

# BEESTON FILM FESTIVAL

2023  
Review

Thursday 13th April to  
Sunday 16th April

## Harvest Year with Us

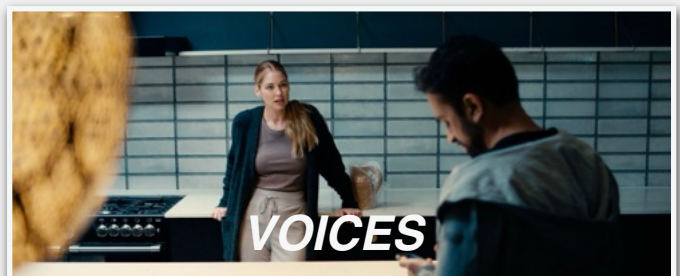
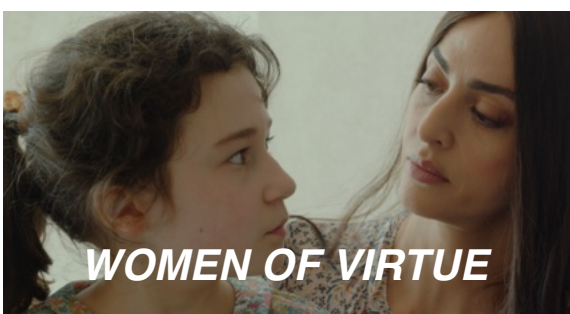
*As we delve into the cinematic creations that graced our screens during this year's festival, we embark on a journey through a myriad of storytelling, creativity, and innovation. Join us as we celebrate the diverse talents of filmmakers from around the world and uncover the magic woven into every frame.*

## CATEGORY SELECTIONS & WINNERS

### Drama

#### Winner: *Voices*

*Women of Virtue*  
*Not My Sister*  
*Baggage*  
*NAZLI*  
*Lapse*  
*Blue Rain*



## Drama

*X to X*

*Treasure*

*OUT OF CHAOS*

*Your Guardian (Čuvam te)*

*Smoked Fish*

*This Wild Abyss*

*Subs*

*Man To Man*

*Sidetracking*

*For Heidi*

*Elpida*

*Les Câlines Cheaps (Cheap Hugs)*

*'Who's Counting?'*

*Òran na h-Eala*

*Moustache Man*

*Il Vespista*

*WAKE*

*Bahar*

*Three*

*Masked*

*Proximity*

*Makeup*

*40th*

*Suburban Fantasy*

*Children Of Wild Orchid*

*Bus Driver*

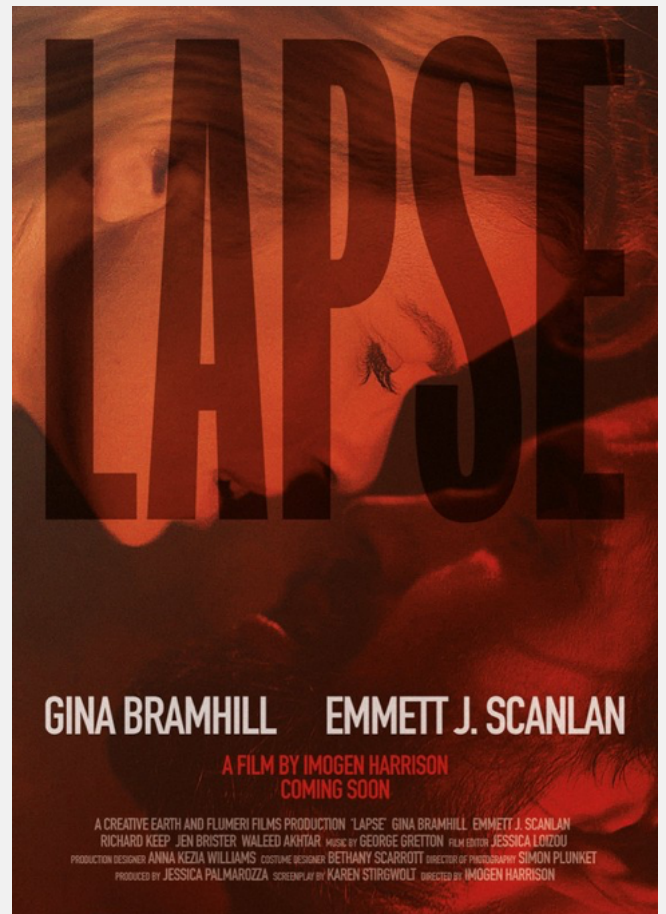
*Free*

*The Tree*

*THE MOUNTAIN*

*Hush*

*CHARTER*





## Crime

*Winner: The Gambler*

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*Headlights*

*Tomb*

*Smocking Dolphins*

*Seen*



## Comedy

*Winner: Non Negotiable*

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*Close*

*Tell Tyler*

*Worlds Apart*

*The First Circle*

*You're Alright Hun*

*Pet name*

*The Magic Flute*

*You're Absolutely Right*

*Work it Class!*

*SWAT*

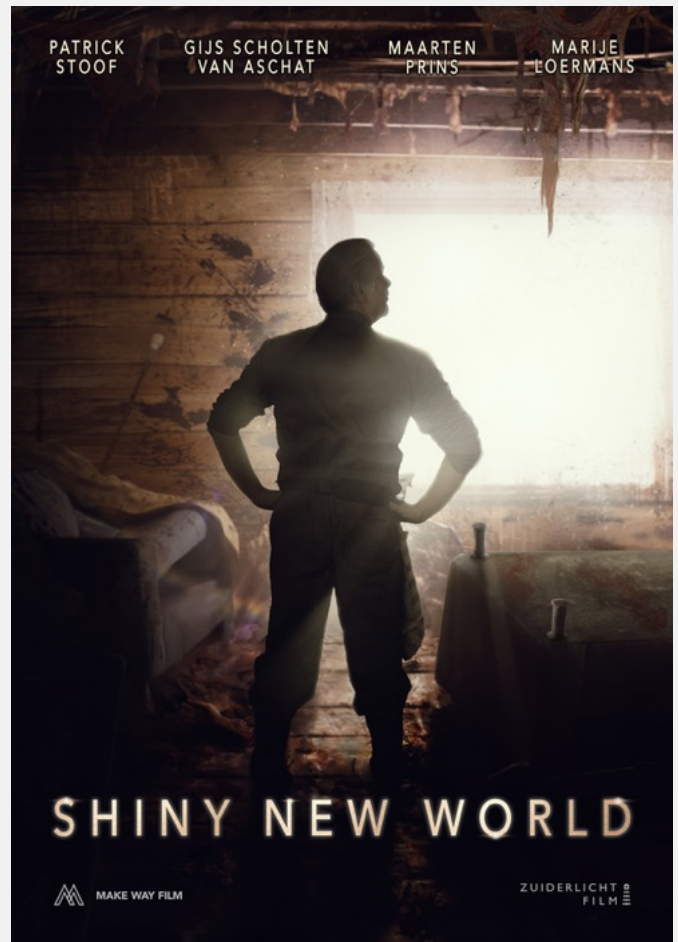
*Cruise*



## Horror

### *Winner: Shiny New World*

.....  
*The Forfeit*  
*Familiar*  
*Sarang*  
*Hidden Mother*  
*Amy&I*  
*Bad Penny*  
*Earthworm*  
*Sucker*  
*The Hunter*  
*ERIC*  
*O*  
*Hideous*  
*A Killer Outside*  
*Rhyme or Die*



## Non Fiction

### *Winner: Joy Uncensored*

.....  
*Revitalizing Cities: Urban River's*  
*Rescue in Taichung*  
*Cost of Living*  
*ATLAS*  
*In·spi·ra·tion*  
*The Lost Library*  
*Brotherness*  
*SCOOL*  
*Two-Spirit*  
*Love Languages*  
*Bad Hombrewood*  
*A Drifting Up*





# Animation

## Winner: *THE SPRAYER*

*The Jennie Show-EP4: In the Hotpot Seat  
Pirouette*

*The Red Ball*

*The Moon Followed Me To Falmouth*

*Interrupted Dream*

*My Dear Son*

*SIP*

*Blue Bottle*

*The Last Cloudweaver*

*Stay*

*Yellowstone 88-Song of Fire*

*The Well*

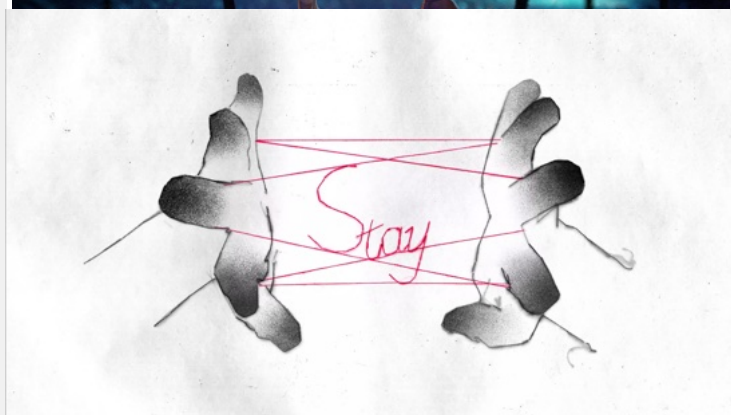
*SNOWCONEIOUS*

*MEDAMA (eyeball)*

*Samurai Frog Golf*

*Prisoner Outside*

*Spoon*



## Women's Voices

### Winner: *My Eyes Are Up Here* & *Hello Muscles*

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*Carceral Scrivings*

*Full full, half half*

*Itching*

*SUPERVISION*

*Dead Cat Film*

*Granny*

*Read me; unheard Narrations*

*Good Grief*

*Bienvenidos a Los Angeles*

*Bona Vacant*

*THIS LITTLE GIRL*

*Milk*

*Still*

*You're Alright Hun*

*Bufflehead*

*Tidal*

*Rich Bitch*

*The Cunning*

*Proximity*

*River Take Me*

*Alicia Armstrong Larrain*

*Made of Flesh*







## Children's Joy

*Winner: Free*

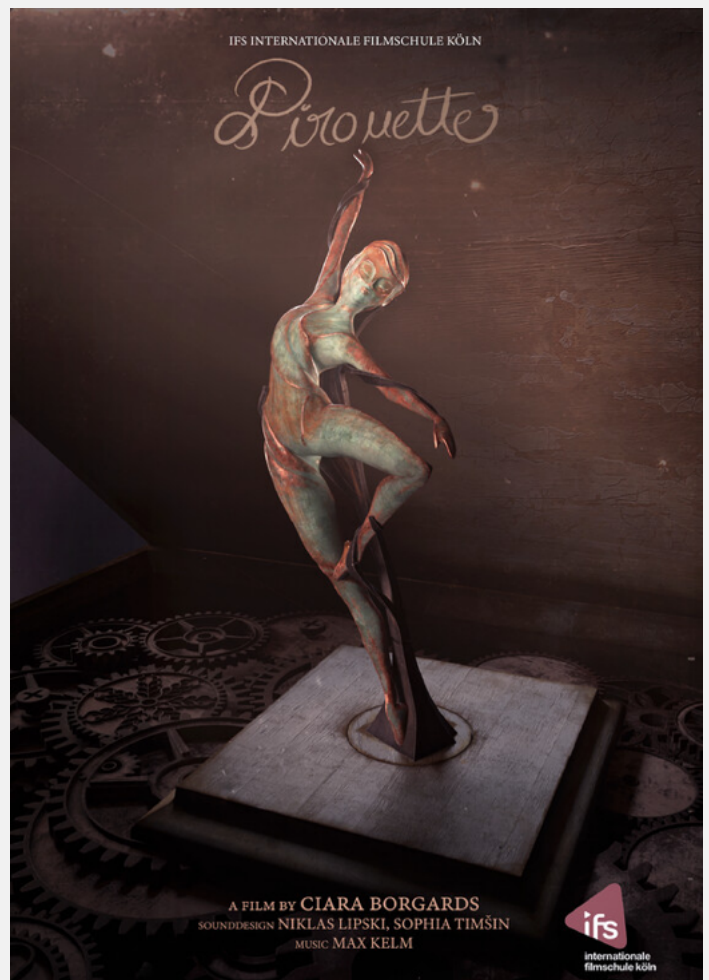
*Between Wings and Swings*  
*Talia*  
*Free*



## Student

*Winner: Pirouette*

*Unders*  
*Sem*  
*Love is Free*



## Science Fiction

### *Winner: That's Our Time*

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*Mergen*

*Carrion*

*DEADLINE*

*DATELEAP*

*Rest Stop*

*It Got Me In November*

*A Song of the Land*

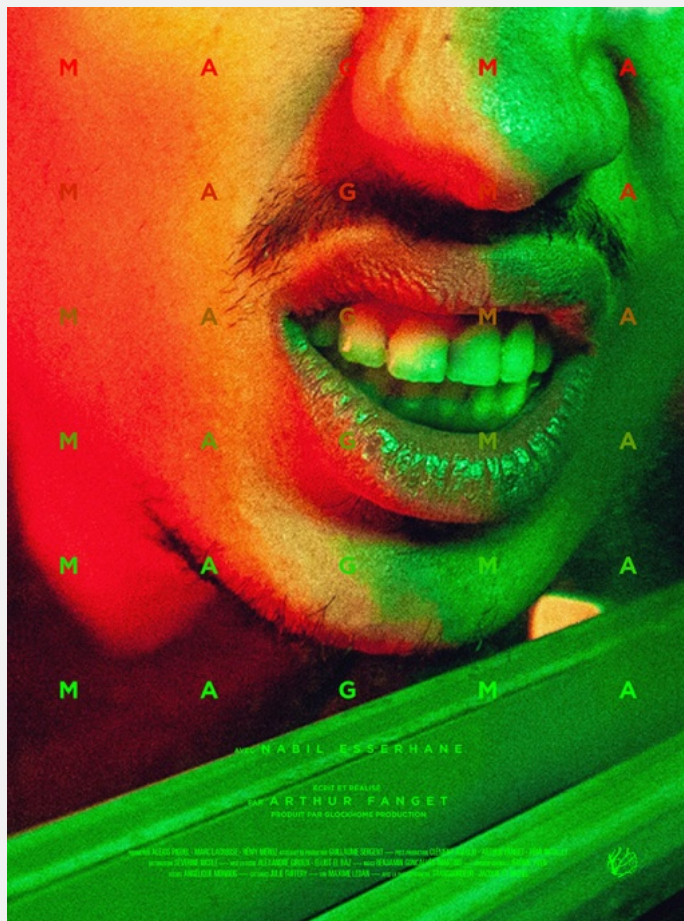
*A Mind Cannot Touch*

*Baby Boom*

*Abducted*

*Le varou*

*Chimera*



## Pride

### *Winner: Magma*

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*Empress ClawScream*

*The Fishing Net*

*River Take Me*

*Tell Tyler*



## Music

### *Winner: PROGEDIA- We Are the Night*

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*The Moon Followed Me To Falmouth*

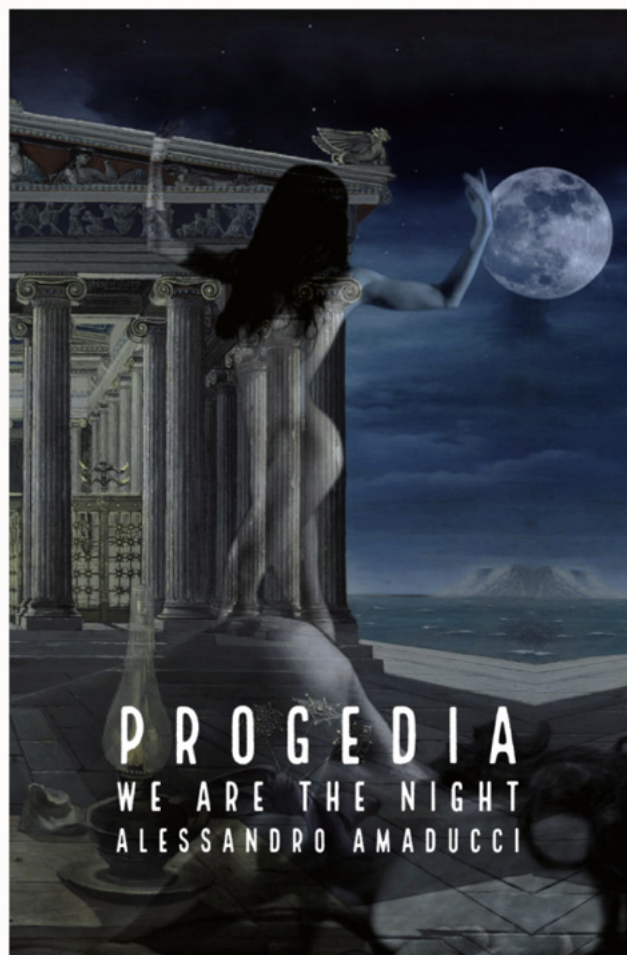
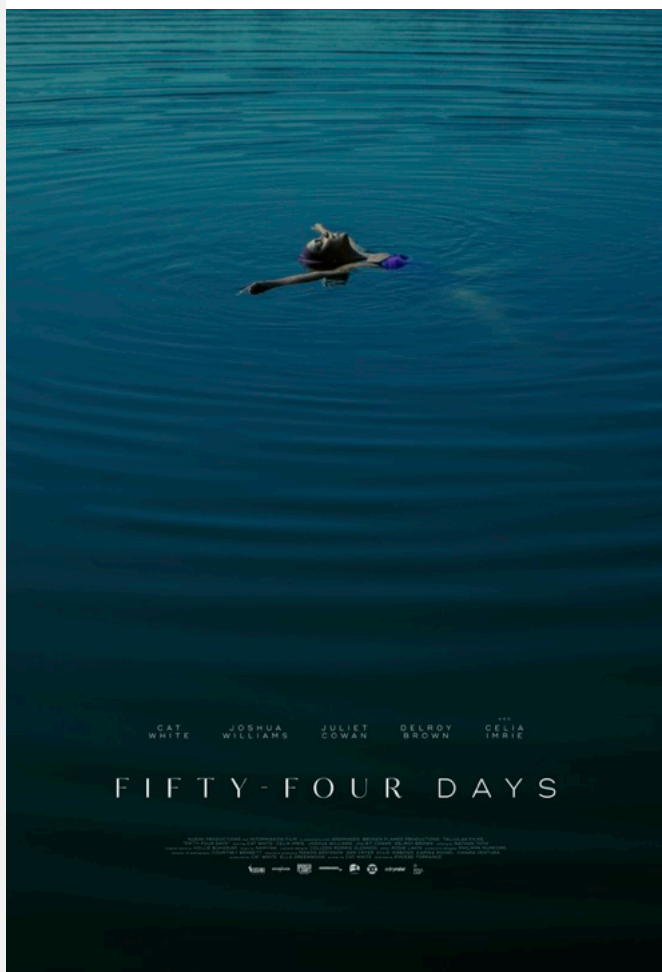
*Sincereality*

*Godmother-I'll Never Learn*

*Particles*

*Unhinged*

*Down&Out*



## East Midlands Focus

### *Winner: Fifty Four Days*

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*A Last Resort*

*ATLAS*

*Full full, half half*

*Spooky Bastard*

*Kiddo*

*Spooky Bastard*

*Boy in the Back Seat*

*Good Grief*

*'Who's Counting?'*

*Cosmo*

*VOID*

*Macaque*

## BEST IN FESTIVAL

### *“My Eyes Are Up Here”*

#### *Director*

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*Nathan Morris began his career making award-winning documentaries in New Zealand. In 2000 he set sail for London where he worked in music, comedy and branded content, directing and writing for artists and brands, such as Sony, BBC, Discovery, Simon Amstell, The Foo Fighters, Rihanna, and Lady Gaga (including Popworld, “history’s greatest music TV show”, according to The Guardian).*



*Nathan Morris*

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#### *Director’s Statement*

*“My Eyes Are Up Here brings a vibrant, under-represented voice to the screen... This film features a BAME woman with a lived experience of disability... Disability is often portrayed one-dimensionally on screen, but My Eyes Are Up Here offers deep insight into the lives of many who are unrepresented and unseen in mainstream media. We focus on the reality of those with lived experience of disability, as opposed to the stereotypes and tropes we are familiar with.”*





# Specialist Categories

## Direction

### *B'OSCAR Winner:*

*Women of Virtue by  
Stephanie Halton*

*"Powerful and capable in so many ways. The tenderness afforded each and every character is heartwarming, the lead performance is mesmerizing whilst the director orchestrates the film with precision and artistry."*

*— — John Currie*



*Hello, Muscles*

*Blue Rain*

*Familiar*

*Lapse*

*Unders*



## Script

***B'OSCAR Winner:***

*Man to Man by  
Shehroze khan*

*Baggage*

*Bona Vacant*

*Hello. Muscles*

***Shehroze  
khan***



## Performance

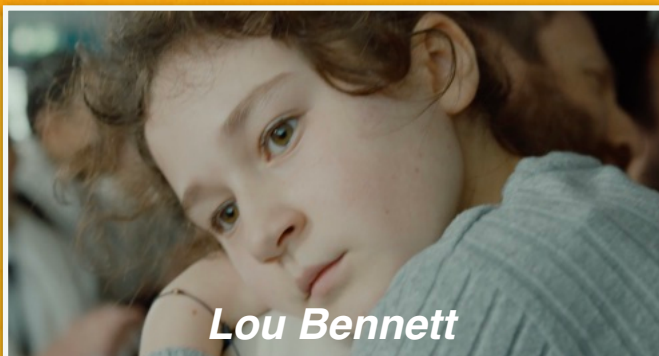
***B'OSCAR Winner:***

*Lou Bennett in  
Women of Virtue*

*Hugo Nicolau  
(Familiar)*

*Laura Aikman  
(Milk)*

*Edie Deffebach & Eleanor Wild  
(River Take Me)*



***Lou Bennett***



***Laura Aikman***



## Cinematography

***B'OSCAR Winner:***

*Mergen by  
Raiymbek Alzhanov*

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*Familiar*

*SUPERVISION*

*Children of Wild Orchid*

*Who's Counting*

*My Dear Son*



## Soud Track & Design

***B'OSCAR Winner:***

*Suburban Fantasy by  
Peter Mancuso*



*Les Calins Cheaps  
(Cheap Hugs)*

*Sarangi*

*Suburban Fantasy*

*SUPERVISION*

## Jury

*Frank Harriman*  
*Writer & Director At*  
*Arrondissement Films*

*Adam Anwi*  
*Writer&Director*

*Thomas Grascour*  
*Award Wining Director & Actor*

*Melissa Skirboll*  
*Award Winning Director , Writer*  
*Actor & Producer*

*Tommy Draper*  
*Writer*

*Deepika Suseelan*  
*Film Director and programmer*

*Mark Ang*  
*Film Producer*

*Emmanuel Anyiam-Osigwe*  
*BAFTA Member&BUFF Studios*

*Nisha Jose*  
*Artistic Director*

*Francesca Levi*  
*Filmmaker & Festival Director*

*Anna Wallace*  
*Writer*

*Sharon Coleclough*  
*Senior Lecturer*

*Marina Anna Eich*  
*Writer & Actress*

*Billie vee*  
*Actress & Screen Writer*

*Gino Van Hecke*  
*Director at Zeno Pictures*

*Lauren Pizzicaroli*  
*Writer*

*Helena Antonio*  
*Director, Producer& Actress*

*Tom Nettleship*  
*Music producer*



## BFF 2023 Festival Blogs

*For the ninth year running, we have another amazing lineup of over 150 films to excite, romance, shock and ultimately celebrate the incredible talent bursting out of the independent scene.*

### Pre-Festival—10/04/2023

*This year we have the addition of our fantastic Pride section. With submissions from the UK, Hungary and France, the Pride selection offers a myriad of Queer perspectives and stories. From machismo and uncomfortable awakenings (**Magma**), coming out stories (**Tell Tyler**) and toxic relationship dynamics stemming from deep trauma (**River Take Me**), to the joyous connection and empowerment fandom can provide the LGBTQ+ community (**Empress ClawScream**), this Pride collection is brimming with fresh talent and unmissable future hits.*

*Yellow Stone Cafe will be the home of our workshops this year, and tying into our Pride selection we have Evangeline Spachis joining us for a talk on the history of Queer cinema which promises to be fascinating. Another highlight will be the B'Oscar Blockbusters, where the four Beeston based film makers featured in the festival and whose films will lead our opening night, discuss their individual stories and journeys into the film industry. For those looking to get into the industry we have workshops on financing your projects as well as film festival strategy, and of course we have our B'Oscars Awards Ceremony! Join us for a glamorous night celebrating the fantastic films and film makers, culminating in the presenting of the Best Picture award.*

*We look forward to seeing you!*

**– Megan Roberts**

## A Chat With the Directors (part 1)- 11/04/2023

*With Arminder Virdee and Arthur Meek as writers and New Zealander, Nathan Morris, as director, 'My Eyes Are Up Here' follows a disabled woman who sets off on a mission to get the morning after pill. The only thing in her way is everything...*

*The short film "brings a vibrant, under-represented voice to the screen", who in many ways feels misunderstood. "I think everyone can relate to certain degrees. I can relate to not feeling understood, not fitting it, and wanting to get the hell away from someone". Morris explains how the feeling of otherness in his own life connected him to the story as he stated "I want people to see her life. I learnt so much from just talking to Arminder" Morris recalls as he continues to explain how he would like people to learn "through humour and romance", from the short film. "It's important to celebrate what brings us together and what makes us similar".*

*When asked what three elements make a good film, without hesitation Morris says "believability, curiosity and a good ending" which stays true to 'My Eyes Are Up Here' which has been nominated for both the 'Best Infestival' and "Women's Voices' categories at the festival.*

**— — — 'My Eyes Are Up Here' by Nathan Morris**

*'Bona Vacantia', Latin for 'Vacant Goods' addresses "absence and the things we leave behind – both physically and emotionally" The short drama, set in Liverpool, explores the themes of morality, loneliness, and an immigrant's concept of home as Nadia Basheer, a council worker, enters the homes of people who have died alone, disturbing their treasures, and learning their stories, all while keeping her own relentless paranoia in check. Salam explains how she took inspiration from a news article on the BBC where she discovered the job of a death administrator and its physical and emotional toll on a person.*

*When talking about the script to screen process, Salam expresses how "filmmaking is a team activity" as she proudly credits her team. "I was lucky to have such an amazing cast, such an amazing crew, and a big shoutout to my cinematographer 'Nizah Elias', who is an amazing female DP...it was also her vision, her idea of what the mood was going to be". Talking about her anxieties about casting during the pandemic and how Yasmin Wilde "made her job so much easier", Salam says "as soon as she came in, she just got the character immediately. There's a quiet strength about her, that I really wanted in the character, that she just exudes almost naturally." Described as "moving, thought-provoking and funny" by the director, 'Bona Vacantia' is up for an award for its script and an award in the "Women's Voices' category, at the B' Oscars.*

**— — — 'Bona Vacantis' by Shezah Salam**



Nottingham director, Leanne Davis states that the film is a *“love letter to mothers and daughters everywhere”* sending the beautiful message through humour, pain, and honesty. Speaking about what the film means to her and what she hopes comes out of the film, Davis said *“This film is my attempt to begin a conversation that proves that the terrifying diagnosis of Alzheimer’s doesn’t have to be a life sentence and ultimately where there is love, there is light.”* Inspired by her own life, Davis expresses how she *“wanted to encapsulate what it’s like to have a mum with early onset Alzheimer’s, especially when everything that’s portrayed in the media and culture is a much older people with Dementia and Alzheimer’s. It’s something you don’t expect.”*

*After initially writing a TV pilot, which was took for Amazon in the USA, Davis decided to take a risk, to ensure the story could be told in a way that felt personal by writing it into a short instead, which was took to the BFI. When talking through the process, Davis proudly reminisced and explained the “release” she felt from creating the short. As the interview came to a close, Davis reiterates the message of the film. “Life is hard but if you surround yourself by people that you love and people that love you, you’ll find a way through it, and there’s always light even no matter how small”.*

*Davis’ directorial debut, ‘A Last Resort’ has been nominated for 2 awards, the ‘East Mids Focus’ and ‘Best Infestival’, which will be decided on the last evening of the festival.*

**— — — ‘A Last Resort’ by Leanne Davis**

Many thanks to Orla for conducting these interviews! And of course, the amazing filmmakers for finding time to give us an insight into their incredible short films!



## A Chat With the Directors (part 2)- 13/04/2023

*By referencing one of the most difficult periods in Kazakh history, Alzhanov makes his debut with an exciting historical thriller enriched with ancient magic. Up for 3 awards, including 'Best Infestival', the science fiction, fantasy short film is a standout as its immaculate cinematography tells the story of a boy, Mergen, who must defend his family in the place of his absent father, on the strife torn Central Asian steppe.*

The idea came "shortly after finishing my studies at the National Kazakhstan University of Art" says Alzhanov who expresses his preferences in film production to be cinematography. "I was very much inspired by films. For example, 'The Witch (2015)' and TV series 'Game Of Thrones (2011)'. I really like the genre of fantasy". He continues to explain how "a lot of people don't know about our culture and mythologies. After the Soviet Union history, we need to remember who we are, so I want to show the films to my people at first, but I think the people around the world will be interested in our folklore, so I want to show my films to people around the world. But first, of course, for the people and my country."

The short film which took four months to film, is the first part of two. The second film taking just one week to film as Alzhanov expresses how "the first one was really hard to do". When discussing the challenges that himself and the crew faced during filming, Alzhanov recalls, "During the shooting, during one of the night shifts when the generator broke, for a while half of us were in the dark in the mountains up to our knees in the snow. It was very scary. We could hear wolf screams. It was difficult but the final production was perfect, and in the movie, I think I've done my bit."

### — — — 'Mergen' by Raiymbek Alzhanov

Nottingham born director, Jonathan Hawes has 9 years of experience writing and directing short films, from the age of 14, which is evident in his latest project, 'Cosmo' which gravitates "towards themes of trauma, grief and obsession told through lens of gallows humour". 'Cosmo' is Hawes' second film to be shown at the festival because in 2016, his film 'Forbidden fruit' was selected. Speaking about this, Hawes says he was "very proud to be selected then and very proud to be selected now" "It's great to be back!"

The original inspiration was based off true events in Hawes' life as he explains how "the cogs just started whirring" as he began to develop the unique idea. The short film sees an obsessive man conducting an investigation to find the animal who keeps pooping on its lawn. Speaking about the challenges that came with working with Squibs the cat, Hawes said they "were always on hand with a bag of treats". He expanded saying, "It was challenging but it was so satisfying when you saw kind of the dailies, the slow-motion scenes of the cat".

Hawes describes composing music for the opening shots of the film with a triangle and cable feedback to create the "sound of a cable just hanging out of a guitar amp, to sort of convey that sense of paranoia". The music also composed by David Rubenstein, who Hawes praised as being a "fantastic composer and always a pleasure to work with" amplifies the emotions and captures the atmosphere of the short film incredibly well.

### — — — 'Cosmo' by Jonathan Hawes

The grassroots directing duo, Michael Bird & Rafe Bird speak about how they utilised their five years of knowledge in music production and acting, to learn how to make films, during the pandemic. "When lockdown hit, I was like 'hey let's make something for my showreel, so we've got something to do creatively.' So, we made a short film and then we realised we really enjoyed it, so we made another one and started to really focus on the craft." Rafe explains whilst Michael nods his head in agreement.

After creating a variety of "snappy" shorts, each focusing on different aspects and techniques of filmmaking, the pair were ready to take on a bigger challenge, which is when they developed the idea for and wrote their short film 'Spooky Bastard'. With excellent comedic timing, enhanced by its use of music/sound effects, the comedy, horror short film, follows main character Jamie, who has found himself in a horror movie. He's just trying to get a good night's sleep when he hears a loud crash and sees a cloaked figure in the garden. Jamie and his girlfriend must find a way to rid themselves of the Spooky Bastard.



When speaking about what inspired them, Rafe said *“people often say it’s quite reminiscent”* of films by Edgar Wright, who is known for his satirical style genre and expressive music. Michael added how *‘Gremlins (1984)’* had really inspired their film *“in a really subliminal way which we hadn’t really realised, down to certain shots and certain kinds of things basically lifted from the film we hadn’t considered ourselves paying homage to.”*

*Talking about working so closely together, they joke saying “It was awful” before Michael expresses how “In a lot of ways it’s like a lot of collaborations. There are distinct differences in ways we want to do things.” However, they both agree that there is a huge benefit as they play to each other’s strengths throughout the filmmaking process.*

### **— — —Spooky Bastard by Michael & Rafe Bird**

*Directed by a 19-year-old Iranian filmmaker, ‘Shcool’ is an eye-opening and inspiring documentary by Kimia Rahmani who “made a promise to be the voice of the young women... to do whatever it takes to show the world what these girls are going through to achieve their dreams” The documentary is incredibly informative as Rahmani creates a space for the girls to courageously speak about their dreams, hopes and frustrations about living in Iran as a girl.*

*Kimia’s manager, Dorreh Khatibi says that “the documentary captures the struggles of a young group of girls in one of the most under-privileged schools in Tehran, Iran”. Rahmani states, “The Islamic republic of Iran was turning teachers and tutors into dictators, and I’ve been engaged with this whole system from a very young age, and I’ve tried to fight back this dictatorship in schools for years. It wasn’t enough so I’ve decided to make this documentary.” Rahmani states “Women, Life, Freedom. Those three words are the only reason I made this documentary.”*

*Rahmani has promised the girls and made it her mission to make their voices heard. Rahmani’s manager and lecturer explain that “you’ve got to look at it as a group of people, children, these are children, that are in prison.” When asked about the challenges that came with filming, they said “Rahmani was doing it secretly. They banned her from school. They banned her from shooting the rest of the film. We just sort of found a new way to put this footage together. In her mind back then, there was a much bigger film than this and the editing was hard because of the lack of footages that she needed. Some of these girls in the film can easily get into trouble for just being in this film so this makes the process of making this film in Iran even harder.” Another significant aspect of the film is the low budget and how Rahmani wrote the script, filmed, and edited all by herself as well as borrowing a camera from a friend.*

*Along with the powerful short film, ‘Shcool’, Rahmani has filmed 2 more, including one film which covers the topic of abortion. ‘Shcool’ described as “more than just a film, it’s a message” is nominated for 2 awards at the B’ Oscars, ‘Best Infestival’ and ‘Non-fiction’.*

### **— — —‘Shcool ’by Kimia Rahmani**

*Many thanks to Matthew, and Jakob for conducting these interviews! And of course, the amazing filmmakers for finding time to give us an insight into their incredible short films!*

## SPONSORS & PARTNERS

### ***Sponsors:***

*Ohannes*

*Doughnotts*

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*Nottingham Trent*

*University*



## INTERN TEAM

Jackcob Thurman

Interview+Filming

Orla Hackman

Interview+Front of House

Thomas Matthew

Interview+Front of House

Sian peace

Front of House

Thea

Front of House

Chloe Wilkinson

Front of House

Alisha Williams

Front of House

Zengs Yao

Front of House

Yunfei Jia

History Document Making

“This festival would not have been the success it was without these wonderful interns”

John Currie, Festival Director.