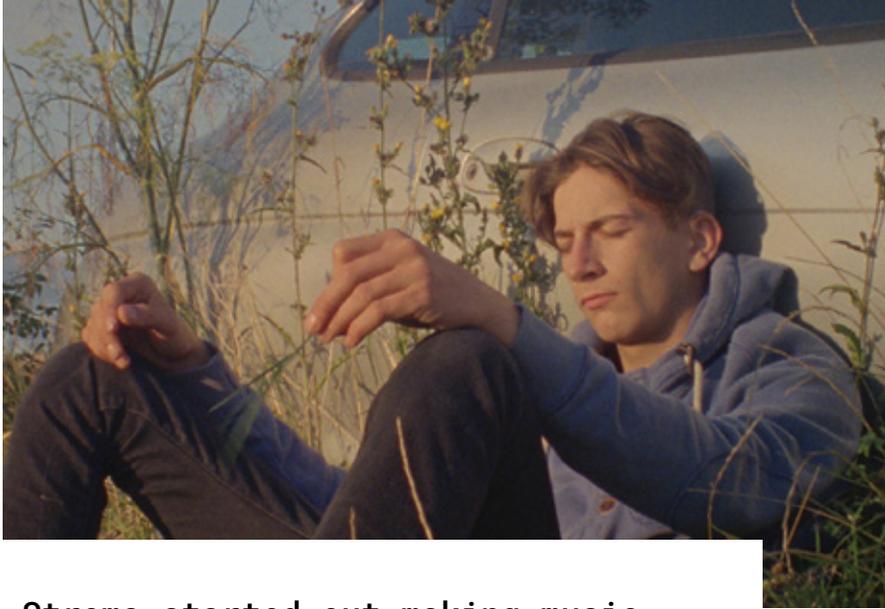
Doc Society's Hannah Bush Bailey talks to Afolabi Kuti and Stroma Cairns about their experiences making documentary shorts. They discuss the importance of passion, funding for docs and the lessons they've learned along the way.



Afolabi Kuti



Watch the full  
conversation here



Stroma started out making music videos before she directed her first documentary project, a five minute short called *If You Knew*. The film explores the fraternal bond between two brothers born with hearing loss and was partly inspired by her own partial deafness.

The impetus came from a funding opportunity Stroma spotted on Instagram. She saw the brothers on her street soon after and approached them right away.

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*If You Knew,*  
dir Stroma Cairns  
2019

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*A Youth,*  
dir  
Giorgio Bosisio,  
2020



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Afolabi started out as a director before moving into producing film, TV and branded content. His first documentary *A Youth* follows a young refugee in Athens who dreams of becoming a rapper. The projects Afolabi likes to get involved with can come from anywhere as long as he loves a director's previous work and believes in their enthusiasm for the story.

**'People need to connect to what you're saying'**

Both agree that fundraising is one of the toughest parts of making a documentary. Opportunities can be sporadic so when it comes to funding applications, conveying a passion for your subject matter is critical.

# Top tip

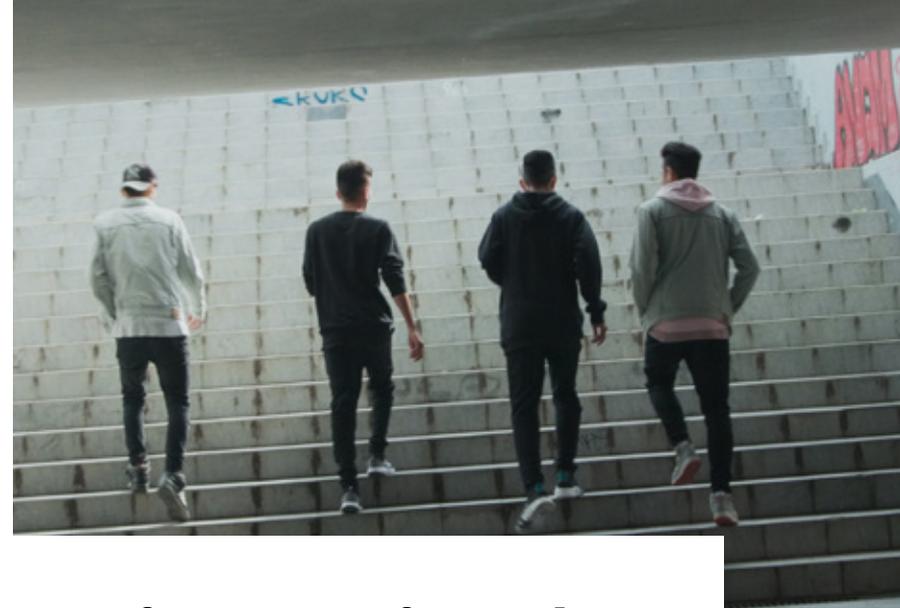
Writing pitches for docs can be particularly tricky because often it isn't clear where the story is going to lead. Afolabi encourages filmmakers to focus on why the proposed subject matter is rich with possibilities and to focus on how the journey, as much as the endpoint, will captivate an audience. As someone who funds documentary projects, Hannah cites the three questions she asks during the evaluation process:

Why do you want to make this film?

Why does this story need to be told now?

And finally, why are you the right person to tell this story?

*A Youth*,  
dir Giorgio Bosisio,  
produced by  
Afolabi Kuti,  
Giorgio Bosisio &  
Charlotte Carroll  
2020



Docs often require financial support from multiple sources. For *A Youth*, the team filmed some teaser material which was useful for giving potential investors a flavour of the story.

They secured funds from a private financier and also benefited from a grant from LUSH (a scheme which is sadly no longer running). Both filmmakers reference the invaluable support of post-houses like *Grain Media* and *Splice Post* who sometimes offer discounted rates for early-career makers.



## 'Plan...and then let go!'

Stroma has learned that docs often evolve during production and a project can completely change on the day of the shoot. With hindsight she wishes she had embraced that fact in a more relaxed way.



*If You Knew,*  
dir Stroma Cairns  
2019

Afolabi says he's learned to consider the importance of a film's runtime; shorts pushing 40 minutes may miss out on potential festival exposure and be harder to sell to broadcasters. On the latter, he thinks doc filmmakers should consider approaching broadcasters for funding support, either in the early stages of a project or during post-production when there is compelling material to show.

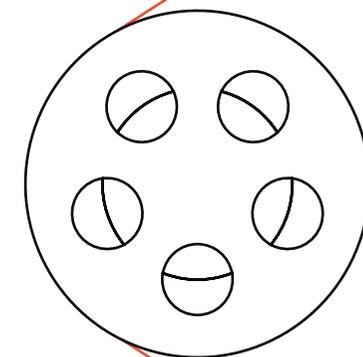


You can read more about Stroma's work on her website:

[stromacairns.co.uk](http://stromacairns.co.uk)

You can read more about Afolabi here:

[independenttalent.com/producers/afolabi-kuti/](http://independenttalent.com/producers/afolabi-kuti/)



 **docsociety**

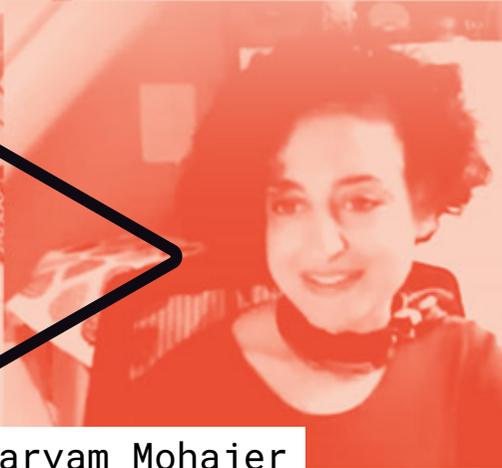
Doc Society is a non-profit founded in 2005 committed to enabling great documentary films and connecting them to audiences globally. You can read more about them here:

[docsociety.org/#whatwedo](http://docsociety.org/#whatwedo)

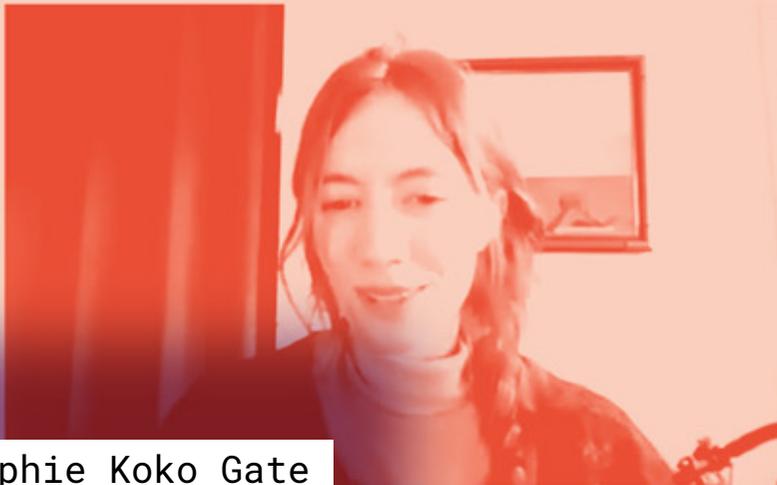
# SHORT FILMMAKER INSIGHTS



Helen Brunsdon



Maryam Mohajer



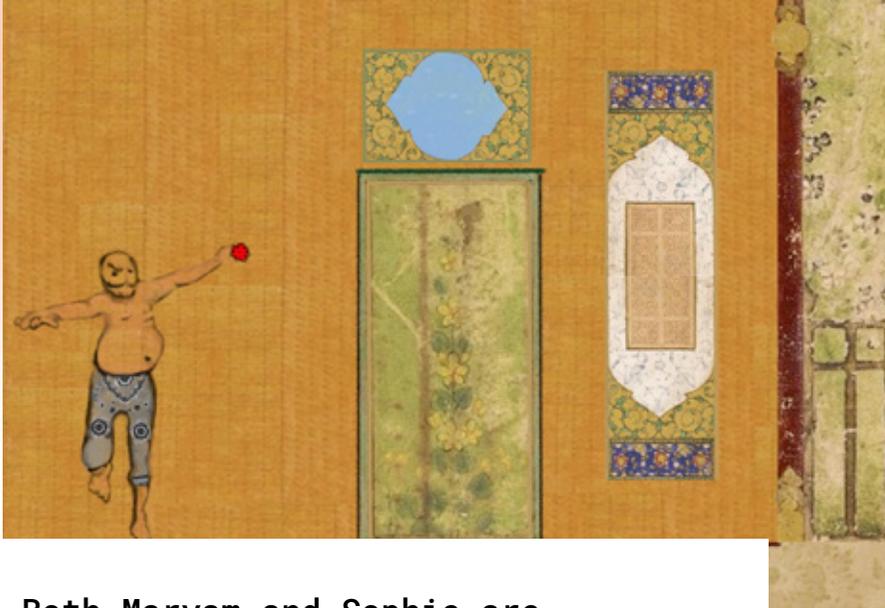
Sophie Koko Gate

## Animation

Helen Brunsdon, director of the British Animation Awards, talks to animators Maryam Mohajer (*Red Dress, No Straps; Grandad was a Romantic*) and Sophie Koko Gate (*Slug Life, Hotel Kalura*) about their evolving styles and the joys of being part of the animation community.



Watch the full  
conversation here



Both Maryam and Sophie are graduates of the Royal College of Art's respected Animation MA. Maryam's films are narrative based and she admits to becoming obsessed by the stories she wants to tell and how to realise them. She is observational in approach, often basing characters on combinations of real people she knows.

She is also a big fan of comedy, which infuses all her work to some degree, and is quick to restate the golden rule: timing is everything! Coming to animation from a background in painting, her work is characterised by a handmade, textured quality, even when using digital software.

*Grandad Was A Romantic*, dir Maryam Mohajer, 2019

*Half Wet*, dir Sophie Koko Gate, 2015



When Sophie started out, she aimed to bridge the space between experimental and commercial animation because they seemed like such completely different worlds.

She really values the close-knit community of indie animators but her ambition remains to 'Trojan Horse' into the mainstream. Both artists describe a need to 'mix up' their mediums and to keep innovating. For Sophie, different projects demand different aesthetic approaches - she describes how she has developed a 'survival style' for more commercial projects in contrast to the more painstaking method she applies to her personal work.

Securing funding for personal projects is a persistent challenge. *Red Dress, No Straps* and *Granddad was a Romantic* were self-funded but Maryam was able to make the films on a shoestring by pulling in reduced rates from kindly collaborators and working flat out for several months on each film.

Sophie welcomes the renewed commitment made to animated shorts by the BFI but has also found support for her work from the USA where she has had projects featured on platforms including Adult Swim and on FX's *Cake* showcase.

It was only when she started travelling internationally with her work that Sophie realised how integral festivals have been for her career progression. Without them she might not have met her agent, secured funding for future projects or pitched to the head of Cartoon Network. Maryam agrees and loves the unfiltered feedback you get on your work from a live audience. Both benefited from the **British Council Travel Grant Fund** which supported them to attend international festivals including SXSW and Tribeca Film Festival.



You can see samples of Sophie's work on her website:

[sophiekokogate.com](http://sophiekokogate.com)

Maryam's recent animations *Red Dress, No Straps* and *My Granddad was a Romantic* are freely available to watch via her Vimeo channel.

Watch

*Slug Life*,  
dir Sophie Koko Gate,  
2019



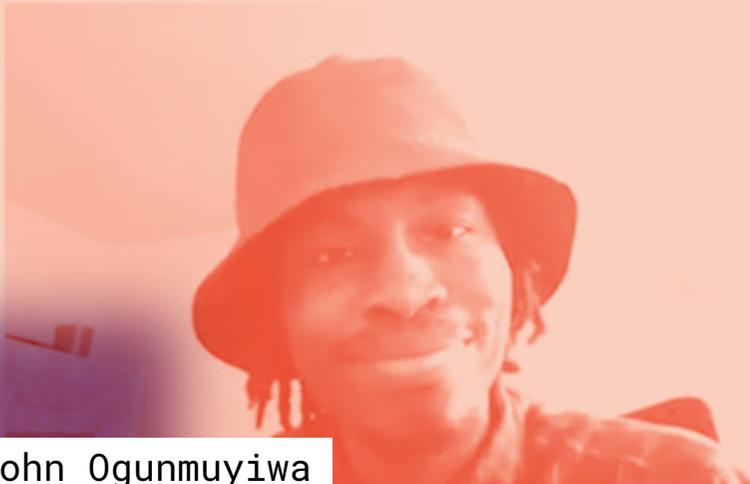
# SHORT FILMMAKER INSIGHTS



Mathieu Ajan



Olive Nwosu



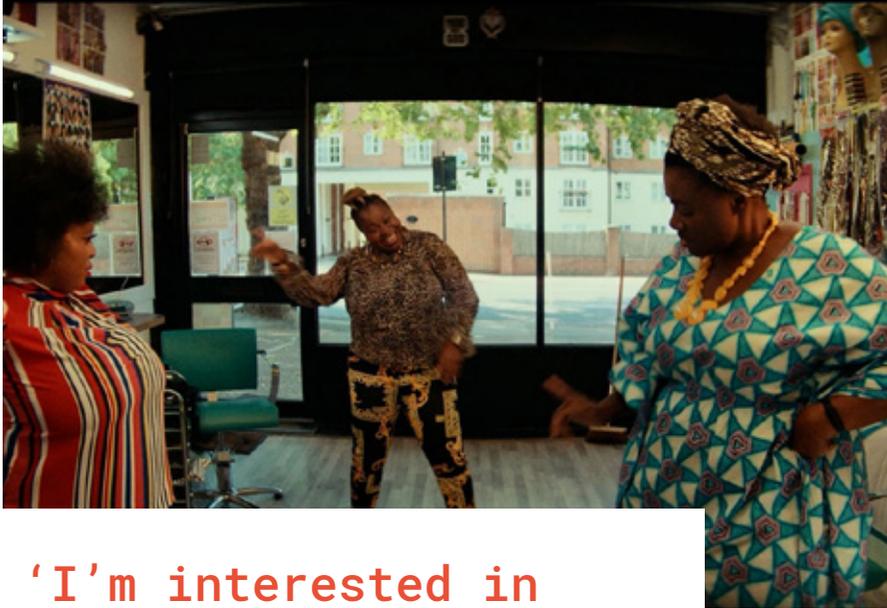
John Ogunmuyiwa

## Fiction

Founder of BOUNCE Cinema, Mathieu Ajan, talks to John Ogunmuyiwa (*Mandem, Precious Hair & Beauty*) and Olive Nwosu (*Troublemaker, Egúngún (Masquerade)*) about getting started in narrative fiction filmmaking, picking collaborators and inspiring others on set.



Watch the full  
conversation here



## 'I'm interested in the small moments'

Life changed for Olive when she enrolled on a documentary filmmaking module while studying in the US. She feels that the transition from docs to fiction is organic because finding the story and pinning down a narrative arc are common to both disciplines.

Olive is particularly interested in exploring the small but inherently dramatic moments in people's lives and says her MA in Psychology has helped her develop an understanding of character motivation. A combination of practice and watching a wide variety of short films to understand the possibilities of the form has also helped develop her creative voice.

*Precious Hair & Beauty,*  
dir John Ogunmuyiwa  
2021

*Egúngún,*  
dir Olive Nwosu,  
2021



John has a keen interest in photography and photojournalism and worked in advertising and music video production before crossing over into fiction filmmaking.

The arrival of the Canon 550D camera in 2010 enabled him to start recording and shooting footage alongside his photography work and his experience honing concepts into succinct pitches has stood him in good stead for developing short projects. He highlights the importance of reading screenplays to understand the craft, pointing to the [Internet Movie Script Database](#) as a key resource.

# Top tips

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'Come up with ideas and be ready to scale them down'

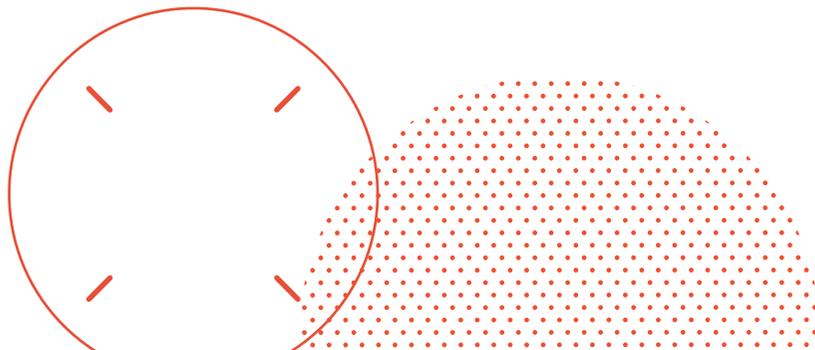
Both warn that early-career funding requires you to balance creative desire against budget reality. John's advice is to stay ambitious but recognise what's possible and work backwards from there.

For Olive, there's strength in knowing when you're ready to take on more creative risk. She recognises that there's no way her British Council/BFI NETWORK-supported short *Egúngún* (*Masquerade*) could have been her first commission.



*Egúngún*,  
dir Olive Nwosu,  
2021

For both filmmakers, building a network of collaborators requires developing a 'mental bank' of potential crew. There's no secret to it; watch films, look at credits, and do your research. Don't be afraid to approach crew that you feel may be outside your natural circle because ultimately they are film lovers too and your project may connect with them in a positive way.



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## 'If you're down, everyone's down'

Olive's mantra for production is 'prepare, prepare, prepare'. It is crucial to go into a production knowing what you want and committing to it because ultimately people are looking to you for a vision.



*Mandem,*  
dir John Ogunmuyiwa,  
2020

John believes the energy and attitude a director brings to the set can affect the entire crew. He references the complexity of the director's ego and the importance of striking a balance between collaboration and staying true to your creative objectives. He concedes this can be tricky when you're not the most experienced person on set but it's important to stand firm. In a final tip, Olive says newer filmmakers should not be afraid of experienced actors; it's ok to push them because they love acting and want to give their best.

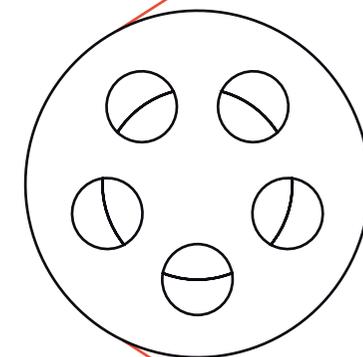


Olive's filmography is  
available on IMBD here:

[imdb.com/name/nm4572334](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm4572334)

John's website is  
available here:

[johnogun.com](http://johnogun.com)



## Bounce Cinema

BOUNCE is a pop up cinema showcasing the very best films and independent talent. Their website is here:

[bouncecinema.com](http://bouncecinema.com)

SHORT  
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INSIGHTS

# Experimental & Artists' Moving Image

Varun Raman, filmmaker and UK programmer at the London Short Film Festival, talks to director Maryam Tafakory and producer Dora Nedeczky about funding for artists' moving image projects, working in isolation, and supportive festivals.



Watch the full  
conversation here



Varun Raman



Maryam Tafakory



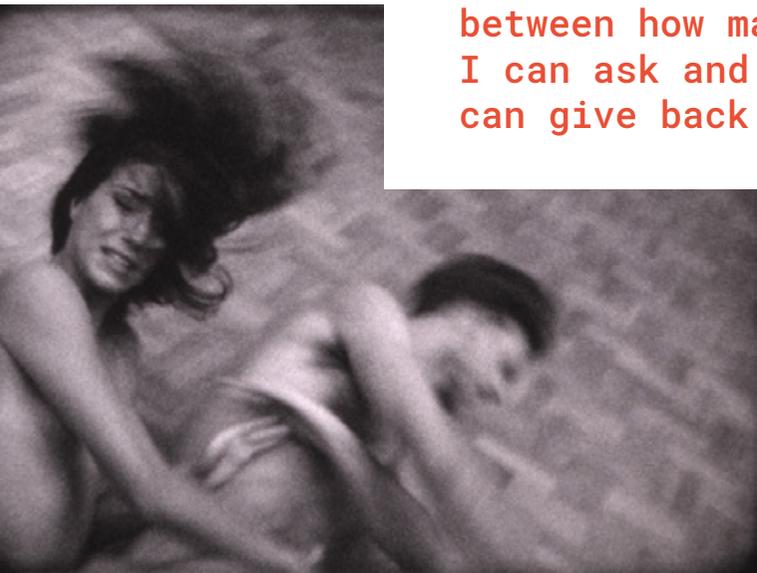
Dora Nedeczky

↓

Dora is a Hungarian producer who collaborates with a variety of international directors. Her career gained momentum in 2014 when she started making experimental music videos with Peter Strickland (*Berberian Sound Studio, In Fabric*).

They then began making short films together and their most recent projects - *GUØ4* and *Cold Meridian* - played widely at international film festivals before finding an online home with [Mubi](#).

'I try to keep a balance between how many favours I can ask and how many I can give back'



*Cold Meridian*,  
dir Peter Strickland,  
2020

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Getting artists' moving image work funded requires some hustle. Dora feels that pitches for experimental work are easily misunderstood and shouldn't have to compete with narrative projects for the same funds.

After several unsuccessful bids to traditional streams in Hungary, she turned towards more unconventional avenues. *Cold Meridian*, for example, was funded via a commission from the London Short Film Festival which she topped up through a tax rebate. Dora highlights events such as Film London's [Production Finance Market](#) (PFM) and [European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs](#) (EAVE) because they pair producers with funding representatives and kick-start relationships that may bear fruit in the future. She also mentions [Euro Connection](#) at Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival and the [European Short Pitch](#) as important events for brokering partnerships as well as providing project development opportunities. A piece of advice she would give to aspiring producers is that it is ok to abandon a project if things naturally lose momentum.

# Top tip

Maryam comes from a fine art background and has been making video essays and experimental films since 2014. Her works often resemble collage, interweaving poetry, documentary, archive and found material. She has screened at festivals including Ann Arbor, Rotterdam, True/False and MoMA Doc Fortnight.

## 'I need to be in love with the project'

Maryam tends to work in relative isolation and will have several projects in development at any one time. She has found that working iteratively and securing funding piecemeal at different stages of production has been a good way to maintain creative momentum.



She has secured commissions from the [Asian Film Archive](#) and [Film and Video Umbrella](#) and cites attendance at events hosted by festivals like [Oberhausen](#) or [BFI NETWORK](#) as a useful way of building networks and hearing about funding opportunities. She stresses that even if you're not a social animal, it's important to get out there and connect with others as it can really help your practice.

*I Have Sinned a Rapturous Sin,*  
dir Maryam  
Tafakory, 2019



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Dora has had particularly positive experiences screening artists' moving image at **Locarno**, **Jihlava**, **Odense** and **Lausanne**, all of which she says offer a respectful home for experimental work in front of a dedicated audience. Rotterdam (**IFFR**) and **Alchemy Film and Arts Festival** in Scotland are two of Mayram's favourites.



*Happiness is a Journey,*  
dir Patrick Bresnan,  
Ivete Lucas, 2021

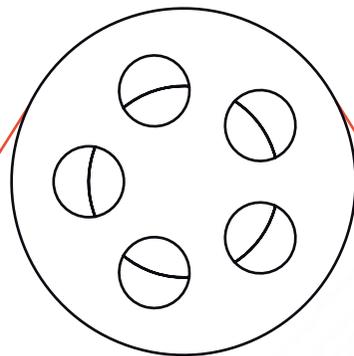


Maryam's website showcasing all of her projects is here:

[maryamtafakory.com](http://maryamtafakory.com)

You can see all of Dora's productions here:

[mindwax.eu](http://mindwax.eu)



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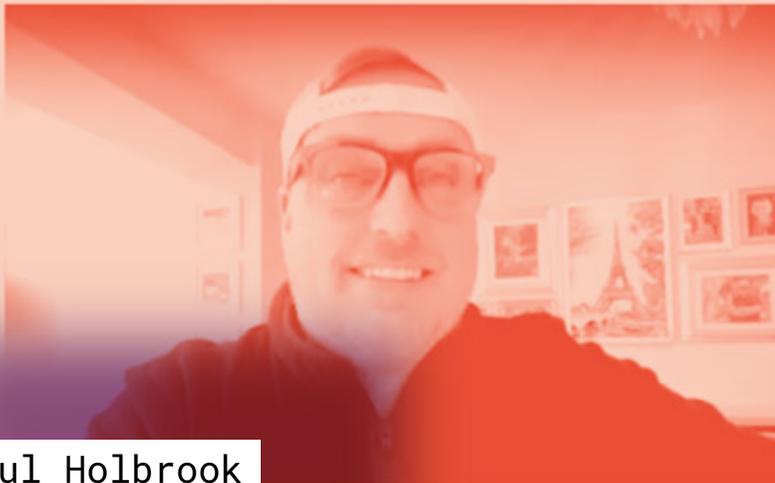


Leila Latif

Chloe Wicks

# Genre & Specialist

Writer, broadcaster and critic Leila Latif talks to Chloe Wicks and Paul Holbrook about the challenges and perks of creating genre-based work.



Paul Holbrook



Watch the full  
conversation here



Chloe works across TV and film, specialising in horror and thriller projects. She believes that making genre shorts is a great way to hone your filmmaking craft because it requires writers and directors to think carefully about audience expectations.

She advises filmmakers to embrace the restrictions that come with low-budget productions. For her short *Cubicle* she and the writer challenged themselves to make a scary film in under five minutes using only one location and a skeleton crew.

*Shiney*,  
dir Paul Holbrook,  
2021

*Hollow*,  
dir Paul Holbrook,  
2021



Paul has made almost 20 shorts as a writer and director but rarely sets out to work in a particular genre. Character and theme come first and the genre tends to reveal itself during the development process.

His short film *Cell* was a B-movie sci-fi and the story took shape in response to the old-fashioned police cell he had secured as a location. Again, the low-budget constraints informed the overall creative direction of the project.

**'We had all the gear and no idea'**

Paul is realistic about the fact that formal funding streams are heavily oversubscribed. His own filmography has been supported through a mixture of personal funds and crowdfunding.

He admits that in the early years he wasn't particularly wise when it came to budget allocation, spending money on flashy kit and extras that did little to elevate his projects. After making several low-budget shorts, Paul secured funding from BFI NETWORK for his film *Shiney* in 2019. He really appreciates the editorial guidance he received on the project but reminds filmmakers that securing funding from public bodies is not the be all and end all. Stamps of approval and awards are great but he warns against chasing them at the expense of your creative vision.



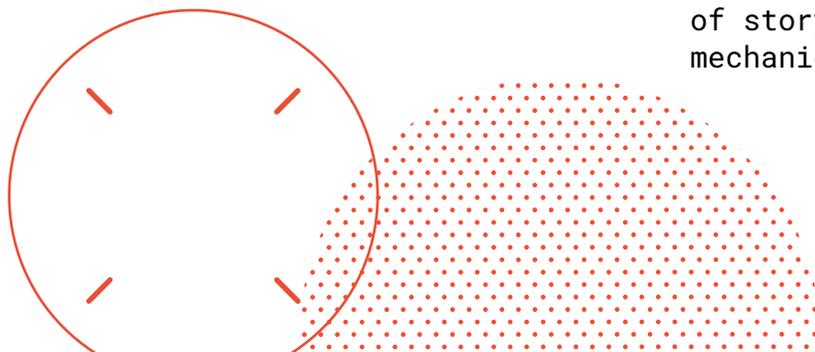
**'Even if you make a film for £100 it can still punch through'**

*Old Windows,*  
dir Paul Holbrook,  
2022

*Cubicle* was made for just £300. It performed well at festivals and helped Chloe secure funding for future projects. She believes that filmmakers who can prove themselves with genre shorts are an attractive prospect for commissioners. Relative to drama projects, which are often driven by the identity of the filmmaker, a good genre short helps demonstrate a solid understanding of story beats and narrative mechanics.



Putting her work up online has also generated significant viewing figures internationally in a short space of time. She puts this down to horror fans being especially loyal and hungry to see new work.



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Both filmmakers are enthusiastic about the current climate for genre filmmaking. In particular, they highlight smart indie crossover titles such as *St Maud*, *Midsommar* and *Hereditary* which have helped break down some of the historic snobbery around the horror genre.



*Cubicle*,  
dir Chloe Wicks,  
2019

Paul highlights the importance of 'depth', suggesting that some projects may ultimately fail to secure funding or connect with audiences if they are overly focused on superficialities like scare jumps and gore.



You can find Chloe's filmography here:

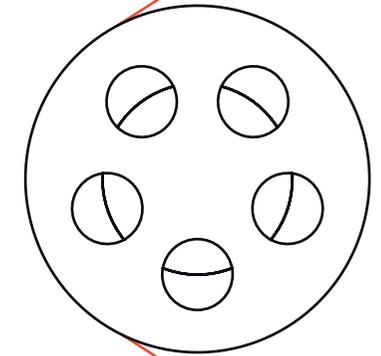
[imdb.com/name/nm4917462](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm4917462)

Read more about Paul's work here:

[paulholbrook.co.uk](http://paulholbrook.co.uk)

Leila's website is here:

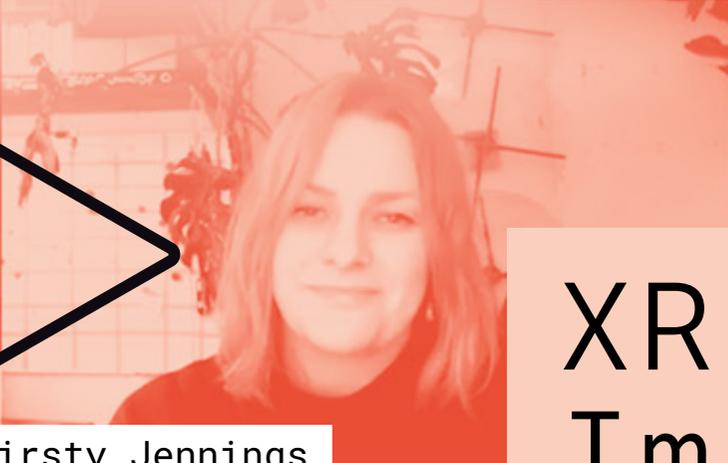
[leilalatif.com](http://leilalatif.com)



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Ulrich Schrauth



Kirsty Jennings



Sparsh Ahuja



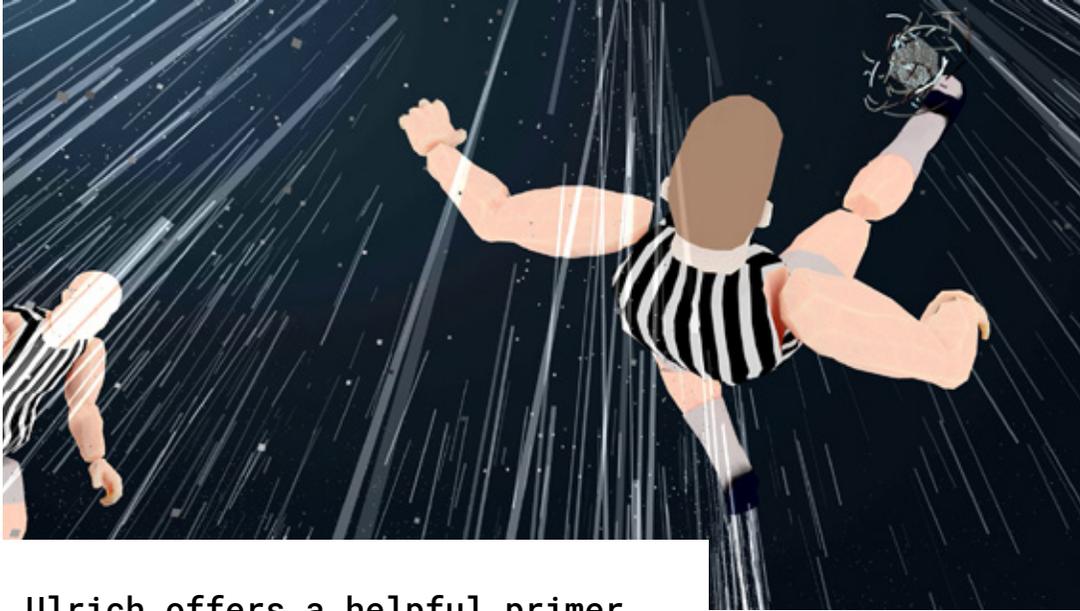
Erfan Saadati

# XR & Immersive

BFI London Film Festival Extended Realities curator Ulrich Schrauth talks to Kirsty Jennings, Sparsh Ahuja, and Erfan Saadati about their work in XR.



Watch the full  
conversation here



Ulrich offers a helpful primer on the different experiences that fall under the 'Extended Realities' (XR) umbrella.

In VR (Virtual Reality), users are immersed in a computer-generated or 360 degree filmed environment, usually via a headset.

AR (Augmented Reality) involves computer-generated imagery overlaid or combined with the real world environment (e.g. Pokemon Go).

Mixed Reality (MR) is where different realities are combined to create a more haptic and visual experience.

*Goliath*,  
created by Anagram  
(dir by Barry  
Gene Murphy & May  
Abdalla), 2020/21

Kirsty is a producer at VR studio **Anagram** which focuses on thought-provoking interactive storytelling.

Their award-winning 2021 project *Goliath: Playing with Reality* is voiced by Tilda Swinton and explores schizophrenia, gaming and human connection. For Anagram, story comes first and technology is used to enhance the audience experience. One of Kirsty's biggest tips as an XR creator is to manage the balance between ambition and risk carefully, especially if you are developing story-focused projects. She highlights VR's potential for creating empathy, as well as the possibilities for playing with the language of gaming, as key factors that can enhance the narrative experience. She also encourages people interested in working across XR to keep exploring different art forms, seeing how they might be incorporated into the immersive experience and translated into storytelling through technology.

Sparsh moved from a background in social sciences into 360 storytelling.

His first VR project, *Child of Empire*, was developed following a series of interviews with his grandfather who was seven years old when he migrated from what is now Pakistan to modern day India during Partition in 1947. For Sparsh, VR became an exciting way to enable his grandfather to return to his ancestral home without the need for physical travel. Visiting online networking spaces and finding out how others actually got projects made was a huge inspiration for his own work. When developing *Child of Empire* he posted a powerpoint pitch on a group called [Kaleidoscope](#), and found the generous community response crucially helpful to the project. In fact, he first connected with Erfan via a VR community page on Facebook ([VR and 360 Professionals](#)) before they went on to collaborate on the project.



**'Grab your tools and start telling stories'**

Erfan has worked in 360 videos since 2011. He started out working on branded content but has since moved into social impact documentary VR projects.

He currently works at [Happy Finish](#), focussing on AR. For Erfan, XR is all about experimentation. He advises new entrants not to overthink things or be afraid to fail. For filmmakers hoping to branch into the immersive space, he suggests unlearning much of what you learned at film school.

*Child of Empire*, lead artists: Sparsh Ahuja, Erfan Saadati, Omi Zola Gupta, Stephen Stephenson, 2021

He emphasises that VR isn't simply an evolution of filmmaking, it's an entirely new medium that mixes film with theatre and gaming. Filmmakers need to start thinking space-wise instead of shot-wise because every scene is a world. While 360 filmmaking is broadly similar to traditional production (with the addition of a 'stitcher'), CGI projects tend to involve small teams with multi-disciplinary crew members. Facebook groups are currently the best place to find potential collaborators with these emerging skill sets.

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Funding opportunities for XR projects are varied and growing. Kirsty mentions the BFI & British Council, along with [StoryFutures](#), [Digital Catapult](#) and a few key film festivals as a good place to start. Looking at the funding partners involved in other projects can also provide helpful information. Erfan adds [Unity](#) and [Unreal](#) to the mix as companies that offer XR grants. Broadly speaking, distribution models for XR projects are yet to mature, so key festivals such as Sundance, SXSW, Venice, Tribeca, London Film Festival and Sheffield Doc/Fest still represent the best environments to showcase new work.



Read more about [Anagram](#) projects here:

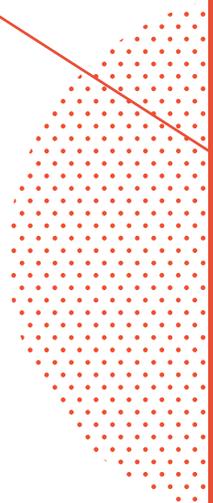
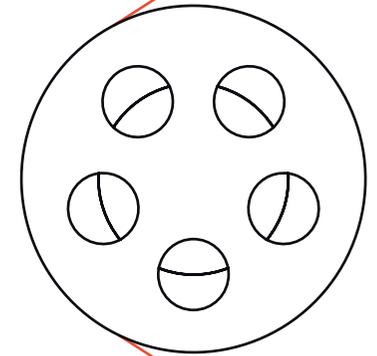
[weareanagram.co.uk/about](http://weareanagram.co.uk/about)

Read more about [Child of Empire](#) and [Sparsh's](#) projects here:

[projectdastaan.org/  
child-of-empire](http://projectdastaan.org/child-of-empire)

Read more about [Erfan's work](#) and [Happy Finish](#) here:

[happyfinish.com](http://happyfinish.com)



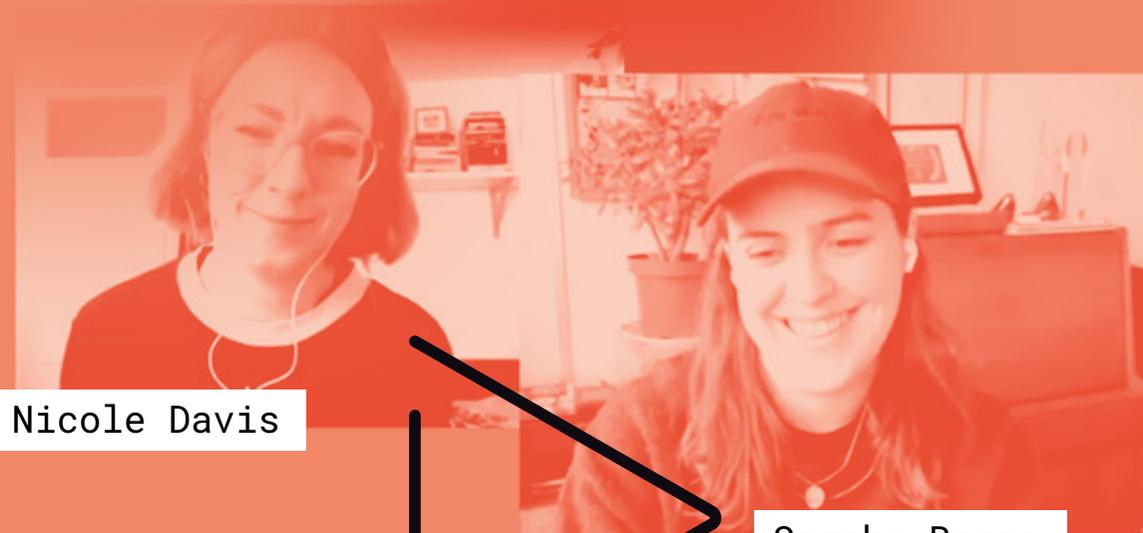
# Building a Film Festival Strategy

Writer, podcaster and BFI NETWORK talent exec Nicole Davis talks to seasoned short film producers Sorcha Bacon (*Wren Boys; Good thanks, you?*) and Katie Sinclair (*Signs, The Last Days*) about festival strategies, being selective and the value of live-audience screenings.



Watch the full  
conversation here

THE  
SHORT FILM  
INDUSTRY



Nicole Davis

Sorcha Bacon



Katie Sinclair



When should a producer start thinking about festivals? For Katie, the process begins at an early stage but identifying 'goal' events to screen at will depend on where the film is in its production cycle relative to the festival calendar and submission deadlines.

For both producers, factoring the cost of submissions into an overall project budget is crucial. As a rule of thumb, Sorcha sets aside between £300-500 and if that money ends up being absorbed by the production itself then she may allocate tax-cut funding to cover fees after the film is completed.

*Wren Boys,*  
dir Harry Lighton,  
produced by  
Sorcha Bacon,  
2018



## Top tip

### 'Think about a festival's core audience'

Producers can limit submission costs by being targeted and selective. Simply submitting to all the A-list festivals is likely to be a waste of time and money so Sorcha advises being realistic with your expectations - you may want to get into Cannes or Sundance but there are thousands of other filmmakers who want the same thing. She adds that the genre of your film, and the audiences you think will appreciate it most, are key factors. If you're making a film with queer subject matter, for example, it is prudent to keep the **BFI FLARE** dates in mind. This chimes with Katie's experience: she had considerable success targeting genre-focused events like **Fantastic Fest** with her 2021 sci-fi-infused short *The Last Days*. The film won the Best Short award there and subsequently received lots of invitations from similar festivals.



Filmmakers have a window of about two years in which to establish a festival run. If you're not getting any traction after a year or so then it may be time to target a different tier of festivals or consider other screening opportunities.

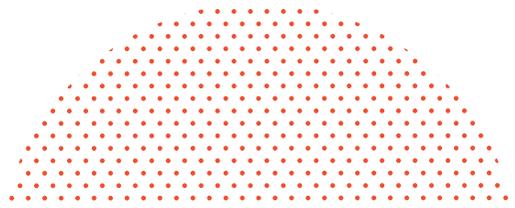
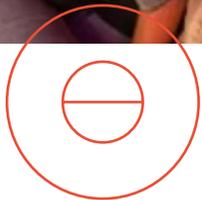


Sorcha believes that some shorts are just better suited to the online environment and that accolades such as a Vimeo 'Staff Pick' can be extremely valuable in terms of audience exposure. Katie says it's often hard to know why a short connects with some festivals and not others. She mentions a film's runtime as something to be conscious of. If a short is clocking in at over 20 minutes then festival selectors will have to make room for that in a programme, possibly at the expense of shorter films. Nevertheless, she doesn't propose 'tailoring' a film just to try to meet the perceived needs of festivals and underlines that a project should be the length it needs to be to do justice to the story.

**'You deserve to be there!  
So get on that plane or  
train if you're invited'**

Katie and Sorcha agree that connecting with audiences in person is special and it's amazing to see a film resonate in unexpected ways at physical screenings. Networking is also a really important element of film festival attendance. You have the opportunity to meet with other filmmakers, producers, financiers and programmers. Remember, they're all there because of the short films in the programme, including yours, so don't be afraid to talk to them!

*Signs,*  
dir Yero Timi-Biu,  
produced by  
Katie Sinclair  
2019



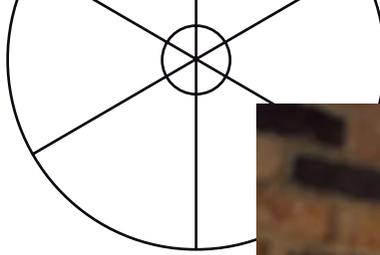
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Information about the British Council's Festival Travel Grants can be found here:

[film.britishcouncil.org/  
opportunities/short-film  
-travel-grant](https://film.britishcouncil.org/opportunities/short-film-travel-grant)

BAFTA's list of qualifying short film festivals is available [here](#).

Oscar qualifying short film festivals are listed [here](#).



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*The Last Days*,  
dir Dipo Baruwa-Etti,  
produced by  
Katie Sinclair  
2021



You can read more about Sorcha's work at:

[sorchabacon.co.uk](https://sorchabacon.co.uk)

Katie's website is:

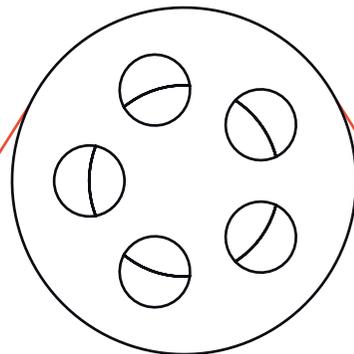
[tannahillproductions.com](https://tannahillproductions.com)

Find out about Nicole's work as a BFI NETWORK Talent Executive for Film Hub South East at:

[network.bfi.org.uk/  
film-hub-south-east](https://network.bfi.org.uk/film-hub-south-east)

Nicole also produces an excellent podcast called Best Girl Grip about women working behind the scenes in the film industry. Have a listen at:

[bestgirlgrip.podbean.com](https://bestgirlgrip.podbean.com)



# Beyond the Festival Circuit

Short film curators Nellie Alston (*TAPE*), Rob Munday (*Short of the Week*) and Ed Sayers (*Straight 8*) discuss the ways short filmmakers can find audiences and build communities around their films beyond the traditional festival circuit.



Watch the full conversation here

THE  
SHORT FILM  
INDUSTRY



Nellie Alston

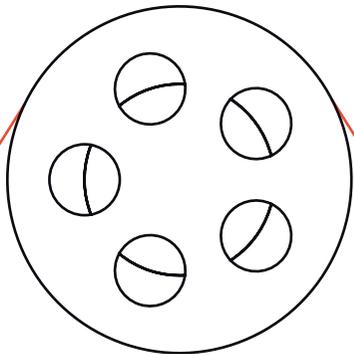
Rob Munday



Ed Sayers



*But Where Are  
You Really From,  
TAPE Collective  
Season artwork*



Ed launched Straight 8 in 1999 with a unique challenge for filmmakers that is still going strong: can you make a film on a single roll of super 8 celluloid film?

The tricky part is that you have to shoot on one cartridge without any opportunity to edit later on - no retakes or reordering. The selection team watches over 200 entries each year and Ed is looking for films that make an impact. Most of the entries are around 3 minutes long and for Ed the standout shorts demonstrate an understanding of narrative technique. Every year the Straight 8 jury selects the best entrants to screen at Cannes Film Festival, in cinemas, where the finalists watch their finished films for the first time!



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TAPE was founded by Nellie, Angela Moneke and Isra Al Kassi in 2016. They met as participants on the **Barbican Young Programmers** initiative and bonded over a mutual ambition to share stories from underrepresented groups.

Nellie looks out for shorts that are memorable and distinct. The collective programmes thematically and will often post open calls for work that connects to a specific programme idea. They regularly attend festivals and also view films sent to them directly. TAPE's core audience is broadly reflective of the team - film lovers of mixed heritage aged 20-35 - but there is lots of crossover with local communities when they tour across the UK, and with other artforms which they engage in their programming.

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**Short of the Week was founded in 2007 with the aim of showcasing one short film per week online to support new filmmakers.**

The platform now profiles five per week and has evolved into a rolling festival that filmmakers, industry talent scouts and general audiences can visit for news and creative inspiration. Rob and the team are always on the lookout for something new, whether that's an original story or an innovative filmmaking technique. He is committed to the idea that short filmmaking is where the next wave of feature filmmakers get their start and gets excited by shorts that have taken advantage of the creative freedom of the medium. Originality is important but he also expects to be moved in some way. The platform sources approximately half of their shorts via an open (but paid) submission system.

Filmmakers can expect to hear back within seven days and can request feedback if unsuccessful. The only criteria for Short of the Week is that submissions should be under 40 minutes in length and free to watch online.



**For more information about  
TAPE Collective visit:**

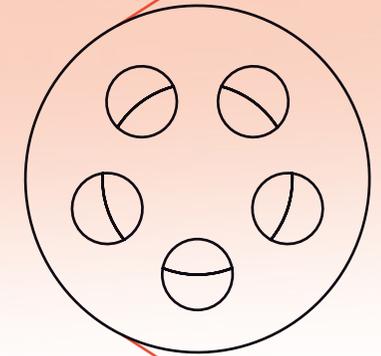
**[tapecollective.co.uk](http://tapecollective.co.uk)**

**For more information  
about Short of the  
Week visit:**

**[shortoftheweek.com](http://shortoftheweek.com)**

**For more information  
about Straight 8 visit:**

**[straight8.net](http://straight8.net)**



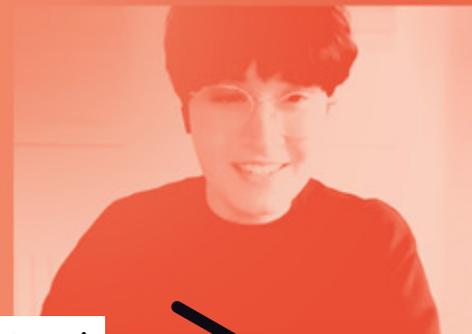
# Festival Programmers in Discussion

British Council's new talent lead Jo Duncombe discusses the realities of short film programming with Ren Scateni (Head of Programme, Encounters Film Festival), Qila Gill (International Programming Lead, London Short Film Festival), Maike Mia Höhne (Artistic director, Kurzfilm Festival Hamburg) and Katie Metcalf (UK Shorts Programmer, Sundance).



Watch the full conversation here

THE  
SHORT FILM  
INDUSTRY



Jo Duncombe

Ren  
Scateni



Katie Metcalf

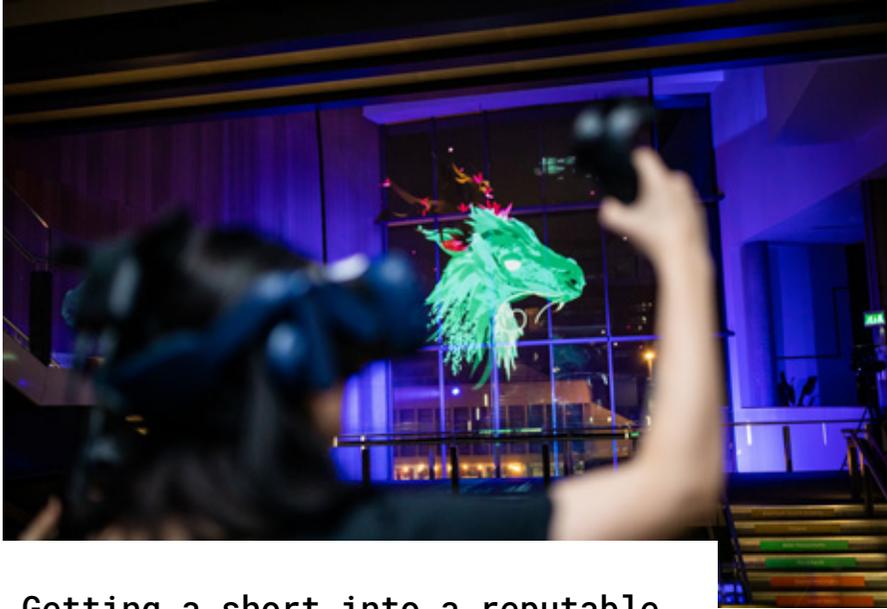


Maike  
Mia Höhne



Qila Gill





Getting a short into a reputable festival is a competitive business. Sundance received 10,374 submissions in 2021, while the other three events received around 4000 each.

Needless to say, there is only enough space to programme a small proportion of entries and filmmakers should remember that selections are made against numerous criteria that push far beyond 'good' and 'bad'. These might include a particular thematic emphasis or how a short contributes to the overall ambition of a particular programme.

**FilmFreeway** is a good starting point for delving into the specifics of each event including premier rules, submission stats, competitive strands and whether screening there could qualify you for a major award.

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*Encounters Film Festival,  
Images ©Black and Whiteley*



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**'There has to be a voice coming through in the film'**

Festivals have distinct personalities and decision making structures. At the London Short Film Festival (LSFF), for example, a punk spirit is central to the festival's ethos.

The LSFF programming team works with pre-selectors to arrive at a shortlist and, in making final selections, Qila wants to understand clearly why a filmmaker has chosen the short form to tell their story. The same is true at Hamburg where the selection team is concerned with filmmakers who are intrinsically interested in the possibilities of the medium. This is the principal focus of their week-long programming discussions.



*Encounters Film Festival, Images ©Black and Whiteley*



Read more about the festivals represented in this discussion here:

**Encounters Film Festival:**

[encounters.film](https://encounters.film)

**London Short Film Festival:**

[shortfilms.org.uk](https://shortfilms.org.uk)

**Sundance Film Festival:**

[sundance.org](https://sundance.org)

**Hamburg Short Film Festival:**

[festival.shortfilm.com/en](https://festival.shortfilm.com/en)

## 'Your film should always work on its own terms'

At Sundance, the emphasis is on bold, independent voices and submissions are divided between ten programmers who nominate films for the whole team to consider. Katie wants to be surprised by a film, values authenticity and feels that creative choices should make sense, even when they are unconventional. For Ren, a great short hooks them in from the very beginning and even the most abstract works should say something complete, regardless of runtime.

If you're attending a festival where you've been selected to screen, the panel has some useful tips. Firstly, enjoy yourself. Secondly, make the time to watch some films because ultimately that's what everyone is discussing at networking events. Thirdly, programmers and festival staff are there to support you so don't be afraid to approach them if you're feeling a bit daunted. Finally, think about what you want to get out of a festival career-wise. At Sundance, the team helps to broker meetings between new talent and industry professionals but often Katy finds that filmmakers haven't really thought about who they might want to meet and why. This is applicable to most festivals, nearly all of which have an industry programme to take advantage of.



FUNDING  
SHORT  
FILMS



# Funding Your Work: The Filmmakers

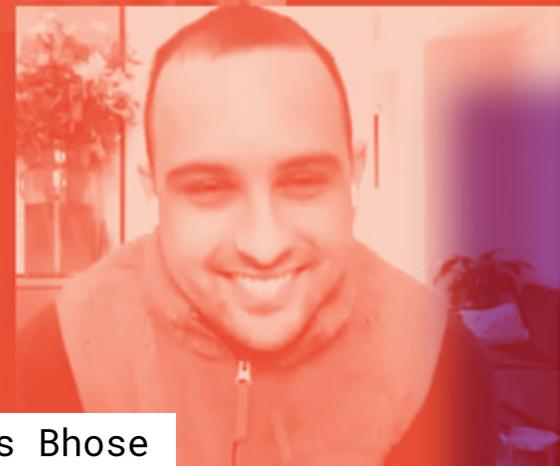
Producer Loran Dunn (*A Deal with the Universe, Shagbands*) and director Louis Bhose (*Calving*) discuss the value of short filmmaking and how to navigate relationships with different funders.



Watch the full  
conversation here



Loran Dunn



Louis Bhose



**'The more money you take [from funders], the more say they want to have'**

Loran has produced over twenty short films, ranging from microbudget to fully financed projects.

Her first production to receive formal support was *The Pig Child* which was awarded £5000 from Creative England (now Creative UK). The commissioning process was relatively light-touch and Loran was able to draw on a strong network of collaborators she had developed as a freelancer to get the most out of the modest budget.

*Shagbands*,  
dir Luna Carmoon,  
2020

She highlights the contrast with *Shagbands*, a £50,000 short supported by BFI and Film4 that involved development sessions, executive sign-off on casting choices and notes on edits. She welcomes this level of involvement from funders because it helps to build longer term relationships but underlines that the process requires considered management from the producer.



## Top tip

**'People want to know what it is'**

Loran challenges filmmakers to ask themselves three important questions when they are pulling together funding applications:

**What is it?**

**Can you make it?**

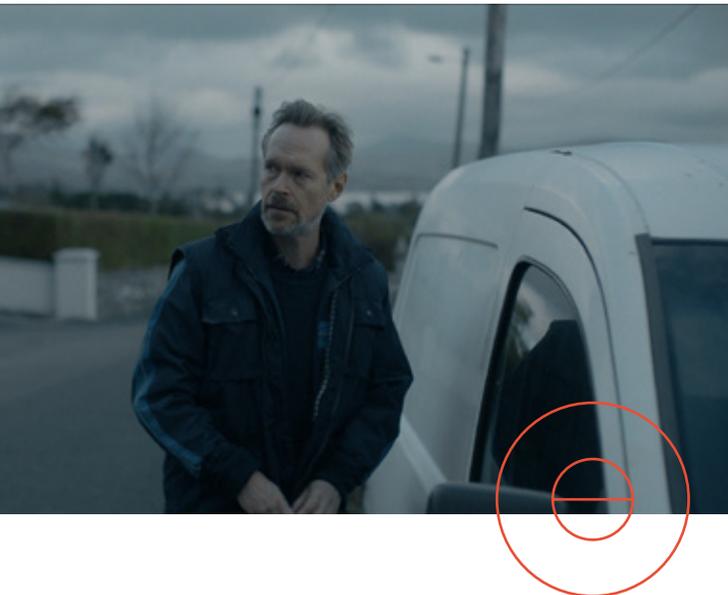
**And Can they afford it?**

When she applies to funders she aims to submit the most polished script possible, as well as materials that help decision-makers understand the visual sensibility of a project. As a less established producer, she used to submit a production pack that tackled any potentially tricky logistical issues head-on in order to calm the nerves of commissioners she hadn't worked with before.

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Loran has noticed that publicly-funded filmmakers feel a pressure to deliver really polished films. As a result she often sees finished shorts that are flawless in their execution but lacking something special.

She feels personally that stories told with heart trump polished visuals and that filmmakers should remember that funders are investing in filmmakers' careers as much as any given project.



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*Calving,*  
dir Louis Bhoose,  
2021



'If you get a no, that doesn't mean that you're terrible, it just means there's lots of competition'



Emerging directors and writers shouldn't feel they need to work with an established producer. In fact, collaborating with a producer at a similar career stage may be more valuable as you are coming up at the same time and they will likely have more time to dedicate to projects. The amount of in-kind support you can rely on to get a project made will depend on the stage you are at in your career - as projects move from the DIY realm into more formal commissioning territory, so do professional obligations to cast and crew. Nevertheless, she encourages filmmakers to always ask larger equipment houses for support. They want to help new talent and are happy to hire out kit for a reduced rate that might otherwise be sitting around over a weekend or bank holiday.

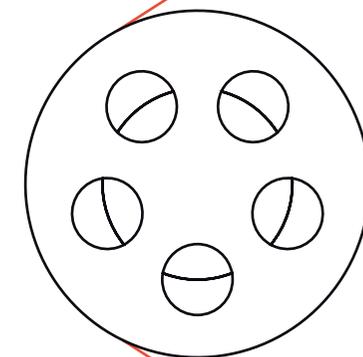
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## 'It was eye-opening in a way I never thought possible'

For Louis, collaborating on short films and music videos was his film school. Working with people who were making things all the time with small budgets and tight deadlines was an excellent way to learn the craft. He developed a good relationship with Agile Films through his music video work and they agreed to part-funded his short film *Calving*.

Louis highlights that production companies working in the advertising and music video space all have a wider interest in film and often support emerging talent. Like the public funders, they are interested in career evolution and understand that short films are not a commercial prospect. Nevertheless, pitches should be tight.

Louis will pull together a pack that includes a treatment, a script, logline, synopsis, notes on themes, and visual references or images found on platforms like [Shotdeck](#) or [Filmgrab](#). Like Loran, he underlines the importance of communicating clearly about what your project is. He also feels it's essential to get a producer on board to help with applications, finding one through platforms like [Shooting People](#) or local talent connect sites if necessary.



Find out more information about Loran's work at:

[Delaval Films](#)

For more information about Louis' work at:

[louisbhose.com](#)

FUNDING  
SHORT  
FILMS

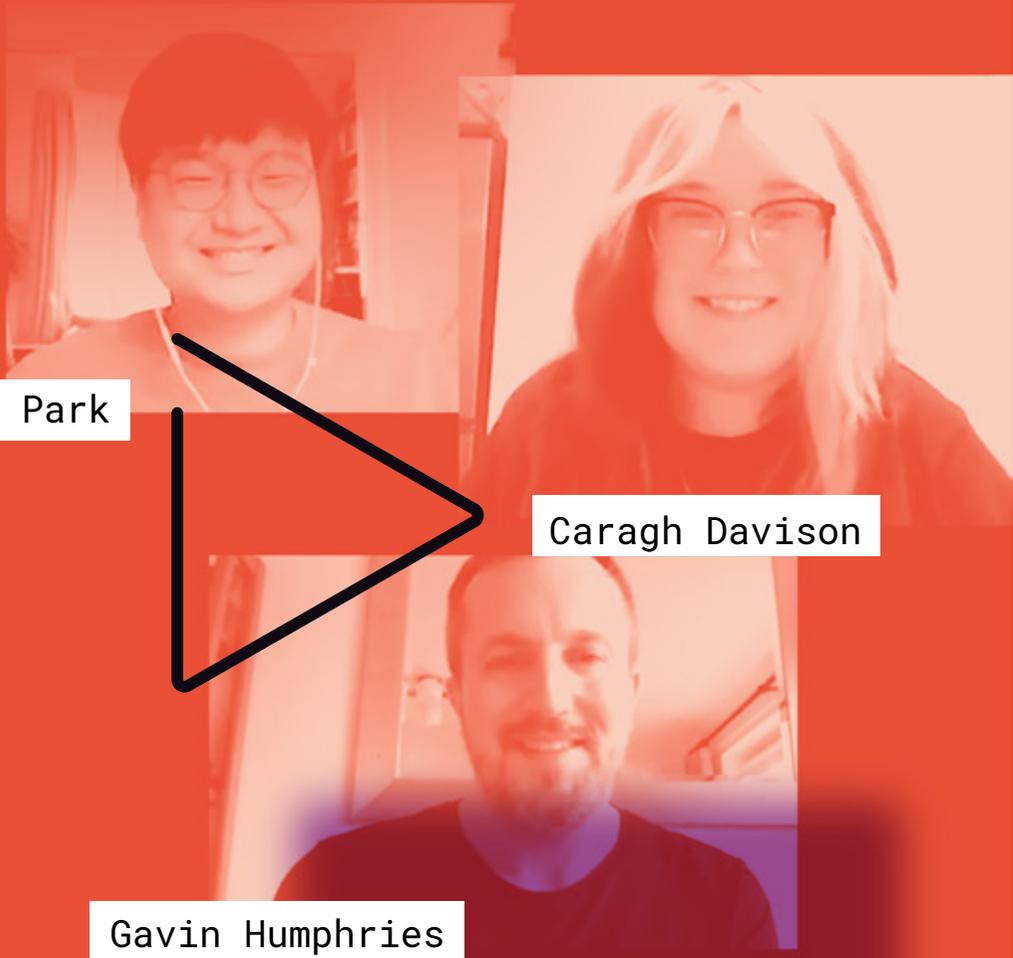


# Funding Your Work: The Funders

Max Park (Development and Production Executive, Film4), Caragh Davison (Talent Programme Manager, BFI NETWORK) and Gavin Humphries (Managing Director, NOWNESS) to discuss the types of support their organisations offer to emerging filmmakers.



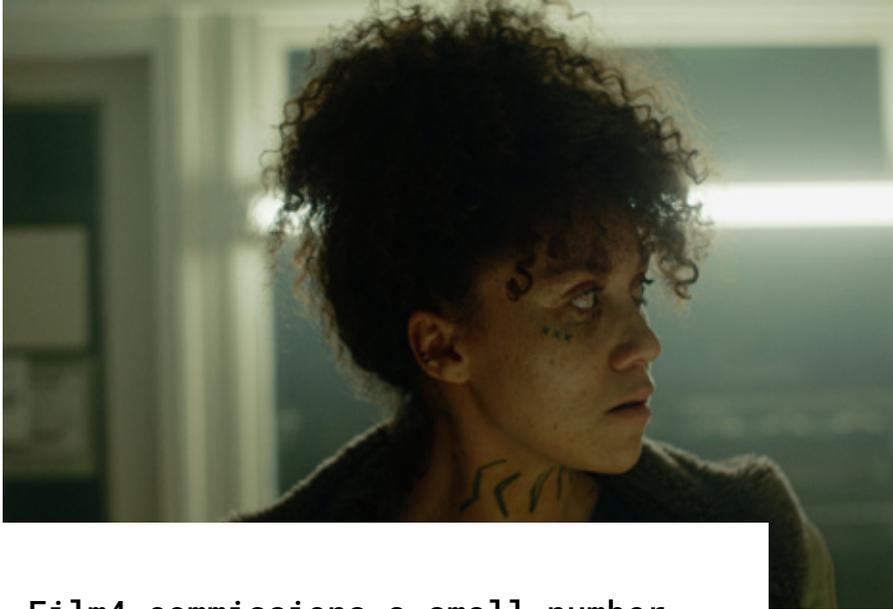
Watch the full  
conversation here



Max Park

Caragh Davison

Gavin Humphries



Film4 commissions a small number of shorts each year, prioritising director development and identifying filmmakers with a bold vision who are almost ready to make a feature film.

The outfit is also keen to work with artists from theatre, visual arts and other writing backgrounds who are interested in directing for screen. The team identifies candidate filmmakers through a combination of scouting and applications. These must come through an established agent or producer and Film4 is unlikely to support a first short unless it's an established creative moving over from a different artistic discipline.

Ideally, applications will contain links to shorts that can demonstrate a track record. Mood boards, treatments, and tonal references are all welcome. Successful applicants can expect close editorial involvement including development meetings after each new draft and feedback on edits. A dedicated in-house production team helps out during pre-production but Film4 tends to leave distribution to directors and producers.

*Pram Snatcher,*  
dir Theo James  
Krekis, 2022



## Top tip

Max's tip: Find your tribe and cultivate strong relationships with your peers because ultimately you're all going to advance in the industry together.



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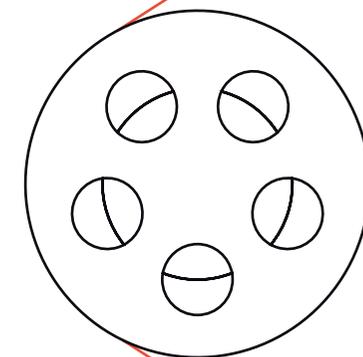
## 'We're always looking for reasons to say yes'

BFI NETWORK supports new and emerging talent, defined as filmmakers who are yet to make their first feature. NETWORK's talent execs are stationed across the English regions and in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland overseeing a short film fund that supports between 50-70 shorts per year. Talent execs are often present at events or festivals and filmmakers are encouraged to reach out to their local representative to discuss potential applications. There's no single answer to the 'What are you looking for?' question but exciting, original, production-ready stories that have a strong connection to the filmmaker tend to cut through.

Like Film4, the benefit of a funding award to the filmmaker's career trajectory is central in decision-making. Successful applicants are assigned a talent exec and the overall aim is to provide support without being prescriptive. When films are finished, NETWORK will look at a variety of screening possibilities in discussion with commissioned teams.

## Top tip

**Caragh's tip:** Try not to second-guess the kind of projects that commissioners want to see. Make work that is true to you and the rest will fall into place.



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**NOWNESS is an online arts and culture video platform that commissions between 20-30 films each year from filmmakers, photographers, dancers, designers, musicians and artists from all around the world.**

There is a strong editorial emphasis on creative hybridity. Filmmakers can 'pitch' a project by contacting a team member by email on a rolling basis. The proposals that tend to connect are brief, demonstrate an understanding of the kinds of work NOWNESS is involved in and have the potential to reach international audiences. Scripts and treatments are usually less important than decks that convey a visual sensibility and examples of previous work don't necessarily need to be polished as long as they demonstrate creative flare.

Though budgets aren't huge - somewhere between £1000-2000 per minute - there is lots of in-house support on offer and the NOWNESS team will often broker new relationships between filmmakers and production companies. The video commissioners provide creative hand-holding throughout but privilege artistic freedom. Delivered films benefit from exposure through the NOWNESS platform as well as extra social media and editorial promotion.

## Top tip

**Gavin's tip: Filmmaking is a long game. As long as you tell stories you are really passionate about with the right kind of collaborators then it will work out!**



**For more information about BFI NETWORK visit:**

**[network.bfi.org.uk](http://network.bfi.org.uk)**

**For more information about Film4 visit:**

**[film4productions.com/about](http://film4productions.com/about)**

**For more information about NOWNESS visit:**

**[nowness.com](http://nowness.com)**

# Training Labs Filmmakers in Discussion

DEVELOPING  
YOUR  
CAREER



Writer-directors Dionne Edwards and Savvas Stavrou have participated in some of the world's leading talent development events. In separate sessions, they talk candidly to British Council's Jo Duncombe about facing their creative fears and how labs help emerging filmmakers build supportive, long-lasting networks.



Watch the  
film here



Savvas Stavrou



Dionne Edwards



Watch the  
film here



## Dionne Edwards

In 2017 Dionne was mentored by Desiree Akhavan (*Appropriate Behaviour*, *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*, *The Bisexual*) as part of BAFTA and BFI's Flare mentorship programme.

In 2019 she shadowed Reinaldo Marcus Green (*Monsters and Men*) on the third series of Netflix's *Top Boy*. In the same year she was selected for the prestigious Sundance Screenwriters and Directors labs. She likens these to artist's residencies for filmmakers, lasting a week for those selected onto the screenwriters lab and a month for those invited subsequently to the directors lab.



© jenFAIRCHILD  
Photography  
- Sundance  
Directors Lab

© jenFAIRCHILD  
Photography  
- Sundance  
Directors Lab

The application process for the screenwriters lab is substantial and the perceived potential of the submitted project is a critical assessment factor.

Successful applicants will likely have made a short film that has received significant industry attention. In Dionne's case this was *We Love Moses* (2016), a story about a young girl's sexual awakening that played at over 50 festivals. Applicants are expected to provide a director's statement, outline their vision for the project and be really clear about why they think participating in a lab would be of benefit to them.

## 'You're going to have to be open, honest and vulnerable'

The screenwriters lab has a reputation for really interrogating a project. The week Dionne spent working on her debut feature *Pretty Red Dress* was intensive, involving sharing circles and a significant amount of time dedicated to talking about her story.

She confesses she wasn't prepared for the emotional intensity of the process but recognises with hindsight that the discussions about character, structure and the scenes that most scared her have served her well.

Being paired with writers who work in both Hollywood and Europe for two-hour feedback sessions was a real highlight, though it does require the writer to go away and make sense of a lot of (sometimes conflicting) notes. The experience leads to strong bonds with fellow participants on the other eleven teams and Dionne is still in close contact with her cohort.



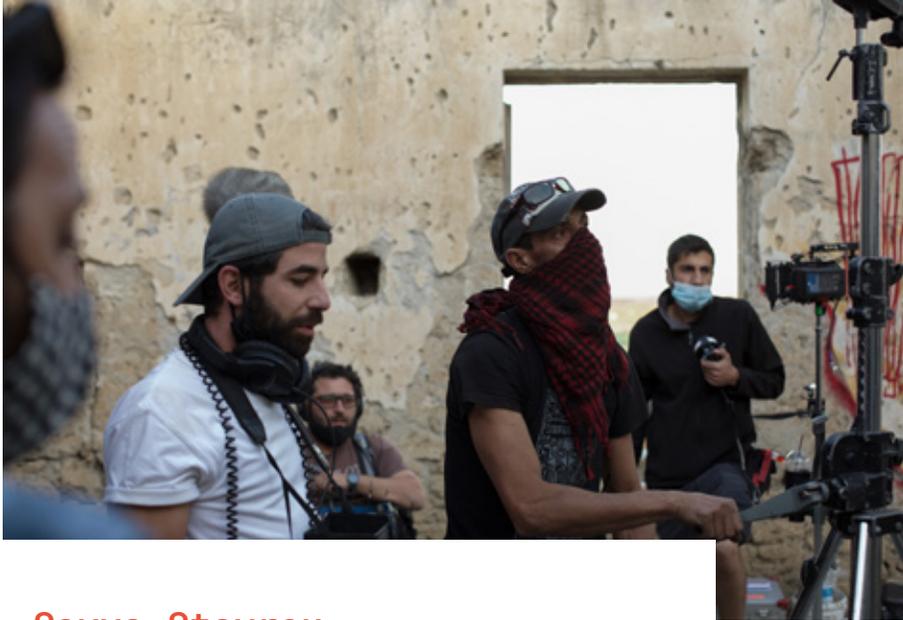
© jenFAIRCHILD  
Photography -  
Sundance  
Directors Lab

## 'Challenging but life-changing'

The directors lab involves a lighter-touch application process and tends to select project teams that are well progressed in their creative journey. Eight teams attend and the focus is mainly practical: filmmakers are paired with collaborators including DoPs and production designers who support the pre-production, production and post-production of four scenes from the participant's screenplay that have been identified as challenging.

This process allows you to make mistakes and analyse scenes in front of an audience of fellow participants. Dionne was grateful for this creative space to experiment, noting that most filmmakers don't have the same luxury when they are shooting their first feature.





## Savva Stavrou

Savvas started making films on his dad's camera when he was ten. He made a few shorts at university and in 2015 he won Sci-Fi-London's 48-hour film challenge which he credits with kickstarting his directorial career.

Savvas wasn't really aware of labs early on in his career but after the success of his 2019 short *A Jar of Nuts* a contact suggested applying to a screenwriting lab with a feature project. It was only when Savvas started researching possibilities that he realised quite how many labs there are out there.

He received several rejections at first but as his filmography grew, so did the interest in him as a filmmaker. To date he has attended the Sundance Mediterranean Screenwriters Lab, Berlinale Talents, Sarajevo Talents, Zurich Film Academy and BFI NETWORK's programme at the London Film Festival.

*Image credit  
Keti Papadema  
Still from Buffer  
Zone, credit Keti  
Papadema.*

'I like to find magic in the most unfathomable of places'

The application process for these initiatives varies from a simple cover letter to extensive form filling. Savvas highlights the temptation to craft perfect applications but has subsequently realised that actually lab assessors are interested in who applicants are as people and how their perspective influences their filmmaking. Having a couple of well-received shorts definitely bolsters applications and some labs have lists of festivals they expect previous shorts to have played at.

**'I've met some of the best people I've ever met on these programmes'**

The Berlinale and Sarajevo Talents programmes divide participants by specialism and feature talks, masterclasses and one-to-one career meetings with leading industry professionals. The BFI NETWORK programme at LFF is very much about being part of a cohort of filmmakers at a similar stage. For Savvas, building networks is one of the great benefits of attending these events. Peers become support systems and the labs themselves remain invested in the progress of their alumni, occasionally helping to broker relationships between previous participants.

**'As helpful as labs can be, you can also create your own network of people around you'**

Some labs are completely free (e.g. Zurich Film Academy), others offer accommodation or subsistence allowances (e.g. Talents), and others require you to meet some costs (e.g. Sundance). Savvas recommends checking British Council's [list](#) of supported labs and encourages filmmakers to ask the organisers if there are any grants available to support attendance. Five labs in and Savvas says he has learned a huge amount but thinks he's probably attended enough. Labs involve a lot of voices giving a lot of feedback and there comes a point where you have to listen to the one voice that matters most.



**For more information about Dionne's work visit:**

[tengtengfilms.com](http://tengtengfilms.com)

**For more information about Savvas' work visit:**

[savvaspictures.com](http://savvaspictures.com)

## USEFUL LINKS

[BAFTA & BFI Flare Mentorship Programme](http://bafta.org/supporting-talent/bfi-flare-bafta-crew)  
[bafta.org/supporting-talent/bfi-flare-bafta-crew](http://bafta.org/supporting-talent/bfi-flare-bafta-crew)

[Berlinale Talents](http://berlinale-talents.de/bt/page/c/main)  
[berlinale-talents.de/bt/page/c/main](http://berlinale-talents.de/bt/page/c/main)

[BFI NETWORK](http://network.bfi.org.uk)  
[network.bfi.org.uk](http://network.bfi.org.uk)

[British Council - Lab Travel Grants \(in partnership with BFI NETWORK\)](http://film.britishcouncil.org/opportunities/labs-travel-grant)  
[film.britishcouncil.org/opportunities/labs-travel-grant](http://film.britishcouncil.org/opportunities/labs-travel-grant)

[Sundance Feature Labs](http://sundance.org/programs/feature-film)  
[sundance.org/programs/feature-film](http://sundance.org/programs/feature-film)

(Sundance also runs a variety of separate Producers labs - info [here](#))

[Talents Sarajevo](http://talentssarajevo.com)  
[talentssarajevo.com](http://talentssarajevo.com)

[Zurich Film Academy](http://industry.zff.com/en/zff-academy/about)  
[industry.zff.com/en/zff-academy/about](http://industry.zff.com/en/zff-academy/about)

# Navigating a Creative Career: Short Filmmaking & Beyond

DEVELOPING  
YOUR  
CAREER



How do early-career experiences prepare you for progression up the talent ladder? In this session, British Council Film Programme Manager Rowan Woods talks to Nosa Eke and Yolanda Mercy about collaboration, innovation and the importance of asking questions.



Watch the full conversation here



Rowan Woods



Yolanda Mercy



Nosa Eke





Nosa is writer-director who works across platforms. Seeing other DIY creatives put exciting work online inspired her to make *The Grind* (2016), a digital series hosted across YouTube, Instagram and Periscope.

Commissioners paid attention and she was soon onto bigger things, like an episodic series on Amazon Alexa for the BBC, a project with EA Games and a short film backed by Film London and BFI NETWORK. Yolanda came to filmmaking through a background in theatre and live performance. The success of her show *Quarterlife Crisis* at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2018 led to opportunities in TV and radio, including directing BBW for Channel 4's BAFTA-nominated *On The Edge* series.

*Something in the Closet*,  
dir Nosa Eke  
2019

*The Grind*  
(digital series),  
dir Nosa Eke, 2016

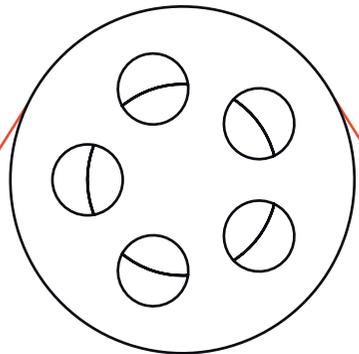


## 'We were surviving on vibes'

Nosa emphasizes the importance of picking your creative collaborators carefully, especially for low-budget projects. Making work without formal support is liberating but intense and she's learned that the people she works with need to be friends as much as colleagues. Yolanda knows she's found a kindred creative spirit when she's discussing a project and they respond with 'Yes! and...'. For her this indicates a desire to bring creativity energy to the table and a willingness to offer constructive challenge.

## 'Transitioning into different media expands your skill set each time'

For Nosa, finding her creative voice has meant really analyzing why certain creative projects connect with her and others don't. She often returns to the importance of narrative structure and points to the wealth of online resources available to emerging writers interested in story design. Yolanda stresses the importance of staying creatively engaged by making time to see other people's work and exposing yourself to things you wouldn't expect to see.



## 'Find the right people for you'

Early career success brings the attention of agents and the possibility of formal representation. A relationship with an agent is likely to be 'long haul' so taking the time to find someone you can connect with personally is vital. Nosa values being able to access someone with industry experience but says she doesn't want to lose her hustler spirit along the way.

Reciprocity is key and you shouldn't rely on an agent to do everything. Yolanda secured an agent after her success at the Edinburgh Fringe but cautions against representation if you don't feel quite ready.



*Quarter Life Crisis* (Soho Theatre), written & performed by Yolanda Mercy, 2018

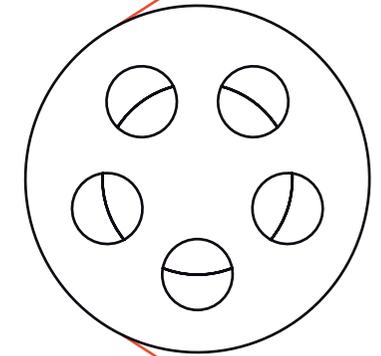
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## 'There's no one right way of doing things'

Yolanda works across a variety of media and really likes to know what everyone does on set. She learns a lot through watching other people and her key advice is: if you're not sure how to do something, just ask! Don't feel you have to shoulder the pressure of knowing everything. If people are using a lot of specific terminology just tell them you don't know what it means. The willingness to ask questions can offset the jitters caused by 'imposter syndrome' which both Yolanda and Nosa recognise is real and persistent. Taking time to remind yourself of the good work you've done is a great way to check in with yourself. Yolanda feels that at the end of the day she's making art and that's an ongoing process - it's never going to be perfect.

## 'Set boundaries for yourself and other people'

'Imposter syndrome' feeds into a bigger question about general wellbeing. Nosa is still working on striking a balance in an industry that can feel 'a mile a minute'. It's important to set boundaries and allocate time for yourself. Learning when to say no is a great way of protecting yourself. And remember, you are allowed to have a weekend!



Find out more about  
Nosa's work here:

[theagency.co.uk/  
the-clients/nosa-eke/](https://theagency.co.uk/the-clients/nosa-eke/)

Find out more about  
Yolanda's work at:

[yolandamercy.com](https://yolandamercy.com)

MARKETING

# Marketing Your Short Film

Sarah Mosses, founder and CEO of Together Films, describes how filmmakers can maximise the marketing and distribution potential of their work.

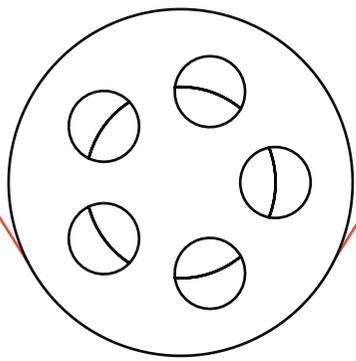


Watch the full  
conversation here

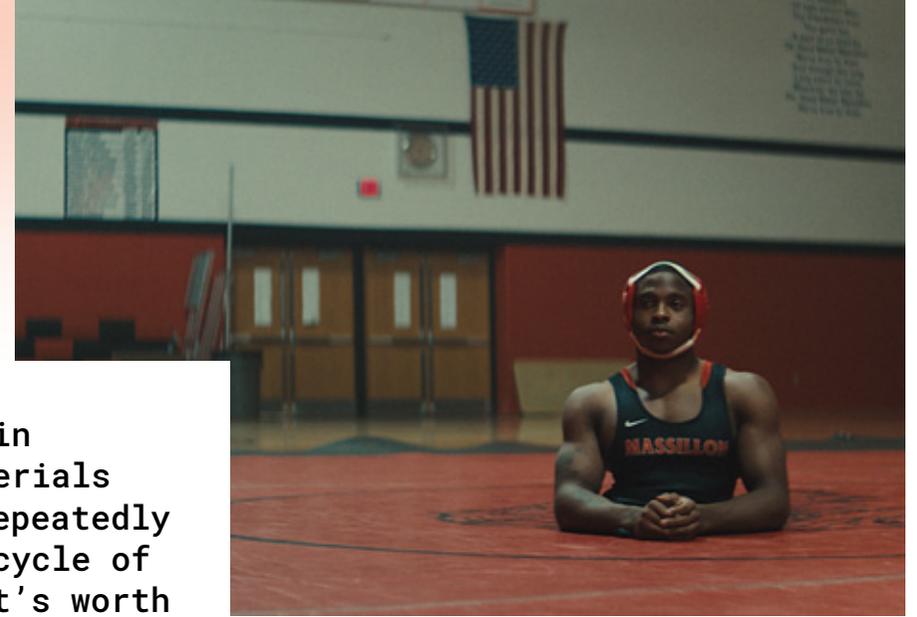


Sarah Mosses





Zion,  
dir Floyd Russ,  
2019



**'You can't sell a film without a good still. Ever.'**

There are certain promotional materials you will need repeatedly during the lifecycle of your film, so it's worth getting these right:

Together Films is a leading social impact entertainment company that has delivered successful marketing and distribution strategies for award-winning titles including *Ping Pong*, *Unrest*, *For Sama* and *A Broken House*.

Sarah stresses the importance of laying the groundwork for your marketing and distribution strategy at an early stage in the production process. Not only will this give your film the best possible chance of connecting with audiences, it will save you time, effort and budget in the long run.

- Good quality stills are vital. Make sure you have someone on set during production capturing highlights, key story moments and behind-the-scenes activity. This will result in a pool of potential images you can use later across a range of platforms. When it comes to selecting a key publicity image, ask yourself which still captures the heart of your story.
- Effective poster artwork is another powerful way to grab attention. Again, ask yourself if the design you have settled on communicates the key messages or sentiments in your film effectively. Don't worry if you don't have the help of a graphic designer, there are software tools like [Canva](#) out there to help you.
- Concise copywriting is a must. Don't get too clever in the way you talk about your film: keep loglines and synopses short, simple and clear.



If in doubt, test whether your promotional materials are having the desired impact by running them past non-industry friends and family members. Ask them to reflect back to you what they think your project is about and how any key images or artwork make them feel.

**'Being niche is usually the way to thrive'**

*The White Helmets,*  
dir Orlando von  
Einsiedel, 2016

It is impossible to market a film to everyone, so embrace specificity when answering the 'Who is this film for?' question. Broad descriptions like 'animation fans' or 'thriller lovers' are too catch-all, so drill down further by asking: Who would actually want to buy a ticket to this film? Who is likely to be most affected by the themes it raises? Who is likely to support it in a wider sense (e.g. charities or lobbying groups)? Look at comparator films and how they presented themselves in the marketplace to guide the strategic positioning of your own work.



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When it comes to promotion, online searchability is key. Whether it's a bespoke site for your project or a dedicated space on an existing website, you'll want somewhere to build an aura around your project. If you don't have a web designer on board then DIY tools like [Squarespace](#) and [Wordpress](#) can deliver great results quickly. Once that's in place you can start to 'collect' your audience through newsletter subscriptions.

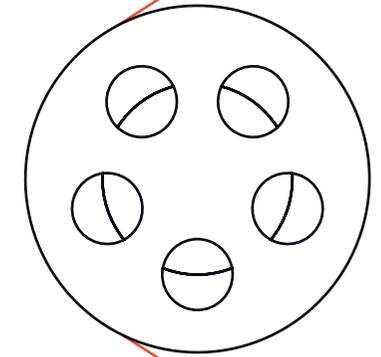


A dynamic social media campaign can really help to build a community around a project but you need to think from the outset about banking up enough good quality material to sustain a run of activity. Frequent posting is advisable and it's a good idea to mix up the 'selling' of your finished project with insights into the creative process and topical content that situates your film in a wider context. Think carefully about whether it is worthwhile to set up a new social media presence for your film rather than integrating promotion into any pre-existing channels.

Back in the physical realm, attending film festivals where your work has been selected represents a golden opportunity to promote both your finished film and yourself as a filmmaker. Remember that festivals with a significant industry presence - e.g. Cannes, Berlin, Toronto, IDFA - give you a platform to network future projects and answer the 'What's next?' question so beloved of execs and commissioners. If you're attending, make time to connect with festival staff on the ground, particularly the programmers who have championed your work. These are career-long relationships worth cultivating.



*Two Distant Strangers*, dir  
Travon Free,  
Martin Desmond Roe,  
2020



### Promotional material examples:

**Key stills:** *The White Helmets*,  
*Two Distant Strangers*, *Colette*

**Posters:** *For Sama*, *Flee*

**Copywriting:** *Lucky Break*,  
*Miss Curvy*, *The Black Cop*

Find out more about  
Sarah's work at:

[Togetherfilms.org](https://togetherfilms.org)

and [Sarahmosses.com](https://sarahmosses.com)

KEY FILM

# FESTIVALS

VERSION 1.0

(2022)



BAFTA



BRITISH  
COUNCIL



NETWORK



THE  
NATIONAL  
LOTTERY

# Documentary ↓ Festivals

 [BAFTA qualifying](#)

 [British Council Travel Grant eligible](#)

 [Oscar qualifying](#)

## JANUARY

[Angers Premier Plans, France](#)  
[premiersplans.org](#)

(BAFTA qualifying)    
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

[Flickerfest, Australia](#)  
[flickerfest.com.au](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)     
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

[Sundance Film Festival, USA](#)  
[sundance.org](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)     
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY

[Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, France](#)  
[clermont-filmfest.org](#)

(BAFTA qualifying)    
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

[IFFR \(International Film Festival Rotterdam\), The Netherlands](#)  
[iffr.com](#)

(BAFTA qualifying)    
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

## FEBRUARY

[Berlin International Film Festival/Berlinale, Germany](#)  
[berlinale.de](#)

(BAFTA qualifying)    
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

## FEBRUARY/MARCH

[PragueShorts Film Festival, Czech Republic](#)  
[pragueshorts.com](#)

Submissions (fees apply)  
[pragueshorts.com/en/regulations](#)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## MARCH

[BFI Flare \(London LGBTIQ+ Film Festival\), UK](#)  
[bfi.org.uk/flare](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

[SXSW Film Festival \(South by Southwest\), USA](#)  
[sxsw.com](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)     
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

## MARCH/APRIL

[CPH Dox \(Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival\), Denmark](#)  
[cphdox.dk/en](#)

(BAFTA qualifying)    
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

## APRIL

[Aspen Shortsfest, USA](#)  
[aspensfilm.org](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)     
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

[Hot Docs \(Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival\), Canada](#)  
[hotdocs.ca](#)

(BAFTA qualifying)    
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

## APRIL

Tribeca Film Festival, USA  
[tribecafilm.com](http://tribecafilm.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
 (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Visions Du Réel, Switzerland  
[visionsdureel.ch](http://visionsdureel.ch)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## MAY

Vienna Shorts, Austria  
[viennashorts.com](http://viennashorts.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
 (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## MAY/JUNE

Krakow Film Festival, Poland  
[krakowfilmfestival.pl](http://krakowfilmfestival.pl)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
 (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## JUNE

AFI Docs, USA  
[docs.afi.com](http://docs.afi.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
 (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Sheffield DocFest, UK  
[sheffdocfest.com](http://sheffdocfest.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

## AUGUST

BlackStar Film Festival, USA  
[blackstarfest.org](http://blackstarfest.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
 (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

DokuFest (International  
 Documentary and Short  
 Film Festival), Kosovo  
[dokufest.com](http://dokufest.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

Edinburgh International  
 Film Festival, UK  
[edfilmfest.org.uk](http://edfilmfest.org.uk)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

## SEPTEMBER

Encounters Film Festival, UK  
[encounters.film](http://encounters.film)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  

## OCTOBER

BFI London Film Festival, UK  
[bfi.org.uk/lff](http://bfi.org.uk/lff)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

Doclisboa, Portugal  
[doclisboa.org](http://doclisboa.org)

DOK Leipzig (Leipzig  
 Documentary & Animated Film  
 Festival), Germany  
[dok-leipzig.de](http://dok-leipzig.de)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
 (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## OCTOBER

Hamptons International  
 Film Festival, USA  
[hamptonsfilmfest.org](http://hamptonsfilmfest.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
 (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Ji.hlava International  
 Documentary Film Festival,  
 Czech Republic  
[ji-hlava.com](http://ji-hlava.com)

Warsaw Film Festival, Poland  
[wff.pl](http://wff.pl)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
 (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## NOVEMBER

Cinanima (International  
 Animated Film Festival  
 of Espinho), Portugal  
[cinanima.pt](http://cinanima.pt)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

IDFA (International  
 Documentary Film Festival  
 Amsterdam), Holland  
[idfa.nl](http://idfa.nl)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
 (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

# Animation Festivals



 [BAFTA qualifying](#)

 [British Council Travel Grant eligible](#)

 [Oscar qualifying](#)

Please note: Films submitted into the BAFTA **British Short Animation** award category currently **do not need to have screened at a festival in order to qualify**. Any questions about this, please email [awards@bafta.org](mailto:awards@bafta.org)  
BAFTA logos below are for general information, and indicate festivals which are BAFTA Qualifying Festivals for non-animation films for the **British Short Film award**.

## JANUARY

[Flickerfest, Australia](#)  
[flickerfest.com.au](http://flickerfest.com.au)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)     
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

[Sundance Film Festival, USA](#)  
[sundance.org](http://sundance.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)     
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY

[Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, France](#)  
[clermont-filmfest.org](http://clermont-filmfest.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)     
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

## FEBRUARY/MARCH

[Pragueshorts Film Festival, Czech Republic](#)  
[pragueshorts.com](http://pragueshorts.com)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## MARCH

[Ann Arbor Film Festival, USA](#)  
[aafilmfest.org](http://aafilmfest.org)

(Oscar qualifying)    
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

[SXSW Film Festival \(South by Southwest\), USA](#)  
[sxsw.com](http://sxsw.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)     
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

[Tricky Women Film Festival, Austria](#)  
[trickywomen.at/en](http://trickywomen.at/en)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## APRIL

[Aspen Shortsfest, USA](#)  
[aspenfilm.org](http://aspenfilm.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)     
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

[Cardiff Animation Festival, UK](#)  
[cardiffanimation.com](http://cardiffanimation.com)

[Go Short \(International Short Film Festival Nijmegen\), Netherlands](#)  
[goshort.nl](http://goshort.nl)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)     
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

[Tribeca Film Festival, USA](#)  
[tribecafilm.com](http://tribecafilm.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)     
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

## MAY

[Flatpack Film Festival, UK](#)  
[flatpackfestival.org.uk](http://flatpackfestival.org.uk)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

[Stuttgart Animated Film Festival, Germany](#)  
[itfs.de](http://itfs.de)

(Oscar qualifying)    
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

[Vienna Shorts, Austria](#)  
[viennashorts.com](http://viennashorts.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)     
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)

## MAY/JUNE

Krakov Film Festival, Poland  
[krakowfilmfestival.pl](http://krakowfilmfestival.pl)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## JUNE

AFI Docs (American Film  
Institute Documentary Festival  
fka Silverdocs), USA  
[docs.afi.com](http://docs.afi.com)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

Animafest Zagreb (World  
Festival of Animated Film),  
Croatia  
[animafest.hr](http://animafest.hr)

(Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

Anney International Animation  
Film Festival, France  
[anney.org](http://anney.org)

(Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

Frameline International  
LGBTIQ+ Film Festival, USA  
[frameline.org](http://frameline.org)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## AUGUST

Edinburgh International  
Film Festival, UK  
[edfilmfest.org.uk](http://edfilmfest.org.uk)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

## SEPTEMBER

Ottawa International  
Animation Festival, Canada  
[animationfestival.ca](http://animationfestival.ca)

(Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

Encounters Film Festival, UK  
[encounters.film](http://encounters.film)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  

## OCTOBER

DOK Leipzig (Leipzig  
Documentary and Animated  
Film Festival), Germany  
[dok-leipzig.de](http://dok-leipzig.de)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Warsaw Film Festival, Poland  
[wff.pl](http://wff.pl)

(Oscar qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

Raindance Film Festival, UK  
[raindance.org](http://raindance.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  

## NOVEMBER

Aesthetica Short Film  
Festival, UK  
[asff.co.uk](http://asff.co.uk)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

## NOVEMBER

Cinanima (International  
Animated Film Festival of  
Espinho), Portugal  
[cinanima.pt](http://cinanima.pt)

(Oscar qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

Leeds International  
Film Festival, UK  
[leedsfilm.com](http://leedsfilm.com)

(Bafta qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  

Manchester Animation Festival,  
Manchester  
[manchesteranimationfestival.co.uk](http://manchesteranimationfestival.co.uk)

PÖFF Shorts (Black Nights Film  
Festival) (fka Sleepwalkers  
Short Film Festival), Estonia  
[shorts.poff.ee](http://shorts.poff.ee)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

London International  
Animation Festival, UK  
[liaf.org.uk](http://liaf.org.uk)

# Fiction/Drama Festivals



 [BAFTA qualifying](#)

 [British Council Travel Grant eligible](#)

 [Oscar qualifying](#)

## JANUARY

[Angers Premier Plans, France](#)  
[premiersplans.org](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

[Flickerfest, Australia](#)  
[flickerfest.com.au](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

[London Short Film Festival, UK](#)  
[shortfilms.org.uk](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

[Sundance Film Festival, USA](#)  
[sundance.org](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY

[Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, France](#)  
[clermont-filmfest.org](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

[IFFR \(International Film Festival Rotterdam\), The Netherlands](#)  
[iffr.com](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## FEBRUARY

[Berlin International Film Festival/Berlinale, Germany](#)  
[berlinale.de](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## FEBRUARY/MARCH

[PragueShorts Film Festival, Czech Republic](#)  
[pragueshorts.com](#)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## MARCH

[Ann Arbor Film Festival, USA](#)  
[aafilmfest.org](#)

(Oscar qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

[BFI Flare \(London LGBTIQ+ Film Festival\), UK](#)  
[bfi.org.uk/flare](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

[Glasgow Short Film Festival, UK](#)  
[glasgowshort.org](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

[SXSW Film Festival \(South by Southwest\), USA](#)  
[sxsw.com](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

[Tampere Film Festival, Finland](#)  
[tamperefilmfestival.fi](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## APRIL

[Aspen Shortsfest, USA](#)  
[aspenfilm.org](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

[FilmFest Dresden \(Dresden International Short Film Festival\), Germany](#)  
[filmfest-dresden.de](#)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## APRIL

Go Short (International Short Film Festival Nijmegen), Germany

[goshort.nl](http://goshort.nl)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Tribeca Film Festival, USA

[tribecafilm.com](http://tribecafilm.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## APRIL/MAY

IndieLisboa (IndieLisboa International Film Festival), USA

[indielisboa.com](http://indielisboa.com)

(BAFTA qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, Germany

[kurzfilmtage.de](http://kurzfilmtage.de)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## MAY

Cannes Film Festival, France

[festival-cannes.com](http://festival-cannes.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Carmarthen Bay Film Festival, UK

[carmarthenbayfilmfestival.co.uk](http://carmarthenbayfilmfestival.co.uk)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

## MAY

Molodist International Film Festival, Ukraine

[molodist.com](http://molodist.com)

(BAFTA qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

Vienna Shorts, Austria

[viennashorts.com](http://viennashorts.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## MAY/JUNE

Hamburg International Short Film Festival (Kurzfilm Festival Hamburg), Germany

[shortfilm.com](http://shortfilm.com)

(BAFTA qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

Krakov Film Festival, Poland

[krakowfilmfestival.pl](http://krakowfilmfestival.pl)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## JUNE

American Black Film Festival, USA

[abff.com](http://abff.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Morelia Film Festival, Mexico

[moreliafilmfest.com](http://moreliafilmfest.com)

## AUGUST

Accra Indie Film Festival

[accraindiefilmfest.org](http://accraindiefilmfest.org)

BlackStar Film Festival, USA

[blackstarfest.org](http://blackstarfest.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Edinburgh International Film Festival, UK

[edfilmfest.org.uk](http://edfilmfest.org.uk)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

Locarno Film Festival, Switzerland

[locarnofestival.ch](http://locarnofestival.ch)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

São Paulo International Short Film Festival, Brazil

[kinoforum.org](http://kinoforum.org)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

Sarajevo Film Festival, Bosnia and Herzegovina

[sff.ba](http://sff.ba)

(Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## SEPTEMBER

Venice International  
Film Festival, Italy  
[labiennale.org](http://labiennale.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Telluride Film Festival, USA  
[telluridefilmfestival.org](http://telluridefilmfestival.org)

(BAFTA qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

Toronto International Film  
Festival (TIFF), Canada  
[tiff.net](http://tiff.net)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Encounters Film Festival, UK  
[encounters.film](http://encounters.film)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  

## SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

New York Film Festival, USA  
[filmlinc.org](http://filmlinc.org)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## OCTOBER

BFI London Film Festival, UK  
[bfi.org.uk/lff](http://bfi.org.uk/lff)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

Busan International  
Film Festival, Korea  
[biff.kr](http://biff.kr)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## OCTOBER

Hamptons International  
Film Festival, USA  
[hamptonsfilmfest.org](http://hamptonsfilmfest.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Independent FilmFest  
Osnabrück, Germany  
[filmfest-osnabrueck.de](http://filmfest-osnabrueck.de)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

Uppsala Short Film Festival,  
Sweden  
[shortfilmfestival.com](http://shortfilmfestival.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Warsaw Film Festival, Poland  
[wff.pl](http://wff.pl)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

Raindance Film Festival, UK  
[raindance.org](http://raindance.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  

## NOVEMBER

Aesthetica Short Film  
Festival, UK  
[asff.co.uk](http://asff.co.uk)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

Belfast Film Festival, UK  
[belfastfilmfestival.org](http://belfastfilmfestival.org)

## NOVEMBER

Brest European Short  
Film Festival, France  
[filmcourt.fr](http://filmcourt.fr)

(BAFTA qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

International Film Festival  
of India, Goa, India  
[iffgoa.org](http://iffgoa.org)

Leeds International  
Film Festival, UK  
[leedsfilm.com](http://leedsfilm.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  

PÖFF Shorts (Black Nights  
Film Festival), Estonia  
[shorts.poff.ee](http://shorts.poff.ee)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Winterthur (International  
Short Film Days Winterthur),  
Switzerland  
[kurzfilmtage.ch](http://kurzfilmtage.ch)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## DECEMBER

Leuven Short Film Festival  
(Kort Film Festival Leuven),  
Belgium  
[kortfilmfestival.be](http://kortfilmfestival.be)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

# Experimental & Artist Moving Image Festivals



 [BAFTA qualifying](#)

 [British Council  
Travel Grant eligible](#)

 [Oscar qualifying](#)

## JANUARY

Sundance Film Festival, USA  
[sundance.org](#)

(BAFTA qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY

IFFR (International  
Film Festival Rotterdam),  
The Netherlands  
[iffr.com](#)

(BAFTA qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## FEBRUARY

Berlin International Film  
Festival/Berlinale, Germany  
[berlinale.de](#)

(BAFTA qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## FEBRUARY/MARCH

PragueShorts Film Festival,  
Czech Republic  
[pragueshorts.com](#)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## MARCH

Ann Arbor Film Festival, USA  
[aafilmfest.org](#)

(Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

Berwick Film & Media Arts  
Festival (BFMAF), UK  
[bfmaf.org](#)

## APRIL

European Media Art Festival  
(EMAF), Germany  
[emaf.de](#)

## APRIL/MAY

Alchemy Film and Moving Image  
Festival, UK  
[alchemyfilmandarts.org.uk](#)

International Short Film  
Festival Oberhausen, Germany  
[kurzfilmtage.de](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## MAY

Flatpack Film Festival, UK  
[flatpackfestival.org.uk](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

Vienna Shorts, Austria  
[viennashorts.com](#)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## AUGUST

Edinburgh International  
Film Festival, UK

[edfilmfest.org.uk](http://edfilmfest.org.uk)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

Outfest (Outfest Los Angeles  
LGBTIQ+ Film Festival), USA

[outfest.org](http://outfest.org)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) ✈️

## OCTOBER

BFI London Film Festival, UK

[bfi.org.uk/lff](http://bfi.org.uk/lff)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

## NOVEMBER

Aesthetica Short Film  
Festival, UK

[asff.co.uk](http://asff.co.uk)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

Winterthur (International  
Short Film Days Winterthur),  
Switzerland

[kurzfilmtage.ch](http://kurzfilmtage.ch)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) ✈️

# Specialist & Genre Festivals



 BAFTA qualifying

 British Council  
Travel Grant eligible

 Oscar qualifying

## JANUARY

Sundance Film Festival, USA  
[sundance.org](http://sundance.org)

(BAFTA qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## FEBRUARY

PragueShorts Film Festival,  
Czech Republic  
[pragueshorts.com](http://pragueshorts.com)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## MARCH

BFI Flare (London  
LGBTIQ+ Film Festival), UK  
[bfi.org.uk/flare](http://bfi.org.uk/flare)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

Oska Bright Film Festival, UK  
[oskabright.org](http://oskabright.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

UnderWire Festival, UK  
[underwirefestival.com](http://underwirefestival.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

Watersprite Film Festival  
(Watersprite International  
Student Film Festival), UK  
[watersprite.org.uk](http://watersprite.org.uk)

Tricky Women Film Festival,  
Austria  
[trickywomen.at/en](http://trickywomen.at/en)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## APRIL/MAY

IndieLisboa (IndieLisboa  
International Film Festival),  
Portugal

[indielisboa.com](http://indielisboa.com)

(BAFTA qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## MAY

Deaffest, UK  
[deaffest.co.uk](http://deaffest.co.uk)

## JUNE

Frameline International  
LGBTIQ+ Film Festival, USA  
[frameline.org](http://frameline.org)

(BAFTA qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

Kashish Queer International  
Film Festival, INDIA  
[mumbaiqueerfest.com](http://mumbaiqueerfest.com)

## AUGUST

Accra Indie Film Festival,  
Ghana

[accraindiefilmfest.org](http://accraindiefilmfest.org)

Outfest (Outfest Los Angeles  
LGBTIQ+ Film Festival), USA

[outfest.org](http://outfest.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

Soul Fest (Screening Our  
Unseen Lives), UK

[soulfilmfest.co.uk](http://soulfilmfest.co.uk)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

BlackStar Film Festival, USA

[blackstarfest.org](http://blackstarfest.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  
(British Council Travel Grant eligible)   

## SEPTEMBER

LOCO London Comedy  
Film Festival, UK

[locofilmfestival.com](http://locofilmfestival.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

## OCTOBER

Scottish Queer International  
Film Festival (SQIFF)

[sqiff.org](http://sqiff.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

The Sitges Film Festival or  
Festival Internacional de Cine  
Fantástico de Cataluña

[sitgesfilmfestival.com/eng](http://sitgesfilmfestival.com/eng)

## NOVEMBER

Aesthetica Short Film  
Festival, UK

[asff.co.uk](http://asff.co.uk)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

UK International Jewish  
Film Festival, UK

[ukjewishfilm.org](http://ukjewishfilm.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

## DECEMBER

South Asian International Film  
Festival (SAIFF), USA

[saiff.org](http://saiff.org)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

# VR / Immersive Festivals



 BAFTA qualifying

 British Council Travel Grant eligible

 Oscar qualifying

## JANUARY

Sundance Film Festival, USA  
[sundance.org](http://sundance.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY

IFFR (International Film Festival Rotterdam), The Netherlands  
[iffr.com](http://iffr.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## FEBRUARY

Berlin International Film Festival/Berlinale, Germany  
[berlinale.de](http://berlinale.de)

(BAFTA qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## MARCH

SXSW Film Festival (South by Southwest), USA  
[sxsw.com](http://sxsw.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## APRIL

European Media Art Festival (EMAF), Germany  
[emaf.de](http://emaf.de)

Go Short (International Short Film Festival Nijmegen), Netherlands  
[goshort.nl](http://goshort.nl)

(BAFTA qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

Tribeca Film Festival, USA  
[tribecafilm.com](http://tribecafilm.com)

(BAFTA qualifying) (British Council Travel Grant eligible)  

## MAY

Flatpack Film Festival, UK  
[flatpackfestival.org.uk](http://flatpackfestival.org.uk)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

## JUNE

Animafest Zagreb (World Festival of Animated Film), Croatia  
[animafest.hr](http://animafest.hr)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

Annecy International Animation Film Festival, France  
[annecy.org](http://annecy.org)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## SEPTEMBER

Venice International Film Festival, Italy  
[labiennale.org](http://labiennale.org)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## OCTOBER

BFI London Film Festival, UK  
[bfi.org.uk/lff](http://bfi.org.uk/lff)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

DOK Leipzig (Leipzig Documentary and Animated Film Festival), Germany  
[dok-leipzig.de](http://dok-leipzig.de)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 

## OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

Raindance Film Festival, UK  
[raindance.org](http://raindance.org)

(BAFTA qualifying) (Oscar qualifying)  

## NOVEMBER

Aesthetica Short Film Festival, UK  
[asff.co.uk](http://asff.co.uk)

(BAFTA qualifying) 

IDFA (International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam), Netherlands  
[idfa.nl](http://idfa.nl)

(British Council Travel Grant eligible) 