



## **Genre Feature Lab launches with call-out for northern writers and production companies**

**New Writing North and Film4 have joined forces to find three of the most exciting northern screenwriters to take part in a unique Genre Feature Lab.**

Genre Feature Lab is a film development programme for emerging writers from across the North of England, produced by New Writing North and supported by Film4. The programme is funded by North of Tyne Combined Authority, now administered by North East Combined Authority.

Each writer will be paired with a regional production company and, following a two-day residential lab, will benefit from ongoing development with an experienced script editor to help take their early-stage idea for a feature film into a compelling treatment and deck ready to present and pitch to Film4.

The lab will be led by BAFTA-winning creative producers Ivana Mackinnon (*Beast*) and Emily Leo (*Under the Shadow*) from Wild Swim Films, who will push writers to take creative risks, ensuring their ideas reach full potential.

The project comes at an exciting time for film production, following the recent announcement of support for the UK's independent film sector, which will see an increase of Film Tax Credit to 40% for films with budgets of up to £15m.

Genre Feature Lab is looking for boundary-pushing writers with a distinctive voice and point of view. Writers and writer-directors interested in applying should have a real appreciation and understanding of the genre they are writing for and know how to make work that subverts tropes, is smart, surprising and has the potential to reach a wide audience.

New Writing North's new partnership with Film4 builds on its long-standing relationship with Channel 4, including the Northern Talent Network and the Channel 4 Writing for Television Awards, which support writers in the North of England to develop their work for television.

Genre Feature Lab will run from September 2024 – March 2025. The programme is now open to application from both writers based in the North of England and independent



production companies based in the North of Tyne area (Newcastle, Northumberland and North Tyneside) until 1 July 2024.

**Amy O’Hara, Development and Production Executive at Film4** comments: *“We’re thrilled to be collaborating with New Writing North, whose reputation for nurturing writers from the North is second to none. The genre lab gives us a focussed approach to developing relationships with storytellers from the region and we’re excited by the talent and ideas we’ll discover along the way.”*

**Roxy McKenna, Development Producer (Screen) at New Writing North** said: *“Genre Feature Lab is a unique opportunity for Northern writers to learn from leading industry experts, develop bold new work and build a meaningful relationship with Film4. The support from the North of Tyne also enables us ensure North East production companies are at the heart of the programme, driving the development of cutting-edge genre work and making vital industry connections”*

Find out more and apply at <https://newwritingnorth.com/event/genre-feature-lab/>.

**ENDS**

For all media enquiries, contact **Laura Fraine at New Writing North** [laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com](mailto:laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com)

### **About Film4**

Film4 Productions is Channel 4 Television’s feature film division. Film4 develops and co-finances films and is known for working with the most distinctive and innovative talent in UK and international filmmaking, both new and established. Since its inception in 1982 Film4’s films have won a collective 43 Oscars® and 97 BAFTAs.

Film4’s most recent films include Oscar®, BAFTA and Venice Golden Lion winning *Poor Things* (Yorgos Lanthimos); Oscar®, BAFTA and Cannes Grand Prix winning *The Zone of Interest* (Jonathan Glazer); Savannah Leaf’s BAFTA winning *Earth Mama*; Molly Manning Walker’s Un Certain Regard winning *How to Have Sex*; Andrew Haigh’s BIFA winning *All of Us Strangers*; Thea Sharrock’s *Wicked Little Letters*; BIFA winning *The Kitchen* (Daniel Kaluuya, Kibwe Tavares); and Rose Glass’ *Love Lies Bleeding*.



Upcoming films include Yorgos Lanthimos' *Kinds of Kindness*; Karan Kandhari's *Sister Midnight*; Thea Gajic's *Surviving Earth*; Rebecca Lenkiewicz's *Hot Milk*; Oliver Hermanus' *The History of Sound*; Dylan Southern's *The Thing With Feathers*; John Crowley's *We Live In Time*; Polly Findlay's *Midwinter Break*; and Asif Kapadia's *2073*.

Film4 has developed and co-financed many of the most ground-breaking and successful UK films including Yorgos Lanthimos' *The Favourite*; Martin McDonagh's *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*; Lenny Abrahamson's *Room*; Asif Kapadia's *Amy*; Steve McQueen's *12 Years a Slave*; Andrea Arnold's *American Honey*; Phyllida Lloyd's *The Iron Lady*, Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*; Sarah Gavron's *Rocks*; Pawel Pawlikowski's *Cold War*; Lynne Ramsay's *You Were Never Really Here*; Rungano Nyoni's *I Am Not a Witch*; Chris Morris' *Four Lions*; Shane Meadows' *This is England*; and Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin*.

For more information: <https://www.film4productions.com/>

### **About New Writing North**

Writing talent is everywhere. But opportunities are not. That's why New Writing North exists. To identify and nurture talent. To inspire a love for creative writing and reading. To create life-changing chances for people across the North. Through our programmes, events, and activities, we find and support talented people of all ages and backgrounds to access creative opportunities and to enable them to flourish.

Find out more at [newwritingnorth.com](http://newwritingnorth.com).

Donate: <https://www.justgiving.com/newwritingnorth>

### **About North East Combined Authority**

The North East Combined Authority (North East CA) was formed on 7 May 2024. We're led by an Elected Mayor and Cabinet and cover the seven local authority areas of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

Our purpose is to champion the full potential of our region. Collaborating with our partners and local authorities, we'll create a better way of life by connecting communities, giving people the skills to succeed, and improving wellbeing for all, so that the North East is recognised as an outstanding place to live, work, visit and invest.

[www.northeast-ca.gov.uk](http://www.northeast-ca.gov.uk)

### **Producer bios**

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### **Ivana MacKinnon – Producer**

Ivana's new company Wild Swim Films, a collaboration with Emily Leo, was founded in 2019, and has produced four films. *Nocebo*, a contemporary thriller directed by Lorcan Finnegan and starring Eva Green, was released in theatres internationally in 2023. *Tuesday*, a mother-daughter fairytale starring Julia Louis Dreyfus and Arinze Kene, will be released internationally in summer 2024. Molly Manning Walker's *How to Have Sex* premiered at Cannes 2023, winning the prize of Un Certain Regard; it was released internationally in late 2023. *Bring Them Down*, an Irish revenge thriller starring Barry Keoghan and Christopher Abbott, will premiere in 2024.

Prior to Wild Swim, Ivana produced Michael Peace's *Beast*, which won the BAFTA for Best Debut Film 2019, was nominated for the BAFTA for Best British Film, and received 11 BIFA nominations. *Beast* was released internationally in 2018, after premiering at Toronto in the acclaimed Platform strand.

In 2013 Ivana Exec Produced *War Book*, a Jack Thorne-penned and Tom Harper helmed political thriller starring Sophie Okonedo and Antony Sher, having worked with both writer and director previously on their debut *The Scouting Book For Boys*.

Ivana was Head of Creative Affairs for Cloud Eight Pictures and Celador Films from 2002-2012, working across films as diverse as *Slumdog Millionaire* and *The Descent*.

### **Emily Leo – Producer**

Emily Leo is a BAFTA and BIFA-winning producer with a track record for discovering new voices and taking risks on distinctive material. Starting Wigwam Films in 2012, Emily sought out and backed the emerging voices on which the company was built. Babak Anvari's debut feature *Under the Shadow*, produced by Emily, won a BAFTA for Best Debut, won prizes at festivals around the world, and was the UK's submission to the Oscars as a Foreign Language film. Her commission of an idea from emerging theatre writers Phoebe Waller-Bridge and Vicky Jones resulted in the TV Series *Run*, which Emily Exec Produced for HBO and One, and which will air in 2020. While at Wigwam Emily also produced *An Evening With Beverley Luff Lin*, which premiered at Sundance 2018, and Netflix's first UK Original, *iBoy*. In 2015 she was a Screen International Future Leader.

In 2018 Emily and Ivana MacKinnon combined development slates to form WILD SWIM FILMS. The company aims to tell creatively ambitious stories that seek truth through



fable and genre. The company has recently produced *Tuesday*, directed by Daina O Pusic and starring Julia Louise Dreyfus, and *Nocebo*, directed by Lorcan Finnegan and starring Eva Green and Mark Strong. Molly Manning Walker's debut film *How to Have Sex*, premiered in and won Un Certain Regard in Cannes 2023, and Christopher Andrews' debut *Bring Them Down* is in post-production. Upcoming projects include *Cavendish*, a female driven chase movie set in the witch hunting forests of 17th century England, and teen comedy *Sumo*.