



Media Information
16 June, 2023

The BMW Filmmaking Challenge in Partnership with the BFI Shortlists Emerging UK Filmmakers

The BMW Filmmaking Challenge in partnership with the BFI is proud to announce the five shortlisted filmmakers who will have the opportunity to showcase their talent at the prestigious BFI London Film Festival in partnership with American Express. Industry figureheads Ncuti Gatwa, Terri White and Asif Kapadia, will judge the overall winner to be announced as part of the Closing Night on 15 October 2023.

With the aim of supporting aspiring filmmakers in their career development and bringing fresh perspectives to the film industry, the BMW Filmmaking Challenge provides a platform for filmmakers to stretch their artistic creativity under the mentorship of industry game-changer Michaela Coel. Coel is supporting the execution of the filmmakers' visions, creative influences, and production process.

The calibre of shortlisted applicants is a testament to the vibrant creativity alive in UK independent filmmaking. Coel shares her experience of meeting the shortlisted filmmakers, stating, **"It's been an honour to contribute to this vibrant, intuitive, and eclectic group of shortlisted filmmakers. The level of talent and creativity they've displayed is exceptional. As a mentor, it's been an enriching experience to witness their dedication and passion for the craft."**

With a focus on supporting the creativity of the UK's future filmmaking talent, the Challenge draws inspiration from the ultra-wide 31.3-inch rear passenger screen of the BMW i7. The Filmmakers have been tasked with bringing their unique stories to life in just 90 seconds, adhering to the theme of "Evolving Perspectives."

Each of the shortlisted teams will now receive a £10,000 production budget, access to 8K camera technology, support from the BFI through Executive Producer Caragh Davison and ongoing mentorship from Coel.

Renowned for her work creating and starring in multi-award-winning TV shows such as "Chewing Gum" and "I May Destroy You," and recently featured in the Marvel movie "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever," Coel adds, **"The 'Evolving Perspectives' theme of the BMW Filmmaking Challenge resonates deeply with the current cultural climate. This truly is a platform for these emerging filmmakers to experiment, explore the capabilities of new technology, and make a powerful statement in a condensed format inspired by the i7's ultra-wide screen."**

Their films will not only captivate audiences but also contribute to the ongoing evolution of the film industry. I am excited to witness the reveal and to celebrate their achievements at the BFI London Film Festival in October."

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The five shortlisted prospective shorts and lead creatives making up the filmmaking teams include:

1. "BLADES"

A group of young Black boys run into a building. One of them is about to do the unimaginable...

- **Christopher Chuky, Director:** Award-winning director of short films, theatre, and music videos
- **Tony Longe, Producer:** Freelance creative producer with a focus on film and promos who has worked in the screen industries
- **Eno Mfon, Writer:** Screenwriter, playwright, and performer with a focus on political, honest and human works
- **Amara Rossell, Producer:** Background in advertising, producer of commercials, music, film, and TV

2. "DAYTIMERS"

An insight into Daytimers, the South Asian DJ collective that are breaking new ground in Britain.

- **Tulsi Shivaanand, Director and Writer:** Writer and director with experience of short films, film festival circuits and a background in theatre and art
- **Eliza Lewis, Producer:** Producer and actor with production experience in music promos, commercials, and short films

3. "RICE BALL"

Told through animation, a young Taiwanese schoolkid is afraid to bring her lunch to school out of the fear of being ridiculed for being different.

- **Kristina Pringle, Director and Writer:** A Taiwanese writer and director residing in London with experience of both narrative projects and commercials
- **Samantha Locock, Producer:** Freelance producer on short form narrative and a production coordinator on commercials
- **Harry Shaw, Producer:** Award-winning producer

4. "HEN DO"

En-route to her hen weekend, bride-to-be Faye kills the vibe with a bombshell confession.

- **Alia Ghafar, Director and Writer:** Glasgow-based writer and director of short films which have screened widely at film festivals, currently developing her debut feature

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- **Misha McCullagh, Producer:** Scottish producer with interdisciplinary experience in the creative industries

5. "WE COLLIDE"

A queercore romance - a visceral and immersive exploration of the power of the mosh pit and finding love in the most unlikely of places.

- **Jason Bradbury, Director and Writer:** Writer and director exploring the themes of home, memory and the search for belonging for LGBTQI+ people, currently developing his debut feature.
- **Cheri Darbon, Producer:** Freelance producer with a focus on internationally appealing genre films and television

Mia Bays, Director of the BFI Filmmaking Fund, said: "This partnership has allowed us to open up an exciting new opportunity to emerging UK filmmaking talent, which has inspired an exciting range of creative responses. The calibre of the shortlisted projects and the teams behind them are impressive, and it's pleasing to see filmmakers so engaged with the theme of 'evolving perspectives'. We can't wait to see the work that comes out of this new Challenge."

Currently in production, the five films will be completed in September. The three judges will select a winning film set to premiere as part of the Closing Night of the 67th BFI London Film Festival, in partnership with American Express, on October 15, 2023. All five films will be available for viewing on BFI Player (<https://player.bfi.org.uk>) following the premiere.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Filmmaker Biographies

"BLADES"

Tony Longe, Producer: Tony Longe is a highly skilled and experienced freelance creative producer with a focus on film and promos. With a background in the London film scene, he has worked with a diverse range of clients, from major industry players to emerging talent. He has been nominated for the BIFA '21 and Sundance '22 awards for his breakthrough short film "Precious Hair and Beauty." As a member of the BFI Insight Programme, Tony is always seeking new opportunities to collaborate with other talented individuals. After earning a Bachelor of Arts in Digital FilmProduction from Ravensbourne University, Tony began his career producing music videos for a

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variety of artists, including Davido, J Balvin, Future, Westlife, Aitch, and Wretch 32. He recently produced "Random Acts' The Gift," which premiered on Film4, and the short film "Appreciation," which was selected for the 2019 BFI London Film Festival, Aesthetica Short Film Festival and was an official nominee at the London Critics' Film Awards 2019 for British/Irish Short Film of the Year. Tony is currently an active BFI Network Insight Producer and developing a slate of films.

Eno Mfon, Writer: Eno is an award-winning screenwriter, playwright and poet known for her political, unwaveringly honest and resolutely human writing. Her debut one-woman show 'Check the Label' had sell-out performances at the Bristol Old Vic and was made into a short film for Channel 4's 'Random Acts', which won Best Short Film at the Royal Television Society Awards. Following her success in Bristol, Eno has had plays staged by major theatres across London, including the Young Vic, Kiln, Bush, Talawa and Almeida. She is currently in the writersroom for Season 3 of 'Devils' on Sky Atlantic and has been commissioned to write an episode for Big Light/Lux Vida.

Her work extends beyond the stage and screen, having written for the audio-drama series 'SIEGE,' 'Murmurs,' and '157 Years' for BBC Sounds and Radio 4, 'THAT PODCAST' for ETT and 'GNR8T' for Audible. Her poetry has seen her perform on platforms such as TEDx Talk and on Piccadilly Circus' big screen. Most recently, she contributed to the poetry anthology, 'A Part of a Story that Stared Before Me'. Her work has been recognised by the Independent, Guardian, Dazed, Vogue, Crack and Huck Magazine.

Christopher Chucky, Director: Chris Chuky is a highly acclaimed and award-winning artist whose talent shines through his exceptional work in the realms of short films, theatre, and music videos. His notable achievements include a short film adaptation of Othello, titled False Men, which received prestigious accolades from the London Short Film Festival, Hiive LSFF One to Watch, and BFI Future Festival Hiive award. Additionally, Chris directed The Money Tree for the National Film and Television School, with the support of Channel 4, and presented a stage piece for Monolithic at Soho House, which paid homage to women and Nina Simone through innovative writings. He has garnered attention from esteemed organizations, such as being selected as one of The Blacklist: Guap Magazine's 30 Under 30 and being included in New Waves' Top 10 Directors for 2021. Chris's music videos have also received nominations, at the UK Entertainment Awards 2021 for Best Music Video Director and UKMVA21 for Best R&B/Soul Video Newcomer. Notably, he has been acknowledged by Take More Photos and Instagram's UK Black History Month campaign, while also achieving membership in BAFTA Connect. Chris's multifaceted contributions have established him as an exceptional director, making a significant impact on the artistic landscape.

Amara Rossell, Producer: Amara has been in the industry for 7 years producing commercials, music, film and TV. She has worked with world class directors, brands and artists, I started my career in advertising, working for top companies such as Ogilvy and Adam & Eve DDB, producing

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projects for brands such as John Lewis, Waitrose, Facebook, Google, Sky, ITV and the BBC. In addition to this she has produced music videos for Chris Brown, Bree Runway, JAE5, Dave and many others.

Her passion for narrative which has led her to become an award-winning producer, her recent short film has been recently selected for Tribeca 2023. In addition to this she produced Things I Never Told my Father Written by Letitia Wright which won best international short at the New York film festival, and also part of the team that was nominated for breakthrough short film at BIFA '21 and Sundance '22, for the short film: Precious Hair and Beauty'.

"DAYTIMERS"

Eliza Lewis, Producer: Liza Lewis is a London based producer and actor currently working for Papaya Films. She has produced multiple music promos and award-winning short films, whilst working across the commercial industry too. Her work with So La Flair theatre company took her on stage to the sell-out show 'How To Keep Up With The Kardashians' at the Underbelly Fringe 2022. Liza is currently working with Papaya Films on short form narrative and commercial work.

Tulsi Shivaanand, Writer/Producer: Tulsi Shivaanand is a Writer and Director based in London. Following her successful film festival circuit, winning Best British Short at the London Independent she is represented by Papaya Films and Curtis Brown. As a British born Indian her work focuses on conflicting identity and physicalising her character's internal battles. Tulsi takes a highly visual approach to filmmaking, using abstract concepts to create heightened worlds through intense sound, bold production design and styling. Ultimately storytelling lies at the heart of her creations and pervades through all aspects of her films.

"HEN DO"

Alia Ghafar, Writer/Director: Alia Ghafar is a Writer/Director from and based in Glasgow. She is an alumni of the BFI NETWORK x BAFTA Crew Mentorship Scheme, NETWORK@LFF 2021 and EIFF Talent Lab 2022.

Her first short, SALT & SAUCE, premiered at BFI London Film Festival in 2017, going on to screen at multiple BAFTA-qualifying festivals. SALT & SAUCE won the Scottish Short Film Award at Glasgow Short Film Festival 2018 and was nominated for Best British Short at the London Film Critics' Circle Awards 2019. The film was also broadcast on BBC Scotland/BBC iPlayer.

In 2020, Alia completed her second short SCUZZ, commissioned by BFI Network/Screen Scotland.

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Festival selections include EIFF, GSFF, Liverpool Film Festival, Manchester Film Festival, Cinemagic Belfast Festival and British Shorts Berlin. The film won the Best Director Award at Women X Festival 2022. Alia was commissioned by BBC The Social to write ALONE, a short drama released online in July 2022, which has been nominated for Best Drama and Best Writer at the RTS Scotland Awards 2023. Currently, she is developing her first feature - YELLOW MOON, an adaptation of the play by David Greig. Alongside her feature, Alia is developing several projects for television.

Misha McCullagh, Producer: Misha is a producer, with interdisciplinary experience in the creative industries. She is a BAFTA Prince William Bursary recipient and a GFF New Talent Mentee. She was selected for Short Circuit's Producer Accelerator in 2021. Misha works in association with Blazing Griffin who are executive producers of Misha's 2022/23 slate. She is currently developing a feature film We Are Not Animals, about Scottish prison reform in the 1980s, directed by Khaled Spiwak, written by RTS-winning Stef Smith and with BAFTA-winning DOP Alan McLaughlin.

She also produced BFI Network short Candy with Sarah Grant which is currently tearing up the festival circuit, with three BAFTA and BIFA qualifying festivals already under its belt and a top prize winner at 16 Days 16 Films. Misha also works as a production coordinator, recently on CBBC's The Dumping Ground, The Hogmanay Show 2022 and Molly and Mack series 3 & 4. Misha is driven to create work that is bold and vivid, amplifying underrepresented voices whilst diversifying and promoting the wealth of Scottish-based talent on and off the screen.

"RICE BALL"

Samantha Locock, Producer: Samantha is a producer and writer-director who loves to create human issue stories which is why she resonated with this film, Rice Ball has strong themes of identity, culture and allyship portrayed in a positive way. She works as a freelance producer on short form narrative and a production coordinator on commercials. Having grown up glued to the DVD player watching Disney and Studio Ghibli films she is excited to venture into the world of animation production. Her short films have screened around the world and she's looking forward to seeing how far this one will go.

Harry Shaw, Producer: Harry Shaw is a producer, screenwriter and director working across non-fiction and narrative film and television. His work has been broadcast on Channel 4, Sky1 and screened at several internationally recognised festivals. Through his production company, Everyday Studio, Harry focuses on developing purpose-driven, high-end cinematic work.

Kristina Pringle, Writer/Director: Kristina is a Taiwanese Writer, Director and Producer working across narrative and non-fiction. The aim within her work has been to create film worlds that fill the

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frame with colour, heart and meaning. Rice Ball is a script that she wishes she'd seen more of on-screen growing up, one that she hopes first and second-generation immigrant communities within its future audience can relate to and feel joy from.

"WE COLLIDE"

Jason Bradbury, Writer/Director: Jason Bradbury is a London based writer/director. His work often explores the themes of home, memory and the search for belonging for LGBTIQ+ people, and have screened at festivals internationally and been seen by over 18 million people online.

His films include ISAAC AND THE RAM (The Uncertain Kingdom), MY SWEET PRINCE (commissioned by BBC and BFI, shortlisted for Best of British at Iris Prize Festival) and WE ONCE WERE TIDE (BFI Flare). He has attended Berlinale Talent Campus, BBC Writers Room London Voices and BAFTA X BFI Flare Mentorship. He is currently writing his debut feature LAYBY with the support of the BFI NETWORK Early Development Fund. The project has been selected for development programmes at Torino Film Lab and MIDPOINT Institute.

Cheri Darbon, Producer: Cheri Darbon is a producer with a diverse background in commercials, television and independent film. During her career, Cheri has worked with major broadcasters as well as more recent projects alongside the likes of Netflix, Film4 and the National Theatre. Her current project, Luna Carmoon's debut feature HOARD, sees Cheri take on an associate producer role, with the backing of BBC Film and BFI. Most recently she has been working with Netflix and Creative UK as a recipient of their Breakout fund, an opportunity that supports emerging talent pursuing genre-focused feature films.

Her short films have screened at numerous festivals, with their success contributing to her selection in this year's prestigious BFI Insight Emerging Producer's programme. In 2020, the same year she was selected for BFI's Flare x BAFTA Crew, Cheri established June & Stella Productions, a space in which she continues to develop inspiring stories and champion emerging filmmakers focusing on internationally appealing genre films and television.

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.

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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 2022 was € 23.5 billion on revenues amounting to € 142.6 billion. As of 31 December 2022, the BMW Group had a workforce of 149,475 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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The 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

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
 - 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.

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