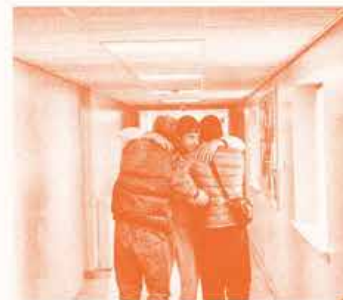




# GREAT



**2025**  
**NEW BRITISH**  
**TALENT SHOWCASE**

Presented by



With thanks to BBC Film & Film4



MADFABULOUS  
Celyn Jones

GREAT 8

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ISH  
Imran Perretta

GREAT 8

# Welcome to the annual Great 8 showcase



For its eighth annual edition, the British Film Institute and the British Council have partnered once again to highlight a selection of new feature projects from some of the UK's most exciting first-time and early career filmmakers.

This is a programme that has championed some of the UK's brightest new talents over the last eight years. We've highlighted filmmakers and films in advance of their world premieres, and before many of them found significant international festival, awards, and box office success, with an alumni including Rich Peppiatt (*KNEECAP*), Charlotte Wells (*AFTERSUN*), Georgia Oakley (*BLUE JEAN*), Rose Glass (*SAINT MAUD*), Charlotte Regan (*SCRAPPER*) and Michael Pearce (*BEAST*) and Rungano Nyoni (*I AM NOT A WITCH*).

Our online presentation which is available from now until 25 May 2025, unveils unseen footage from a handpicked selection of titles, each with a brief introduction from the filmmaker. In this brochure you can find more information about both films and filmmakers, as well as the contacts for each project. If you like what you see, please contact the sales agents and teams directly for more information.

Thanks as ever to BBC Film and Film4 in helping to assemble this showcase - and thank you for joining us, and for your continued support of UK films and filmmakers.





# Animol

## Ashley Walters



### Synopsis

*ANIMOL* tells the story of 15-year-old Troy, who is remanded in custody for a murder he didn't commit.

Thrown into a notorious Young Offenders' Institution, he tries to keep his head down and stay out of trouble – but survival isn't easy when everyone wants something from you. Amid the chaos, Troy finds an unexpected ally in Krystiyan, another young inmate struggling to navigate the same volatile world.

A powerful and tender coming-of-age drama, *ANIMOL* explores the shattering of innocence, the grip of tribalism, and the courage it takes to be your true self in the harshest of environments.

### Director's Bio

Ashley Walters is a celebrated and award-winning actor, director, producer, and recording artist, known for his seismic role within Black London culture and the UK entertainment industry. He first rose to prominence as part of the pioneering UK Garage collective So Solid Crew, whose No.1 single "21 Seconds" earned them a BRIT Award. His breakthrough acting role came in *BULLET BOY* (2004), earning him a BIFA for Most Promising Newcomer. Ashley is best known for his portrayal of Dushane in *TOP BOY*, a defining series in British television, with five seasons spanning Channel 4 and Netflix. In 2017, he founded his production company, SLNda, to champion new talent and culturally resonant stories, making his directorial debut with the short film *BOYS* for Sky. Most recently, Ashley directed on Steven Knight's *A THOUSAND BLOWS* for Disney+/Hulu and starred in Netflix hits *MISSING YOU* and *ADOLESCENCE*, which broke UK viewing records.

#### Production Credits

Sky  
Film4  
BFI  
Joi Productions  
Rogue State Productions  
SLNda

#### Genre

Drama

#### Country of Origin

UK

#### Delivery Date

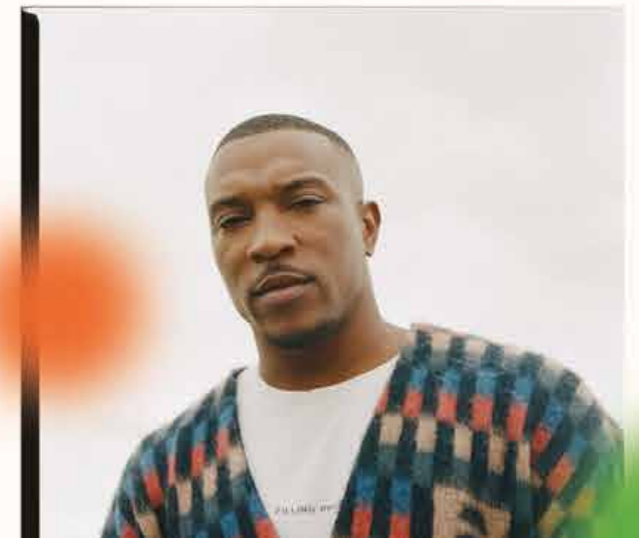
Autumn 2025

#### Territories already sold/unavailable

UK

#### Sales Contact

Bankside Films  
Yana Georgieva  
yana@bankside-films.com



#### Director

Ashley Walters

#### Writer

Nick Love

#### Producers

Tom Hawkins  
Joy Gharoro-Akpojotor  
Nick Love, Ashley Walters

#### Cast

Tut Nyuot, Vladyslav Baliuk  
Stephen Graham  
Sharon Duncan-Brewster  
Sekou Diaby

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# Ish

## Imran Perretta



### Synopsis

*ISH* follows two best friends, Ish and Maram, on the cusp of being teenagers.

In a society where racial profiling ensures brown boys are constantly under surveillance, their friendship is ended by a traumatic police stop-and-search. Ish soon discovers that 'letting go' can be the hardest part of growing up.

### Director's Bio

Imran Perretta is a writer, director, visual artist and composer from London. Achieving critical acclaim in the world of contemporary art, his sound and moving image work has been performed and shown at galleries and festivals internationally and is included in a number of public and private art collections including the Tate and the Arts Council England. Imran's most recent film work *THE DESTRUCTORS* toured major institutions across the UK.

Following the debut of *THE DESTRUCTORS*, Imran was named a Turner Prize Bursary winner in 2020. His current exhibition, *A RIOT IN THREE ACTS* is currently on tour and features a new suite of music for string quartet, *A REQUIEM FOR THE DISPOSSESSED*, commissioned and performed by the Manchester Camerata. In addition to the Turner Prize Bursary, Imran was named a Jarman Award nominee in 2019, and was a recipient of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Artist Award in 2023.

#### Production Credits

Primal Pictures  
Home Team  
Good Chaos  
BBC Film  
BFI  
Calculus Media  
Out of Order

#### Genre

Coming of age

#### Country of Origin

UK

#### Delivery Date

June 2025

#### Territories already sold/unavailable

Airlines

#### Sales Contact

Film Constellation  
Fabien Westerhoff  
fabien@filmconstellation.com

#### Director

Imran Perretta

#### Writers

Imran Perretta, Enda Walsh

#### Producers

Dhiraj Mahey  
Bennett McGhee

#### Cast

Farhan Hasnat  
Yahya Kitana  
Avin Shah  
Sudha Bhuchar  
Joy Crookes  
Arman Mohammed  
Is'haaq Hasan Haque  
Hasnain Shah

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**Production Credits**

Shudder Films  
 Wildcard production  
 KeyFilm  
 One Wave Films  
 Eiru Films  
 Screen Ireland  
 UK Global Screen Fund  
 Ffilm Cymru Wales  
 WRAP Fund  
 Netherlands Film Fund  
 Dias Feld  
 Finite Films  
 Bankside Films  
 Three Point Capital

**Genre**

Drama

**Country of Origin**

UK, Ireland, Netherlands

**Delivery Date**

Autumn 2025

**Territories already sold/unavailable**

N/A

**Sales Contact**

Bankside Films  
 Yana Georgieva  
 yana@bankside-films.com

# Learning to Breathe Under Water

## Rebekah Fortune

### Synopsis

Leo is eight, curious, wise and full of imagination.

His best friend is a massive shark—half sculpture, half myth—that crashed through the roof of his house one night when his dad, Peter, gave shape to what he couldn't say out loud.

Leo's world is full of questions: why do grown-ups act so strangely? Where did Mum go five years ago? And will Dad ever come down from the clouds—or at least remember to do the shopping? Peter's either buried in big, bonkers art projects or barely speaking, so Leo daydreams vividly and shares his secrets with the shark, who might just be listening but can't speak back.

Then Anya bursts into their lives: a spirited au pair with her own questions to shatter the silence and answers more honest than Leo has ever heard before. Her fearless warmth and energy brings back colour to their world and uplifts their lives.

**Director**

Rebekah Fortune

**Writer**

Richard Brabin

**Producers**

Jack Tarling  
 Patrick O'Neill

**Cast**

Rory Kinnear

Maria Bakalova

Ezra Carlisle

### Director's Bio

Rebekah Fortune is an autistic director based in Tamworth. Her micro budget debut feature *JUST CHARLIE* was released to critical acclaim in 2017 receiving many awards including the Audience Award at EIFF and the Cannes Ecrans Junior Award, was nominated for 2 BIFAs and secured distribution worldwide. Her short films have won numerous Oscar and BAFTA qualifying festivals. She has mentored for BFI Network, sat on the BAFTA short film jury, and is an alumni of Network@LFF, Edinburgh Talent Lab, BIFA springboard, Screen Yorkshire Flex and Breaking Through the Lens along with being a finalist for The Academy Gold Fellowship. Additionally Rebekah works extensively with young actors with Disabilities.



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# Madfabulous Celyn Jones



## Synopsis

A riotous, uncompromising celebration of otherness inspired by the unlikely British aristocrat who theatrically bankrupted his estate, lived fast and died young.

When the flamboyant Henry Paget arrives in 1890s North Wales from France to claim his aristocratic inheritance, his theatrical flair and defiant eccentricities send shockwaves through the upper-class elite, much to the amusement of the local townspeople. Alongside his spirited cousin Lily and loyal butler Gelert, Henry tries to carve out his own identity as the Fifth Marquess, navigating suffocating traditions, scheming relatives, and the long shadow cast by Henry's estranged father.

*MADFABULOUS* is inspired by Henry Paget, the fifth Marquis of Anglesey, who smashed society's notions of class, gender and decorum, squandering a multimillion fortune before his heartbreaking untimely death. They left nothing behind but love... and a good story.

## Director's Bio

Celyn Jones is a critically acclaimed, award-winning actor and BAFTA-nominated writer from Wales, as well as Creative Director of production company Mad as Birds.

The Times praised him as "the powerhouse writer/performer behind the greatest Dylan Thomas biopic yet." He won a BAFTA Cymru Award in 2019 for his portrayal of a real-life serial killer in *MANHUNT*, but in recent years has focused increasingly on writing and directing.

Jones wrote and co-directed *THE ALMOND AND THE SEAHORSE*, in which he also stars opposite Rebel Wilson and Charlotte Gainsbourg; the film premiered at the Zurich and Dinard Film Festivals, winning the Special Jury Prize. *MADFABULOUS* marks his debut as a solo director.



**Director**  
Celyn Jones

**Writer**  
Lisa Baker

**Producers**  
Sean Marley, Nadia Jaynes

**Cast**  
Callum Scott Howells  
Ruby Stokes  
Rupert Everett  
Paul Rhys  
Siobhán McSweeney

GREAT 8

**Production Credits**  
Mad as Birds  
Ffilm Cymru Wales  
Creative Wales

**Genre**  
Alternative Period  
Drama

**Country of Origin**  
Wales, UK

**Delivery Date**  
May 2025

**Territories already sold/unavailable**  
Worldwide Rights Available

**Sales Contact**  
Sean Marley  
sean@madasbirdsfilms.com





# Mission

## Paul Wright



### Synopsis

*MISSION* is a punk exploration of the psyche which follows alienated Dylan (George MacKay) as he throws off the shackles of his solitary life in an attempt to experience the highs and lows of existence at its most extreme.

Estranged from his sister Claire (Rosy McEwen), he embarks on a thrilling journey of self-discovery that proves both inspiring and terrifying.

#### Production Credits

Early Day Films  
65 Wilding Films  
Meraki Films  
Rapt  
BBC Film  
Screen Scotland  
Ffilm Cymru Wales

#### Genre

Drama Thriller

#### Country of Origin

UK

#### Delivery Date

Winter 2025

#### Territories already sold/unavailable

None

#### Sales Contact

Blue Finch Films  
Mike Chapman  
mike@bluefinchfilms.com

### Director's Bio

Paul Wright is a critically acclaimed BAFTA winning Scottish Writer/Director whose work has played internationally at festivals such as Cannes, Berlin and Locarno. An NFTS graduate, his short films have received international acclaim and awards, including winning the BAFTA for Best Short Film, The Leopard Of Tomorrow Award at Locarno, and screened in numerous prestige film festivals worldwide. His feature debut *FOR THOSE IN PERIL* premiered at Cannes Critics Week, won Best Film at the BAFTA Scotland Awards and the BIFA Douglas Hickox Award for Directorial Debut. Paul was also nominated for the BAFTA Award for Outstanding Debut by a British Writer/Director. He has most recently completed *ARCADIA*, a provocative and poetic documentary. The film screened at numerous festivals including BFI London Film Festival, Glasgow Film Festival, and MOMA in New York, before being released theatrically nationwide to critical acclaim.

#### Director

Paul Wright

#### Writer

Paul Wright

#### Producers

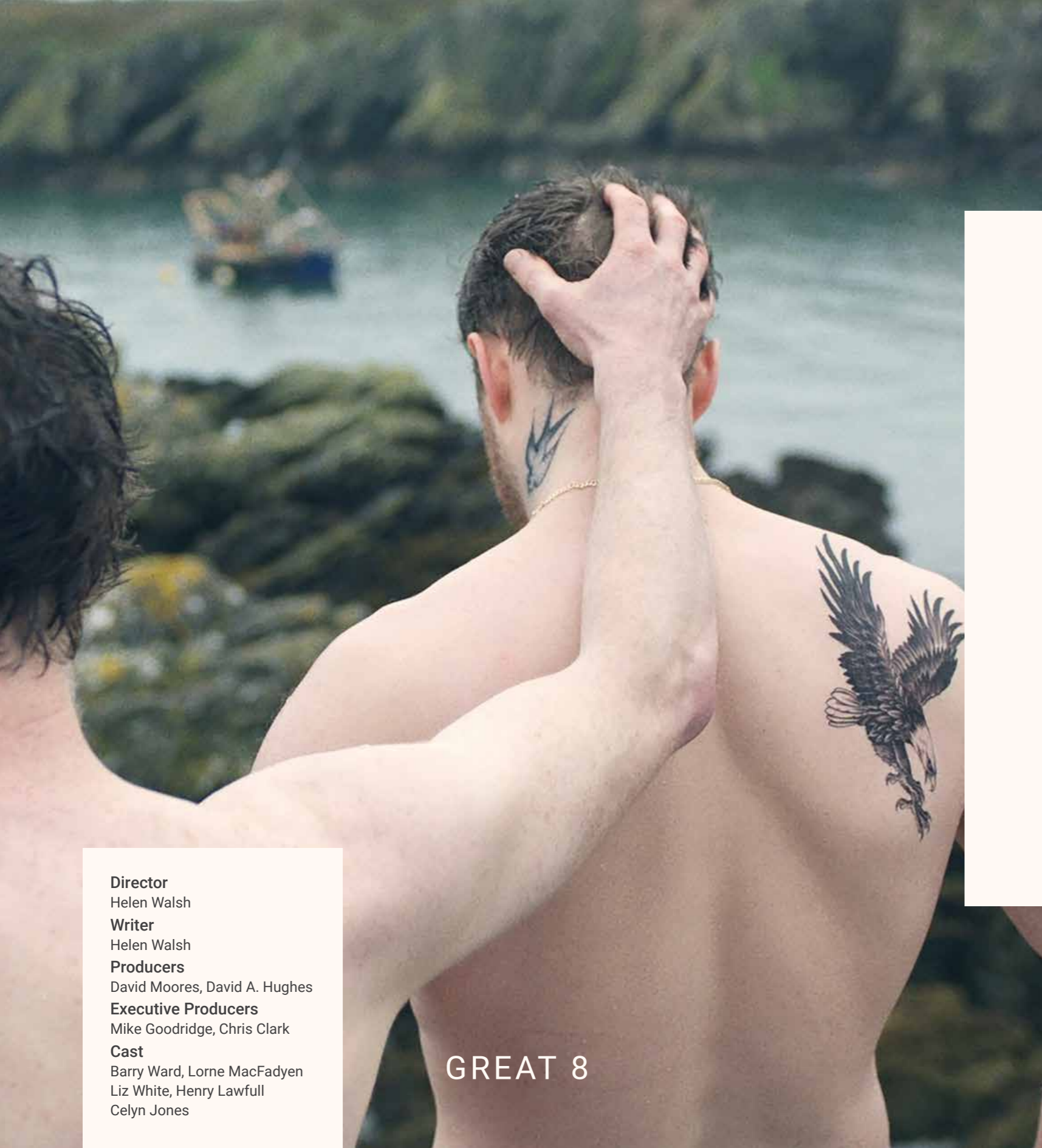
Kate Byers, Alex Thiele  
Linn Waite, Marie-Elena Dyche  
Lowri Roberts

#### Cast

George MacKay  
Rosy McEwen

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# On the Sea

## Helen Walsh



### Synopsis

Jack has been married to Maggie for over half his life. He works as a Hand Raker on the mussel beds in North Wales alongside his younger brother, Dyfan, and Dyfan's three sons.

Jack has always assumed that his own boy, Tom, will join the family business on leaving school but Tom's resistance to follow in his footsteps creates familial tension. Tensions are further inflamed by the arrival of an itinerant deckhand, Daniel, who makes known his feelings for Jack. In this remote, rural community where life revolves around Church and fishery, Jack is faced with an impossible dilemma. *ON THE SEA* is a beautiful, sensual and at times, tragic exploration of masculinity, place and desire.

### Director's Bio

Helen Walsh's debut novel *BRASS* won the Betty Trask Award and was the most widely reviewed book of 2004. Natasha Walters, writing in *Vogue*, called it, 'One of the most striking coming of age stories I have ever read.' Her second novel *ONCE UPON A TIME IN ENGLAND* won the Somerset Maugham Prize and *THE LEMON GROVE*, her most recent, was a critically acclaimed best-seller that she is currently adapting for TV.

Helen wrote and directed her debut feature, *THE VIOLATORS* in 2016 and was awarded BAFTA's Breakthrough New Director. Her recent Channel 4 show, *THE GATHERING* (2024), which she created and wrote was the recipient of three RTS Awards. *ON THE SEA*, is her sophomore feature and will be released in 2025.

**Production Credits**  
Red Union Films

**Genre**  
Drama

**Country of Origin**  
UK

**Delivery Date**  
Summer 2025

**Territories already sold/unavailable**  
Available Worldwide

**Sales Contact**  
David Moores  
dmoores@redunionfilms.com  
Mike Goodridge  
mike@goodchaos.co.uk

**Director**  
Helen Walsh  
**Writer**  
Helen Walsh  
**Producers**  
David Moores, David A. Hughes  
**Executive Producers**  
Mike Goodridge, Chris Clark  
**Cast**  
Barry Ward, Lorne MacFadyen  
Liz White, Henry Lawfull  
Celyn Jones

GREAT 8





# Retreat

## Ted Evans



### Synopsis

Raised in an isolated deaf community, cracks begin to appear in Matt's seemingly idyllic world when the arrival of enigmatic outsider Eva forces him to question the realities of his identity.

Is Matt prepared to discover what lies beneath the surface of his supposedly utopian community and the costs demanded to maintain it?

### Director's Bio

Writer-director Ted Evans is from Hackney, East London and communicates in both spoken English and British Sign Language. In 2012 he co-wrote and directed two films for the Paralympic Opening Ceremony - LOOK UP and BIRD GHERL. Evans received international and critical acclaim for his award-winning shorts, *THE END* and *RETREAT*, the latter of which he has adapted as his debut feature film, with production company The Fold supported by the BFI and BBC Films. He directed a documentary, featuring Rose Ayling-Ellis: *SIGNS FOR CHANGE*, which aired on BBC1 after being showcased at Sheffield's Doc Fest in 2023 and netted him a BAFTA nomination for Emerging Talent: Factual. In 2018 he was selected as part of Creative England's CE50 and his most recent short film *TO KNOW HIM* was nominated for Best Short Film at BIFA 2018.

#### Production Credits

The Fold  
104 Films  
BFI  
BBC Film  
Creative UK

#### Genre

Thriller

#### Country of Origin

UK

#### Delivery Date

Summer 2025

#### Territories already sold/unavailable

UK Television rights (BBC);  
Portugal; Airlines

#### Sales Contact

XYZ

Marcela Victoria  
marcela@xyzfilms.com

#### Director

Ted Evans

#### Writer

Ted Evans

#### Producers

Michelle Stein, Jen Monks  
Alex Usborne

#### Cast

Anne Zander, James Boyle  
Sophie Stone, Ace Mahbaz  
Anna Seymour

GREAT 8





# The Son and the Sea

## Stroma Cairns



### Synopsis

Jonah, charismatically ADHD, is a man-child who keeps on slipping, whilst his best mate, Lee, nimbly climbs every ladder.

After hitting yet another bump and under pressure to see his great-aunt, who is lost to dementia, Jonah contrives that he and Lee go visit, hoping it might also offer respite from himself and the mess he's creating. Though the Northeast coast of Scotland wasn't quite what Lee envisioned, it holds a certain wildness and wonder. There, they meet Charlie, who is profoundly Deaf and attempting to clean up after his shady twin brother. Through a developing friendship that surpasses their language barriers, the three boys form a connection that encourages them to step out of their boyhood, discover the courage to be vulnerable, and that joy is possible despite loss.

### Director's Bio

Stroma Cairns is a BAFTA-winning director based in London.

*THE SON AND THE SEA* will be her debut feature. The film is an ode to her Scottish roots, her brother and his father/musician Gavin Clark. The film features music by Gavin Clark and the score is by TOYDRUM (former UNKLE members).

Stroma directed the second block of the BAFTA winning TV series *MOOD*. She was selected for BFI NETWORK x BAFTA Crew mentoring programme.

Previously, her short film *IF YOU KNEW*, inspired by her own hearing loss, premiered at Sheffield DocFest, and went on to receive the Jury's Special Commendation award at BFI London Film Festival. It also won 'Best Short Film' at Open City Doc Festival and was shortlisted for a Grierson trustees award.

### Production Credits

BBC Film  
In The Company Of  
Studio Cloy  
Moment Film Group  
Creativity Media  
Creativity Capital

### Genre

Coming-of-age  
Drama

### Country of Origin

UK

### Delivery Date

May 2025

### Territories already sold/unavailable

Standard BBC UK  
Television Rights

### Sales Contact

Kelly Peck  
kelly@studiocloy.com  
Imogen West  
imogen@inthecompanyof.co



### Director

Stroma Cairns

### Writers

Imogen West, Stroma Cairns

### Producers

Imogen West, Kelly Peck

### Cast

Jonah West, Stanley Brock  
Connor Tompkins  
Grant Lindsay

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