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BAFTA SEARCHES FOR NEW WRITING TALENT FOR CHILDREN'S FILM AND TELEVISION

Winner of the special BAFTA Rocliffe New Writing Forum showcase will attend MIP Junior, supported by The London Book Fair

London, 30 June: The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA), in partnership with Rocliffe, and supported by The London Book Fair, today announced a call for scripts from emerging writers for the first ever BAFTA Rocliffe New Writing Forum focussed on children's media, offering entrants the chance to present their work to influential members of the film and television industries.

The BAFTA Rocliffe New Writing Forum is a long-running initiative which aims to give a platform to undiscovered screenwriters and help them to develop their careers.

Applications open today at <http://bit.ly/BAFTARocliffe> for British-based screenwriters to submit scripts with a focus on content for children and families across a range of forms including feature film, single drama, mini-series, sitcom, comedy-drama and animation. The final deadline for submissions is Monday 1 September.

The writers of the three successful projects will have extracts from their scripts performed by professional actors at a showcase event at BAFTA headquarters, 195 Piccadilly in London, on Saturday 27 September. In addition to gaining feedback from attendant experts, one writer from the three projects, selected by The London Book Fair, will receive an expenses-paid trip and full delegate pass to the MIP Junior international children's programming market in Cannes in October, where they will benefit from extensive industry introductions and networking opportunities, organised by The London Book Fair.

Entries will be judged by an industry jury of writers, commissioners, agents, producers and development executives from companies including BBC, Blue Zoo Animation, Channel Five, Coolabi, David Higham Associates, Heyday Films, HIT Entertainment, ITV, Kindle Entertainment, Lime Pictures and Turner Broadcasting.

Past winners from the BAFTA Rocliffe New Writing Forum have built on their success to develop their careers in the film and television industry. Children's author Sarah Courtauld showcased her script *The Slush Pile* at the BAFTA Rocliffe New Comedy Showcase at the New York Television Festival in 2012. The project has been optioned for an original comedy series and Sarah has since been commissioned to write for a new children's television comedy developed by Citrus TV. Sarah said: "The BAFTA Rocliffe New Writing Forum is a brilliant way to open doors. For me it led directly to getting an agent, and working on Children's TV scripts - as well as meeting producers and collaborators who I would never have met otherwise. There are some amazingly weird and wonderful shows in the world of children's TV at the moment. Plus, if you write for children you can be completely, unambiguously silly. I can't recommend it enough."

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Harvey Elliott, Chair of the BAFTA Children's Committee, said: "BAFTA is proud to host the inaugural BAFTA Roccliffe New Writing Forum focussed on children's film and television. The Forum enables BAFTA to identify and inspire a wealth of emerging writers; in launching this new children's strand we aim to continue that success into family content, developing talent in children's film and television writing, and strengthening the industry's future."

Farah Abushwasha, Founder of Roccliffe, said: "Children are notoriously hard audiences to engage - this is an exciting challenge for any writer. I hope to see stories that are imaginative reflections of the diversity of society. It is really thrilling to see what new voices we will find."

Jacks Thomas, Director of The London Book Fair, said of their collaboration with the BAFTA Roccliffe New Writing Forum: "Books and broadcast are a wonderful partnership: the leading lights in the UK Creative Industries portfolio. How fantastic, therefore, to partner with BAFTA on this exciting new writing initiative, which showcases great talent in the field of children's entertainment. Greater still, is the opportunity to introduce this talent to MIP Junior in Cannes, where children's publishing and children's media come together."

Malorie Blackman, Children's Laureate and BAFTA-winning screenwriter for children's drama *Pig Heart Boy*, said in support of the new strand: "Only by actively seeking out and encouraging new diverse voices can our creative industries grow and flourish. Our children need writers with vision, passion, ideas and commitment - they deserve nothing less."

Applicants must submit a ten page extract and be available on Saturday 27 September for the showcase event at BAFTA, and from Saturday 11 to Sunday 12 October to attend MIP Junior in Cannes, France. For full application details, and terms and conditions, go to: <http://bit.ly/BAFTARoccliffe>.

- Ends -

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About BAFTA

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts is an independent charity that supports, develops and promotes the art forms of the moving image by identifying and rewarding excellence, inspiring practitioners and benefiting the public. In addition to its Awards ceremonies, BAFTA has a year-round Learning & Events programme that offers unique



access to some of the world's most inspiring talent through workshops, masterclasses, lectures, scholarships and mentoring schemes, connecting with audiences of all ages and backgrounds across the UK, Los Angeles and New York. BAFTA relies on income from membership subscriptions, individual donations, trusts, foundations and corporate partnerships to support its ongoing outreach work. For further information, visit <http://www.bafta.org> and www.bafta.org/guru.

About Rocliffe

Rocliffe created a series of events, notably the New Writing Forums, now held at BAFTA and renamed the BAFTA Rocliffe New Writing Forum. It has a popular blog Farah's Rocliffe Notes which is being published as a book in 2014. With its inception in 2000 by founding member Farah Abushwasha and a team of dedicated volunteers including award winning director Susan Jacobson and casting directors Laura Dickens CDG, Catherine Willis and Kahleen Crawford. The format of the New Writing Forum is truly original – following a public script call-out in the months before the event, three diverse pieces are selected from the hundreds received and performed live by professional actors in front of a live audience. The pieces are framed by especially composed music by new composers from Air Edel and digital art. The event showcases undiscovered talent – a must attend for agents and talent scouts alike; development focused discussions generated by the readings; exposure to and advice from experienced industry members; feedback from an audience and an invaluable method to test out new concepts and material. Given the often isolating nature of the industry, the forums create the ideal environment for networking as well as unknown writers the chance to get their work seen and heard. Past featured writers include James Dormer, Jack Thorne, Josh Appignanesi and Claire Wilson.

About The London Book Fair (LBF)

The London Book Fair (LBF) is the global marketplace for rights negotiation and the sale and distribution of content across print, audio, TV, film and digital channels. Taking place every Spring in the world's premier publishing and cultural capital, this landmark event is an opportunity to explore, understand and capitalise on the innovations shaping the publishing world of the future. LBF brings you direct access to customers, content and emerging markets. LBF 2015, the 44th Fair, will take place from Tuesday 14-Thursday 16 April 2015, Olympia London. LBF's London Book and Screen Week will run for the second year, with the book fair as the pivotal three day event within a five day programme. London Book and Screen Week will open with LBF's Publishing for Digital Minds Conference on Monday 13 April, the day before LBF opens. Mexico is Market Focus country in 2015, following Korea in 2014.