**NEW BFI FAN FILM EXHIBITION FUND OPENS**

**TO REBOOT PROGRAMMING AND BRING AUDIENCES BACK TO COMMUNAL FILM EXPERIENCES ACROSS THE UK**

**National Lottery funding for UK-wide members of the**

**Film Audience Network**

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

**London, Monday 17 August 2020**: The BFI announces the **BFI FAN Film Exhibition Fund** opens today, with **National Lottery** funding available to exhibitors across the UK. The new Fund will support activity to re-engage audiences with collective, big screen film experiences at film festivals, mixed arts venues, and both community and traditional cinemas. As part of a comprehensive package of support for film exhibitors – including the **Government’s £30m Culture Recovery Fund for Independent Cinemas in England** launched last week – the Film Exhibition Fund will support dynamic cultural programming and activities to engage diverse audiences.

BFI FAN is a unique collaboration of eight Film Hubs managed by leading film organisations across the UK, who will each distribute the funding in their region or nation. This BFI FAN Film Exhibition Fund will enable FAN Members to deliver a broad range of programming once they restart, ensuring excellent British and international independent cinema is available to audiences all over the UK. Other priorities of the Fund are incentivising exhibitors to embed inclusion and environmental sustainability into their approach to reopening, post shut down.

**Ben Luxford**, **BFI’s Head of UK Audiences**, said: “We know the best place to watch film is on the big screen, but the UK’s many indie venues and smaller exhibitors also serve as vital cultural spaces where audiences can connect with their local community, make new and surprising discoveries and be inspired by this most accessible art form in a communal setting. With the generous support of Government and National Lottery, our wealth of film exhibitors are in a position to restart activity, and this funding is there to support them – to continue being brave with their programming choices and to best serve audiences wherever they live in the UK.”

Thanks to the support of Government and National Lottery funding through the BFI, many independent cinemas have been able to survive the shutdown which hit arts and cultural venues badly and with immediate impact. The **BFI FAN Resilience Fund** opened in April offering £1.3m in emergency funding to exhibitors in critical need as they continued to face months of closure and uncertainty, awarding 130 FAN Members grants ranging from £415 to £23,000 each. The Government’s £30m Culture Recovery Fund for Independent Cinemas in England is now open, providing funding to cover COVID-related health and safety costs, and grants to support independent cinemas operate under the restricted conditions and at limited capacity due to social distancing measures. The UK Government has also provided funding to support cinemas in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which will be managed by the devolved Government administrations.

As part of the industry-wide **BFI Screen Sector Task Force**, the UK Cinema Association led on publishing guidance on the safe operation of cinemas and mobile cinemas. ***Working safely during COVID-19 in cinemas***, which is regularly updated to meet the latest government guidance, is produced in consultation with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The BFI put in place a [package of support](https://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/announcements/package-support-uk-industry-covid-19) for individuals, organisations and businesses across the sector that have been most impacted by COVID-19 (including the BFI FAN COVID-19 Resilience Fund, Production Continuation Fund, Sales Company Organisational Fund and COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund with The Film & TV Charity for freelancers) and through the BFI Screen Sector Task Force, it continues to work with industry and Government to develop and implement a robust, sector-wide strategy for recovery.

A number of significant initiatives have resulted from the work of the Screen Sector Task Force, including the Culture Recovery Fund for Independent Cinemas in England; a Government funded scheme to support independent film and television production struggling to get coronavirus-related insurance; creating guidance for film and television production to restart and cinemas to reopen, both given the greenlight by Government and Public Health England; and the quarantine exemption for film and high-end television cast and crew.

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**Notes to Editors**

**About the BFI Film Audience Network**

Supported by National Lottery funding, the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), is central to the BFI’s aim to ensure the greatest choice of film is available for everyone. Established in 2012 to build wider and more diverse UK cinema audiences for British and international film, FAN is a unique, UK-wide collaboration made up of eight Hubs managed by leading film organisations and venues strategically placed around the country. FAN also supports talent development with BFI NETWORK Talent Executives in each of the English Hubs, with a mission to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers.

BFI FAN Film Hubs are:

* Film Hub Midlands is led by Broadway, Nottingham working in partnership with the Birmingham-based Flatpack
* Film Hub North is led collectively by Showroom Workstation, Sheffield, HOME Manchester and Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle
* Film Hub South East is led by the Independent Cinema Office
* Film Hub South West is led by Watershed in Bristol
* Film Hub Scotland is led by Glasgow Film Theatre
* Film Hub NI is led by Queen’s University Belfast
* Film Hub Wales is led by Chapter in Cardiff
* Film Hub London is led by Film London

**About the BFI**

During the COVID-19 pandemic the BFI has provided a **package of measures** worth over £5m to support the film sector including funding for productions that have had to halt before completion; a resilience fund for festivals and exhibitors; a contribution to the COVID-19 Film and TV Emergency Relief Fund for freelancers; a sales company support fund; and funding flexibility for its partners and projects.

The BFI is the UK’s lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a distributor of National Lottery funding and a cultural and education charity that:

•       Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of world cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online

•       Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world

•       Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers

•       Works with Government and industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

**About the National Lottery**

Thanks to National Lottery players, up to £600 million of funding has been made available to support communities across the UK during the Coronavirus crisis.

The National Lottery is playing a critical role in supporting people, projects and communities during these challenging times.

By playing The National Lottery, you are making an amazing contribution to the nationwide-response to combatting the impact of COVID-19 on local communities across the UK.

**About the DCMS Culture Recovery Fund**

The Government’s **£1.57bn Culture Recovery Fund** is the biggest ever one-off investment in Britain’s world-class culture, arts and heritage institutions. It aims to help organisations to help weather the impact of coronavirus by staying afloat while their doors are closed, safeguarding the sector for future generations and support their employees whilst they are closed. The UK’s world-renowned galleries, museums, heritage sites, music venues and independent cinemas are critical to keeping our economy thriving and employ more than 700,000 people.