



## STARTING BLOCK FILMMAKERS SHOWCASE

As part of the RE:Mind event

[Scottish Mental Health Arts & Film Festival](#)

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2011, 11.30am

Centre for Contemporary Arts, 350 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow

For tickets, call 0141 352 4900 or [www.cca-glasgow.com](http://www.cca-glasgow.com)

[www.mhfestival.com](http://www.mhfestival.com)

What better way to start your weekend than with a series of short films heralded as 'formidable', 'thought-provoking', 'brave', 'excellent', 'fun', 'emotional', 'giving people an amazing insight into everyday people's lives?'

This time last year, a group of aspiring filmmakers from Glasgow, Fife and Dumfries & Galloway who had never met before joining the Starting Block programme were busy shooting their first films, come rain, shine and lots of snow.

Making a film and having your story heard can be hard at the best of times, and many of the filmmakers had a variety of challenges to beat to be able to make their films, including Asperger's syndrome, ME, financial and geographical barriers. As a programme, Starting Block aimed to help people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to engage in filmmaking with great results for all involved.

Starting Block is Diversity Films' film-making training and mentoring programme, providing six filmmaking teams with the opportunity to develop and produce their first short film commission. In its first year, six films were commissioned on diverse themes such as alcoholism, ultra-running, living with Aspergers, physical disability and life as a woman farmer.

A year on, the diverse mix of films have been screened at [Glasgow Short Film Festival](#), [Loch Ness Film Festival](#), [Southside Film Festival](#), [Edinburgh Short Film Festival](#), [Cinefringe](#) and [Deep Fried Film Festival](#) as well as a variety of regional screenings at community venues in Fife and Dumfries & Galloway.

In addition, **James Dean**, written and directed by Lucy Asten Holmes-Elliott has shown itself to be much loved around the world with screenings at [Sydney Film Festival](#), [Palm Springs Film Festival](#), **Out Film Festival** in Kentucky (where the film picked up the **Grand Jury Prize for Live Action** and the **Audience Choice Award**), [Boston Lesbian & Gay Film Festival](#), [London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival](#), [Brief Encounters Short Film Festival](#) and more as well as securing a nomination for the [Iris Prize](#).

Meanwhile, **Running Wild** by Fife filmmaker Pete Rennie has screenings coming up at both [Edinburgh Mountain Film Festival](#) and [Dundee Mountain Film Festival](#), and has been screened in Russia at the 3rd International Sportsfilm and TV Festival and 8th International Sportsfilm Festival 'ATLANT'.

It's not just about screenings and awards either. The filmmakers have all gone on to keep making films and keep in touch as friends as well.

Please join us to celebrate the film-makers' achievements at the RE:Mind event at Scottish Mental Health Arts and Festival which this year explores memory, identity and dreams.

**For more information, interviews and photographs please contact:**

0141 357 7299 [mail@diversityfilms.org.uk](mailto:mail@diversityfilms.org.uk), Studio 6 333 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6NG

**To watch the films please visit:** <http://diversityfilms.org.uk/index.php/starting-block-2/>

## About Starting Block:

**Starting Block** is **Diversity Films** Community Interest Company's primary filmmaking and training programme. Launched in May 2010, the film scheme was open to new filmmakers across Scotland, aged 16 and over. From a long list of surprisingly fresh and spellbinding short film ideas, 15 were shortlisted and developed further – of which eventually six were selected with enormous difficulty. The six ideas underwent a period of thorough development before they finally went into production.

With subject matters of the six shorts ranging from **disability** to burgeoning **sexual identity**, from **alcoholism** to **autism** and from **farming** to **ultra running**, the final result are six completely different films, showcasing a variety not only of inspiring emerging talent, but also a series of captivating snapshots of Scotland today. **Details of the filmmakers and films overleaf.**

**Diversity Films** encouraged people to collaborate across communities and generations and worked with people to form teams around each production.

**Starting Block** was funded by a mixture of national and regional funding with **Creative Scotland** (previously **Scottish Screen**) and the **Paul Hamlyn Foundation** as the key backers.

Leslie Finlay, Development Executive at Scottish Screen said '**Creative Scotland is delighted to be supporting 'Starting Block', through our New Talent Development initiative, to discover and train screen talent of the future in diverse communities throughout Scotland**'.

Other regional funders include the **Hollywood Trust**, **LEADER Fife**, **Dumfries & Galloway Community Learning & Development Department**, **Celebrating Fife 2010** and **North East Glasgow Area Committee**.

## About Diversity Films:

Diversity Films, a not for profit organisation set up by film professionals in 2007 with its main aim being to find, nurture and mentor new filmmakers. They've run Community Filmmakers Project and Brand New across Greater Glasgow and so far worked with over 300 individuals aged 9-80+, who have produced over 50 films between them. Diversity Films is currently fund- raising to continue working across Scotland.





Photo of DT Wilson by Marie Olesen

### FOR THE LOVE OF LUGOSI

By **D.T. Wilson** (Glenrothes)  
Directed by **Andy Gregor** (Dunfermline)  
Produced by **Kim Hickey** and **Tam Hickey** (Glasgow)  
**Drama Documentary** (15'36).

**For the Love of Lugosi** explores one man's interest in old gothic horror movies and the effects that **Asperger's Syndrome** has had on his life. Shot in Fife and Glasgow.



Photo of Calum Murray & Paul Massie by Ross Wilson

### I, ALIVE

Written by **Thomas Simpson**  
Directed by **Thomas Simpson**  
Produced by **Andrew Lanni** (Kirkwall/Glasgow) and **Thomas Simpson** (Glasgow)  
**Drama Short** (8'32).

**Wheelchair bound and unable to speak, Kevin** still has a voice and is certain that his brother **Paul** will listen to him sooner rather than later.



Photo of Lauren Dempsie by George Geddes

### JAMES DEAN

Written and directed by **Lucy Elliott** (Glasgow)  
Produced by **Jennifer Scammell** (Glasgow)  
**Drama Short** (7'20).

**A family day out** takes an unexpected turn when young **Alex** decides to share her secret.



Photo of Isobel Henkelmann by Campbell Mitchell

### THE KING AND QUEEN OF WÜRTEMBERG

Directed by **Samantha Fernando** (Kirkcudbright)  
Produced by **Amy-Dee Tighe** (Newton Stewart)  
**Documentary** (24'44).

**Working the land** is in **Isobel's** blood; Now it's her turn to tackle the acres and make the land work for her.



Photo of Isobel Henkelmann by Campbell Mitchell

### MY FATHER'S SON

Directed and produced by **Claire McGuire** (Glasgow) and **Ian McLaughlin** (Glasgow)  
**Drama Documentary** (14'09).

**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?



Photo of Runner by Campbell Mitchell

### RUNNING WILD

Directed by **Pete Rennie** (Cairneyhill)  
Produced by **Helen Brogan** (Dunfermline)  
**Documentary** (16'16).

**A documentary** tracking the life of ultra-distance runner **Fiona** and her family.



## Starting Block Filmmaker Quotes:

*'At almost 50 yrs old, I thought that there was nothing out there to help me, although I was happy making videos for YouTube, I wanted to know more about film making so when the opportunity of getting on to Starting Block came up I jumped at the chance....I was a co-producer on 'For the Love of Lugosi', I never thought that I would meet and work with others, least of all those from Fife, But with Starting Block's help it came together and they made every effort to make sure we kept in touch and got the best out of each other in making the film'*

**Kim Hickey, For the Love of Lugosi, co-producer (Glasgow)**

*'The media industry can be a cold and harsh business for anyone with a desire to work within this environment. Many places want you to work long hour for no pay and expect you to be grateful for it. What I love about Starting Block is the programme gives people the opportunity to do what they want with regards to film whether that is direct, write, produce, sound, camera and so on. I know that I would have struggled to get funding for my project, with Starting Block all I needed was an idea and a vision.'*

**Thomas Simpson, I, Alive, writer/director (Glasgow)**

*'Diversity Films to me is a doorway into an industry which is without doubt one of the hardest to get into. In my experience Diversity Films main objective is to find people with good ideas who have the passion and talent to turn them in to great films and Diversity does not discriminate based on your experience, qualifications or who you may or may not know.*

*Diversity films gave me the opportunity to make a film the way I wanted to make it. I also had the best equipment available to me, advice from so many talented professionals whenever I needed it and I was given creative freedom.*

*Starting Block has been an exciting learning experience for me as well as the chance to meet lots of like minded people. I'm certain that without it I wouldn't have been given the chance to direct and produce a film and have it shown at the Glasgow Film Festival.'*

**Claire McGuire, My Father's Son, co-director & producer (Glasgow)**

*'I was amazed that the mentors (producers and directors) were so willing to give us the creative freedom to explore our own film ideas and make our own films. From script development and filming, to editing and dubbing, my mentors were on hand to offer their knowledge and experience - the learning curve was huge!! but the rewards tremendous. Just want to make another film now!'*

**Samantha Fernando, The King and Queen of Württemberg, director (Kirkcudbright)**

