DATE: TUESDAY 21 AUGUST 2012

FERTILE GROUND FOR HOME-GROWN TALENT

Encounters provides an international platform for the very best in South West film and animation creativity.

Encounters Short Film and Animation Festival, now in its 18th edition, is well-established as a leading international short film and animation showcase and an unmissable annual event on Bristol's cultural calendar. In a new slot from 18 - 23 September 2012 at Watershed and Arnolfini, this year the festival will continue to champion local talent, allowing regional creativity to shine through across its programmes.

Works by South West filmmakers and animators selected in competitive strands of the festival - Brief Encounters for live action, Animated Encounters for animation and Mixed Competitions for strands featuring all formats - will be up for prestigious awards and cash prizes totalling £12,000 alongside productions from 32 different countries. Two dedicated Best of South West Awards (Brief and Animated) will also be carefully discerned by the jury, with £500 going to the winner.

Amongst the most hotly anticipated short films in competition, Flytopia by Bristol based creative team Karni and Saul will have its UK premiere at Encounters. Adapted from a short story by Will Self and brought to the screen in a mix of live action and animation, Flytopia is a fantastical tale in which a man enters into a pact with all the insects that live in his house. The directors already featured at Encounters in 2010 with the BAFTA-nominated Turning.

One of the ever-popular highlights of the festival will be the Best of South West showcase, returning with a mix of home-grown fiction, documentary, animation and all that lies in between. The programme includes an animated road movie by BAFTA-winning director Emma Lazenby, The History of the Orange, as well as documentary 7 Stones by socially-engaged Irish writer-director Conor McCormack, which tells the story of 12-year-old Jamal, who is growing up in a refugee camp in the West Bank.

Also featured is a live action and stop-motion music video for Plain Song by Sheffield band Native and The Name, created by Oscar-winning animation legend Nick Park, best-known for his characters Wallace and Gromit (Aardman Animations). The collaboration came about after the director chose the song on Radio 4's Desert Island Discs, and is Nick Park's first music video since working on Peter Gabriel's Sledgehammer in 1986.

Nick Park says of the experience: “Choosing Plain Song for Desert Island Discs created quite a reaction. It's a song that deeply moved me and that I can’t get tired of it even after many plays. Making this music video with loads of volunteers was great fun and took me back to being a student again”.

The Best of South West will welcome a number of works from promising students and new graduates of the region’s universities, including the premiere of a fantastical short animation from local Bristol School of Animation graduate David Dymond, Fell. Several directors bring an international flavor to the selection: Shell and Paddy co-directed by Swiss animator Thomas Spettel with Joseph Hill (University of Falmouth); Klovesteinen, a Norwegian folk tale animation graduate Anders Furevik (University Arts College Bournemouth). There are also international co-productions: Webbed by Maria Morancho (UK / Spain), and video art piece La Quantité de Vie by Phoebe Fleming (UK / United Arab Emirates).

Shorts2Features, the festival's showcase of debut and second features from filmmakers already known for their short films, will be highlighting another local success story. Young Polish director Katarzyna Kl zkiewicz's Flying Blind was shot in Bristol and made under Creative England's low budget initiative iFeatures. Katarzyna met the film's producer Alison Sterling at Encounters 2009, where she screened her short Hanoi-Warsaw (winner of the European Film Award for Best Short Film in 2010).
Flying Blind is the passionate love story of an older woman and a young Muslim man, in a world where security is paramount and nothing is quite what it seems. The film will have its Bristol preview at Encounters following a world premiere at the Edinburgh International Film Festival. Encounters is also delighted to welcome the director in the Brief Encounters Jury.

Meanwhile, Aardman Animations, the world-renowned studio behind some of Bristol’s best-loved film exports (Chicken Run, The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists), will feature strongly in the festival’s Animated Encounters strand. This giant of the animation world, as dynamic as ever in its fourth decade of existence, will be offering audiences a glimpse into the vaults and an insight into the company’s development, past and present.

In a special gala event, the studio’s key figures Nick Park, Peter Lord and David Sproxton will be brought together in conversation for a rare joint appearance at Arnolfini. Alongside this, a Retrospective includes two programmes of short format work - “Early Years Claymation” and “From Pigs to Pirates!”, bringing Aardman treasures to the big screen in all their animated glory.

The festival will notably be making use of the Arnolfini’s ground floor gallery space for the first time, to present a free-entry exhibition of Aardman Models, sets and props from heart-warming creations such as Morph and Wallace and Gromit. Not forgetting the welcome return of model-making fun for all ages, with animation workshops for both kids and grown-ups led by Aardman’s Jim Parkyn.

In line with its role as a champion of emerging talent from Bristol and the surrounding area, the festival will host the launch of the FilmWorks networked professional development scheme, designed to fast track the short and feature film projects of selected producers and directors. The initiative is organised by Watershed alongside Showroom Workstation in Sheffield and Broadway in Nottingham. Bristol-based participants will be mentored by world-class local producer Julie Lockhart (The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists!). For more information on FilmWorks visit www.filmworks.org.uk.

The festival programme and online delegate registration are now available online. For more information visit the website www.encounters-festival.org.uk.

Join the discussion by finding us on Facebook and Twitter @EncountersSFF.

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EDITOR’S NOTES

ENCOUNTERS SHORT FILM AND ANIMATION FESTIVAL

BEST OF SOUTH WEST
Tues 18 Sept 20:00 Watershed Cinema 1
Sat 22 Sept 13:00 Watershed Cinema 1 (repeat)
£6.50 / £5.00 conc.

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS BRIT 4: OFF THE RADAR featuring Flytopia by Karni and Saul
Thurs 20 Sept 15:30 Watershed Cinema 1
Fri 21 Sept 19:30 Watershed Cinema 3 (repeat)
£6.50 / £5.00 conc.

SHORTS2FEATURES: FLYING BLIND
Sat 22 Sept 15:30 Watershed Cinema 1
£6.50 / £5.00 conc.

AARDMAN IN CONVERSATION
Wed 19 Sept, 20:30, Arnolfini Auditorium
£10 / £8 conc.
AARDMAN: EARLY YEARS CLAYMATION
Wed 19 Sept, 14:30, Arnolfini Auditorium
£6.50 / £5.00 conc.

AARDMAN: FROM PIGS TO PIRATES!
Wed 19 Sept, 18:30, Arnolfini Auditorium
£6.50 / £5.00 conc.

AARDMAN MODELS
Wed 19 Sept – Sat 22 Sept, from 09:30 to 23:30, Arnolfini Gallery
Free entry

AARDMAN RAPID-PROTOTYPING WORKSHOP
Fri 21 Sept, 10:00, Arnolfini Light Studio
Fri 21 Sept, 15:30, Arnolfini Light Studio (repeat)
£20

KIDS ANIMATION WORKSHOP
Sat 22 Sept, 10:00, Arnolfini Light Studio
Sat 22 Sept, 13:00, Arnolfini Light Studio (repeat)
£5, suitable for ages 7+

FILMWORKS LAUNCH: IT BEGINS WITH AN IDEA...
Wed 19 Sept 17:00 Watershed Cinema 3
£6.50 / £5.00 conc.

Encounters Short Film and Animation Festival is the umbrella festival for Animated Encounters and Brief Encounters which together presents one of the world’s best-known showcases and meeting points for new and established international short and animated film talent. The longest running competitive short film and animation festival in the UK, and one of Bristol’s leading cultural events, Encounters seeks to promote the importance of short film as a means to develop and progress the next generation of creative talent. The 2012 festival will be held in Bristol, UK, between 18 to 23 September. Encounters is a qualifying UK festival for the BAFTAs, Cartoon d’Or, European Film Awards & Oscars®. The festival is funded by the British Film Institute, Bristol City Council, Creative England and the MEDIA Programme of the European Union. Encounters Festivals Ltd operates as an independent company and is a registered charity.

For more details visit: www.encounters-festival.org.uk

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