

# THE WHICKERS

FILM & TV AWARD  
FINALISTS 2021

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# ABOUT THE WHICKERS

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The Whickers were established in 2015 to fund and recognise original and innovative documentary. We seek to use the generous legacy of our namesake, pioneering broadcaster Alan Whicker, to support emerging film and audio documentary-makers in the funding and production of director led programmes.

The Whickers are comprised of two annual awards: the Film & TV Funding Award and the Radio and Audio Funding Award (RAFA).





# ABOUT THE FILM & TV FUNDING AWARD

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The Film & TV Funding Award is awarded annually to an emerging filmmaker from anywhere in the world with the most promising pitch for a director-led documentary, which fulfils our core criteria. With a main award worth £80,000 and a runner-up contribution of £15,000, The Whickers Film & TV Funding Award is one of the most significant documentary awards in the world.

The Whickers Pitch will be held virtually at Sheffield Doc/Fest on June 8, 3pm BST and the winners will be announced during our virtual Awards Ceremony on June 10, 6pm BST. Find out more and book [HERE](#).

## OUR JUDGING CRITERIA

### DIRECTOR-LED STORY

- » Storyteller with demonstrably strong interviewing skills
- » Demonstrates passion for the subject whilst retaining fair-mindedness
- » Demonstrates a real sense of independence
- » Personal but not partisan
- » Wry humour welcome
- » Strictly no 'Whicker impersonations'

### ENGAGEMENT

- » Unique access to engaging characters in unusual or inaccessible locations
- » Allows contributor's story to emerge in their own words
- » Demonstrates a flair for coaxing the human spirit into revealing itself
- » The author demonstrates intimacy with but does not overshadow the subject

### CURIOSITY

- » Spirit of inquisitiveness that leaves viewers wanting more
- » Tells us about something new and unexpected about the world
- » Excites wonder
- » Understands how wit can illuminate the toughest or most nuanced real life drama

### ORIGINAL USE OF TECHNOLOGY

- » Breaking new ground or using existing means of production in a refreshing new way

### NOT PARTISAN

- » No campaigning, pre-set agendas or political theories.

# OUR JUDGES

Who will be awarded the coveted £80,000 Film & TV Funding Award to make their first feature-length documentary? Meet the stellar line-up of judges who will decide.

From broadcast to online streaming platforms, distribution to festivals and multi-award winners, our judges cover all corners of the industry, bring a wealth of expertise to the table and they are on the look-out for the next best international, emerging talent.



## JANE MOTE

Jane is a journalist, storyteller, TV executive, and a champion for the power and accessibility of documentary. As Consultant Editor at The Whickers, she nurtures and supports new audio and film documentary-makers who share a curiosity for the world.



## SALMA ABDALLA

Salma is the CEO of Autlook Filmsales, based in Vienna, one of the leading sales agents for feature documentaries and series. They currently represent titles such as *The Painter and the Thief*, *For Sama*, *Midnight Family*, *Of Fathers and Sons* and *Writing with Fire*.



## PATRICK HURLEY

Patrick runs Sheffield Doc/Fest's international Marketplace connecting filmmakers with industry Decision Makers to get new documentaries made and seen. He also oversees the Festival's All Year talent development programmes.



## KATE TOWNSEND

Kate is a prolific director and producer who joined Netflix in 2017 after creating a successful palette of work during her time at the BBC. Kate has worked on many successful Netflix projects such as, *FYRE: The Greatest Party That Never Happened* and *Losers*.



## MANDY CHANG

Mandy is the Commissioning Editor of Storyville, the BBC's pioneering global feature documentary strand. It showcases the world's best documentaries – dealing with big issues of our time and with stories that resonate universally.



## GARY KAM

Gary is one of the leading documentary producers in Asia and is the first ever Korean documentary producer nominated for an Oscar for his recent film *In the Absence*. It also won the Grand Jury Prize at DOC NYC, AFI Docs and was officially selected for IDFA 2018.





# MADE IN ETHIOPIA

**Presented by:** Xingyan Yu & Max Duncan,  
Co-Directors

**Country:** China / Ethiopia / UK / US

**Language:** Mandarin / Amharic / Oromo  
/ English

**Stage:** Early Production

**Runtime:** 90 mins / 52 mins

**Total Budget:** £399,978

**Secured Budget:** £138,630

**Looking for:** Funds, Broadcasters, and  
other platforms





## XINGYAN YU & MAX DUNCAN CO-DIRECTORS

**Production Company:**  
Made in Ethiopia LCC

**Contact:**  
echoyuxinyan@gmail.com  
max@maxduncan.com

### DIRECTOR BIO

**Xinyan Yu** and **Max Duncan** are filmmakers and journalists with a combined 20 years' experience working in China and around the world. *Made in Ethiopia* is their first feature length documentary.

### SYNOPSIS

Three trailblazing women – managing director Motto, farmer Wakinesh and factory worker Beti – navigate the bumpy expansion of the biggest Chinese industrial park in Ethiopia. The African giant wants to lift tens of millions out of poverty. But is the China Model what it needs?

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Most people have heard something about China's growing presence in Africa. But few know much beyond tropes about neo-colonialism and resource extraction. Ethiopia's relationship with China is profoundly reshaping the African giant's future. But what kind of future is that, and what does it mean for the country's 115 million people?

As journalists and filmmakers who covered China's transformation from poverty to powerhouse, we understand both the promise and pain of industrialization. To see how those patterns we witnessed play out in Ethiopia at a critical moment in its history, we decided to focus on one Chinese industrial park, and three women living and working within it.

As we've dived deeper into Motto, Beti and Wakinesh's lives, a narrative more dramatic, colourful and layered than we could have imagined has unfolded. We're more aware than ever that nothing is either black or white, and no one simply a villain or a victim. And we have urgent new questions, some of the most important for our generation to address: What is a fair model for growth in the 21st century? Who are the winners and losers? Ultimately, what is the real cost of progress?





# DEVI

**Presented by:** Subina Shrestha, Director

**Country:** Nepal

**Language:** Nepali

**Stage:** Early Production

**Runtime:** 90 mins / 52 mins

**Total Budget:** £270,019

**Secured Budget:** £14,867

**Looking for:** Funds, Co-Producers,  
Broadcasters, Impact Partners





## SUBINA SHRESTHA

### DIRECTOR

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**Production Company:**  
Mediadante

**Contact:**  
shrestha.subina@gmail.com

### DIRECTOR BIO

Subina Shrestha, a filmmaker and a journalist from Nepal, likes to push boundaries in storytelling and tells stories of the people from the margins of the society.

### SYNOPSIS

Devi, a former guerilla fighter who survived war time rape, decides to fight for justice. Nepal's leaders want to keep the shameful truth about how sex abuse was used as weapon of war buried, but Devi will do whatever it takes to bring her suffering and that of her countrywomen to light and resolve the conflict still raging within her.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In June of 2019, Devi finally trusted me with her diary in which she had detailed her life, including her well-known rape and its aftermath. I'd waited to talk to her about all of this for years. During Nepal's decade-long conflict, while I was a budding filmmaker and a journalist, Devi was already a legend. Still, even though I'd traipsed through the

jungles with other Maoist women, she refused to meet me. She didn't trust me, not yet.

I understood, though. When #MeToo surfaced, unpleasant memories of sexual assault resurfaced for me. I hadn't realized the amount of shame I'd internalized and how complicated it can be to share one's story. So, why would Devi trust me? Many, including the Maoist party, had leveraged her story for their own gain and political purposes. Rape survivors, too, hoped she would be their voice. My researcher Aruna, a former guerilla herself, and I continued to build trust.

Now that we are documenting Devi's story, we are mindful not to jeopardize the integrity of her narrative or those of the survivors she's reaching out to. This film has become redemptive. It is a way to reclaim my own voice while elevating Devi's.





# RED HERRING

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**Presented by:** Kit Vincent, Director

**Country:** UK

**Language:** British

**Stage:** Early Production

**Runtime:** 90 mins

**Total Budget:** £315,129

**Secured Budget:** £61,500

**Looking for:** Funds, Broadcasters,  
Co-producers, Sales Agents, Distributors





## KIT VINCENT DIRECTOR

**Production Company:**  
Good Kid Films

**Contact:**  
kit\_vincent@hotmail.com

### DIRECTOR BIO

Kit Vincent is a director/producer with an interest in character driven stories that use humour to explore nuanced, real life drama. Kit began his career working on flagship documentary series' for Channel 4 and other UK broadcasters and attended the Sundance Talent Forum as part of the Documentary Film Programme in 2019.

### SYNOPSIS

In the midst of shocking family revelations, a young filmmaker is diagnosed with terminal cancer. What follows is an intimate and darkly humorous journey of a family's attempt to make sense of their upended past and disrupted future.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I've always imagined this film as a family photograph which has been ripped into pieces and scattered across the ground. The process of making it is like trying to piece each of these fragments back together, creating something that resembles the original in some way, but which is more

beautiful, more powerful and has more life. I hadn't realised the importance of examining these shards of memory before; I felt there was no need. Now, I've come to realise the immense power contained in these small moments and small stories.

As a filmmaker when an interesting lead presents itself to you, often it is easy to analyse it objectively and see what makes it a story. You can see the characters, the tensions, the narrative, the dynamics, the pieces that make it captivating and something you want to share. When you are in the middle of the story, it is much harder to do. Your family are the characters, and the relationships are your own. The tensions cause you pain and the making of the film only adds to that.

It's strange that bringing an inanimate object into the room with me and my parents could open the dynamic and allow for so much growth in the strength of my relationship with my parents. But, without introducing a camera into the most intimate moments of the past years, I would never have unlocked what I have, and we would never be in the position we are now.





# CONCRETE LAND

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**Presented by:** Asmahan Bkerat, Director

**Country:** Jordan

**Language:** Arabic (Bedouin dialect)

**Stage:** Early Production

**Runtime:** 80 mins

**Total Budget:** £120,000

**Secured Budget:** £34,000

**Looking for:** Production Financing,  
Post-Production Financing, Distribution





## ASMAHAN BKERAT

### DIRECTOR

**Production Company:**  
Nava Projects

**Contact:**  
bk.asmahan@gmail.com

### DIRECTOR BIO

Asmahan Bkerat's passion and love for intimate and personal stories inspired her to pursue a career in documentary films, she was hooked to the art of observational docs ever since.

### SYNOPSIS

*Concrete Land* is an intimate look at the lives of a nomadic Bedouin family in its struggle to hold on to its traditional life under the pressures of urbanisation. Their only wish as a family is to stay together, with their loyal yet eccentric pet sheep Badrya firmly by their side.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Bedouin nomads have lived and prospered in Jordan for hundreds of years, but nomadism is in consistent decline all over the world and due to the unavoidable pull of urban life, that way of living is on a steady path towards extinction. My film, *Concrete Land*, is a unique look into the intricate dynamics of a close Bedouin family and their pet sheep as they navigate the increasing hostility they face from their non-nomadic neighbours.

My path intersects with the Najar family's path in so many ways. I come from a Palestinian family that were displaced in 1948 just like the Najars, and I lived in the same area they live in. Even though we're so different, their story is my own in so many ways.

My intention is to allow audiences to connect with individuals who at first glance may seem very unfamiliar to the average viewer and display the inescapable co-dependency we all have with each other regardless of cultural differences.

This is a film about loss of identity, familial bonds and gentrification. These issues are highlighted through the intersection of all of these themes through the family's interaction with their surrounding society.

Utilizing an observational lense, the film shares the struggles of a family determined to stay together in spite of all the barriers working against them. In doing so, *Concrete Land* is, at times, a feel-good story in the most unexpected of circumstances, showing that urban life has its ups and downs for everyone affected by city life, whether by choice or by need for survival.





# KAMAY

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**Presented by:** Ilyas Yourish & Shahrokh Bikaran, Co-Directors

**Country:** Afghanistan

**Language:** Farsi / Persian

**Stage:** Production

**Runtime:** 90 mins / 52 mins

**Total Budget:** £245,254

**Secured Budget:** £89,516

**Looking for:** Funds, Broadcasters





## ILYAS YOURISH & SHAHROKH BIKARAN CO-DIRECTORS

**Production Company:**  
Kamay Film

**Contact:**  
ilyasyourish@gmail.com  
shahrokh.bn@gmail.com

### DIRECTOR BIO

**Ilyas Yourish** graduated in 2014 from the Faculty of Journalism at Kabul University. Since 2011, he has worked as a journalist, researcher, and filmmaker. **Shahrokh Bikaran** graduated in 2016 from The Tehran Film School, where he studied directing, score composition, and Audio Engineering. He has since been involved in the creation of more than ten documentaries. Ilyas and Shahrokh have recently established their Afghanistan-based Film Production Company.

### SYNOPSIS

After a young girl from the mountains of central Afghanistan mysteriously commits suicide inside Kabul University, her family's calm rural life enters into a painful and exhausting process. Her parents are now looking for justice in one of the most corrupt judicial systems in the world; while Freshta, their younger daughter, attempts to gain admission to the same university to complete what her sister had started.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Afghanistan is at a point in its history where the reality cannot be easily described and where many untold stories are hidden behind the war headlines. The international media usually focuses on violence across the country and constantly reports

the number of casualties. Sometimes even the numbers lose their value, they should reach larger digits to provoke reaction and sympathy.

The human souls and faces behind these numbers, the ordinary people who fight for their human values, and the sacrifices by them to get educated and build a peaceful and democratic country, barely make it to the headlines of the world news. These people deserve to be listened to. Their struggle should be valued and their stories should provoke sympathy before their casualties do.

*Kamay* is the story of these ordinary people. The radical protest of Zahra by committing suicide inside the campus, the parent's fight to seek justice for their daughter, and Freshta's efforts to continue in her sister's footsteps, reflect our struggle for education, justice, and a better future. This family belongs to the Hazara ethnicity who are under persecution for nearly three centuries and suffering from an ongoing genocide. Their identity adds another layer to this already complex battle.

In such circumstances, the need to tell the stories of these suffering people turns to a necessity. We consider ourselves as an inevitable part of these issues and feel responsible to tell the stories that have not been shown, picturing an "alternative Afghanistan".



# CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

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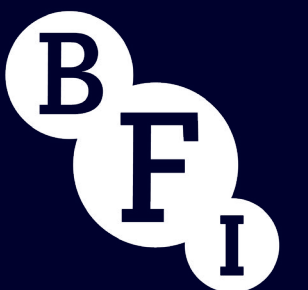
This August 2021 marks 100 years since our founder, Alan Whicker's birth. In true Whicker style, we are celebrating with a series of special events in partnership with the BFI.

Join us on Saturday 7 August at BFI Southbank as we pay homage to a career that spanned six decades and the diverse, visionary work that kept him ahead of the pack and often ahead of his time. We will be joined by Michael Palin and other friends, colleagues and admirers to discuss the man behind the iconic glasses and his lasting legacy.

Tickets will be on sale via the BFI website [HERE](#) on 8 July 2021. Keep your eyes peeled!



## 100 Years of a Visionary





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**Sheffield**  
**2021 DocFest**