

**PRESS RELEASE: NATIONAL**

## **EXCITING TIMES FOR FRESH FILM-MAKING TALENT AS STARTING BLOCK ANNOUNCES SIX NEW SHORT FILM COMMISSIONS**

Launched in May this year 'Starting Block' is a new filmmaking training scheme which invited first time filmmakers aged 16yrs and over to submit ideas for short films based on the theme of 'Diversity'.

'Starting Block' is run by Glasgow based Diversity Films, who facilitated a series of introductory film schools in Fife, Glasgow and Dumfries & Galloway to encourage and support filmmakers who wanted to submit their ideas to the programme.

From a shortlist of 15 projects which were developed at residential Weekend Film Schools in the focus regions, Diversity Films and their project partners are delighted to announce that six projects have now been commissioned. Many of the projects are cross-regional productions which bring together new filmmakers from across Scotland.

Please note that all these are working titles and that the project teams are still to be finalised.

### ***I, Alive***

Written by Thomas Simpson, Glasgow (Director - Thomas Simpson; Producers - Sharon McCance & John Rae, Glasgow);  
A short drama about Kevin, a young man with motor neurone disease who relies on his brother Paul to have a life. Kevin will be played by Adam Stafford from Edinburgh.

### ***For the Love of Lugosi***

By Derek T Wilson, Glenrothes (Director - Andy Gregor, Dunfermline; Producers - Kim Hickey & Tam Hickey, Glasgow);  
A biographical film about Derek and his life with Asperger's syndrome explored through his love of Bela Lugosi.

### ***James Dean***

Written by Lucy Elliott, Glasgow (Director - Lucy Elliott; Producers Graham Dron & Glenn Cameron);  
A family day out takes an unexpected turn when young Alex decides to share her secret.

### ***Living on the Edge***

By Samantha Fernando, Kirkcudbright (Director - Samantha Fernando; Producers - Yen Hongmei Jin, Dumfries & Amy-Dee Tighe, Newton Stewart);

Working the land is something Isobel is used to, it's in her blood. She watched her parents' daily toil, and listened to tales of her grandparents' struggles. Now it's her turn to tackle the acres and make the land work for her.

### ***Running Wild***

By Pete Rennie, Cairneyhill (Director - Pete Rennie; Producer Helen Brogan, Dunfermline);  
A documentary tracking the life of ultra-distance runner Fiona and her family.

### ***Taxi for Henderson***

By Ian McLaughlin, Glasgow (Director/ Producers Claire McGuire, Gillian Park, Francis Wallace & Ian McLaughlin);  
Drama documentary. When Ian was a wean he was petrified of his alcoholic dad. Was it too late to change his ways when he realised that he was slowly turning into this person he loathed so much?



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Each project will have a professional filmmaker attached as a mentor to guide the new filmmakers through the process. Furthermore, a series of additional specialist workshops will be offered, which will be tailored to meet the needs of various individuals on the scheme. The films will be completed and delivered by the end of the year. Diversity Films encourage people to collaborate across communities and generations and will work with people to form teams around each production.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Starting Block is funded by a mixture of national and regional funding with Creative Scotland and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation as the key backers. Leslie Finlay, Development Officer at Creative Scotland said 'Creative Scotland is delighted to be supporting 'Starting Block', an initiative to discover and train screen talent of the future in diverse communities across Scotland'. Other regional funders include The Holywood Trust, Leader in Fife, Dumfries & Galloway Community Learning & Development Department, Celebrating Fife 2010 and North East Glasgow Area Committee.

Additionally, region-wide cultural partnership teams and venues have offered in-kind support which include Fife Women's Technology Centre and the Royal Oak Community Club in Lochgelly, the Blairhall Community Centre, the Tayside Institute Centre in Newburgh, the Auchmuty Learning Centre in Glenrothes, the Northwest Resource Centre in Lincluden, Youth Buzz Roadshow in Dumfries, the Agnew Park Pavilion in Stranraer, the Newton Stewart Community Centre, the Kingsway Health and Wellbeing Centre, AIS and Platform in Glasgow.

Diversity Films has since its inception worked with over 200 people who have produced dozens of films between them. Most recently they ran Brand New, which used the same model of community based outreach work to help people, who might be otherwise excluded from this type of training, to make films that matter to them on their doorstep.

## QUOTES FROM FILMMAKERS

One of the selected filmmakers, Samantha Fernando, says about her commission: "I am absolutely thrilled at being selected. Making films is something I've wanted to do for a very long time - to explore its creative potential to reflect, reveal, and bring ideas to life; it's been bubbling away as I've got on with being a busy mum. Now that I've been given my first commission, I really do believe there is no stopping me!"

Thomas Simpson says: "I was pleased to be even considered for Starting Block and unable to keep the smile from myself when my project got selected. I'm hoping that it will make people think but overall, I want them to enjoy it."

Lucy Elliot: "It's amazing my film has been selected for Starting Block. This opportunity has developed my skills in story telling and script writing with my assigned mentor and will also give me practice in a directorial role. I'm excited about seeing a project from start to finish and hopefully this will give me the confidence to continue making more work".

Ian McLaughlin: "Developing this idea to reach the shortlist was great but selected to have our film produced is wow."

Pete Rennie says: "I have enjoyed being part of the Diversity Film Schools, it has been very rewarding and beneficial to me as a student. I submitted a film idea and I was thrilled to be chosen as director of my very own project "Running Wild", although an amateur film maker I am excited at the prospect of making my first professional documentary."



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Derek T Wilson: "I'm quite amazed that my film idea was selected along with the other five - and although I'm quite scared of getting the film up and running, it is going to be for now, a once in a lifetime experience!"

## NOTE TO EDITORS

To obtain images or set up interviews with Starting Block filmmakers or Diversity Films, please contact Marie Olesen on [marie@diversityfilms.org.uk](mailto:marie@diversityfilms.org.uk) 0141 357 7299.

For more info about Diversity Films, please visit [www.diversityfilms.org.uk](http://www.diversityfilms.org.uk)

