



Media Information
31 January 2023

Emmy-award winning writer, director, actress, Michaela Coel takes a lead role in the new BMW Filmmaking Challenge in partnership with the BFI

Industry game-changer and progressive thinker, Michaela Coel, is offering a mentoring role to five shortlisted filmmakers, drawing on her personal experience from both sides of the lens.

London. Encouraging filmmakers to dream big and push boundaries in film, the BMW Filmmaking Challenge, in partnership with the BFI, is inspired by the ground-breaking all-electric BMW i7 and its ultra-wide 31.3-inch rear-passenger theatre screen.

Creative experimentation is vital to the future of an innovative and successful UK film industry and this Filmmaking Challenge aims to nurture bold, forward-thinking storytellers. It will provide five shortlisted filmmakers with access to the latest technology and a £10,000 production budget, enabling them to explore new perspectives and experiment with an exciting format, unlocking the potential of 8K / 32:9 cinematography.

From the five shorts, a winning film will be selected to premiere as part of the Closing Night of the BFI London Film Festival in partnership with American Express taking place in October 2023 and all five films will be available on BFI Player. The Challenge provides an exciting opportunity for talent to stretch their creativity and a unique platform to help springboard to the next step in their career.

BMW and the BFI are encouraging filmmakers and creative talent to challenge limitations and to harness the power of emerging technology. The BMW i7 offers a new technical palette which can be explored through innovative filmmaking, creating a new cinematic experience and giving a new meaning to the term motion picture.

In partnership with the BFI, the challenge will benefit from the reach and expertise of BFI NETWORK, the BFI's UK-wide talent development programme for new and

BMW Group Company

Postal Address
BMW (UK) Ltd.
Summit One
Summit Avenue
Farnborough
GU14 0FB

Telephone
01252 920000

Internet
www.bmw.co.uk

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emerging filmmakers. Open to filmmaking teams with experience in creating short form works, the production budget, new 8K camera technology and a short running time presents a creative challenge that demands innovation and will stretch successful applicants, building their skills and capabilities.

All five filmmakers will benefit with support from an executive producer from the BFI to create their film, as well as mentoring from Michaela Coel. The writer, director, and actress, best known for creating and starring in her multi-award-winning TV shows *Chewing Gum* and *I May Destroy You*, and most recently featuring in Marvel movie *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, will support the execution of the filmmakers' visions, from discussing creative influences through to the production itself.

Michaela Coel says: "I hope this Filmmaking Challenge provides an opportunity for creatives to explore new and interesting perspectives, allowing us to discover the stories yet to be told. The BMW i7's technology and theatre screen, which is much wider than we'd traditionally watch, will push creatives to think more expansively. I look forward to geeking out with the filmmakers about their ideas and providing a sounding board as a mentor throughout this process."

Mia Bays, Director of the BFI Film Fund, comments "The film industry constantly experiments with form, content and technology to share inspiring, challenging, and entertaining stories on screen. We are committed to opening up more opportunities to emerging filmmakers from all backgrounds and all parts of the UK, to give them a chance to develop their craft and expand their repertoire. We're therefore delighted with this new partnership with BMW and can think of no better and more inspiring icon than Michaela Coel to present this exciting new Filmmaking Challenge. When applications open, we can't wait to see the ideas and teams who step up and look forward to presenting the results in the cinema, on BFI Player and in the back of the new BMW i7 in October, which is a first for us!"

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Michelle Roberts, Marketing Director at BMW UK, adds, "This challenge is designed to foster creative risk-taking, inspired by the ground-breaking all-electric BMW i7 and its uniquely advanced cinematic technology.

BMW has an extensive history of supporting the arts and nurturing breakthrough talent through initiatives like BMW Play Next and our long-standing partnership with Frieze. We are proud to extend this to film by working with prestigious partners who are pioneers in their respective industries and share our commitment to welcoming a diverse selection of filmmakers to this project."

To launch the challenge, Coel stars in a 90-second promotional film featuring the BMW i7 as the brand's flagship vehicle, written and directed by Aliyah Otchere.

Highlights inside the new i7 include the Executive Lounge Seating, rear doors integrated with individual touchscreens to operate the infotainment system intuitively and an ultra-wide 32:9, 8K rear-passenger theatre screen which can be paired with the 1,965 watts Bowers & Wilkins Diamond surround sound system to create a 4D audio experience.

The BMW Filmmaking Challenge in partnership with the BFI will officially open for entries in March 2023. Five winners will be shortlisted and given the budget to produce their films over the summer months with high-profile talent judges selecting the final winner in September, ahead of the 67th BFI London Film Festival in partnership with American Express, taking place in mid-October.

Read more at <https://www.bmw.co.uk/bmwfilmchallenge>.

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The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises over 30 production sites worldwide; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2022, the BMW Group sold nearly 2.4 million passenger vehicles and more than 202,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2021 was € 16.1 billion on revenues amounting to € 111.2 billion. As of 31 December 2021, the BMW Group had a workforce of 118,909 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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About BFI NETWORK

Made possible through National Lottery funding, BFI NETWORK exists to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers. We collaborate with film organisations and leading cultural venues across the UK to provide funding for short films, support for the development of first features, as well as a range of professional and creative development programmes.

Find out more and watch supported work: <https://network.bfi.org.uk/> @bfinetwork

About the BFI

We are a cultural charity, a National Lottery distributor, and the UK's lead organisation for film and the moving image. Our mission is:

- To support creativity and actively seek out the next generation of UK storytellers

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- To grow and care for the BFI National Archive, the world's largest film and television archive
- To offer the widest range of UK and international moving image culture through our programmes and festivals - delivered online and in venue
- To use our knowledge to educate and deepen public appreciation and understanding
- To work with Government and industry to ensure the continued growth of the UK's screen industries

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Tim Richards.

About Michaela Coel

Emmy and BAFTA award-winning actress, playwright, screenwriter, director, showrunner, poet and author, Michaela Coel is one of the UK's leading stars. Having won numerous awards for her hit TV series, *I MAY DESTROY YOU*, Michaela is the first black woman to win an Emmy for Outstanding Writing for a Limited or Anthology series and featured in Time Magazines 100 Most Influential People of 2020.

Michaela's phenomenally successful and ground-breaking HBO/BBC dark comedy-drama, *I MAY DESTROY YOU*, which she created, wrote, co-directed, and starred in premiered in June 2020. The series is fearless, frank, and provocative, offering refreshing insight into the contemporary lives of young people and the complex issues they face while living, working, and building relationships in London. Michaela plays the central role of 'Arabella', a self-assured, care-free Londoner whose identity is called into question upon being spiked with a date-rape drug. The series was met with across-the-board praise from both critics and audiences alike and won a host of prestigious awards including: two Emmys, five BAFTAs, three Royal Television Society awards, a Peabody Award, two Independent Spirit Awards and a GLAAD Award, amongst many others, with multiple nominations globally.

Most recently, Michaela starred in Marvel movie *BLACK PANTHER: WAKANDA FOREVER*, the sequel to the 2018 blockbuster with Ryan Coogler writing and directing again. In 2023 she will feature in the *MR AND MRS. SMITH* series for Amazon alongside co-creator, executive producer and star of the show, Donald Glover.

Michaela's first book, *MISFITS: A PERSONAL MANIFESTO* was released in September 2021 and received wide acclaim, described as: 'Comic and devastating' by the New York Times, 'Your self-help bible of 2021' by the Sunday Times and 'A perfect truth teller of our time' by Elle. The book is a passionate and inspired declaration against fitting in. It is based on the prestigious MacTaggart lecture Michaela gave in 2018 at the Edinburgh TV Festival, where she was the first black woman to take the lectern.

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In 2018, Michaela played the lead role in *BEEN SO LONG* a movie-musical written by Che Walker and directed by Tinge Krishnan. The film was released on Netflix and Michaela was nominated for 'Most Promising Newcomer' at the British Independent Film. That year Michaela also starred in the BBC Two/Netflix drama *BLACK EARTH RISING*, receiving rave reviews for her performance as Kate Ashby, a woman who as a young child was rescued during the Rwandan genocide and brought to Britain. Written and directed by Hugo Blick, the show explored issues of justice, guilt and self-determination across Europe, the UK, Africa, and the USA.

In 2017, Michaela was picked as one of the Screen International 'Stars of Tomorrow' and made the Forbes Magazine '30 under 30' list celebrating the brightest young entrepreneurs, breakout talents and change agents across the globe. Michaela was also selected as one of the European Shooting Stars at the Berlinale Film Festival.

2017 saw Michaela feature in series four of Charlie Brooker's award-winning dystopian drama series *BLACK MIRROR* for Netflix. Michaela had previously appeared in the third series of *BLACK MIRROR*, in Joe Wright's episode *NOSEDIVE*. Michaela also made a surprise cameo appearance in the 2017 film *STAR WARS: THE LAST JEDI*.

Michaela first came to prominence for her debut series *CHEWING GUM*, based on her sensational play, *CHEWING GUM DREAMS*, which ran at the National Theatre in 2014. The success of *CHEWING GUM* led to several awards for Michaela including two Royal Television Society Awards for 'Best Comedy Performance' and 'Breakthrough Performance'. A BAFTA Television Craft Award for 'Breakthrough Talent', the 'Best Female Performance in a Comedy Programme' award at the BAFTA Television Awards and a Broadcast Digital Award for 'Best Scripted Programme'.

Other TV credits include: E4 comedy-drama *THE ALIENS*; BBC espionage drama *LONDON SPY*, starring alongside Ben Whishaw and Jim Broadbent; and the award-winning, raw and gripping C4 drama *TOP BOY*.

Michaela's theatre credits include acting roles in *HOME* directed by Nadia Fall, *MEDEA* and *BLURRED LINES*, directed by Carrie Cracknell, all at the National Theatre, and *THREE BIRDS* at the Bush Theatre and Manchester Royal Exchange, directed by Sarah Frankcom.

For further information please contact:

Chris Overall
BMW Media Relations Manager
Tel: 07815 370 990
Email: Chris.Overall@bmw.co.uk

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Christina Burnham-Hepe
General Manager, Communications
Tel: 07815 371 206
Email: Christina.Burnham-Hepe@bmw.co.uk

Graham Biggs
Corporate Communications Director
Tel: 07815 376 867
Email: Graham.Biggs@bmw.co.uk