AT THE OSCARS: FILMMAKER STORIES | WHAT'S ON GUIDE: FESTIVAL PROGRAMME | MARK JENKIN: THE MAKING OF BAIT | DIVERSITY DEBATE: TIME FOR CHANGE

SATISFIED EYE

FOR THE INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER

ISSUE 3 / OCTOBER 2020

"THIS IS UTTERLY WORTHLESS ...WHAT AM I DOING WITH MY LIFE?"

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SATISFIED EYE 3

Bigger, Better, One of the Best in the World

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COVID 19 SAFETY INFO
The Satisfied Eye International Film Festival will be ensuring all up-to-date government Covid-19 guidelines are adhered to. Full sanitation will take place before and after each screening, all seats are socially distanced and staff will be on hand to ensure these measures are maintained.

Cover image: Krula Photography

FESTIVAL SPONSORS

FOREWORD

Chris Hastings

You could be forgiven for thinking that 2020 has thrown us into a Dickensian Groundhog Day and dependent upon your media source, it's either the best of times or the worst of times for the film industry. Wherever you look, we're witnessing the demise of festivals, untold opportunity for independent film, a fatal quake for bricks-and-mortar cinema, or a boon for new technologies. The only certainty is uncertainty; and Baby Yoda.

The relationship which has evolved over the past decade between providers and audiences has taken a sizeable leap forward during the pandemic and, for now at least, theatrical has lost its crown. The permanence of this seismic shift will be played out over the coming months as audiences either return to cinemas or decide they prefer the new normal.

Of course, industry-wide naval-gazing is nothing new and the death-knell of the archaic systems that underpin the industry have been predicted for as long as those archaic systems have been in place. Yet, still they persist, jabbing away like an ageing boxer past his prime, with just enough resilience to defy the anticipated KO. It's the irony of a technology-obsessed world, where everyone keeps an iPhone in their pocket and CCTV on their doorstep, that Netflix is still perceived as a bastard interloper, the legitimacy of Academy Award qualifications still questioned.

But what does this all mean for independent filmmakers, who are having to navigate a new virtual world and find innovative ways of gaining exposure; who are having to decide whether to hold onto their opus for a live premiere in 2021 or place their bets on immediate online exhibition? While the short-term outlook is uncertain, the long-term changes in consumption and viewing habits should signal optimism.

When packaging a project (and juggling the usual demands for saleable talent, for instance) it's easy to perceive the requisite hoops as a vagary of that same archaic system; but dig a little deeper and the truth is that it's simply the tail wagging the dog. The inaugural season of the Satisfied Eye International Film Festival (which followed a year of audience research) threw up surprising statistics. The vast majority of audiences chose what they watched based primarily on the names in the credits and the genre (no shocks there) but - more surprising - most audiences had no idea that anything outside their local multiplex even existed and over 3/4 of cinema goers were unaware that professional filmmakers produced short films, assuming that 'short film' was simply a synonym for 'student film' (not to denigrate the incredible work of student filmmakers, similarly undervalued by the masses).

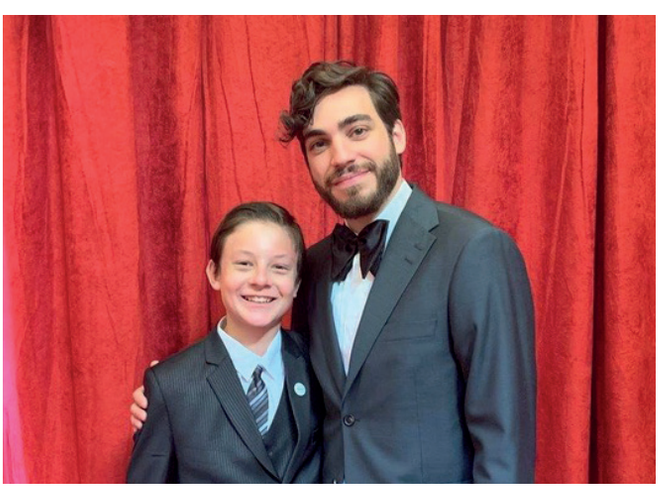
This disconnect between audience assumption and the realities of the industry is a key part of the challenge facing independent film and filmmakers. Before the likes of Netflix, documentaries and world cinema were, in the main, perceived as the niche habitat of the dedicated cinephile rather than something to be enjoyed by the casual channel-surfer. Now, families gather around The Platform and Tiger King; entire offices enjoy heated water cooler debates about 365 Days and Don't F*ck With Cats (or at least they did before Covid-19); Love, Death & Robots has legitimised short form content; and while it may not pay for that move to Beverly Hills, filmmakers can reach new audiences on Amazon.

Whatever anyone may think, that's progress. In the post-pandemic era, distribution methods are getting a shake-up, with digital releases and streaming fast-tracked as the alternative to delayed festival and theatrical releases. But, for independent filmmakers, change is already afoot and it's a testament to the power of streaming that it has created not only a new paradigm in audience viewing habits, but an infinitely more diverse appetite. Now audiences don't just want to check the credits, they want something that will engage: the same kind of content which astonishes us year in year out at the Satisfied Eye International Film Festival.

It's too soon to say the future is bright, but rumours of the apocalypse might be a little premature.

THE OSCARS

The Academy Awards are often seen as the pinnacle of the film world. The yearly gathering of Hollywood's elite is broadcast around the world, with people vying for their favourite actors and films to scoop the coveted statuettes. Being awarded an Oscar is the stuff of dreams for some filmmakers, but what is the reality of those dreams after they have been achieved? What happens after the glitz and glamour of the event when filmmakers have to get back to work? Are the Oscars all they're hyped up to be? Ellen Cummings spoke to four Oscar winners and nominees about their experience with the Academy Awards.



JÉRÉMY COMTE

Jérémy is a director, writer and editor based in Montréal, Canada. Jérémy's short film Fauve, which was screened at SEIFF in 2019, tells the story of two errant boys playing in a surface mine who sink into a seemingly innocent power game with Mother Nature as the sole observer. Fauve was nominated for the Oscar for Best Live Action Short Film at the 91st Academy Awards in 2019.

Why did you become a filmmaker?

When I was around ten years old I did a theatre show and the teacher put me up for the main role, and I realised that I found creating a story and telling it to an audience really interesting – but I didn't want to do it live. I like to really think it out and craft it. This naturally led me to filmmaking. I have a passion for making people experience emotions and I love it when people react to something. I knew that filmmaking was going to be hard, but I didn't let that stop me – I knew that I needed to do it and try to make it work.

What inspired you to make Fauve?

I grew up in a small town in the countryside of Québec. I was very close to nature – the nearest neighbour's house was five kilometres away. I used to explore the woods with my friend, and we'd always pull pranks on each other. Sometimes it would be almost dangerous; we were little boys in this environment of machismo. I grew up in those surroundings, so Fauve was clearly inspired by my upbringing. Another inspiration was a nightmare I once had about sinking in quicksand. In my dream I felt very trapped, and later on in my life, maybe six years ago, I was running in the countryside on a muddy

road when it was raining, and it all came back to me. I knew I wanted to make a film which explored a raw childhood in the countryside with elements of surrealism; something which reminds you of a dream but is also hyper-real with a grandiose presence of nature.

Did you set out to create an Oscar nomination-worthy film, or simply a great film that you believed in?

I had no expectations with the film, to be honest! I never thought it would have that level of success at festivals – we almost didn't submit it to Sundance. I was just trying to do the best I could. I had so much fun writing it and being on set, and I was very excited to see how people would emotionally react to the film. I think that's a good starting point. As soon as you set yourself really high expectations then you jinx it; it's hard to be successful that way.

What was your experience of working on the film like?

One of the high points was when we found the two actors to play the boys – Félix Grenier and Alexandre Perreault. We started casting in Montréal first, but we realised that the kids there were a bit too proper. They didn't have the right energy for the characters; I wanted them to be rough around the edges. So, we started casting in the area where we were shooting the film. My casting director reached out to elementary schools and we did auditions there. On the first day we saw fifty boys, but Félix and Alexandre had so much natural charisma. In the breaks between auditions they would be telling jokes to the other kids to make them laugh, and they already had this complicity. Seeing the characters becoming real and having the boys suggest ideas for the film really elevated the screenplay. Finding the locations was another high point – we found this mine with old, abandoned trains next to it. I thought it was so special that they exist next to each other, and it really complemented the vision of the film. That was a beautiful moment in pre-production.

However, Fauve was very difficult to shoot. We had to wait for a year to shoot because of funding, which was disappointing. When we went back to the location in the spring to shoot, it was full of water because the snow in the quarry had melted. It was impossible to create the scene where the boys are sinking in quicksand. The owner of the land reassured us that we'd be able to shoot in two to three months, so we had to wait again. Months passed and the water level hadn't really gone down, so we were freaking out! We ended up having to bring in a pump, and my producer and I had so many sleepless nights because we had to pump water out constantly. Shoots are always full of problems; you just have to find the solutions to them – that's exciting to me. You can never be sure how the film is going to come out, so you have to enjoy the process.

What was your role in the Oscar submission and campaign process?

A distribution company called H264 did most of the submission to festivals around the world. To get in the first round of Oscar submissions you need to win at an international festival which is eligible. The first festival which made us eligible for the Oscars longlist was REGARD: Festival International Du Court Métrage Au Saguenay, where Fauve won the Canadian Grand Prix and Youth Short Film awards. Depending on the year, there's about 150 short films which have won awards around the world and end up in the longlist for the Oscars.

Once you're in the longlist, it then narrows down to a shortlist of 10 films. From those 10 films it then goes down to five – the Oscar nominees. When we got into the shortlist, we hired a PR company to help us. I also had to do interviews and be present – I went to Los Angeles before we got the nomination to meet with people.

What impact has Fauve's Oscar nomination had on your career?

I wouldn't say there is more pressure to succeed, but there is a desire for it. I've gained credibility in the industry, and people are more interested in my ideas. However, I want to stay genuine to myself and try to work hard on stories. Sometimes people rush into shooting too quickly and the story isn't good enough, and I didn't want that. Some people were saying that since eyes were already on me and I had momentum, if I didn't shoot something quickly then I would lose out – but I knew that if it was a bad story then I'd be in a worse

situation than if I hadn't shot anything. I think Fauve was successful because it came from a good and genuine place and I was passionate about it, so for my next project I want to recreate that.

As for funding, I've just finished writing the draft of my first feature film and we're only looking at funding now, so I don't know how Fauve's success will affect that yet. At the least, it has helped me open doors and create new connections. I now have access to people who would have been hard to get to before the Oscar nomination.

Do you think institutions like the Oscars are important?

For me, being Oscar nominated is a childhood dream come true. I admire the Academy so much and I feel very grateful. Being at the actual event amongst so many creators and people who are passionate about cinema was amazing. I'm also now a member of the Academy, so I can watch the films that are nominated and be part of the voting process. I have more access to people in the industry who I really admire, and I'm learning a lot through that.

Do you think the Oscars a reasonable goal for indie filmmakers to aspire to?

I think it is a reasonable goal. All festivals and awards systems are a bit political, that's for sure – but what we've seen this year with Parasite is a foreign, subtitled film winning the Oscar for Best Film. You can see the change that is happening in the industry. You can see that people are more open to watching films that are subtitled or which portray different cultures. Even though Parasite wasn't in English and there probably weren't any specific actors that you wanted to watch from the outset, there is a love for the story and the filmmaking. My first feature film is going to be in French, so I see a little bit of myself in that. It's inspiring to dream of the Oscars – who knows what could happen!

What advice would you give to other filmmakers?

When you're writing a film, you never really know whether it's going to work out or not. I would say that what makes you special as a person are the challenges you encounter. When we face our fears and are honest with ourselves, it is an experience which is unique to you. You've seen yourself be vulnerable, and if you're bold enough to actually show the world this too then the audience will connect well with it. Your unique experience creates your vision. It's not easy, but it's part of the creative process.

There aren't really any do's or don'ts – there isn't one path to follow. I would say not to feel rushed by age because everyone has their own traumas, and it takes some people more time to process them. Some people make films earlier in their life and some do it later, but it's a combination of so many different things which aren't under our control. Remember that everything is possible and keep that mentality. Dream of the best.

To learn more about Jérémy and his work visit ***www.jeremycomte.com***

MARSHALL CURRY

Marshall is a writer, director, editor and producer based in Brooklyn, New York. He has three Oscar-nominated documentaries, and he won the Oscar for Best Live Action Short Film at the 92nd Academy Awards at the start of this year. The Neighbor's Window is Marshall's first foray into fiction. The Neighbor's Window is an official selection for SEIFF 2020 and will be screened at the festival as part of the People's Choice programme.

Why did you become a filmmaker?
I took a pretty winding road to becoming a filmmaker. I studied comparative religion at college and then taught high school students about government and politics, and then worked at a public radio station. After that I worked at an internet start-up in New York for a while, but I loved documentaries and really wanted to make one. I'd worked at the internet company for a few years and saved up some money, so I took a leave of absence to shoot, direct and edit a documentary called Street Fight about Cory Booker's first run for mayor of Newark, New Jersey. That was the first feature-length documentary that I'd worked on and it ended up being nominated for an Oscar that year. This enabled me to keep making documentaries, and then a few years ago I got an itch to make a fiction film – so I wrote and directed The Neighbor's Window.

What inspired you to make The Neighbor's Window?
In 2015 an episode of the Love and Radio podcast featured a writer and filmmaker named Diane Weipert who told a true story called The Living Room. The story was about a young couple moving in across the street from Diane, and her developing this sort of Rear Window obsession with watching the couple. It was a beautifully told story which stuck with me for years – it was a while before I decided to make The Neighbor's Window. When I was looking for a fiction story to make, I wanted something which had a very clear arc that would work as a short as opposed to a feature. I had an idea for a way to change the story to make it fictional and I liked the fact that it could be shot in one location. I loved the intimacy and complexity of the story, so it became the seed for the script.

Did you think the film could be an Oscar winner when you were writing and shooting it, or were you more focused on telling a good story?
The Oscars are so hard to predict and there are so many good movies which get made every year, so you'd be sort of crazy to make something with the goal of being nominated for or winning an Oscar. I can't say that I never thought about it, but I didn't think much about it. I just wanted to tell a story which was emotional and complex. When you make a short film there's not really much commercial gain – nobody watches fiction shorts at cinemas. It's kind of like writing a poem; you don't write a poem thinking that it's going to win a Pulitzer Prize, you just write a poem because it's what wants to come out of you. That was my approach to The Neighbor's Window.

What was your experience of working on the film like?
I loved the process. I do love making documentaries – they're very improvisational; you're chasing reality and trying to find a way of corralling it into becoming a movie – but with fiction you get a level of control over every detail, from fine tuning lines with actors to choreographing with the DP. I loved writing the story, I loved working with actors, and I loved working with the whole team to build a world in a way which you don't get to do with documentaries.

Although your Oscar win is very recent and the coronavirus pandemic has delayed a lot of filmmaking, has the win had a tangible effect on your career?
It has helped to open doors and start conversations with people. I think there's a lot of overlap between directing documentaries and fiction – the grammar of the movie is the same – but to have an Oscar-winning piece of fiction has definitely given me more credibility in this genre. I have a few movie and television projects which I'm currently developing scripts for.

What have you learned along the course of your career?
I'm definitely better at the technical side of making films now. My first film was just me getting out there with a camera and filming whatever I could film. It was a lot of guts and instinct – I didn't go to film school, so I didn't have formal training. There are elements of projects which are easier now than they used to be. I'm much more fluent in storytelling than I was 15 years ago but trying to come up with an original, fresh story is as hard as ever. I do think that the process of making my documentaries has made me a much better writer and director, though. A lot of the skills which I developed from my years of making non-fiction movies were transferable to fiction.

Do you think that institutions like the Oscars are important?
I think they're important in the sense that they draw attention to work which would otherwise be overlooked, especially with documentaries and short films. From that perspective, the Oscars are definitely helpful and I'm very appreciative of the attention that my films have received from the Academy. However, in the grand scheme of the world and with all the problems we're currently facing – are the Oscars important? Not really. Compared to the coronavirus pandemic, creeping fascism, racism and all of the other heart-breaking things which we're wrestling with, the Oscars feel kind of small!

Do you think that the Oscars are a reasonable goal for indie filmmakers to aspire to?
Yes – you never know what's going to happen. Street Fight was the first film I ever made, and it got nominated for an Oscar. The Neighbor's Window was the first fiction film I'd ever made, and it won an Oscar. Every year there are Oscar-winning filmmakers who come out of nowhere. Getting to the Oscars is certainly possible. On the other hand, I don't know if it's worth spending a lot of time or energy thinking about – all of your energy should be spent on making your movie as good as possible. If the Academy happens to value it then that's great, but you shouldn't try to figure out what appeals to the Academy or make something which you're not passionate about because you think it might win an Oscar.

What advice would you give to other filmmakers?
Make things that move and excite you personally. Focus on your passion for telling stories, making movies and working with casts and crews – that has to be the thing that drives you, not winning awards. Otherwise your work won't have the sparkle which touches other people. I would also say that filmmaking awards tenacity. There are going to be so many obstacles – every film has hundreds of points at which there's a good reason to quit, but you have to continue pushing forward until you finish it.

To learn more about Marshall and his work visit ***www.marshallcurry.com***

JUDY CAIRO AND MICHAEL A. SIMPSON

Judy and Michael are Los Angeles-based partners in Cairo Simpson Entertainment and Informant Media, and together they have produced more than 40 feature and television films and series that have been awarded Oscars, Golden Globes, Emmys, BAFTAs and dozens of other top industry awards. The film Crazy Heart, which stars Jeff Bridges and Maggie Gyllenhaal and was produced by Judy and Michael, won the Oscar for Best Actor and Best Original Song at the 82nd Academy Awards in 2010.

Why did you become filmmakers?

MAS: I wanted to make movies from the earliest of times, when I spent Saturday afternoons as a child at a local cinema in Atlanta, Georgia.

JC: My initial passion was for live theatre; I loved the idea of communicating a message to a captive audience. Both of us are drawn to the collaborative nature of film, and the spirit of family that is created while you're in production. All of those things apply to the experience of making TV or a film.

What are the best and worst parts of being a producer?

MAS: The first time you read a script and realise that you've found something special is always a great moment. Judy almost always reads first, so it's exciting to see her enthusiasm when she finds something that she responds to. The first day of principal photography is an electric moment. There's a "camaraderie of purpose" that I always enjoy. And when you first see the movie assembled into a rough cut. That's a fun moment. There are certainly stresses that come with the constantly shifting business terrain in which we find ourselves deployed as producers. But like Sinatra crooned about his mistakes being too few too mention; our stresses aren't worth lingering on. We move on.

How were you involved in the production process of Crazy Heart?

JC: In May of 2007, Bic Tran and Peter Trinh from ICM talent agency shared the screenplay with us at the Cannes Film Festival. Michael and I read the script that night and let them know that we wanted to make it our first feature film under our new banner of Informant Media. I had previously been producing TV movies, including the Elvis mini-series for CBS. Michael had made several independent films. One which he wrote and directed, Impure Thoughts, debuted at the Sundance Film Festival where it was a Grand Jury Prize Dramatic Nominee.

I met with director/writer Scott Cooper and Bobby Duvall's producing partner, Rob Carliner, who was already attached – and gave a set of notes, which Scott addressed. T-Bone Burnett was also attached; he introduced me to MTV/Paramount, who agreed to finance the film, and we started making offers to the cast. Jeff Bridges was already interested, but once the money was in place he attached and then CAA, his agency, called us in for a meeting and helped bring the rest of the cast to build around Jeff (Maggie Gyllenhaal, Colin Farrell, and a songwriter whom Colin had heard play in an LA music venue, Ryan Bingham. Ryan and T-Bone went on to win the Oscar for Best Original Song for Crazy Heart).

We headed for Santa Fe and Albuquerque, shot for just under a month, then headed back to LA, where John Axelrad had been editing. We shepherded the project for the next year, through various cuts, the sale to Searchlight by ICM's Jeff Berg, and the release.

What were your experiences of working on the film like?

JC: Shooting the music sequences was a high point, especially the scene we shot in Albuquerque with a real-life crowd of 10,000 people. I flew to Texas and convinced country music acts Toby Keith and Montgomery Gentry to let us borrow their stage – and their audience – when they came to Albuquerque; we only needed long enough to shoot two songs for the film. They agreed, but they said we could only have 15 minutes!

When the night came, the audience had no idea that, just before Toby Keith was to come to the stage, Jeff Bridges and Colin Farrell would be introduced by Bobby Duvall, and Jeff and Colin would perform two numbers for the film. We'd had just that afternoon to prepare, during the sound check. We had seven cameras, and Scott and DP Barry Markowitz were operating on pure adrenaline; it was exhilarating and terrifying and was the most memorable night of my and Michael's career.

MAS: The experience with Crazy Heart was certainly a proud moment for both of us. The script floated around Hollywood for many, many years and no one could figure out how to get it made. It was a very dark story, and the draft of the script we originally read had a particularly bleak ending. But we knew it had potential.

What impact did the film's Oscar wins have on your careers?

JC: It cannot be overstated. It helped us immensely, both in opening doors and raising funds to make our next movies. "We produced Crazy Heart" is the phrase that gets us in the room; it's then up to us to make sure we have material that at least takes a stab at rising to the calibre of Crazy Heart.

Other than that, it's just satisfying to be sitting at a restaurant in Paris or London, and you tell a stranger that you were involved in the film, and they say "I loved that movie," or "that film really meant something to me." That makes all the headaches of the industry worth it.

Have your attitudes changed when going in to produce a film?

JC: Every film teaches us something new. Michael compares movies to children, each with its own personality and challenges. Some are well-behaved. Others are always in trouble about one thing or another. What we know is that you have to constantly adjust and adapt to the marketplace and to the changes in the industry. These days, in some ways, it's probably harder to put together financing for independent films (but not impossible!) so we have shifted some of our time and attention to the streamers that fully finance. We've also branched into developing series, as there are so many opportunities there.

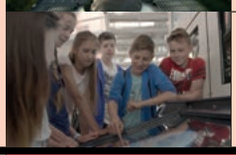
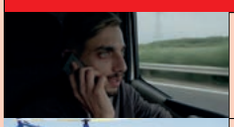
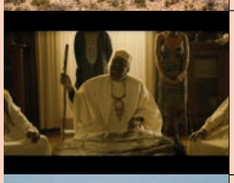
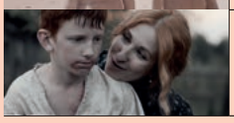
Do you think institutions like the Oscars are important?

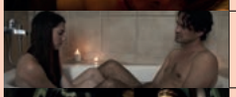
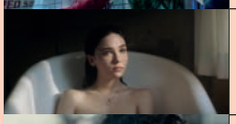
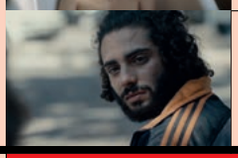
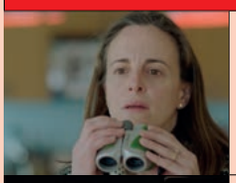
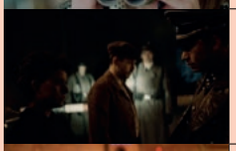
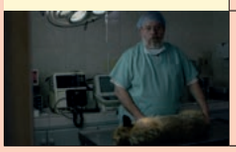
JC: I think the Oscars are a motivator, prompting filmmakers to push themselves to do their best work. But more importantly, I think that awards, not just Oscars but also the Film Independent Spirit Awards, help support a certain type of film that might otherwise not get financed or produced.

Crazy Heart was about a middle-aged, alcoholic country music singer. It wasn't exactly the type of film for which financiers were reaching into their wallet. But it was high-quality material, with a message about redemption that touched people, and so it attracted an amazing cast who wanted to slip inside those roles. They were rewarded with those very heavy gold statues – it was Jeff Bridges' fifth nomination!

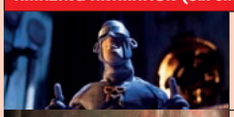
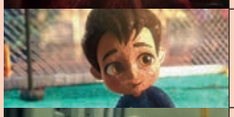
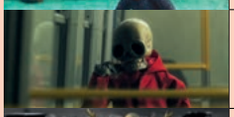
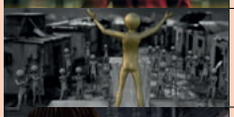
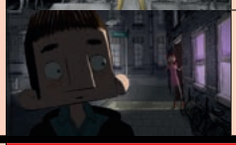
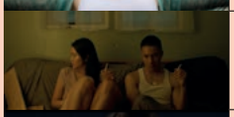
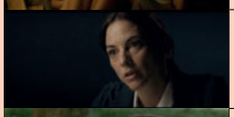
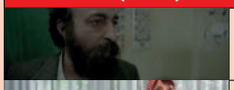
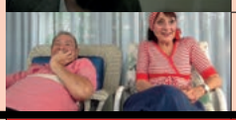
To find out more about Judy and Michael's work visit ***www.informantmedia.com***

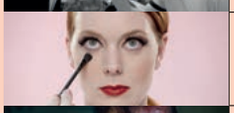
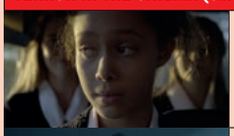
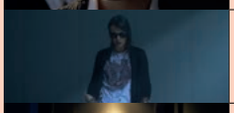
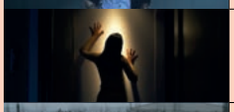
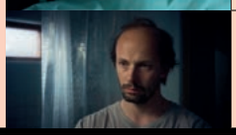
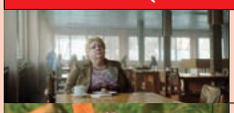
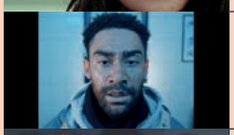
WHATS ON
FRIDAY 9 OCTOBER

Time		Film	Judges Comments
10.30am	**DOUBLE BILL (81mins)**		
		**Sister** (USA) *Siqi Song* In this Oscar-nominated short, a man thinks back to his childhood memories of growing up with an annoying little sister in China in the 1990s. (8mins)	Funny, touching and beautifully shot.
		**Piláte** (Hungary) *Linda Dombrovszky* Adapted from the novel by internationally renowned author Magda Szabó, PILÁTE tells the compelling story of Anna, an elderly widow who is persuaded to move from her quiet village to live with her daughter - a big city doctor - but torn from her own environment nothing goes quite to plan. (73mins)	A bravura performance by Ildikó Hámori which drives a wonderfully authentic film.
12.30pm	**LITTLE DOCS (Three of the best short documentaries from this year's festival) (86mins)**		
		**Dieorama** (USA) *Kevin Staake* By day, her work takes her to morgues where she observes autopsies and studies pictures of crime scenes. By night, her hobby turns her work and nightmarish imaginings into precise, red-splattered miniatures.	Brilliant. Fascinating, macabre and funny.
		**The Roads Most Traveled: Photojournalist Don Bartletti** (USA) *Bill Wisneski* Pulitzer prize-winning photojournalist Don Bartletti shares heart-wrenching stories from his forty-year career documenting history as it unfolds.	So touching and timely it should be seen by everyone.
		**Underage Engineers** (Poland) *Aleksandra Skowron and Hanna Polak* A truly inspiring and uplifting story about how one individual can dramatically change the lives of a class of typical teenagers - and how a teacher can become a better person under the influence of his pupils.	What a joyously uplifting tonic. I was grinning from ear to ear at the end credits.
2.30pm	**STRANGER THAN FICTION (A selection of five short films all inspired by true events) (84mins)**		
		**Cargo** (Germany) *Christina Tournatzés* In August 2015 the Hungarian government recorded the telephone conversations of smugglers transporting 71 refugees across Europe in the back of a truck. This is the real story.	As true to life as it gets.
		**Judas Collar** (Australia) *Alison James* In outback Australia a wild camel is captured and fitted with a tracking device known as a Judas Collar. Based on a real life practice, Judas Collar is a scripted, no-dialogue, live action short that explores the story of a camel used to betray her kind.	Stunning cinematography. A visual feast.
		**The German King** (USA) *Adetokumboh M'Cormack* The unbelievable true story of King Rudolf Douala Manga Bell; a German-raised African prince who becomes king after his father's death. Upon returning home to Cameroon, he sees his people being subjugated under Kaiser Wilhelm II's oppressive colonial rule and realizes the only way to put an end to their suffering, is to lead a rebellion against the man he once considered his brother.	Made me cry, smile and gave me goosebumps, all in under twenty minutes! A beautiful film.
		**Guaxuma** (Brazil) *Nara Normande* Tayra and I grew up on a beach in the north east of Brazil. We were inseparable. And then . . .	Sad, nostalgic, exquisite, completely unique biographical animation.
		**Mum's Hairpins** (Russia) *Tatiana Fedorovskaya* BAFTA-winning Mum's Hairpins recounts the fascinating true story of the escape of the director's own grandfather from German occupation in 1941.	Wow, just wow. Brilliant in every single way.

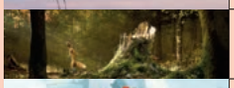
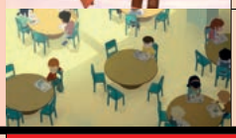
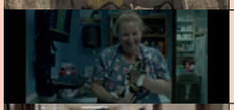
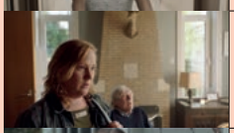
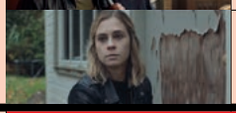
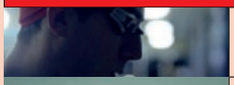
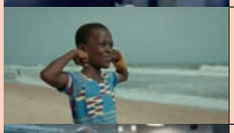
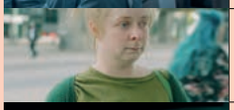
Time		Film	Judges Comments
4.30pm	**THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE (Seven short films showing love in all its guises, from comedy to tragedy and everything in between) (80mins)**		
		**He's The One** (USA) *Jessie Kahnweiler* A girl meets a guy and falls head over heels, but a shocking discovery forces her to question everything. A dark comedy about falling in love with the one person you're supposed to hate.	A thought-provoking dark comedy underpinned by strong central performances.
		**In Orbit** (Ireland) *Katie McNeice* There was once an invisible optician, trapped in a strange and lonely world. Her story starts with a broken lens and the woman who taught her to see things differently.	Haunting, esoteric and profound.
		**The Bathtub** (Spain) *Jonay Garcia* A couple's conversation in the bath doesn't go as expected.	An absolute lesson in less is more. Perfecta.
		**The Blue Bed** (Iran) *Alireza Kazemipour* A middle-aged woman visits a temporary marriage agency and signs up for a young working girl; but the girl becomes suspicious of her client's intent.	Sensitive, compelling, eye-opening.
		**Extra Innings** (USA) *John Gray* A reporter interviews the manager of the Boston Red Sox in an attempt to uncover secrets from his past.	Brilliant writing and performances. The dialogue was glorious.
		**Rumori** (Italy) *SÄMEN* A window into the conversations and sleepless nights of two people disappearing from each other's minds.	A mature thoughtful film that stayed with me long after it had finished.
		**The Suit** (Italy) *Maurizio Ravallese* An immigrant working in a laundry steals a suit from a sick groom who has been left at the altar and is forced to avenge the robbed man to atone for his sins.	Beautiful, soulful. This really moved me. And I love the way it plays with your expectations.
6.30pm	**PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS (The top short films from our programme as selected by local judges) (88mins)**		
		**The Neighbor's Window** (USA) *Marshall Curry* Winner of this year's Oscar for best live action short. A middle-aged woman with small children has her life shaken up when two free-spirited twenty-somethings move in across the street.	An effortless piece of filmmaking, excellent performances which packs an emotional message without sentimentality.
		**Alina** (USA) *Rami Kodeih* As Nazis separate children from their parents in the Warsaw Ghetto, a gang of women risks everything to smuggle their friend's three-month-old baby to safety. Inspired by true events.	Absolutely chest-tighteningly, breath-holdingly, edge-of-seat drama.
		**Better Than Neil Armstrong** (Iran) *Alireza Ghasemi* Four adventurous children embark on a journey to the moon with the mission of finding a mysterious place called The Redland; but the gates of Redland are being guarded by a mischievous snake.	A film both satisfyingly sad and uplifting. A real treat.
		**1971** (Sweden) *Magnus Häll* Mary lives in self-chosen solitude but when her precious silence is disturbed by a charming man whose car has broken down, we follow Mary's thoughts as she questions karma, what's right and what's wrong, what's true and what's fiction.	Perfect. I want to hang this film on my wall.
		**Quidquid Latine Dictum Sit, Altum Videtur** (Poland) *Julia Orlik* The wire girl wonders what she needs to do not to be made out of wire.	Love, love, love this. Fun, lively. Bitingly witty.
8.30pm	**DOUBLE BILL (85mins)**		
		**Rain** (Poland) *Piotr Milczarek* (5mins) A superhero's work is never done.	Boom. Hits its mark and makes its point with sardonic aplomb.
		**A Dog's Death** (Argentina) *Matias Ganz* (80mins) A bungling vet finds his life spiralling out of control when his incompetence leads to the death of a four-legged patient.	Brimming with dark buttock-clenching comedy, like an Argentinian Basil Fawlty.

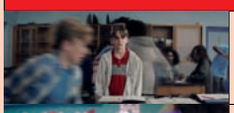
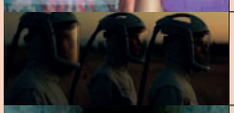
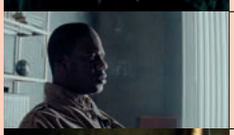
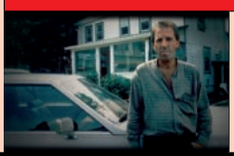
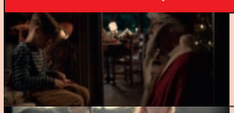
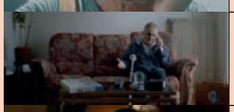
SATURDAY 10 OCTOBER

Time		Film	Judges Comments
10.30am	**AMAZING ANIMATION (Six short animation films from around the world) (93mins)**		
		**Meanwhile, at the abandoned factory** (Australia) *Michael Cusack* Meanwhile, at the abandoned factory... celebrates the heyday of cliff-hanger TV serials. Can our intrepid reporter find her way out of this classic dilemma?	Bold. Inventive. A true love letter to the 30s and 40s cliffhangers.
		**Girl in the Hallway** (Canada) *Valerie Barnhart* Why does Little Red Riding Hood give Jamie nightmares? It's been 15 years and the girl in the hallway haunts him still.	Utterly captivating. What a way to commemorate a life.
		**Ian, a Moving Story** (Argentina) *Abel Goldfarb* Ian was born with cerebral palsy. Like all kids, he wants to have friends, but discrimination and bullying keep him from his beloved playground. But Ian won't give up easily…	A delightful animation that deals with a difficult subject in a refreshing way.
		**Rebooted** (Australia) *Michael Shanks* A stop-motion animated skeleton, once a formidable villain of the silver screen and now a struggling actor, takes drastic measures when he learns the film for which he was created is being rebooted without him.	Loved everything about it. Screaming out for a TV show of its own.
		**Them** (Germany) *Robin Lochmann* In a forgotten village, where everyone is cut from the same cloth, a new, self-proclaimed leader arrives changing their way of life.	Completely unique and idiosyncratic.
		**Mind My Mind** (Holland) *Floor Adams* When relying on social scripts to survive the social world, it's not easy to go off-script. Especially if you're obsessed with German dive bombers and just want to date a girl.	A beautiful, non-confrontational, insightful and genuinely laugh out loud foray into anxiety.
12.30pm	**WOMEN BEHIND THE CAMERA (Six short films directed by incredible women filmmakers) (84mins)**		
		**Angel & Alien** (Canada) *Sandrine Béchade* Lili is nothing like her family: if they even are her family. Then she meets The Martian, a similarly misfit teen and together they form a bond hatched from their imaginary worlds.	Loved it. My film of the festival.
		**Our Home Here** (USA) *Angela Chen* Parallel stories of broken relationships between parents and their children striving for the American Dream all revolving around one explosive night at a fast food joint in Texas.	Walks the Crash line with infinitely more authenticity.
		**My Brother Juan** (Spain) *Cristina Martin Barcelona, Maria José Martin Barcelona* A 6-year-old girl undergoing child therapy talks happily about her brother Juan; but soon it becomes clear everything isn't quite as it seems.	Astonishingly mature performance by the young actress.
		**Dawn** (Belgium) *Valentine Lapiére* A 14-year-old girl placed in a juvenile correction centre for the first time struggles to strike a balance between doing what she wants, what she can and what she must	A terrifically handled examination of isolation and loneliness in a world that doesn't quite make sense.
		**Blocks** (USA) *Bridget Moloney* An existential comedy about the mother of two young children who begins to spontaneously vomit toy blocks.	Painfully familiar in the best way. Every mother will cheer at this.
		**Salam** (USA) *Claire Fowler* A female Lyft driver navigates the night shift in New York City while waiting to hear life-or-death news from her family in Syria.	Masterfully shot and observed.
2.30pm	**DOUBLE BILL (83mins)**		
		**W** (Greece) *Stelios Koupetoris* (6mins) A teacher goes through his daily routine during one of the most difficult days to teach.	Innovative and beautifully executed!
		**When All That's Left is Love** (USA) *Eric Gordon* (77mins) When All That's Left is Love is the emotionally gripping story of a wife's determination to care for her Alzheimer's-stricken husband in their home.	A completely unique perspective, so personal, so intimate.
4.30pm	**LAUGH OUT LOUD (From action comedy to farce, seven shorts to tickle every rib) (77mins)**		
		**Hardballer** (Finland) *T2* A man having doubts about his impending marriage gets thrown into a farcical life and death battle for survival during a bachelor party gone horribly wrong.	No one does bonkers comedy romp like the Fins.
		**Waffle** (USA) *Carlyn Hudson* Kerry is at a sleepover with the socially awkward, mysteriously orphaned heiress Katie and soon learns that Katie always gets what she wants.	Like the Royal Tenenbaums meets Black Mirror.

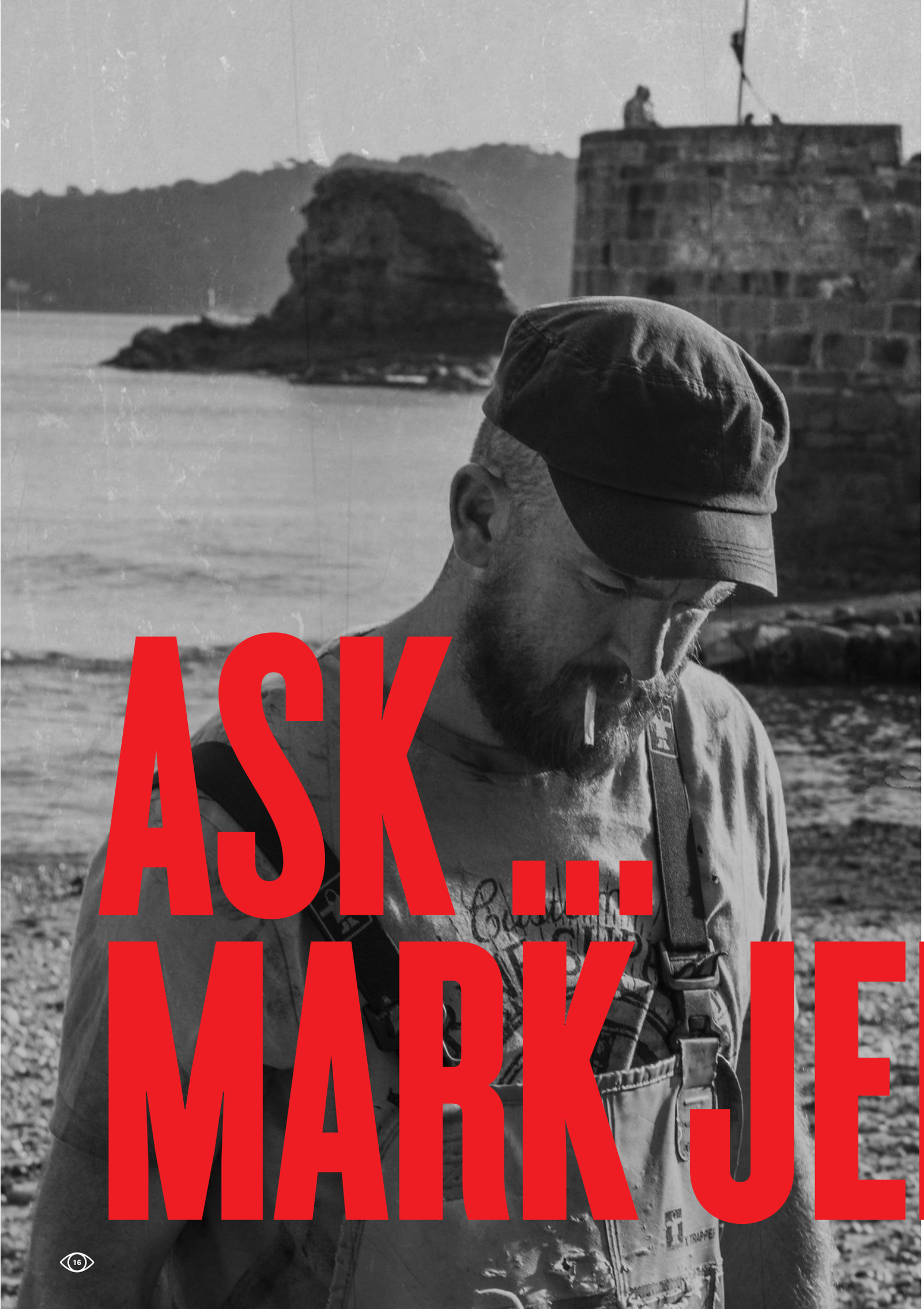
Time		Film	Judges Comments
4.30pm		**Broccoli** (Spain) *Ivan Sainz-Pardo* If life brings you broccoli, order a pizza.	Three minutes of comedy gold.
		**Night Shift** (Germany) *David Dybeck* After a night of clubbing René is called in to work an extra shift at the convenience store. Battling exhaustion and annoying customers, he is desperate to get to bed - but fate has other plans!	Has the heart and soul of Clerks but the acting and writing are razor sharp and dare I say it out Clerks Clerks.
		**Lady Parts** (USA) *Erin Rye, Jessica Sherif* Liz, a struggling actor who goes from dancing tampon to her first real break, playing a meaty role in a financial drama by an acclaimed up-and-coming director quickly discovers that things aren't what they seem.	Gloriously irreverent and much more than the sum of its parts - no pun intended.
		**Rubbish Robbers** (Norway) *Anders Teig* When a couple of 'badass' guys prepare to break into a bank, they quickly realize the terrible mistake it was to involve premium idiot Klaus as part of the group.	A great bit of ensemble acting elevate this to the next level.
		**Widows** (Spain) *Maria Guerra* After the sudden death of her husband, Julia watches over his body in the conjugal home; but is surprised by a visit from his former wife who wants to assume the title of 'widow' for herself.	Perfectly judged. Juggles the pathos and comedy. Left me feeling warm all over.
6.30pm	**TERROR IN THE CINEMA (Six shorts to keep you awake at night) (96mins)**		
		**Here There Be Monsters** (Australia) *Drew Macdonald* To escape incessant bullying on the bus home, a girl falls asleep only to wake up trapped at an empty yard, with something lurking outside - and if she wants to make it out alive, this frightened girl will have to unleash a monster of her own.	Tense and atmospheric.
		**Replica** (Spain) *Álvaro de la Hoz* Olivia goes out and tests herself, going further and further. Until she executes her plan.	A compelling emotional ride that builds and builds. The resolution is a thing of beauty.
		**Stucco** (USA) *Janina Gavankar, Russo Schelling* J is trying and failing to move forward as the scars of old relationships keep her trapped inside her new home. While hanging a piece of art, she knocks a hole in her wall that reveals what might be a hidden room.	Reminds me of Cronenberg at his best.
		**Mentor** (Hungary) *Szonja Szabó* A lonely and bitter teenager is guided by a mentor whom she knows only online and whose twisted tasks he claims are for her benefit. But just what game is her mentor playing?	The sense of impending doom is so horrible it's almost unbearable.
		**The Desecrated** (USA) *John Gray* A young morgue attendant working the night shift encounters an unwelcome visitor.	Nail biting stuff from first second to last.
		**Bad Hair** (Estonia) *Oskar Lehemaa* Insecure and balding, Leo locks himself in his apartment to try a new hair growth liquid. But the effects of the treatment have rather unexpected consequences.	Anyone who can watch this without covering their eyes or hiding behind a cushion is a stronger person than I.
8.30pm	**BEST OF BRITISH (Seven films from home soil) (76mins)**		
		**Anna** (UK) *Dekel Berenson* Living in war-torn Eastern Ukraine, Anna is an aging single mother who is desperate for a change. Lured by a radio advertisement, she goes to party with a group of American men who are touring the country, searching for love.	Every single moment of screen time is perfectly executed.
		**Come Wander With Me** (UK) *Molly Mayhew, Mia Moore* A journey through the woods exploring life, death, and the beautiful brutality of nature.	Both horrifically real and like a grotesque fairytale; like Chris Packham's nightmares.
		**Stigma** (Iraq) *Jaafar Muraad* The story of Iraqi victims who were tortured and humiliated by the Saddam Hussein regime because they refused to fight in the first Gulf War.	An extraordinary story.
		**Birds with No Legs** (UK) *Pavlos Stamatis* Harry encounters a beautiful woman in a late night burger bar but when she promises a kiss in return for some sparkling conversation he gets much more than he bargained for.	Beautifully shot, multi-layered, expertly directed and acted. It really is a great advert for British filmmaking.
		**Choker** (UK) *Orson Cornick* As a girl drops from the sky onto a crowded beach, a mysterious man drives at breakneck speed towards her.	The opening scenes were beautiful to watch.
		**Bulldog** (UK) *Kieran Stringfellow* After spending the night in a cell, a rough sleeper has a score to settle.	Fantastic. Reading the director's statement, this film achieved exactly what it set out to. In just over 6 minutes.
		**The Devil's Harmony** (UK) *Dylan Holmes Williams* In this Sundance winner, a bullied teenage girl leads an a cappella club on a trail of destruction against her high school enemies.	Delightfully surreal.

SUNDAY 11 OCTOBER

Time		Film	Judges Comments
11.00am	**KIDS ANIMATION (Six family friendly animation shorts) (50mins)**		
		**Warm Star** (Russia) *Anna Kuzina* A bird that keeps order in the sky accidentally drops a star during cleaning.	Warms the cockles of the heart.
		**Sous La Glace** (France) *Luce Grosjean, Ismail Berrahma, Flore Dupont, Laurie Estampes, Quentin Nory, Hugo Potin* On a lake, a heron is fishing while winter arrives.	Visually a work of art.
		**The Fox and the Bird** (Switzerland) *Sam and Fred Guillaume* A solitary fox finds itself improvising fatherhood for a freshly hatched baby bird.	Beautiful. Funny. Complex.
		**Blanket** (Russia) *Marina Moshkova* In the far North lives a very grumpy Polar Bear. One day he receives an unexpected visitor.	Comforting like a bedtime story.
		**The Kite** (Czech Republic) *Martin Smatana* A boy's games with his grandfather teach him life's big lessons.	A beautiful rumination on life and loss.
		**Hedgehog** (France) *Vaibhav Keswani, Jeanne Laureau, Colombine Majou, Morgane Mattard, Kaisa Pirttinen, Jong-ha Yoon* A little boy speaks about hedgehogs all the time to everybody.	Simple, nostalgic, bittersweet, surprising, multi-layered, so much more than it first appears.
12.30pm	**WONDER WOMEN (Six shorts focusing on strong women characters) (91mins)**		
		**Ward's Henna Party** (Egypt) *Morad Mostafa* A Sudanese henna painter goes to a young Egyptian bride to prepare her for her wedding: under the eyes of her daughter Ward, the encounter between the two women grows from complicity to suddenly unveiled tensions.	A thoughtful study in prejudice.
		**Good Heart** (Russia) *Evgeniya Jirkova* In a primitive family, all mom wants is that everyone is full and healthy. But one day everything changes when her son brings a puppy home.	This, this is my life! And the life of every parent! I wanted to cheer!
		**Keep it Quiet** (USA) *Yaya* Corey, a veterinarian, keeps her depression secret from family and friends, until one day she decides to take her own life.	Rusty Schwimmer gives an incredibly truthful, authentic performance.
		**Wanted: Strong Woman** (Canada) *Marilyn Cooke* Nadege lacks the confidence to get what she wants from life, until the day she discovers a new passion that awakens the beast inside her.	A nuanced film that should be celebrated.
		**Lieve** (Belgium) *Vincent Groos* Lieve, a home nurse, braves the windy weather on her moped to assist her elderly patients. She has a big heart and tries her hardest to fulfill the wishes of all her patients but her biggest challenge is learning to respect her own boundaries.	Perfectly observed, wonderfully scripted and acted.
		**Hot Chocolate** (New Zealand) *David Hay* Maddie, a young student, leaves her 8-year-old sister in the car as she collects some things from her flat - only to discover the dead body of her flatmate.	Wow. This was powerful. Incredible acting from the lead took you right there.
2.30pm	**ONES TO WATCH (Five student films showing the rising stars of the future) (91mins)**		
		**Blood Rule** (Australia) *Harry Tamblyn* When a girl's scream echoes through a public pool, parents flock to accuse the most likely subject.	So hard to watch, near flawless.
		**Good Night** (Ghana) *Anthony Nti* A foreigner in Ghana gets an assignment from his gang to find kids for a risky job that will take place later that evening. While spending the day with two energetic children, he starts to question his decision and how it will affect their lives.	Takes you through all the emotions, from joy to sadness and heartache and back again.
		**Raw** (Switzerland) *David Oesch* To succeed in the world of haute cuisine you need more than creativity. A young chef must learn that in this kitchen a lot of blood, sweat and tears go into making every dish.	Relentless edge of your seat stuff.
		**No Ill Will** (Denmark) *Andrias Hogenni* Elinborg runs into her old friend Marita at the grocery store. The conversation is civil yet awkward until Marita decides to ask the big question that's been bugging her for so long: has Elinborg blocked her on Facebook.	Bloody brilliant.
		**Dogwatch** (Austria) *Albin Wildner* Forced to take a job as a security guard for which he is ludicrously overqualified, Raphael finds his life taking some unexpected turns.	A microcosm of life, everything a film should be, sad, tragi-comic, hopeful.

Time		Film	Judges Comments
4.30pm	**THE TWILIGHT ZONE (From science fiction to macabre tales, a selection of six twisted shorts) (89mins)**		
		**Balloon** (USA) *Jeremy Merrifield* When fourteen-year-old Sam becomes the target of the school bully he feels pressured to hit back, but Sam isn't so sure– even if he does have super powers.	Excellent performances and effects.
		**Heat** (Holland) *Thessa Meijer* During an extreme heat wave, a shy girl seeks refuge in an ice cream shop.	Short, messed up and very sweet.
		**Third Kind** (Greece) *Yorgos Zois* Long since the planet has been abandoned and the human race has found refuge in outer space, three archeologists return to earth to investigate a mysterious signal.	Masterful filmmaking.
		**Dark Water** (Australia) *Erin Coates, Anna Nazzari* A deep-sea environment unexpectedly manifests in the walls of a grieving woman's suburban dwelling.	Completely engulfs you in its discomfort.
		**Bodyman (Experience Required)** (USA) *Ryan R Browne, Nick Ciffone* In the near future when gun deaths become an everyday occurance, a displaced roadkill cleanup worker applies for the newly federal-mandated position of 'bodyman'.	Great performances from both leads - sharp, slick, wouldn't be out of place in a series of Black Mirror.
		**Jupiter** (Germany) *Benjamin Pfohl* Hours before a comet passes the earth, a shy teenager has to decide to pursue her own path on earth or to follow her parents, members of a cosmic cult, through a fatal procedure into a higher existence.	Cerebral, thought-provoking with wonderful imagery.
6.30pm	**NARROWSBURG (85mins)**		
		**Narrowsburg** (USA) *Martha Shane* The incredible true story of a French film producer and a mafioso-turned-Hollywood-actor who attempt to turn a tiny American town into the Sundance of the East. Persuading the townspeople that they can be movie stars, launching a film festival and shooting a gangster movie. This stranger-than-fiction tale shows the power of cinema, and the fine line between dreams and delusions.	I spent most of my time watching this with my jaw on the floor.
8.30pm	**SIMPLY THE BEST (Five of this year's best short films competing for the Jaguar D'or) (85mins)**		
		**Thank You For Patiently Waiting** (Sweden) *Max Marklund, Anders Jacobsson* A short film about the inevitable ups and downs in life.	Makes me want to hug my loved ones and kiss my children.
		**Skin** (USA) *Guy Nattiv* In this Oscar-winning short, a black man smiles at a 10-year-old white boy across the checkout aisle in a supermarket. This innocuous moment sends two gangs into a ruthless war that ends with a shocking backlash.	The most impactful piece of cinema I've ever watched in my entire life.
		**One** (Spain) *Javier Marco Rico* Far out at sea, a cell phone floating inside an air-tight bag starts to ring.	Heart-wrenching and rare perspective on a familiar story, and all the more profound and moving for it.
		**Bonobo** (Switzerland) *Zoel Aeschbacher* When the elevator of their public housing breaks down, the fates of three strangers intertwine towards an explosive ending where their limits will be tested.	Expertly handled, unbearable climax.
		**Sticker** (Macedonia) *Georgi M Unkovski* After an unsuccessful attempt to renew his car registration, Dejan falls in a bureaucratic trap that tests his determination to be a responsible father.	Incredibly accomplished dark comedy from such a young filmmaker.
Showing throughout the festival		**Covid 19 - Together We Are Stronger** (USA) *Maya Adam* A light-hearted animated advisory video about COVID-19.	Deftly cuts through the science with humour.

For more information on any of the films or filmmakers contact Chris Hastings, Artistic Director at hello@satisfiedeye.com



ASK... MARK JE

Filmmakers put questions to multi-award-winning writer/director Mark Jenkin whose landmark film Bait picked up the BAFTA for Outstanding Debut in 2020. Described by Mark Kermode as "One of the defining British films of the decade" Bait has been released internationally in the UK, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden and Poland.

Next scheduled to direct the horror film Enys Men with Film 4, Mark's idiosyncratic filmmaking techniques favour traditional methods, with Bait shot in black and white on a 1976 hand-cranked Bolex; Mark processes all of his own footage with much of his work firmly rooted in his Cornish heritage.

How long did it take to make Bait?
It was quick. The middle of September 2017 to the end of July 2018 and it had its premiere in February 2019. The film that I did before, a 44 minute film called Bronco's House, I hand-processed and post-synced in exactly the same way as Bait but it was half the length. When I looked in my (Bronco's House) diary before we did Bait, I got my dates mixed up and thought it had taken me 9 months but Bronco's House actually took me a year and 9 months. When we did Bait I said I want to turn Bait around in the same amount of time but because of the diary mix-up I actually did it a year quicker.

Are you a planner or is your process instinctive?
I'd say my process is entirely instinctive. I'm a big believer in just trusting your gut instinct. I just read a biography of Sam Peckinpah and people who knew him said he'd always find the film in the edit, which I think I do as well. But - and I'm in no way comparing myself to Peckinpah - somebody like him would shoot the hell out of everything, he'd shoot with six cameras for hours and hours, and then he'd find the film in post. What I do is shoot hardly anything. I don't shoot any coverage. I just get the shots that I'm going to need in the scene the way I imagine. When I get in the edit, normally it doesn't quite work how I think it's going to work and I'll find the scene based on the options I'm forced to embrace and the shots that I've got. Which is why it ends up being fragmented and non-chronological. When you're in the warmth of a studio which is where I write, every option is open and you tend to overcomplicate things. It's the trap of the writer. Then you get on the location and realise you've got no time, no money, no resources - how am I going to do that sequence in 4 shots? So it's all about simplicity, which is why the film looks like it looks. It's why it's lit simply. It's why the action is simple. It's why it cuts around - because quite often I haven't got the coverage to communicate the scene in a more conventional way.

There was talk of Bait being picked up by the BBC at one point. How did you feel when that didn't come to fruition - did you think the film was never going to happen?
It was one in a long line of setbacks for the film and I actually remember that setback fondly. It went so far with BBC Films that it felt good we were being taken so seriously. In many ways it was a very different film then. Thematically it was the same but it was a found footage film. I went to see The Last Broadcast [a 1998 found footage horror] but by the time our film was ready to go and get financing, Blair Witch had blown up and all of the imitators that followed. At the time Laura Hardman was the producer, who was a really good friend of mine and she passed away very suddenly so the film was shelved for a while. It wasn't until a few years later that I reinvented it. This film's been with me my entire adult life. I came up with the idea in 1999 about a year after I'd graduated. So it's been in development - at least in my head - for 20 years. Because of the success the film's now had I don't ever think back to any of that time as being negative, because it was all part of getting it made. And I never give up on anything. Whether anyone was ever going to see it or not, that was out of my control. The bit that I was responsible for, I always knew I was going to make it one way or another.

The two words most often associated with Bait are 'authentic' and 'mythical' which sounds like an oxymoron! Do you think this is what's made it such a universal film with so many people?
I don't for one second think about the audience when I'm making a film, because there is no audience. To think about the audience when you're making something, it's dangerous because it's very presumptuous. But also you start designing something for an audience that doesn't exist. I think we were lucky that it resonated because of timing - so people were able to interpret it as a comment on Brexit or a general comment on the alienation of ordinary people or the lack of a voice that people had. But also by going local and specific you can achieve an authenticity that is universal as a context. If I can create a world that is authentic then people will engage with it in a way that it feels real. When I first wrote Bait (it was originally called The Holiday Park) it was so specific to a part of Cornwall, I thought even people in Cornwall wouldn't relate to it. Then I was at the American Premiere and a woman from Barbados came up to me and said "that film is about my dad". So universality is achieved from being very specific.

Pre-production and raising finance for a film often involves compromises. Was this ever an issue for Bait or did you always have complete control?
We lost quite a significant chunk of money before we went into production and the producers said we needed to make some savings. So I did a rewrite and originally both of the brothers had boats in the film and a lot of their arguments went on at sea. So when we lost the money, I rewrote it and lost one of the boats because they were the big expenses. Then I had to rewrite it so Martin was shooting the net off the beach. Which then became centrally the key aesthetic, which I'd never have written if we hadn't lost that money. It's a really good example of the limitations that then throw up creative possibilities.

Do you hate technology?

I don't want to fetishise the equipment but I get amazed that there isn't more discussion about form and the way films are made. It's always 'it's got to be about story' and 'if you're worrying about form the story's not working'. But it's not a book, you're not reading a novel, or telling stories round a campfire, it's a mechanical art form and the form is as important as the content and they should work together. I remember visiting a shoot and being introduced to the crew and somebody said "this is the DIT". I walked away and asked someone "What's a DIT?" and they thought I was joking. I thought, I really have stepped away. I'm not saying it's a bad way to work, but I'm so far away from that. The way we shoot, I have the camera, one 26mm lens, a light meter around my neck, a bag with my viewfinder and seven rolls of film. And that's it. I have an assistant with a tripod, Colin (Holt) with 3 lights and a reflector, so at the end of the day there's nothing else. So meeting this DIT - I found it fascinating - but it had no relevance to the way I work. I just decided to make films in the way I used to enjoy making films, so I removed anything that didn't fill me with deep joy. I made films on a VHS with a friend in the early 90s, we'd do the script and the costumes and shoot each other, but it was joyous because we were doing everything. Which is why I want to do it all still.

"As a kid making films, cameras were really rare, so when you got hold of a camera you wanted to be the one operating it."

Are you being given the freedom to work in your usual way on your next film Enys Men?

The Enys Men producer is Denzil Monk who produced Bronco's House. So we're doing that with Film 4. We've got a huge amount of freedom. Partly because it was the type of film that we need freedom. They were just willing to allow us to work in the way that we wanted to work. And it's at a budget level where we're working on a quick shoot, small cast, controllable locations - and although it's a period piece set in 1973 there's not a lot of period work. Having said that, we should have shot it by now in May and June but have been pushed back a year by the pandemic. But I think it's going to make it a better film.

You write, direct, edit, compose. What's the reasoning behind that?

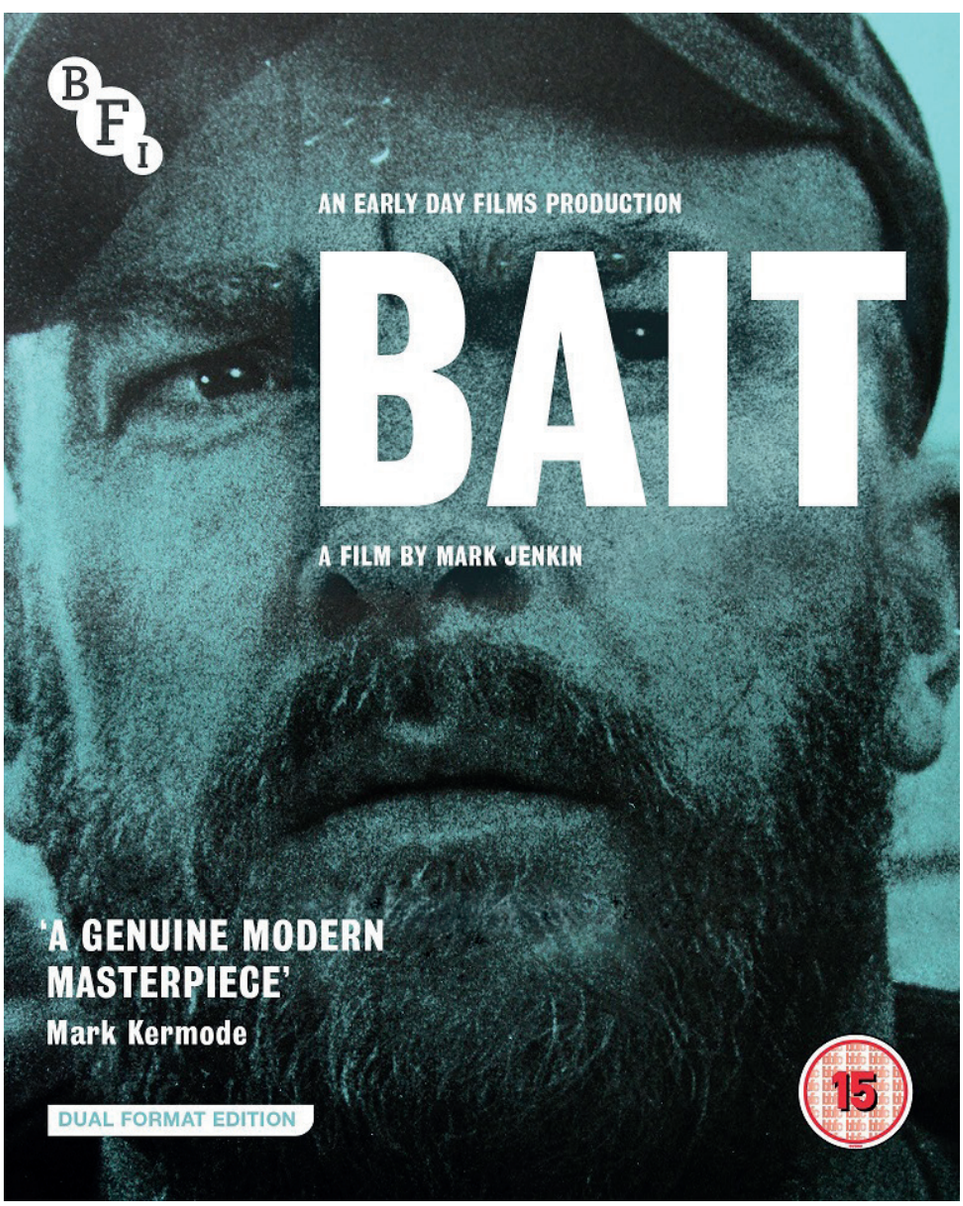
I think it goes back to the childlike excitement of all areas of filmmaking. As a kid making films, cameras were really rare, so when you got hold of a camera you wanted to be the one operating it. Then shooting film I love processing film. I started as a 16 year old shooting black and white photographs and processing them and it was the alchemy, the magic of opening up the tank and seeing an image. I didn't think twice about processing my own 8mm and 16mm film. The idea that I would send off my stock to a lab who would have all the fun of processing the film and then you'd pay them for it, it just seemed insane. I'm a filmmaker and I love films and I try to do as much of it as possible. Writing, because of the way I shoot, I write for the shoot and the edit and need ownership of that script so I can change the writing and story whilst I'm shooting. Then doing the score, that was an accident. Because I shoot everything silently I start to do all the rough foley and there was just a scene on the beach where I had to spot effect every wave, every footstep on the shingle, every bit of the net being moved and I just thought I can't face this foley - and I had a little analogue synthesiser and I started making this drone sound which I thought sounded like an out-of-tune accordian. And I thought

"There are times I do doubt myself and in the course of a single minute I can go from thinking "this is going to be the greatest film that the human race has ever seen" and by the end of that minute I can think "this is utterly worthless."

if I drop that on I don't have to do any of that foley. I watched it with the producers and told them - quite self consciously - the drones are just temporary and then they said "we actually quite like the drones." A few months later I've got a record deal and a soundtrack on vinyl! But that was by accident, I never meant to write the soundtrack as well. For Enys Men I've started working on the score because I want to do a crazy synth score, but I don't have a plan of what I'm doing, I just enjoy it. As soon as I don't have fun I wouldn't do it. At the moment I'm enjoying doing the music and sound design. Bronco's House, if you look at the credits, it wasn't shot by me or edited by me - they're all just anagrams of my name. I think I was self conscious of people thinking it's a vanity ego trip.

Did you ever have any doubts about what you were doing?

Every day. One of the technical things is that I've got no preview monitor. So nobody can see what we're shooting other than me. Quite often I'll be taking a shot and I'll turn to Colin who's lighting it and say "did we get that" and he'll say "I've got no idea, you're the only person who's looking at the actual shot". That puts a lot of pressure on me, which I really like. I try to take one take of everything. In some ways, that's really reassuring because I've seen it in the moment and as long as I get the processing right we've got it. There were a couple of moments in the very first week of the shoot - with our 'action sequences'. There's the altercation on the quayside we shot night for day, we were so behind. It was almost pitch dark. I just wasn't prepared. It was so full on - it was technically a fight scene and I thought, we're not going to get to the end of the shoot at this rate, I've lost the film here - this isn't going to cut together. That was the end of the very first week. It took me the whole editing process to make that scene work. It's such a weird scene now and I love it. It's so odd, the performances are really stylised because we were in such a race against time. But at the time it was an absolute clusterf**k. I hand processed 126 rolls of film for Bait which took about 3 months on my own and each day I opened the processing tanks I'd have that moment of "is this going to be the roll that means the film won't work". It's a process I've designed myself but there are times I do doubt myself and in the course of a single minute I can go from thinking "this is going to be the greatest film that the human race has ever seen" and by the end of that minute I can think "this is utterly worthless, I'm 44 years old, what am I doing with my life?" But I never give up on anything once I've started doing it.



BAIT is released on Blu-ray/DVD by the BFI and is available to rent on BFI Player. The Mark Jenkin short film collection, including HARD, CRACKED THE WIND (2019), is on BFI Player's Subscription service. https://player.bfi.org.uk/

THE DIVERSITY TIPPING POINT

Tobias Forrest in Daruma directed by Alexander Yellen

Affecting change is like going on a diet. The notion gives hope of a new you and a brighter future but, in practice, well sometimes it's just easier to forget the revolution and grab that doughnut.

The entertainment industry's cumbersome embrace of diversity has reached its very own doughnut moment. From BLM to #MeToo and everything in between, revolution never occurs without struggle and we're now at the diversity tipping point where change often flounders.

It's startling that it has taken the most atrocious of race-related deaths and high- profile sexual abuses, all played out in grotesque technicolor, for the wider community - those who don't endure the daily battle with discrimination - to acknowledge that maybe, just maybe, there's a problem.

But when support of a cause expects more than platitudes on social media, the world drags its heels. Often, it's simpler just to agree passively: "Change is needed, but don't take my doughnut."

So how do we tip the balance in favour of change and what can be done to normalise diversity and prevent it from being the elephant in the room? Satisfied Eye Magazine took the question to those on the sharp end of the debate.

"This is a big issue, and we have to attack it on so many levels," Erin Rye told us. A Los Angeles-based actor, writer and director, her short film Lady Parts, a scathingly witty takedown of the patriarchy's treatment of female actors, is one of SEIFF's official selections for 2020. "It starts with education and opportunity. I would love to see gender parity and racial diversity beginning in film school. Then within those film schools, where important relationships are forming and opinions are being forged, there must be a diverse faculty and a requirement that student productions have a diverse crew."

One barrier, according to Janice Turner, diversity officer at BECTU (the UK trade union representing workers in media and entertainment) is lack of transparency and the failure of the film industry to publish the diversity of cast and crew on each production. "So long as this information is not in the public domain, the issue of the under-representation of BAME workers (for instance) remains somebody else's problem. If this data was published for each production, it would focus the minds of those responsible for recruitment on working to address this on future productions. We succeeded in persuading Arts Council England to publish the equality monitoring data of their funded clients and it immediately led to theatres and arts venues which were shown to have poor diversity to take action to address this. We need the same level of transparency in the film industry."

Lauren Appelbaum, Vice President of Communications at RespectAbility (an American non-profit which aims to empower and advance opportunities for people with disabilities across all industries) believes disability needs to be part of all diversity and inclusion conversations. "Disability needs to be looked at as something which intersects gender, race, sexual orientation and other diverse groups. Once we realise that one in four adults have a disability (one in five when you include children as well), we are more likely to understand the importance of the inclusion of people with disabilities. Also, as more people in positions of power disclose non-visible disabilities, this will help normalise not only having a disability, but publicly talking about your disability and sharing the accommodations that would ensure you can do your job better."

But, in an industry where a significant proportion of work is unregulated, non unionised, non-contracted, what can be done to ensure better diversity practices at grass roots level where many belief systems and working practices are developed?

Dan Edge is the Vice Chair of Equity's Deaf and Disabled Members Committee. "I think that the creative industries are in an interesting position when it comes to this. Our public-facing image is probably one of our most powerful tools in changing things at a grassroots level. I tend to look specifically at D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent talent, being part of that diverse group myself. This group is arguably the most underrepresented, and poorly represented group of people in all of the arts. I have personal experience of being asked why there is no work for disabled talent when applying for stage schools. However, some of the industry still tries to claim that there is no disabled talent out there. This is a blatant falsehood. By showing more diverse talent in the visible areas, it then becomes normalised and seems more achievable at a grassroots level. This is the same for any diverse group."

"Hire more and hire often," is Sage Kemp's concise response. An artist, script doctor, marketing, sales and PR specialist with a career spanning twenty years, and an LGBTQIA+ professional, Kemp has experienced first-hand diversity discrimination. "CIS candidates will apply for roles regardless, but for LGBTQIA+ professionals it can help if you actively seek them out and encourage them to apply. Organisations can also run outreach programmes in schools in order to talk to LGBTQIA+ youth and encourage them to consider a career in the film industry, and thereby affirm that it is an option which is available to all – not just the few. People do amazing work at raising the profile of LGBTQIA+ and ethnic minority groups at

events like Pride and Black History Month, but we also need to have more of a presence at a local level – for example, on the high street and in libraries and community colleges."

Rye has a very simple solution for women in the film industry. "I do believe that there is one absolute way to fix this problem in about two years. If Sundance, Raindance, Slamdance, TIFF, SXSW and Tribeca all got together and decided that in order for a film to be eligible for their festival it must have a crew that was 50 percent non-male identifying (including department heads), we would see a massive change by the following submission period. That may sound bold but, if we want change, we must be bold. These film festivals have an outsized influence on young filmmakers, many of whom have dreamed of them for years. Most would be willing to jump through any hoops to reach that pinnacle – and then they'd have an incredible rolodex of wonderful collaborators they might work with again and again."

An even-more insidious side-effect associated with a lack of diversity is its impact on the passive acceptance of discrimination and abuses within the industry.

"My film Lady Parts addresses exactly this!" exclaims Rye. "When you are the only one in the room (whether that "one" is a woman, black person, person with a disability, or any other marginalised group) it falls to you to speak both for yourself and every other member of your group. In a situation where there's a power imbalance, you may be unlikely to speak up until the situation becomes truly unbearable. In fact, you might not speak up at all, especially if the situation doesn't directly affect you. However, on a diverse set, there may be someone else with whom you have similar life experience who might bring up the issue on their own. Or you may look around and see the friendly face of someone you can confide in."

Edge agrees. "There is strength in numbers, and when you do not have that support it can be scary to raise your voice and challenge wrongs. #MeToo and BLM are examples of where those individual voices were able to connect with others with shared experience, and so they felt empowered to make change."

"This is starting to change," Kemp believes, "but the change needs to happen from the top levels of management before it can trickle down to affect the lower levels. Having organisations led by CIS white men who make all the important decisions is not helpful. We only have to look at the Harvey Weinstein case for proof that CIS white men at the top have normalised abuse. There are currently #MeToo movements happening across three different entertainment sectors – film, comedy and gaming – which are all interconnected. It's terrible when a story of abuse comes out, but I'm pleased that the years of systemic abuse are finally being addressed, both here and in the US. People have been hurt across the board, but they have pulled together and helped heal each other's wounds. The abusers are also either being forced out or are removing themselves from the situation. I truly hope they don't worm their way back in."

Particularly pertinent - and not exclusive to disability - is the argument that the very fabric of the acting profession is about assuming roles that challenge an actor's abilities, which is often given as a basis for disabled roles going to able bodied actors.

Tobias Forrest is a Los Angeles-based actor who has appeared in productions including How to Get Away with Murder, Weeds and Daruma. He is also a C5 quadriplegic, and he utilises his career in the entertainment industry to raise the profile of people with disabilities. "Any actor should have the opportunity to create honest and authentic portrayals, but not at the risk of doing it wrong and causing further discrimination. Shouldn't a character who is blind, Asian and a lesbian be played by someone who has as many of those qualities as possible? Unfortunately, there are very few roles for actors with disabilities, so when a non-disabled actor takes the part, they have also taken the opportunity from someone who could create a more authentic portrayal."

"Currently, it is extremely rare for a disabled actor to even be given the opportunity to audition for a non-disabled role," Appelbaum adds. "So, disabled roles are often the only opportunity for a disabled actor – which is unequal in terms of access from the beginning. Furthermore, if you want to portray a disability authentically, who better to do so than someone with lived experience of that disability? For example, ASL [American Sign Language] is not only a unique language but also a culture – something that cannot be taught in a few months. Having a disabled actor in the role will help you avoid making a mistake in accurate representation – especially if that actor is given agency to speak up if something is not portrayed accurately. If you are looking to create content with a disabled character, casting authentically disabled actors will lead to a better production."

Erin Rye in Lady Parts directed by Erin Rye and Jessica Sherif

The fight to improve diversity in the industry has endured many false dawns, particularly apparent with the perennial 'diversity blip' that many awards ceremonies undergo after criticism. How do we make change happen, but - more importantly - how do we make change permanent?

Turner suggests "Improving diversity requires the industry to take a long hard look at the way it hires its workforce and to accept that achieving lasting change necessitates ongoing positive intervention. The BFI Diversity Standards unfortunately give the industry a choice of which under-represented group they would like to address with the inevitable result, shown in the BFI's own report, that the industry overwhelmingly chooses women. BAME workers and disabled workers are left behind. A production could meet the BFI Diversity Standards while employing no BAME workers."

"It's a wider cultural problem that happens in every industry," Kemp acknowledges. "It's tricky not to get caught in generalisations of race and cultural assumptions, but we have been talking about this a lot as a community – how you might see certain races entering and rising quickly but not others, because that community may actively discourage their children from entering such industries. Whilst we are in the midst of great change, currently the only thing we can continue to hold on to and encourage is hope for the future. That's why so many people have fought so hard and stayed positive in the face of adversity – so the next generation can benefit from our struggles."

Edge points out that systemic change is hard to achieve compared to a quick fix and this is the root of the problem. "Companies want to be seen taking positive action quickly, especially in the current age where social media has so much power. I understand this and applaud any drive towards positive change. However, policy that is made quickly is generally made badly, and is not built to be long-lasting. In turn, there can also be a complete lack of accountability, since it is the nature of the creative industries for people to move around often. Things are not always carried on or handed over, and there may be some people in some organisations who do not see the importance of change in the first place."

What about initiatives like the Bechdel and DuVernay tests - is there merit in formalising such methods to validate projects throughout the entertainment industry?

Edge is unequivocal in his support. "On a personal level, I think these tests are vitally important. Making them mandatory would challenge creatives to think in different ways and realise things they hadn't before – much like when thinking about access needs for D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent performers. This should be "baked in" to the start of any creative process."

"While the DuVernay test is about onscreen content," Turner adds, "BAME workers behind the camera also face being pigeonholed into working on productions that are linked with minority ethnic issues and having far less chance of working on other productions. This is why BECTU's longest running campaign is about transparency of equality monitoring data. When we can shine a light on productions that are doing well and learn from them and take their lessons to the productions that are failing to employ a diverse workforce, then we will speed the pace of change. Onscreen content will improve with a diverse offscreen workforce."

Forrest confirms that other areas of the industry are utilising similar tests. "Fortunately, Jenni Gold, the director of the documentary CinemAbility: The Art of Inclusion, has taken the initiative to create one [for disabled performers]. The Gold Test is meant to focus attention on film and television portrayals of the largest minority group; people with disabilities. I believe tests like this are necessary to educate the public and bring awareness to the inequality still present in the entertainment industry."

One area conspicuous by its absence in the debate is the games industry. While simultaneously being notorious for its lack of diversity, the industry also battles misconceptions about its scope. We spoke to Kish Hirani, Chair of BAME in Games, (a UK organisation which advocates for the inclusion of more diverse talent in the games and wider entertainment industry) who is optimistic about the future of the industry.

"The games industry, as a relatively younger industry, has the slight advantage in that we follow the best practices from the other creative sectors, especially the film industry. However, it's still in its infancy in terms of government and art council bodies recognising gaming as a serious business. Currently, all the effort is led by grassroots advocacy organisations like BAME in Games, which is entirely run by volunteers in their spare time. Attracting diverse talent to the industry remains a challenge. The perception of the industry not being a "real job" or a serious career path is still a major barrier in attracting people, especially ethnic minority talent.

Government and local art councils still largely dismiss the industry, despite the revenue it generates – in the UK and most western countries, the annual revenue from gaming now exceeds TV, films and the music industry combined."

And looking ahead?

"BAME in Games takes a more grassroots approach by having monthly meetups at various video game development studios or related organisations to encourage more diverse talent to work in gaming. The organisation will soon be launching a mentorship programme as well. Having a diverse workforce is key. I can certainly see the diversity numbers and visual diversity in games increasing by seeing the audience that is drawn to games, and the indirect and often overlooked impact that video game vloggers and esports players have. In addition to all the work that various diversity organisations put in, retaining key minority talent that then move on to senior roles will remain a challenge, and each studio needs to constantly work on retaining such talent."

Finally, issues of diversity within all industries have been put under the microscope by the most tragic of events - the death of George Floyd and subsequent BLM [Black Lives Matter] protests - the ramifications of which have filtered through all walks of life. What does it say about where we are right now that it needs such atrocities for people to finally say 'enough is enough'?

Edge offers a suggestion: "I think that it shows how insulated peoples' lives can become. How something doesn't affect someone, not always due to malice, but in many cases just naivety. They do not see it as an issue. It takes a truly tragic event like the death of George Floyd for some people to realise that there is a problem – to bring these issues into sharp focus, and into the mainstream consciousness. This is shocking, but it shows the amount of work that is left for all of society to do. This is where the creative industries can be a force for good; by telling these stories authentically and by empowering diverse talent, we can educate the world to be a better place – but we can only do that once we have our own house in order."

Rye mirrors Edge's thoughts: "Unfortunately, sometimes people really need a problem to invade their daily lives before they can truly see it. These systems of oppression work together and are woven through the fabric of our laws, our governments and our culture. They are written into our literature, splayed across our screens, and heard on our radios. It's no wonder we have so many people in our society who have been asleep for so long. What we can and must do is support each other, especially those people who are now awakening. We have an opportunity to reach them, to explain things that they would never have been open to hearing before. Where do we go from here? The answer is everywhere. We go to the streets if we're able, we go to the polls and vote, we go to our email and write to our leaders, we go to our friends and family to have difficult conversations and offer love and support where it's needed, we go to our wallets and give money, we go to our skills and give our time, we go to Twitter and Instagram to amplify diverse voices, and we, the artists, go to the page, the song, the screen, to invite the world into a new way of being, to imagine a better tomorrow."

WHAT PRICE FOR ART?

By Maureen Younger

Maureen Younger is a comedian, actor and writer based in London. Maureen has written articles for various online magazines and websites, with topics from Simone de Beauvoir and French films to German literature and Outlander. In 2019 Maureen published her first collection of short stories, The Void and is also the driving force behind comedy nights MY Comedy.

What do you call a film featuring female protagonists? A chick flick. What do you call a film, of any genre, which features a black cast? A black film. What do you call a film which features straight, white, male protagonists? A film. That's what you call it – a film.

Moreover, it's the standard by which everything else is measured against. Films featuring a female cast are regarded as niche and only of interest to other women, maybe a few gay men, and possibly the odd vegan.

As for the gender ratio in films, that seems to hover around the seven men to one woman mark, and that's if you're lucky. Middle-aged women rarely make an appearance unless it's to play the domineering mother or the aged tart with the heart. No wonder Greta Garbo, one of the biggest stars of her time, decided to retire at 36. She presumably saw the writing on the wall.

But what about the fictonal love interests of all the middle-aged men left to star in films, if women their age are as rare an occurrence in film as England making it to the final stages of the World Cup?

Fear not, because according to the movies nothing is more attractive to a nubile 20-something than a man 30 years her senior. Who knew that 20-year-old women were attracted to nasal hair, male pattern baldness and the possibility of erectile dysfunction?

In films, women often act in a way that no woman in her right mind would. Take the classic French movie Belle de Jour; here Catherine Deneuve portrays a woman who, having intimacy problems with her husband, decides to become a sex worker. I appreciate that Catherine is French, but surely French women do what British women do in such a predicament – get pissed and fantasise about somebody else. Not our Catherine. She nips down to her local brothel – luckily for Catherine, she happens to know where it is – and asks for a job, whereupon the Madame agrees to hire her despite Catherine pointing out that she can only work between two and five in the afternoon. Hours which I suspect aren't peak time for sex work, even in France.

In recent years, much talk has been about what happens behind the scenes, epitomised by the fall of Harvey Weinstein who, in an unlikely turn of events for a powerful man, is facing the consequences of his actions. If Ronan Farrow's book Catch and Kill is anything to go by, Weinstein's behaviour was glossed over for years. Considered too powerful and too important for anyone to hold him to account, the modus operandi by those in the know was not to deal with the problem – Weinstein – but rather deal with the symptoms; traumatised women who would be intimidated into silence.

This is the nub of the issue – power. The men who have it and the women who don't. The women are expendable; the men are not. So much so that even when Roman Polanski (aged 43 at the time) was convicted of "unlawful sex with a minor" (13-year-old Samantha Geimer), excuses were made to absolve him from guilt even though Polanski never denied that the sex took place*. After all, think of all the future films Polanski could make. Why should that be adversely affected just because Geimer had failed to stick to the rape victim's script and keep schtum?

Here you see the pernicious nature of rape culture at work. Firstly, the idea that the perpetrator is too important to pay for his crimes, and conversely that the victim has no intrinsic value in and of herself. Who cares if she's traumatised for the rest of her life? This man has a career.

Polanski was thus cast as a great artist, hounded by sanctimonious moral outrage. Mention was made of Polanski's horrific past surviving the holocaust and the brutal murder of his wife, Sharon Tate, by the Manson Family.

Meanwhile, responsibility was shifted onto the child. In the probation report Geimer is described as "physically mature" – presumably she had started growing breasts. That's basic biology; it's not a come-on. They went on to call her "willing" – so "willing" that Polanski had to lie to her about why they were meeting up and allegedly ply her with alcohol and drugs. Frankly, it doesn't sound as if she was that willing to me. It's also irrelevant. If there's a 13-year-old child and a 43-year-old adult in the room, there is only one person responsible – the adult.

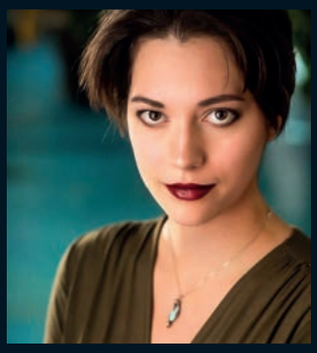
It's also misogynistic hogwash. Imagine if a 43-year-old woman was caught having sex with a 13-year-old boy. Now imagine her trying to convince a jury that she was led on because said boy had a well developed six-pack and had been "willing." Are we to believe that Polanski, a successful Hollywood director, capable of directing the likes of Faye Dunaway and Jack Nicholson, was at a loss when it came to the supposed machinations of a 13-year-old?

Of course, if we were to judge artists by their private lives or their personal beliefs, art galleries, libraries and film archives would be decimated, but are there no moral lines at all? If Polanski had been your average Joe rather than a highly talented director, imagine the outrage. But should our sense of wrongdoing be solely shaped by the artistic value we place on the perpetrator and not by the crime itself? And what of the victim?

And while you can argue that Weinstein was a major force in bringing numerous movies to the screen, what about all the talented female actors whose careers were stymied and who never got to develop and evolve as artists?

Post-Weinstein, it's unlikely that a director involved in a similar situation to Polanski's would get the support that Polanski historically enjoyed from within the industry. Victims now have a voice, but that's partly due to social media, a forum which Hollywood can't control. Likewise, people caught up in #MeToo scandals have seen their careers disappear overnight. Has Hollywood grown a conscience? It's doubtful. It's just that films featuring these actors, directors or producers would receive too much of a backlash on social media with no guarantee of any financial reward substantial enough to make taking such a risk worthwhile. This is what lies behind any sea change in attitudes and what has always oiled the wheels in Hollywood – money.

**Polanski was charged with rape but the case was settled upon his plea to unlawful sexual intercourse.*



E'S INTO CHANGE

By Trinity Vélez-Justo

Trinity Vélez-Justo is a public speaker and educator, and an award-winning composer for film and media. Trinity also speaks internationally about diversity and inclusion in the industry and in the creative classroom. She is an instructor at University of North Carolina School of the Arts in the MFA Film Music Composition program.

"You are a disappointment. You lack commitment. You are not dedicated enough to be in this industry," one of my intern hosts said in response to me leaving his studio for another. Two days earlier, he had spoken about Trump's misogynistic and racist tendencies whilst tossing salt and vinegar crisps into his assistant's bra. There were three women in the room; the assistant whose shirt was riddled with potato grease, another assistant, and me. After finishing the bag, he wiped his hands and, with a smile, invited us all out for ice cream. I turned to the other woman after he was out of earshot and, as she cleaned her shirt, I asked why she put up with his behaviour. She said, "Because if I don't, I will lose my visa and my chance to excel in Hollywood." I later learned that the intern host hires international women and offers to pay for their visa and provide a full-time position at the expense of their dignity; despite this fact, he is well-known for his kind and friendly nature. He won an Emmy two weeks later.

The problem is women, people of colour, and other underrepresented groups in the entertainment industry, often feel they must sacrifice their self-perceptions of worth in order to take advantage of what little opportunities are presented to them. They lack the support, the encouragement and the opportunities to reach their goal of making a profession out of their passions. Yet, if their dignity is endangered or obliterated by the acts of the people who give them these opportunities, their passion becomes inactive, ineffective, lost; what makes them whole would no longer exist.

Whilst the #MeToo movement has been successful in minimising the amount of sexual harassment and degradation on set, it is not enough to stop the inappropriate behaviour behind closed doors. While the Black Lives Matter movement has started a wave it will not be enough to change how people perceive those unlike themselves. Their mentality resonates a troubling acceptance, "It's just the way it is." But it only is "the way it is," because we, the industry, allow it to be.

The answer to lasting change is to apply the four "E's" into our everyday lives and professions; we must educate, empathise, encourage, and execute in order to change the normality of treating people who aren't white, heterosexual men as incapable, dispensable objects. We are all united in the human condition – regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, class, political stance, and religion.

- Educate our youth on how to approach these issues in the workplace. I teach at an arts university which is recognised for its film school. Too often have I heard from students on campus that their older professors (conditioned by the industry's "old ways") advised them to "let it be," "walk away," or "mind their own business" when witnessing or experiencing sexual or racial assault or harassment. Our youth are passionate about equal rights and treatment, but they are also impressionable.

  We must teach them that if they witness or experience inappropriate behaviour, they should report the behaviour safely and conscientiously, respecting the victim and their boundaries. This will continue being an issue if we do not learn how to act positively to enforce change. We must also educate ourselves about the emotional burdens these people carry every day and be open to conversing with the oppressed without forcing on them the emotional burden of educating us on how the world approaches them.

- Empathise by immersing ourselves into the struggles of women, people of colour, LGBTQIA+, and disabled persons. Ask ourselves the difficult questions: If I were a member of an underrepresented demographic, how would I feel about my workplace? Do I feel included in this industry/project/conversation/team/office? Do I feel fairly represented in comparison to my non-minority peers? We need to familiarise ourselves with micro-aggressions and stereotypes which are dehumanising and disrespectful so as not to use them. The more we understand, the more we can change.

- Encourage our underrepresented community. Black Lives Matter. LGBTQIA+ matter. Disabled people matter. Women matter. People of colour matter. For all voices to matter, they must individually matter as well. Let us encourage the communities that face adversity by listening to them, supporting them and sharing their stories. Nurture their perspectives with respect, self-love, appreciation, and purpose. Include them in our discussions. Create opportunities for them and affirm that they are valued for their talents and skills, not just their ability to "diversify" the team. We should embrace their contributions, as we would our families and closest friends.

- Execute the promises we make; speak and act with intention. "We support Black Lives Matter." How? Are we educating ourselves about the many challenges that black members of our community face on a daily basis? Or about their history and how their parents and their parents' parents warned them of the life of pain they are sure to endure because their skin is a different colour? Are we lending them our voice so that they can be heard? "I support people of colour/LGBTQIA+." Are we creating more opportunities for people in underrepresented groups? For example, for my independent filmmakers who wish to create authentic media – instead of casting a Caucasian male or female, leave the description open. Supply the non-physical characteristic traits and cast the person (male, female, non-binary, gay, trans, Black, Latinx, Asian, whomever!) who best performs the role.

  I am a Puerto Rican woman film composer – I am a rarity. I constantly fight for opportunities to flourish and excel in my profession. It has taken me 30 years to value my worth and, through many experiences of sexist and racist prejudice, I have learned to surround myself with people who do the same. It is our duty as a society to nurture this mentality of self-respect and self-worth, both within ourselves and with the people who inspire us to film the world – everyone else.

THE FESTIVAL IS DEAD...

For many, Covid-19 has pressed fast-forward on changes to the film festival circuit that were both inevitable and necessary. With festivals already fighting to remain relevant in the age of streaming, coronavirus has wrought havoc on live events, forcing the majority of the industry to pivot to hybrid or completely virtual models.

But with over 8000 film festivals globally, the unique physical experience each event provides has been diluted by a homogenised online world. Festivals - traditionally the lifeblood of the indie filmmaker - have been forced to reinvent themselves minus the buzz of crowded rooms, red carpets and step-and-repeats. Conversations in bars, cafes and cinema foyers have been replaced by Zoom Q&As and the entire industry is learning how to navigate a socially-distanced landscape.

The long-term implications on distribution opportunities are as unpredictable as the pandemic itself. Live events may put filmmakers only a seat away from community and connection, but the virtual world offers freedom and accessibility. Once the dust has settled, what will remain? We spoke to Katie McCullough, founder of Festival Formula, about her vision for the future of festivals.

There's a lot of talk about the pandemic signalling the end of festivals as we know it. How do festivals (outside prestige events like Sundance, SXSW etc) remain relevant in such an over-saturated market?

First of all film festivals will never die, how long have we been hearing about the "death of short film" and that's never happened has it?! Secondly I'm glad that there's an acknowledgment outside of the tastemaker festivals. What has infuriated me during this process is the sole focus on the top tier festivals, which has glossed over how nimble and productive the festivals in their shadow have been. Festivals have had to adapt and that's the key issue here. The alternative is that they don't take place.

If anything, the pandemic has built a stronger community throughout (admittedly not everywhere, but you'll never get that). Festivals who have pivoted to being a virtual edition have worked hard to keep themselves relevant by being able to reach out to a wider audience and from our case studies they've reached new audiences. It's business as usual, just the usual business has changed. So it's still about curating a strong programme of films to share with an audience, it's still about entertaining people with the moving image. The market is forever going to be over-saturated because anyone can start a festival. It's the focus on staying-power that makes you stand out, the programme choices you make, the opportunities you provide.

With so many it's inevitable that - like any industry - there will be some less reputable ones. Do you think the industry needs more regulation?

It's a topic of conversation that is always bandied around, but it's a hard element to implement due to how restrictive it could be for young upstart festivals (or those who do things very differently). We're in a fortunate position where we're dealing with hundreds of festivals across the world so it's not a case of one size fits all.

It's a two-way street realistically - filmmakers need to be more aware of the festival circuit at large, and festivals need to make sure there is a clarity of what they can provide. Suspect festivals prey on filmmakers' negligence on doing research, and they thrive on the impatience of the festival submission process. The simplest way we can put it is - understand where you are spending your hard earned cash! Know why you're submitting there and make it about recommendations or because they have a specific category - don't make it about how much it costs or because it's on some affiliation list.

We get hired by film schools and organisations to deliver masterclasses on festival strategy and submissions for the reason that it's an ever-fluxing landscape and it's not taught within the curriculum. There may be a glance at the BAFTA or Academy list and the notion of submitting, but getting your hands dirty and reading rules and regulations is something that is never really focused on. Research is what helps you understand the who, what, when, where and why. Apply that to where you're going to submit your film and you're halfway to making better decisions.

What's the most innovative/successful change and use of technology you've seen from festivals going virtual?

It sounds trite, but the amount of festivals who are now incorporating more interaction from filmmakers for the benefit of their audience is what's been catching my eye. For example Q&As were only really accessible to those who attended the festival, whereas now festivals are embracing that they can have all filmmakers virtually attend no matter where they are so it's a silver lining.

What positives do you think have come out of the pandemic for filmmakers?

It shows how robust the landscape is and how far festivals are willing to go to help, nurture and celebrate filmmakers. On a more critical level it's also flagging up those festivals who were doing it for the right reasons, and sorting the wheat from the chafe. A lot of dust has been shaken from the traditional methods during this climate, and I think whilst it feels drastic and terrifying now, it is for the better.

Other silver linings may not necessarily be seen first hand by the filmmaker but more by the festival; increase in audience reach, sponsors sticking by their side and increasing support, positive feedback from those with accessibility issues (whether that be disabled-access, lower-economic restrictions, or location etc.), more press coverage due to going ahead during the pandemic. The list goes on. The beauty that is often getting lost in this epic upheaval

LONG LIVE THE FESTIVAL

is that when a film gets selected, it's still a curated decision made by your peers for you to harness the accolade and reach an audience - the very reasons you've stepped on to the circuit to begin with. That is still what is going on, just with the added nuance that it's going on even during a pandemic situation. No one is looking down on films that are screening at virtual festivals, it's something to be proud of that you're involved with a festival still soldiering on and putting on their event. For those sticking with the fluxing circuit right now, they will be reaping the benefits of those selections and submissions later down the line. Stepping off now you're missing the opportunities that festivals can offer, we know of some filmmakers waiting until "real events" start happening again. No one knows when that will be, and with the positive feedback virtual festivals are getting it seems silly to keep ignoring that and waiting. Remember that submission windows are a long process, deadlines happening now are for festivals happening end of the year and way into 2021. Stepping out of it all is only going to elongate an already long process.

The alternative is no festivals happen, films lose traction, and we aren't engaging with an audience or the industry. For me the latter is impossible, as shown by the multitude of festivals that have jumped into action and adapted given the circumstances.

Fingers crossed this time next year we're returning to some semblance of normality, what would you like to see festivals retain from their online models?

The idea of online access is not a new idea, it's been evident in higher-tiered festivals with their online video library for professionals within the industry. Knowing how hard it is to select and arrange travel to as many festivals as we can, there will always be festivals we have to miss. So retaining the idea of industry professionals having access to the selected programme could be extremely beneficial. The seeds of how effective this can be is evident with resounding success at Clermont Ferrand International Short Film Festival.

How has the pandemic affected Festival Formula's work - have you changed your own strategy with regard to which festivals you submit to?

We won't lie, we were braced for the worst. But if anything it's the busiest we've been which was a pleasant surprise! It was partly down to filmmakers having the time during lockdown to finish projects, but also because a lot of filmmakers needed the guidance as the landscape shifted. We reached out to all of our clients to keep them in the loop with any information we had found which reassured them. As active members of the Film Festival Alliance and the Short Film Conference we were party to conversations behind the scenes across the circuit, so we could report back that state of affairs very quickly. And also put to bed a lot of myths that were coming out of the beginning few festivals that cancelled - a lot of people thought the circuit was dead but it was anything but!

If you were going to give filmmakers one piece of advice that would help them make most effective use of festivals, what would it be?

Know the strengths and weaknesses of your film - this will do you in good stead in terms of how much money you're going to spend, where you're going to spend it, and will help you manage expectations. There is a plethora of festivals out there so it benefits you to know why you're sending your film there.

Festival Formula Ltd is a consultancy company that helps filmmakers navigate the world wide circuit with strategy and submissions support. They are a leading voice in the festival circuit landscape, including being quoted in The Hollywood Reporter and Screen Daily, and are active members of the Film Festival Alliance and the Short Film Conference.

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Creating a network is an integral part of working in the film industry, and Satisfied Eye International Film Festival has been fortunate to form valued professional relationships with a considerable array of talented creators since its inception, including in-house projects with previous winners. With the third season of SEIFF taking place this October, Satisfied Eye Magazine caught up with some of the filmmakers from previous seasons to find out more about their films and what they're up to now.

ON THE UP

ALBERTO CORREDOR

Alberto is an editor and director from Spain who has been based in London for the last 15 years. He edited and directed the short film Baghead, a wickedly sharp dark comedy about a man whose search for answers about the deceased love of his life takes him to an unremarkable place – but provides him with an experience which is anything but. Baghead won the People's Choice award at SEIFF 2019.

Why did you want to work on Baghead?
I was looking for scripts to direct a low budget horror movie. Lorcan Reilly, Baghead's writer, sent me the script and I straight away saw the potential to shoot it as a proof-of-concept for a feature. The character of the witch was so powerful that I knew that, if properly done, it would make waves. And it is a dark story about loss and grief, something everyone can relate to.

What was your experience of making the film like?
Making your own films is always difficult, mainly because it is expensive, and it requires from you to do a lot of extra work on top of your daily load. We were lucky to win a pitching contest from ShortsTV, which gave us a bit of cash, and the backing of a well-known player in the short film arena.

What was your experience of the film festival circuit?
It was absolutely draining. I didn't know it would be so gruelling at times. You imagine going to festivals as something nice, where you meet other creative people, get to show your work and talk to the audiences to gather feedback. And it is mostly like that, but it is also a very demanding environment where you are constantly on edge, looking for any chance to network, to try to sell your next project to the right people.

It is also a very lonely affair for someone like me, who has difficulties talking to people they haven't met before. You spend a lot of money, time and energy travelling around the world, and when you are back home you fall in a deep hole as you not only weirdly miss it, but you have to do all the stuff you had postponed to earn a living. Nevertheless, festivals are a very important part of your development as a filmmaker and everyone who does it for the first time grossly underestimates its importance. Without a successful festival run I wouldn't be where I am now.

Where is Baghead available to watch?
At the moment it is available for streaming on Movistar+ in Spain and ShortsTV shows it now and then on their cable channel.

What has your experience of video on demand been like?
Let's start with the financial aspect – you won't recoup the money you invest in a short movie, let alone make any money out of it. In my case, it wasn't difficult to get on streaming platforms as they constantly contacted me. It was more the case of being careful in what to do not to ruin the experience or not to get tied up in contracts that could influence any development of the next project, which was based on the short's story. But I think every project is different, so don't take my experience as the norm.

What have you been working on since Baghead?
I have been trying to make a feature film based on the Baghead short for the past three years and, finally, it has paid off. We have sold the rights to Studio Canal and we have been working on the script with Christina Pamies for the past few months. Andrew Rona and Alex Heineman from The Picture Co will produce it and we hope to be able to shoot it early next year.

What advice would you give to filmmakers who are just starting their career?
Focus on the story from the beginning; don't settle for any half-good story just because you want to shoot something. Good shorts (and you will most probably start with shorts) cost quite a bit of money, and to promote them costs even more, so you should only make something that is truly personal and different.

Pay decent wages to everyone involved. Hire professionals, not friends (unless they are professionals). This is even more important for actors. Treat people nicely on set and give them agency, get them emotionally involved in the project, because it is also theirs. This is a form of art based on collaboration, so leave the ego outside the door; that only shows insecurity and will eventually alienate people. Finally, budget a lot of money for the festival run, otherwise the project will take you nowhere!

GAVIN MICHAEL BOOTH

Gavin is a writer, director, producer, cinematographer and editor from Ontario, Canada who now lives in Los Angeles. His film Last Call – a real-time, split-screen, single take feature which showcases both ends of a phone call when a suicidal alcoholic dials a wrong number – was screened at SEIFF in 2019, where Gavin won the award for Best Director.

What inspired you to make Last Call?

I have forever been obsessed with long-take storytelling. Films like Jaws, which would play out scenes in moving masters, or the famous intro in Touch of Evil, which was at one point the longest single take in cinema history.

Once digital video arrived and removed the time limitations associated with film, we were ushered into a new era – the ability to make an entire film in true real time. Timecode and Russian Ark were the first on my radar. They were mind blowing. I was hooked. When my writing and producing partner Daved Wilkins (also the male lead in Last Call) came to me with the concept of a man placing a desperate call for help, our minds immediately turned to ways in which the tension could be sustained, never letting the audience have a breather or time to consider what comes next. Real-time allows for just that.

Then we decided to over-complicate things; showing both sides of the phone call in complete real-time from opening frame to end credits. My filmmaking history involves having directed several single take music videos and Blumhouse's Fifteen (the world's very first movie to be broadcast live, also shot in a single take). Last Call felt like the next evolution of a filmmaking challenge.

Did you face any difficulties from the film industry when making the film, or was anyone particularly supportive?

Oh, we were told by everyone not to make this film – that we wouldn't actually be able to get two single takes shot side by side at the same time without having to hide cuts. Camera and sound people all ran away when I pitched the idea. Eventually, we had camera gear companies like Zacuto, Tilta and Quasar Science sponsor the film – so we had believers, but it took some effort to get to that point. We went completely indie and raised the money ourselves outside of the traditional film industry system. The community in my hometown of Windsor, Ontario was the most supportive; helping us with locations and catering. The film wouldn't have happened without their support.

What was your experience of the film festival circuit?

Spectacular. We've had full theatres, standing ovations, rooms full of teary-eyed people, and super engaging Q&As. We've been fortunate to win awards at over 25 festivals around the world. I travelled to cities and countries I've never been to before. I've met so many amazing filmmakers and actors that hopefully will become future collaborators. Festivals are the lifeblood of indie cinema and the experience with Last Call has been the best festival circuit of my career so far.

Where is Last Call available to watch?

Last Call was released in North America on September 18, with video on demand soon after.

What process did you go through to get a theatrical release for Last Call?

I'll preface this by saying that the business of film is a terrible place full of thieves and liars. There's no polite way around that. It's a rigged game that needs to be shaken by the ankles off a balcony and made to promise never to do it again. Having been down such terrible roads in the past, finding distribution for Last Call meant that we were not going to settle for the first offer that came along. We made the film on a microbudget, with a back-up plan of self-releasing the film if we couldn't find a fair deal. It's a weird film. It's a soul-crushing drama. It has no stars in it. We had all the odds against us of what "sells" in the industry, so we were prepared to do it on our own terms.

However, Mutiny Pictures, a newer distribution company, came into being. We know a few of the people who formed the company so we felt that they would make a great partner. Our festival awards and attention definitely helped us get meetings with distributors, but what helped the most was networking by picking up the phone and speaking with people directly or asking filmmaker friends for any recommendations and personal introductions.

Indie film is in flux without home video rentals and sales – the way the indie market used to work – and the massive push to streaming has devalued some of the rights and payments available for truly independent films. You might be a genius artist, but part of being a film producer and filmmaker is being a businessperson. It is fascinating to me how many filmmakers have zero clue how the business of film works and then are upset when they find themselves ensnared in its steel jaws. Educate yourself. Research the companies that are smiling to your face and promising you the world. Know your own worth, and that of your film, and don't settle for the first offer out of desperation of "just wanting to get your film out there."

What have you been working on since Last Call?

I shot a new feature this past winter titled Primary and I'm due to shoot two features almost back to back – those are titled Dreamcrusher and Cut! I also have three shorts which are getting the final touches before being ready for the festival circuit. They're titled In These Parts, Rent Do and Link.

What advice would you give to filmmakers who are just starting their career?

Always be creating. Don't let budget or access to better gear stop you. Use your smartphone. Make things. Release things. Fail. Fail huge and fail often. Just get out there and create. You will learn so much about finding your voice and your style. You will network and continue to find more cast and crew who you love working with. Just get out there and make stuff regardless of money and access. Think outside the box or scale a project down – just make it instead of talking about making it.

Do you think the film industry needs to evolve?

Yes. Streaming will continue to rule the world. We are in an unprecedented period of change, and the coronavirus pandemic has only forced the future on us faster than expected. We are also in a time when an iPhone and a laptop has as much power as any Hollywood studio. Anyone can go out there and tell their story. This fact is continuously democratising the industry and giving a voice to anyone who wants to stand up and say something through media. We need to continue to embrace new platforms, accept that short form content is here to stay and that it is just as valuable as longer-form shows and movies. This is the digital wild west. There are no rules regarding format and length anymore.

To learn more about Gavin and his work visit ***www.gavinmichaelbooth.com***

ROWENNA BALDWIN

Rowenna is a director and producer from Lancashire, UK. Her short documentary Goodnight, Friend – a moving exploration into the grieving process after losing a pet – won Rowenna the inaugural Best Female Director award at SEIFF 2018.

What inspired you to make Goodnight, Friend?
The film was inspired by my own experiences of pet loss, in particular, losing my horse, which happened very suddenly. I found that some people seemed uncomfortable when I talked about how badly it had affected me, so I decided that I wanted to make a film that would highlight the importance of recognising pet bereavement as a major issue in many people's lives.

Did you face any difficulties from the industry when making the film, or was anyone particularly supportive?
I made it during my master's degree in Documentary Filmmaking, so I didn't really come across anyone from the film industry as such. I had a lot of support from the Blue Cross animal welfare charity and also a local veterinary surgery, both of which feature in the film.

What was your experience of the film festival circuit?
I realised very quickly that there is a lot of rejection to face on the film festival circuit, but the festivals that did accept the film were fantastic. I felt like my film was really understood and appreciated by the festival organisers. In particular, when I attended SEIFF I was made to feel so welcome and I was very touched by the comments people made about my film.

Where is Goodnight, Friend available to watch?
It is now available to watch for free on Vimeo, via vimeo.com/429210219

What have you been working on since Goodnight, Friend?
I have completed another short documentary since, called We Are All Migrants and some other academic research films. All my other projects are either in development or early stages of filming.

What advice would you give to filmmakers who are just starting their career?
My advice is to not be afraid to pick up a camera yourself, even if you normally consider yourself to be better at the non-technical side of things. I shied away initially. This was partly because I was new to filmmaking and had a different kind of background, but I also found that I was surrounded by a lot of tech-savvy and confident men who were always very happy to put themselves forward for those roles. I decided to buy my own camera recently and now I'm gaining a lot more confidence in that area and finding that I enjoy it a lot. I think having knowledge and understanding of different areas will help me as a director going forward.

Do you think the film industry needs to evolve?
I think it still seems very much like an industry that works on nepotism and the gatekeeper system. Unfortunately I don't know how that can be stopped, but I think the online streaming platforms like Netflix are the ones who are in the best position to make that change as they do seem to be looking for new voices even if they do still make it difficult to be heard.

To learn more about Rowenna and her work visit ***www.vimeo.com/channels/rowennabaldwinfilmmaker***

WILL KENNING

Will is a writer, director, actor and editor based in Bedfordshire, UK. His short film The Legend of Bob Leonard tells the story of a medieval bard's attempt to barter with a gang of soldiers for his life, with humorous results. The film won SEIFF's inaugural awards for Best Costume Design and Best British Short Film in 2018.

What inspired you to make The Legend of Bob Leonard?
I'd had the idea of an anti-hero version of Robin Hood for ages and had been making much lower budget shorts for a few years. Finally, something just made me stop procrastinating and get on with it – probably getting older and realising that if I was ever going to have a career in film I'd better get on and make some films that I actually wanted to make! It's amazing how easy it is to fall into a trap of making endless corporates and promos of stuff you have no real interest in. The Legend of Bob Leonard was an antidote to that.

Did you face any difficulties from the industry when making the film, or was anyone particularly supportive?
It was an entirely self-motivated and self-funded exercise. It didn't take long to realise that no funding body was going to support a silly medieval romp of a short film, so I knew I had to do it all myself. The people at Langley Forest in Buckinghamshire (the film's location) were brilliant and even had a sliding scale rate card depending on the size and experience level of your production, from Pinewood to student. Once we'd found the location it was easier to fit the rest of the jigsaw puzzle together. The film wouldn't have been anything without the generosity and help of horse-master and stunt coordinator Steve Dent. He's a total legend in the business and even provided the horses for the Russell Crowe version of Robin Hood, among several other productions. I felt a bit nervous reaching out to him, but he couldn't have been nicer and more supportive. It's a great example of how people in this industry are prepared to give back if they've done well. Steve was in between Netflix projects and still decided to help out a complete nobody just to give them a leg up – I hope I can pay it back myself one day.

What was your experience of the film festival circuit?
Although I'd made what I'd call "pocket money" shorts before, The Legend of Bob Leonard was my first proper short which I really wanted to get out there. With no experience of the circuit, I approached Katie McCullough and the team at Festival Formula. They were totally brilliant and held my hand through the whole process. They're brutally honest from the start and explain what you can and can't reasonably expect to achieve. Of course everyone thinks they're going to win an Oscar, but if you don't get a sense of reality then you can tip a huge amount of money into the bin, and so Katie helps to curate your strategy and manage your finances so that things don't spiral out of control. What they're also great at is understanding which festivals are on the rise. They were the ones who pointed me in the direction of SEIFF, and in three years' time it's grown to be one of the top 100 best reviewed festivals on FilmFreeway. Understanding what makes a good festival is about having a relationship with the people – you can't do it by selecting a few names from a list which sound sexy. I really enjoyed the experience of travelling to the festivals when I could – again, something that's quite financially restrictive. But after a year on the circuit I certainly learned a lot and now understand how to better allocate a film's festival budget. Needless to say, SEIFF will always be on my list!

Where is The Legend of Bob Leonard available to watch?
It's available to watch on Amazon Prime and several other VOD platforms across the world.

What has your experience of video on demand been like?
It's been really interesting to try and educate myself about the VOD process. It's not as difficult as it may seem – I approached FilmHub (a site that splits profits 80/20 in return for placing your film on VOD platforms) and did it that way. I have to say – you're not going to make much money with shorts, but I knew that. Shorts remain a way of honing your craft and getting your name out there. I was pleased to use the film as a bit of a guinea pig to understand the route to VOD. Like anything, you can't generate income unless you have a marketing campaign – no one is going to discover it by accident. I'm still submitting the film and still have loads to learn, but in terms of making money on VOD I think that's really only possible with features.

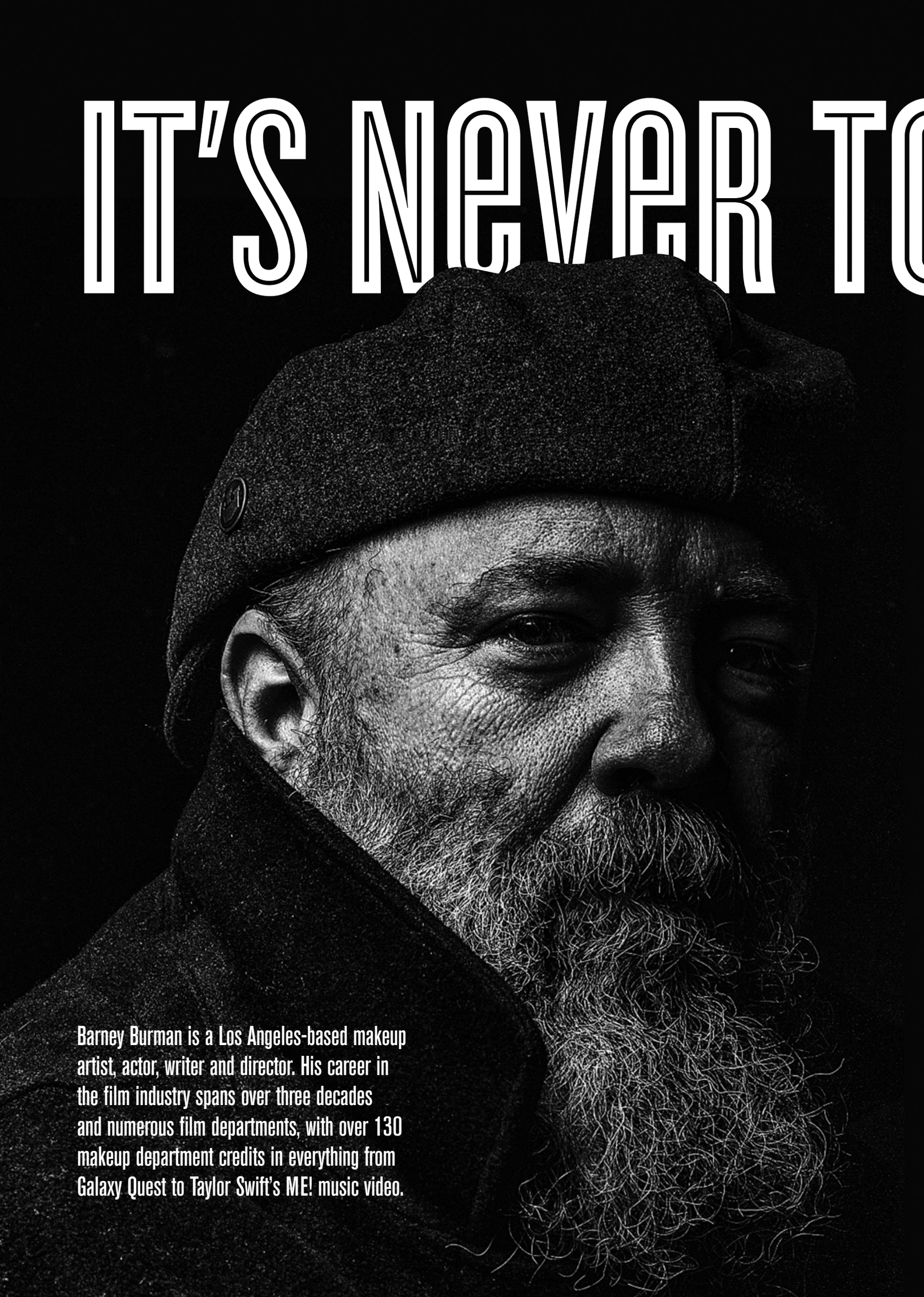
What have you been working on since The Legend of Bob Leonard?
In 2018 I co-wrote and directed a 20-minute short called Geoff with my great friend Michael Rouse – a romantic comedy about a man with a phobia of crossing bridges. It was an incredible experience, filmed with no dialogue up in the Scottish Highlands. It's done well on the circuit and even went on to be BAFTA longlisted. I'm currently in post-production with my latest short Tap Boy (a story about a kid in a county lines drug gang who discovers tap dance) which is part of the 2020 Challenge Alexa scheme in conjunction with Directors UK and ARRI. It's been a slow process because post-production has all been remote during Covid-19, but we were so lucky to get it shot before lockdown. We had an amazing cast and crew and I'm super proud of it – it should be ready by the end of September.

What advice would you give to filmmakers who are just starting their career?
It's simple – make a film. Do it now. Don't make excuses. Take the leap before you feel ready to do so; it's the only way you'll learn and progress. Don't think that everything you do has to be perfect, just strive to make the next film better. If you can teach me how to take this advice myself, I'd be so pleased!

Do you think the film industry needs to evolve?
I think there's a huge awareness within the industry about how important total equality is. I honestly believe that if people put themselves forward for whatever role in film they wish to pursue, support is there for them. But ultimately, no one is going to make things happen for you. You have to get on with it yourself. If you make it, they will come!

To learn more about Will and his work visit ***www.willkenning.com***

IT'S NEVER TO



Barney Burman is a Los Angeles-based makeup artist, actor, writer and director. His career in the film industry spans over three decades and numerous film departments, with over 130 makeup department credits in everything from Galaxy Quest to Taylor Swift's ME! music video.

OO LATE TO ...

In 2009 Barney was part of the makeup department team which collected the Academy Award for their work on J. J. Abrams' Star Trek. In 2019 at the age of 71 he released his first self-directed feature film Wild Boar, which he also wrote.

Let's start with the big question: Why? After such an enduring and accomplished career as a makeup artist, what drove you to write and direct your own movie?
I've always wanted to direct, although I didn't always know I could. Not knowing if I'd be any good at something kept me from trying too many times. I decided to go ahead and try it anyway when I got to the point where I couldn't not do it. Now that I'm doing it, I wish I'd started 30 years earlier.

Was it easier to make your own film after being so well established, albeit in other roles?
I think all experience and education helps, so yeah, it was easier having had a background in other fields. But there was still a heck of a lot of stuff to learn that I hadn't really touched upon before.

Having worked in the industry for over thirty years, what continues to keep you motivated?
Many things. Boredom. Pain. Anger. Frustration. Dreams. Random drops of truth and beauty that seem to appear form nowhere. Carrie Fisher said "Take your broken heart and turn it into art."

And how has your work evolved?
I think, like with anything, the more you do it the better you get. I'm more sensitive to it. More in tune. I pay more attention to the details and have a better preconceived notion of what I want. When beginning anything new, we're all just floundering. Running on instinct. Hoping to God that no one realises we're just making it up as we go. Although that feeling never leaves. And if it does, you're not pushing yourself enough. You're coasting. And that's when you make the mistakes. It's like riding a motorcycle down a long, straight country road, feeling relaxed and admiring the puffy white clouds in the sky and then suddenly SMACK! The traffic in front of you stopped and you didn't even notice until it was too late.

Have you seen a lot of change in the industry over that period?
It is changing and evolving, pretty constantly. That can't be helped. The very nature of storytelling changes over the years. This is why the AFI Top 100 list changes. Some films hold up and some become better over time. If a movie is made and the audience doesn't get it, it just may be that they haven't caught up to it yet. I do love that "Hollywood" is finally giving more films to women and people of colour to direct. It's like politics – we've seen what old white men can do, it's time to get more points of view. I believe it will help us grow as a people on this planet. And that's coming from an old, white man – well, maybe not "old" but…!

Wild Boar is firmly rooted in horror - what drew you to the genre for your feature directorial debut?
I like almost all genres when they're done well. But I can't ignore the fact that I grew up in and around horror movies, so I probably have a slightly better take on doing that kind of movie over something I'm less familiar with. Plus, my mind tunes into some really twisted shit sometimes! But I also love romance and drama and comedy in films. And action and the choreography of a good musical. I'd love to work in all of these genres or include a little of each of these things into the same movies. Why does a movie have to just be one thing? Most of my favourite films encompass many of these different elements. There's even singing and dancing in A Clockwork Orange.

Having been there, done that and worn the t-shirt, what advice would you give to up-and-coming filmmakers who'd still like to be going strong in 2050?
Whatever the budget or scale or scope of the project is, always try to give it your best. Be on Your A-game. Always try to do things better than the last time you did it. If for no other reason than to entertain yourself, see if you can make it better. And try to be kind to yourself. Nurture yourself. Let the adult you give the child you a hug and some encouragement to keep going. You do matter. Your work matters. You can and do make a difference, even though you may not feel like it at times. But it's true. Creating and living and loving, it's all moving energy and that's a beautiful thing.

What's your proudest achievement so far?
My son. And probably not letting my own perceived limitations stop me from trying – and sometimes doing – things anyway.

Who is your hero?
You know how they say "Never meet your heroes?" I used to have one but that person changed and those changes hurt me, so I had to become my own hero. And when that hero (me) lets me down, I have to pick myself back up again and that reinstates my own heroism. It may sound egocentric but believe me it's not, it's strictly survival. The other hero I have is my wife. She's astoundingly smart and wonderfully supportive – even if I can't see it sometimes.

And finally, let's go right back to the beginning. What was your first job, where this crazy journey started?
The first thing I got paid for, I was 9-years-old and my father was making the small aliens for Close Encounters of the 3rd Kind and he needed a model to sculpt them on. I had my head and hand casts done and got paid $75 from production.

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We would love to hear about your needs, so please reach out to us today and we'll help bring your project to life. E-mail: the.right.hand@posterposse.com or 949-463-6257

ones to watch

One of the standout documentaries enjoyed by the Satisfied Eye International Film Festival judging panel this year was the edge-of-your-seat documentary I Am Not Alone. The film follows the incredible story of journalist and politician Nikol Pashinyan who - in Easter 2018 - put on a backpack and went live on Facebook to announce that he was beginning a walk across Armenia. His mission: to inspire a non-violent revolution – and topple the corrupt regime that enjoyed absolute power in his post-soviet nation. I Am Not Alone tells the miraculous true story of what happens in the next 40 days. Satisfied Eye Magazine caught up with producer Alec Mouhibian.

1. From first shot to festival ready, how long did it take to make I Am Not Alone?
The first shot was on Easter Day, 2018, and we wrapped up postproduction in August 2019, right before our TIFF premiere.

2. Did you know it would be a feature film when you began or did you let the material guide you?
Garin Hovannisian, the director, had been documenting and participating in uprisings in Armenia for years. When he began filming this one, we like everyone else expected it to be yet another failed chapter in this nation's seemingly doomed post-Soviet struggle for democracy and autonomy. But this time, the magical third act finally happened — and we knew we had a movie.

3. What did you envisage happening to it when you began work on I Am Not Alone or was that not even in your thoughts?
Once the revolution culminated we knew it was a truly historic event which happened to unfold almost exactly according to a classic cinematic arc, a textbook hero's journey. This is not entirely a coincidence, since the movement itself began with a literary poem by Nikol Pashinyan, and the struggle for freedom in Armenia had always been framed in literary, even mythological terms by the few lone dissidents who had always fought for it in darkness. We felt that if we could get anyone to actually pay attention, they would be transfixed by what happened.

4. What were the biggest hurdles during production?
The threat of physical danger during clashes between protesters and riot police was ever present, but the real challenge was convincing members of the overthrown regime — including its long time leader, ex-president and prime minister Serzh Sargsyan — to grant exclusive interviews and give their side of the story. Ultimately Sargsyan agreed to sit down with us, and it was the only interview he had granted postrevolution until very recently. Other key members of "the other side" also speak to us in the film, and I think that's what separates I Am Not Alone from most other documentaries about revolutions.

5. Were there ever any concerns about capturing the necessary footage and being able to do justice to such a profound story?
There are always doubts. Will the audience — many of whom did not even know Armenia was a country — understand the stakes? The impossibility of the movement's odds? The true hopeless psychological reality that the revolutionaries were up against? What's the least amount of background info we can present to make sure they get it without slowing down the ride? Will the interview subjects be honest about all the failed moments they endured on their way to a seemingly miraculous victory? But we did have faith that if we could get the "backstory" across as unobtrusively as possible, the story itself would really hit hard.

6. Was there a point during filming where you thought 'we have something special'?
The moment the revolution succeeded.

7. What was your main drive behind making I Am Not Alone?
To capture what had happened. I mean, of course, what had *really* happened — which is less a story about politics than about how we are the ultimate authors of our own reality.

8. How did the pandemic affect the 'life' of I Am Not Alone?
Massively. We were supposed to have a theatrical release in the U.S. in April, and were set to play in yet another dozen festivals around the world. Ultimately, in all the chaos a major distributor stepped up and acquired the film for a global release in January. So we look forward to the world seeing it then.

9. And what's next for you after I Am Not Alone?
We made another doc, Truth to Power, with LiveNation Films, also directed by Garin Hovannisian. That was set to be the opening night film at Tribeca, with a showing at the Beacon Theater. That film's fate is suspended now. Beyond that, we have returned our focus to various fiction projects we have been developing both as films and TV series under the auspices of our production company Avalanche Entertainment. Some of these are also set in the post-Soviet space.

★★★★★ "I could go on all day about all the things I loved about this festival"

★★★★★ "I could have carried on watching all afternoon"

★★★★★ "Amazing and fun"

★★★★★ "The whole experience was amazing"

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