



NUMBER 9 FILMS' STEPHEN WOOLLEY AND ELIZABETH KARLSEN TO RECEIVE THE 2019 EE BRITISH ACADEMY FILM AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING BRITISH CONTRIBUTION TO CINEMA

London, 16 December 2018: The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) today announced that award-winning producing partnership **Elizabeth Karlsen** and **Stephen Woolley**, co-founders of Number 9 Films, will receive the Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema Award at the 72nd EE British Academy Film Awards ceremony on Sunday 10 February in London.

The Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema Award is presented annually in honour of Michael Balcon, the British film producer known for his work with Ealing Studios. Previous recipients include Mike Leigh, Kenneth Branagh, Derek Jarman, Mary Selway, Ridley and Tony Scott, Working Title Films, Lewis Gilbert, the Harry Potter series of films, John Hurt, Peter Greenaway, Tessa Ross, BBC Films, Angels Costumes and Curzon. The National Film and Television School was the recipient at 2018's Film Awards.

Marc Samuelson, Chair of BAFTA's Film Committee said: "Elizabeth and Stephen are two of the UK's leading producers whose contribution to the British film industry over the last four decades is outstanding. Their commitment to producing independent films in the UK which breaks down barriers and connects with audiences internationally is an inspiration to us all. The success they have enjoyed is testament to their passion and excellence in filmmaking and we're delighted to award them the Outstanding British contribution to Cinema award."

Stephen Woolley and Elizabeth Karlsen commented: "We are both extremely honoured to be given this prestigious award. Just to be mentioned in the same breath as Michael Balcon is special. We would like to thank BAFTA for recognising the importance of independent producers in the UK and thank everyone involved."

Stephen Woolley and Elizabeth Karlsen are two of the most prolific independent film producers currently working in the UK. Their producing partnership was cemented in 2002 with the formation of leading UK independent production company, Number 9 Films, and both have enjoyed success in the film industry across the past four decades. Their films have been nominated for a total of 52 BAFTAs.

Woolley began his career in the mid-70s, working at his local arthouse cinema, Islington's Screen on the Green, before owning and running his own repertory cinema, the legendary Scala. Alongside Nik Powell, he founded Palace Pictures, successfully distributing over 250 independent films from the likes of Mike Leigh and Ken Loach as well as international hits like *Paris, Texas*, *When Harry Met Sally* and *The Evil Dead*. On the production side, 1983 marked the beginning of Woolley's highly successful collaboration with Neil Jordan. *The Company of Wolves* was their first film together, which was nominated for four BAFTAs. Other films they produced include *Interview with the Vampire* (winning two BAFTAs out of its four nominations, as well as garnering two Oscar® nominations), *Michael Collins* (nominated for two BAFTAs, and two Oscars®), *Mona Lisa* (winning one BAFTA out of its six nominations), *The End of the Affair* (ten BAFTA nominations and two Oscar® nominations) and *The Crying Game* (six Oscar® nominations, including best screenplay win, and seven BAFTA nominations, including Best British Film win). During that period, Woolley also produced *Absolute Beginners* starring David Bowie, the multi award-winning *Scandal* starring Joanne Whalley and John Hurt, *A Rage In Harlem* starring Forest Whitaker and Danny Glover, *Shag* directed by Zeldia Barron and starring Bridget Fonda, *The Big Man* starring Liam Neeson, *Hardware* directed by Richard



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Stanley and the BAFTA-winning *Backbeat*, the story of The Beatles in Hamburg. Stephen Woolley has been a member of the American Academy for 25 years.

Elizabeth began her career in New York after completing a graduate degree at Sussex University in Critical Theory. She produced short films in early collaborations with Christine Vachon and worked with late filmmaker Bill Sherwood on his first and only feature film, *Parting Glances* before he died of AIDS. Made on a tiny budget, *Parting Glances* starred Steve Buscemi in his first film role and went on to achieve international success as a ground-breaking film. Karlsen first worked as an on-set intern, where Sherwood recognised her talents and asked her to assist him with the edit and all aspects of post-production. After the film's premiere at the Edinburgh Film Festival, Sherwood asked Karlsen to work with him producing projects. Throughout this time Karlsen continued to work in various production roles on music videos, short and independent features in New York with the likes of Jean-Baptiste Mondino, Jim Jarmusch and Zbigniew Rybczyński.

Elizabeth first collaborated with Stephen during his time at Palace Pictures, and co-produced *The Crying Game* and went on to produce multiple titles including Mark Herman's *Little Voice*, starring Jane Horrocks and Michael Caine (nominated for six BAFTAs, three Golden Globes®, winning best actor for Michael Caine and 1 Oscar® nomination) and Terence Davies' *The Neon Bible*, starring Gena Rowlands, which was nominated for the Cannes Palme d'Or in 1995.

Since its inception 15 years ago, Number 9 Films has become one the leading UK independent production companies, becoming synonymous with critically acclaimed, award-winning, high-quality films. Highlights from this prolific period include HBO single drama *Mrs. Harris*, starring Annette Bening and Ben Kingsley (nominated for twelve Emmy® Awards, three Golden Globe® Awards and a PGA Award), Mike Newell's *Great Expectations*, *Made In Dagenham* (nominated for four BAFTAs and later adapted into a West End stage show starring Gemma Arterton), *On Chesil Beach*, starring Saoirse Ronan, *Their Finest*, which once again reunited them with regular collaborator Gemma Arterton, and Paolo Sorrentino's 2015 Cannes Palme d'Or nominee, *Youth*. Also premiering in Cannes that year was Todd Haynes' multi-award winning *Carol*, starring Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara, which received six Oscar® nominations and nine BAFTA nominations.

Woolley and Karlsen have both been nominated for PGA Awards, with Woolley receiving the award for Outstanding Producer of Theatrical Motion Pictures for *The Crying Game*.

Karlsen and Woolley's upcoming films include *Colette*, starring Keira Knightley and Dominic West, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, and will be released in the UK January 2019. They are also developing another project with Phyllis Nagy, who wrote the celebrated *Carol* and makes her feature film debut with *So Much Love*, set to star Gemma Arterton as legendary soul singer Dusty Springfield. Other films in development include an adaptation of Graham Swift's *Mothering Sunday* by Alice Birch (*Lady Macbeth*) and *The Assessor*. They also have several television projects lined up including *Portrait of a Lady*, adapted by Rebecca Lenkiewicz (*Ida*, *Colette*), and *The Sea The Sea*, an adaptation by Jemma Kennedy.

The EE British Academy Film Awards will be held on Sunday 10 February 2019, with the nominations announced on 9 January at BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly. The EE Rising Star Award nominations will be announced on 3 January. BAFTA's [Awards Season Tea Party](#) in Los Angeles will take place on 5 January.

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About BAFTA

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) is a world-leading independent arts charity that brings the very best work in film, games and television to public attention and supports the growth of creative talent in the UK and internationally. Through its Awards ceremonies and year-round programme of learning events and initiatives – which includes workshops, masterclasses, scholarships, lectures and mentoring schemes in the UK, USA and Asia – BAFTA identifies and celebrates excellence, discovers, inspires and nurtures new talent, and enables learning and creative collaboration. For advice and inspiration from the best creative minds in working in film, games and television, visit www.bafta.org/guru. For more, visit www.bafta.org.

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