

PRESS RELEASE
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SIX SHAKESPEARE FILM PROJECTS SHORTLISTED BY CINESTAAN FILM COMPANY & FILM LONDON FOR MICROWAVE INTERNATIONAL: SHAKESPEARE INDIA PROJECT

TRAINING FOR PROJECTS BEGINS IN UK

CINESTAAN FILM COMPANY & FILM LONDON ANNOUNCE UK NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH BOB & CO

- **Six teams from the UK and India begin intensive week-long Microschool to hone Shakespeare-themed features, supported by the British Council**
- **Teams feature directors *Rajat Kapoor, Bornila Chatterjee, Pratyusha Gupta, Ashish Ghadiali, Nirpal Bhogal and Vikas Chandra***
- **Expert mentors and speakers to include *Andrea Calderwood, Ritesh Batra, Nandita Das and Tristan Goligher***
- **UK EIS created by Bob & Co for training-through-production-fund**

Cinestaan Film Company & Film London are excited to announce the six shortlisted film projects from UK and India based on or inspired by Shakespeare's works.

The project will see six filmmaking teams comprising Asian writers, directors and producers from the UK and India, developing projects which draw on the work of **Shakespeare**. The teams include *Rajat Kapoor* (known for acting roles in films like of *Monsoon Wedding* and directing features such as *Raghu Romeo*), producer *Smriti Jain* (line producer, *The Lunchbox*) and *Kurban Kassam* (line producer, *20,000 Days on Earth, The Possibilities Are Endless*). The teams are being put through their paces at an intensive **Film London Microschool** this week, funded by the **British Council**. The expert training, advice and mentoring will see the teams hone their ideas and will touch every aspect of the filmmaking process.

Following the school, one feature will be greenlit and released theatrically in 2016 as part of **Shakespeare 400** – a year-long cultural programme marking 400 years since the writer's death.

The selected projects for *Microwave International: Shakespeare India* are:

Realism (based on '**Macbeth**')
Team: UK Writer/Director *Ashish Ghadiali* and Indian Producer *Umesh Pawar*

Caesar (based on '**Julius Caesar**')
Team: UK Writer/Director *Nirpal Bhogal*, UK co-writer *Mike Powell* and Indian Producer *Achin Jain*

The Heart of the City (based on '**The Taming of the Shrew**')
Indian Director *Pratyusha Gupta*, UK Writer *Sharmila Chauhan*, UK Producer *Ameenah Ayub* and Indian Producer *Smriti Jain*

Mathura (based on '**As You Like It**')
Indian Writer/Director *Rajat Kapoor* and UK Producer *Uzma Hasan*

The Crorepatis (based on '**Titus Andronicus**')

Indian Writer/Director *Bornila Chatterjee* and Indian Writer/Producer *Tanaji Dasgupta* with UK Producer *Kurban Kassam*

Love and Longing in Rohtak (based on '**The Merchant of Venice**')

Indian Writer/Director *Vikas Chandra* and UK Producer *Ajay Rai*

Film London is also pleased to announce a new partnership with media investment firm **Bob & Co**, who will bring together UK production finance for the ambitious **Microwave International: Shakespeare India** production via a new Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS). The news comes as six filmmaking teams drawn from India and the UK begin their intensive **Microschool** training.

Bob & Co joins India's **Cinestaan Film Company** in financing the initiative, which sees Film London's successful training-through-production scheme spanning two continents for the first time. Film London has forged these partnerships to deliver an innovative investment model, to enable the growth of the scheme which has proved itself to be a successful incubator for exciting new talent. Leveraging private finance sees Film London breaking new ground for the scheme, and the move heralds a step forward in terms of helping stories with global appeal reach audiences across the world. **Andy Brunskill** of Bob & Co film subsidiary **SUMS** brokered the deal and will Executive Produce the venture.

Guest speakers at Microschool will come from both continents with **Ritesh Batra** (director, *The Lunchbox*), **Pete Travis** (director, *Dredd*, *Vantage Point*), **Jonathon Rushton** (Head of Theatrical, *Artificial Eye*) and **Pete Buckingham** (founder, SampoMedia) holding sessions over the five days. Expert industry mentors include producers **Andrea Calderwood** (*The Last King Of Scotland*, *A Most Wanted Man*) and **Tristan Goligher** (*45 Years*, *Weekend*), directors **Nandita Das** (who has starred in over 40 films and made her directorial debut with *Firaaq*) and **Amit Gupta** (*One Crazy Thing*, *Resistance*), script developers **Angeli MacFarlane** (*Death Of A President*, *I Am Slave*) and **Shefali Malhoutra** (HBO, ITV), editor **Mick Audsley** (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, *Twelve Monkeys*) and providing guidance on Indian distribution is **Rahul Merchant** (India's FAME cinema chain, Bubble Motion Pte Ltd).

Adrian Wootton, Chief Executive of Film London and the British Film Commission, said: "Securing two commercial investors from both India and the UK is a major achievement, and we are delighted both Bob & Co and Cinestaan share our ambition and can see the potential in this project. I am proud of our track record in successfully discovering and training exciting new filmmaking voices and I have high hopes of the talent we're working with this week. It is hugely exciting to forge new partnerships and routes of finance to provide our teams with such a fantastic opportunity – with the longer term aim of strengthening links between the two industries and helping more talented filmmakers start their careers."

Rohit Khattar, Chairman of Cinestaan Film Company, said, "We are delighted that six really diverse projects have been shortlisted for the Microschool in London and are looking forward to greenlighting one of the projects for production. To partner with Film London for a film celebrating 400 years of Shakespeare is extremely exciting. Cinestaan is proud of India's cinema heritage and this collaboration shall develop a unique production, uniting talent from India and the UK."

Simon Flamank, Executive Director of Bob & Co, said: "We are delighted to be involved in this amazing project which will bring new talent to cinema screens. Bob & Co is well-versed in the commercial challenges and opportunities of developing film content to screen, and will provide business support to the project, alongside providing production support through our in-house production company, SUMS, headed up by Andy Brunskill. Having financed previous Microwave film *Lilting* and last year financing and shooting Indian-set *Jet Trash*, it feels like a very harmonious union all round."

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For further press information, please contact:

Rafiq Gangjee

M: +91 9821557851

E: rafiq.gangjee@cinestaan.com

Alex Deller

T: 020 7613 7682

M: 07787 254 250

E: alex.deller@filmlondon.org.uk

Notes to Editors

About Microwave International: India

As part of Shakespeare400 on Screen, Film London has launched Film London Microwave International: Shakespeare India. The scheme will offer talented writers, producers and directors the chance to hone their skills while receiving an intensive programme of training, professional mentoring and advice on issues ranging from financing through to distribution. The scheme will partner promising Asian talent from the UK and India, who will attend a British Council funded Microschool in Mumbai. The teams will be mentored by leading industry professionals, and, with Indian and UK production finance, the ambition is to award one filmmaking team up to £500,000 to produce a feature for worldwide release. As well as celebrating Shakespeare, the project seeks to address the lack of diverse talent entering the industry and respond to Creative Skillset's latest census which reported the number of Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic talent working in the production industries was only 5.4% in 2012, which is a fall from 6.7% in 2009 and 7.4% in 2006.

About Film London Microwave

Launched in 2006, Film London Microwave is the acclaimed micro-budget feature film scheme which has produced eight features including *Lilting*, *Shifty* and *iLL Manors*. Funded by the BFI and BBC Films, with support from Creative Skillset, Microwave is committed to discovering and investing in emerging London-based filmmakers, backing talented teams with fresh voices and strong stories. It provides an intensive approach to filmmaking with the emphasis on original ideas, tightly focussed scripts and short production schedules. Between 2014-2017, Microwave will develop and train up to 36 filmmaking teams and produce up to six features, at production budgets of £150,000, with additional funding ring fenced to support development and distribution.

About Cinestaan Film Company

Cinestaan Film Company (CFC) is a film Production House committed to telling stories that are at the cutting edge of creativity and that resonate universally.

CFC has recently announced a three film agreement with visionary filmmaker Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra's ROMP Pictures. The first film will be the *Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra* directed *Mirzya*, followed by *Fanny Khan*, an official remake of an Oscar Nominated film, to be directed by *Nitin Kakkar*, the National Award Winner for Best Film in 2013. The third film (yet untitled) will again be directed by *Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra*.

CFC's 4th film is a co-production with Film London for an adaptation of a Shakespeare story in the year of his 400th anniversary.

Cinestaan is committed to preserving the rich legacy of India's cinematic heritage and several initiatives are being worked upon in that direction. This includes an Oral Histories project that shall celebrate the contributions of our screen legends.

www.cinestaanfilmcompany.com

About Bob & Co

Bob & Co is a family of creative businesses that develops content across a range of platforms. It's advisory business, Bob & Co Partners LLP advises the Cultural Capital Fund, a Jersey based fund that itself invests in content.

Bob & Co champions media and entertainment through the development, distribution and funding of all forms of content; from kids TV and feature films, to drama adaptations, documentaries and theatre projects.

Founder Bob Benton and Executive Director Simon Flamank met through their work in restructuring Handmade Films in 2010 and went on to set up Bob & Co to help creative talent maximise the potential of their content. The company has evolved to house drama production company Duchess Street Productions, factual producers Woodcut Media and independent film production company SUMS, plus an investment advisory business, Bob & Co Partners, LLP.

Bob & Co works in partnership with an array of artistic talent, including award-winning actors, authors, screen writers, directors and musicians-with particular focus on great storytellers and the written word.

Recent Bob & Co investments/productions include *Beautiful: The Carol King Musical*, *Hetty Feather* musical; feature-doc *Peggy Guggenheim: Art Addict*; TV movie *That Day We Sang*; upcoming feature films *The Call Up*, *Jet Trash* and *The Girl at The Lion D'Or*; previous feature *Lilting*; kids animation *QPootle 5*, kids live entertainment *In The Night Garden Live* and online movie theatre MUBI.

www.bobandco.co.uk

About Shakespeare400 on Screen

Shakespeare400 on Screen, co-ordinated by Film London, is an international celebration of the life, work and ever-present legacy of William Shakespeare. Marking 400 years since his death, Shakespeare-related film and television activity will take place all over the world to celebrate the global cultural phenomenon of a writer whose work has been translated into every major language and is continually re-interpreted and performed worldwide.

Presented under the banner of Shakespeare400 on Screen will be: major international film and television screenings, including London-wide, UK and international touring programmes; brand new productions including shorts, feature films and artists' film commissions produced through Film London; and a host of exhibitions.

Shakespeare400 on Screen delivery partners include: Arts Council England; BBC; BFI Film Audience Network (representing hundreds of cinemas UK-wide); British Council; GREAT campaign; Into Film; London & Partners; Melbourne International Film Festival; Museum of London; National Portrait Gallery; New York Public Theater; Rotterdam Film Museum; Toronto Film Group; and Visit Britain.

Shakespeare400 on Screen is part of Shakespeare400, a consortium of leading cultural, creative and educational organisations, co-ordinated by the London Shakespeare Centre and the Cultural Institute at King's College London.

www.filmlondon.org.uk/shakespeare / www.shakespeare400.org.uk

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide.

We work in more than 100 countries and our 7,000 staff - including 2,000 teachers - work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year by teaching English, sharing the arts and delivering education and society programmes.

We are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter. A core publically-funded grant provides less than 25 per cent of our turnover which last year was £781 million. The rest of our revenues are earned from services which customers around the world pay for, through education and development contracts and from partnerships with public and private organisations. All our work is in pursuit of our charitable purpose and supports prosperity and security for the UK and globally.

Our work in Film

British Council Film works with our extensive global network to connect UK films, filmmakers and film culture with international audiences. We showcase innovation, diversity and excellence and seek opportunities for creative exchange and collaboration

For more information, please visit: www.britishcouncil.org/film. You can also keep in touch through twitter.com/British_Film.

About Film London

Film London is the capital's screen industries agency. We connect ideas, talent and finance to develop a pioneering creative culture in the city that delivers success in film, television, animation, games and beyond. We work to sustain, promote and develop London as a global content production hub, support the development of the city's new and emerging filmmaking talent and invest in a diverse and rich film culture. Funded by the Mayor of London and the National Lottery through the BFI, we also receive support from Arts Council England, Creative Skillset and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Film London's activities include:

- Maintaining, strengthening and promoting London's position as world-class city to attract investment through film, television, animation and games
- Investing in local talent through a range of specialised production and training schemes
- Boosting employment and competitiveness in the capital's screen industries by delivering internationally facing business development events
- Maximising access to the capital's film culture by helping audiences discover film in all its diversity
- Promoting London through screen tourism

Film London also manages the British Film Commission (www.britishfilmcommission.org.uk) through a public/private partnership which is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport through the BFI, and UK Trade and Investment.

www.filmlondon.org.uk
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