

## **2016 BAFTA BREAKTHROUGH BRITS, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BURBERRY**

### **Biographies**

#### **Alex Grahame – Games Artist**

Alex Grahame, 26, grew up in Edinburgh and now lives in Brighton.

Alex graduated from The University of Abertay Dundee in 2014 with a First Class degree in Computer Arts. She specialises in 3D game environments with a focus on realism, traditional practices and the creation of diverse experiences in games. In 2014 whilst still studying, Alex was selected as one of Develop's '30 Under 30' young talents rising within the games industry. Before graduating, Alex secured a position as an environment artist for games studio The Chinese Room, subsequently working as part of a small team to create the multi-BAFTA-winning *Everybody's Gone to the Rapture*. Alex regularly talks at national industry events about inclusivity in the arts and bridging the gap between academia and the games industry.

Alex said: "I feel very proud of my accomplishments to date and that I've been recognised as a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit feels incredible! Having this recognition from BAFTA will help to promote my profile as an impactful role model in the games industry by championing diversity and making art. Having my voice as a gay woman supported by BAFTA will help to show a broader representation of the people who make games and how the games industry should be an inclusive environment available to anyone. I'm most excited about the connections I'll make. BAFTA Breakthrough Brits will allow me to meet with high profile influential people from the games industry that I can connect with, share information, advocate for inclusive practices and make a difference."

#### **Eben Bolter – Cinematographer**

Eben Bolter, 33, grew up on Hayling Island in Hampshire, and now lives in Chiswick, west London.

Eben spent several years working in recruitment before picking up a camera for the first time to shoot corporate marketing films at the age of 24. Over the past five years, Eben has concentrated on developing his career in drama, shooting 15 features and 80 short films in this time. His previous film credits include *Mum's List* starring Rafe Spall and Emilia Fox, and Joe Stephenson's *Chicken*, the cinematography for which Mark Kermode described as "[capturing] the warmth, loneliness and harsh reality of this disenfranchised world with unobtrusive aplomb". Most recently, Eben shot the UK Netflix original feature film, *iBoy*, starring Maisie Williams, Rory Kinnear and Miranda Richardson.

On being named a Breakthrough Brit, Eben said: "It's a great honour and a real life-affirming moment. It's a vote of encouragement and support in an industry that can be so hard to sustain a career in and it inspires me to keep learning, working hard and striving to make better and better work. I'm very much looking forward to meeting and learning from BAFTA members, mentors and heroes of mine from the industry, who otherwise I might never have had the opportunity to meet."

#### **Ellen Husain – Producer**

Ellen Husain, 40, was born in London but grew up in Veryan, a small village on the south coast of Cornwall. She now lives in Leigh Woods near Bristol.

Ellen specialises in producing wildlife programming, having moved into television following a successful career as a marine biologist. Her first significant project came in 2007 on BBC Two's *South Pacific* series, where she was originally employed as a researcher but obtained an assistant producer credit for her ambitious underwater sequences. Following *South Pacific*, Ellen worked as

an AP and director on the Emmy-nominated BBC One series *Ocean Giants*, narrated by Stephen Fry. Ellen's breakthrough as a producer came in 2013 when she was approached by Alastair Fothergill – the executive producer behind *Blue Planet* and *Planet Earth* – to produce Silverback Films' landmark seven-part series, *The Hunt*, which was broadcast in 2016.

Ellen said: "I'm hugely pleased to be named as a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit. It's an incredibly exciting initiative [that] provides a fantastic platform to help turn creative ideas into reality. I'm really looking forward to making exciting new connections with people across the industry, learning from their experience, generating innovative ideas, and potentially even opening avenues to future collaborations and longer-term working relationships."

### **Florence Pugh – Actress**

Florence Pugh, 20, grew up in Oxford, where she still lives today.

Florence's first professional role came whilst she was still at school, when she was discovered by Carol Morley and casting director Shaheen Baig following an open audition for 2014's *The Falling*, in which she played Abigail Mortimer, a prominent character in the film. Starring opposite Maisie Williams and Maxine Peake, she received Best British Newcomer nominations at both the London Film Festival and Critics Circle Awards for her performance. Florence recently completed her first lead role for film, playing the central character in William Oldroyd's *Lady Macbeth*, which received its world premiere at the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival. She has also appeared on television in ITV's crime-drama *Marcella* and Warner Bros. pilot of *Studio City* in the US.

Florence said: "I am so grateful to be named a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit; it has given me a huge sense of pride, relief and inspiration [and] it's a sign that I am going in the direction I have always strived for. The opportunity to meet and learn from more experienced actors and directors is a big deal to me and one that I do not intend to take lightly."

### **Helen Walsh – Writer-Director**

Helen Walsh, 40, grew up in Warrington in Cheshire, and now lives in Birkenhead, Merseyside.

Helen's interest in filmmaking started from a young age, when with friends she would make shorts inspired by their experiences of the North West rave scene of the late eighties. Feeling disconnected from the industry's London hub, Helen found an outlet for her creativity in writing prose. She has published four novels, two of which - *Brass* and *Once Upon a Time in England* - have received a Betty Trask Award for Excellence from the Society of Authors. Pursuing filmmaking, Helen attracted the support of Red Union Films in Merseyside, allowing her to develop an original idea for the big screen. This became *Violators*, her debut feature as a writer-director, which was released in 2016 and earned her a Producer of the Year nomination at the British Independent Film Awards in 2015, with the film's lead actress, Lauren McQueen, long-listed as one of 12 British Actors to Watch.

On receiving the news that she had been named a Breakthrough Brit, Helen said: "I am thrilled. Having shot my first feature last year, this is a unique opportunity to continue honing my craft under the aegis of BAFTA mentors. A virtue of my debut is that it is raw and elemental, much of it done on instinct. I am keen, now, to discover as much as possible about the technical arts of filmmaking, and I am excited about the opportunities to learn new disciplines through the BAFTA Breakthrough Brits programme."

### **Jodie Azhar – Lead Technical Artist**

Jodie Azhar, 29, was raised in Horsham, West Sussex, where she still lives today.

Jodie began her career in 2009 as a junior animator at Kuju Entertainment, where she developed her talent for problem-solving within the animation pipeline. She then moved to Rebellion, where she was quickly promoted to Senior Technical Animator, supporting a six person animation team and developing the company's in-house engine tools. In 2013, Jodie's career took a further leap when she was hired by Creative Assembly to work as a Character Rigger on the popular *Total War* series. Her ability to consistently deliver above and beyond the scope of her role eventually led to Jodie being promoted to Lead Technical Artist across all *Total War* projects, on which she now supports a team of more than 70 designers.

Jodie said: "It's really gratifying knowing people have looked at my career so far and recognised my achievement and potential, but it also feels that there's a lot to live up to. The mentoring programme is what excites me the most. Because there tend to be fewer technical artists than other roles in games development I've not had anyone directly above me to learn from in most of my jobs. Having the chance to gain insight and advice from people further along in their careers will be invaluable in helping me to make better games."

### **Jon McKellan – Creative Director**

Jon McKellan, 35, grew up in Glasgow where he still resides today.

Jon began his working life as an animation and motion-graphics designer for print before finding a home for his creativity in the games industry in 2009. He quickly rose through the ranks as a motion-graphics artist, subsequently gaining his first lead design role for Creative Assembly in 2010 as Lead Artist for the BAFTA-winning *Alien: Isolation* for which his title sequence received an SXSW nomination. While working on *Alien* expansions, Jon released his debut game as a solo developer. *Lub vs Dub* was published in 2013 for iOS and was downloaded by over one million unique players in its first year before earning Jon a BAFTA Scotland New Talent Award in 2014. In August 2015, Jon founded his own game studio, No Code. His company's first release, *Super Arc Light*, was acquired by All 4 Games/Channel 4 and released in 2016 to critical and commercial success. No Code has continued to grow and now employs five members of staff who are working towards a narrative console title to be released in 2017.

Jon said: "It's an honour to be named as a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit, especially in an industry as full of amazing, creative developers as it is. Where I grew up, being creative for a living was often dismissed as 'a dream' and not something attainable, and it means so much to me that I can in some way prove that wrong and hopefully inspire young people, and my own kids, that with some hard work, dedication, and a bit luck, you can achieve great things."

### **Kayode Ewumi – Actor/Writer**

Kayode Ewumi, 22, grew up on the Aylesbury Estate in south east London, and still lives in the area.

Shortly after graduating from Coventry University in 2015, Kayode wrote and starred as the lead in his mockumentary web series *#HoodDocumentary*. Released via YouTube, the series quickly gained over two million viewers, and attracted the attention of BBC Three which commissioned Kayode to write and appear in six *#HoodDocumentary* shorts for broadcast in June 2016. Kayode has since appeared in a leading role in BBC One's re-boot of *Are You Being Served?* while continuing to develop his own projects as an actor and writer.

Kayode said: "To be named as a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit is amazing! This acknowledgment has motivated me to continue to create my own work, as well as taking on roles that are physically

and psychologically challenging. I am really excited about the networking opportunities that will be provided. I can't wait to listen and soak up all the knowledge that will be thrown my way by those who have been in the industry for years."

### **Malachi Kirby – Actor**

Malachi Kirby, 27, grew up in Battersea, south London, and now lives in Surrey.

Malachi achieved success on the stage early in his career, receiving an Outstanding Newcomer nomination at the Evening Standard Theatre Awards in 2011 for his lead role in *Mogadishu* at the Lyric Theatre. He has since starred in critically acclaimed productions for television, including *My Murder* opposite John Boyega, *Doctor Who* and *Jekyll & Hyde*. His first lead role for film came in 2013 with *Gone Too Far*, directed by former BAFTA Breakthrough Brit Destiny Ekaragha. His other film credits include Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner *My Brother The Devil*, and *Offender* in which he starred opposite Joe Cole. In the past year Malachi has made a breakthrough as an international performer, having been cast as Kunta Kinte in a mini-series remake of *Roots*, starring opposite Forest Whitaker, Anna Paquin and Jonathan Rhys Meyers. Malachi will soon return to British television in a leading role for series three of *Black Mirror*.

On receiving the news that he had been named a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit, Malachi said: "It feels great. It's a privilege [and] hopefully it means more progress. The idea of potentially learning from, discussing and working with a mentor of my choosing is very exciting."

### **Marnie Dickens – Writer**

Marnie Dickens, 30, grew up in Frieth, a small village in Buckinghamshire, and now resides in Haringey, north London.

Having written for *The Musketeers* and *Ripper Street*, Marnie's breakthrough came with the 2016 broadcast of *Thirteen*; a five part mini-series that she created, wrote and produced for BBC Three and, following its outstanding success online, was later aired on BBC Two. The drama was a ratings and critical success, leading to Marnie having television projects in development with BBC and Sky, and adapting a novel for the big screen with The Ink Factory and Big Talk Productions.

On being selected as a Breakthrough Brit, Marnie said "I feel very honoured to be chosen as a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit [and] I'm excited at the prospect of having a mentor. It's lovely to be recognised in such a competitive industry and to have the BAFTA name behind me. I'm hoping it will mean I can use this year to shore up where I've come to, and plough ahead with new projects."

### **Matt Hyde – Creative Director**

Matt Hyde, 38, grew up in Grimsby, Lincolnshire and now lives in Stoke Newington, north London.

Matt graduated in 2000 from Central Saint Martins with a First Class degree in Graphic Design & Communication. He subsequently co-founded the digital design studio Matt&George, creating award-winning digital products, mobile apps and games for clients including PlayStation, BBC, Channel 4 and Samsung. In 2013, with a desire to focus on his own products within gaming, Matt co-founded the London-based games studio, Glitchers. In 2015, in partnership with a team of scientists and technology consultants, Matt led the creation of *Sea Hero Quest* – a multi-platform adventure game designed to advance the understanding of the initial symptoms of dementia. *Sea Hero Quest* was downloaded over one million times within its first week of release, and has user-generated over 6,000 years' worth of dementia research so far.

Matt said: "I feel incredibly honoured to be selected as a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit. I want to develop my skills further in the industry [and] I'm hoping that achieving such an accolade will help both myself and my studio raise our profile within the gaming industry and help open up more doors. I'm most looking forward to meeting and learning from industry professionals who have more experience than me."

### **Michael Berliner – Producer**

Michael Berliner, 30, was raised in Bedford and now lives in Herne Hill, south London.

To date, Michael has produced 14 short films including Chris Foggins' 2012 *Friend Request Pending*, starring Judi Dench and Tom Hiddleston. Following mentorship by Mark Herbert, producer of the *This Is England* series, Michael was named as a 2014 Screen International Star of Tomorrow. In 2015, Michael received a BAFTA nomination for his comedy short *Emotional Fusebox*. Following its success on the festival and awards circuit, Michael secured financing from Creative England to adapt the short into his debut feature, *Adult Life Skills*. Starring Jodie Whittaker and directed by Rachel Tunnard, the feature premiered at Tribeca Film Festival and was released in the UK in June 2016.

Michael said: "Given the number of fantastic people that have been selected for Breakthrough Brits over the years, this is really thrilling. It's also tremendously affirming and validating of my work, giving me the confidence and authority to reach even higher on my next project. I'm looking forward to meeting the other Breakthrough Brits and perhaps finding collaborators for the future."

### **Nainita Desai – Composer**

Nainita Desai, 48, was born in Balham, south west London and now lives in Lewisham, south east London.

Nainita's first foray into film was as an assistant sound editor and sound designer on features including Iain Softley's *Back Beat* and Anthony Hopkins' *August*. Having studied sitar, piano, guitar, tabla and violin from a young age, Nainita moved away from film sound to work as a freelance music engineer for artists including Peter Gabriel and Ravi Shankar. During this period she received her first TV composing commission for a Channel 4 travel series, leading to further work for the BBC, Discovery and National Geographic. In 2005 Nainita scored her first short film, *Little Terrorist*, which went on to receive an Oscar nomination. In recent years she has forged a reputation in factual television and documentaries, with composer credits for *Children of Beslan*, *Storyville*, *9/11 – The Day That Changed the World* and *The Day That Kennedy Died*. Nainita's debut as a feature film composer came in 2016 with the release of *The Confessions of Thomas Quick*, for which she won a Music+Sound Award for Best Music in a Feature Film.

Nainita said: "I'm still recovering from the shock! I'm very thankful to be included amongst such a talented, diverse group of Brits. I feel it validates everything I have done to date and is a massive calling card so I hope that I can get my presence felt out there. I am really excited about meeting and engaging with people that I would not normally be able to reach out to if it weren't for this initiative, and I'm excited to forge new relationships and collaboration with my fellow Breakthrough Brits."

### **Rebecca Lloyd – Editor**

Rebecca Lloyd, 37, grew up in Godalming, Surrey and now lives in Rotherhithe, south London.

Rebecca has built 10 years' experience as an assistant editor across film, television and animation. Her first stride into the industry came when working on BBC Natural History Unit's *Elephant Diaries*, for which she was hired to assembly edit, but subsequently received an editor credit for the scope

and quality of her work. This led to her working as an assistant editor on the Weinstein Company and BBC Films' *The Meerkats*. Roles as a first assistant editor have since followed, on features including *Fishtank*, *The Two Faces of January*, *We Are Many* and *Testament of Youth*, and, most recently, John Michael McDonagh's *War on Everyone*. Rebecca's breakthrough as an editor came in 2016 when she was credited as an additional editor to Joe Bini on Andrea Arnold's feature, *American Honey*. She is currently lead editing her first feature film, Ron Scalapello's *My Name is Lenny*.

Rebecca said: "I feel so honoured and excited to have been selected by the BAFTA jury to be a Breakthrough Brit. To be recognised by BAFTA has given me a real confidence boost in my skills [and] I'm going to make sure I embrace this opportunity to learn as much as I can. The thought of having a one-to-one mentor to help my career grow as an editor is a dream come true."

### **Ruth Madeley – Actress**

Ruth Madeley, 30, grew up in Bolton, Greater Manchester, where she still lives today.

Ruth holds a First Class degree in Creative Writing, with a major in Scriptwriting. Following her graduation, Ruth appeared in *Half Moon Investigations* and *Fresh Meat* in supporting roles, before writing and starring in the pilot episode of Lime Pictures' *Scrims* in 2012. In 2015 Ruth starred in the Jack Thorne scripted *Don't Take My Baby*, which tells the story of a disabled couple fighting social services for custody of their newborn daughter. Ruth went on to receive a BAFTA nomination for Leading Actress in 2016 for her performance, with the drama also winning the BAFTA for Single Drama in the same year. She recently completed filming for ITV's six-part police drama *The Level*, marking her first character role that was not cast as disability-specific.

Ruth said of being selected as a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit: "It feels absolutely incredible. Being a Breakthrough Brit will mean that I will have a bigger platform to help break down more barriers in the industry for actors with disabilities, as well as give me the opportunity to showcase more of what I am capable of. In particular, I am really excited to work closely with mentors who can advise and guide me throughout the next twelve months."

### **Tim Wicksteed – Game Developer**

Tim Wicksteed, 28, grew up in Barnet, north London and now resides in Horfield in Bristol.

In 2012 at age 24, Tim left his career as a mechanical engineer to start his own one-man games studio, Twice Circled. His first game *Lonage* – a well-received real-time strategy game for Android – launched in 2013. This debut release led to Tim speaking at various industry conferences where he was able to build his professional networks. In 2014 he secured a publishing deal with Positech Games to create *Big Pharma* - a pharmaceutical-themed strategy game for PC. *Big Pharma* was released in 2015 and spent several days in Steam's top-10 chart. It has since sold 100,000 copies, leading to a 2016 expansion, *Marketing and Malpractice*, and is financing Tim's next project.

Tim said: "Working as a lone developer, I have to rely on external sources for validation. For this reason, being named a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit is a very special achievement for me. Having BAFTA's backing will hopefully open a few doors that might otherwise have been closed to me. I'm looking forward to meeting lots of interesting and talented people and having the opportunity to meet some of the people who inspired me to get into this industry."

**Tom Davis – Actor/Writer**

Tom Davis, 37, grew up in Sutton and Croydon and now lives in a village just outside of Peterborough.

Tom is an actor, writer and stand-up comedian whose first acting role for television came in 2010 on Channel 4's *The Morgana Show*. He has since built a reputation as a versatile comedic character actor, appearing in a number of shows including *Lemon La Vida Loca*, *Bad Education*, *Cockroaches* and *Plebs*. In 2015 Tom co-created, wrote and starred in BBC Three's *Murder in Successville*, which was renewed for a second series in 2016. In the past 18 months, Tom has grown his feature film career, with supporting roles in *The Bad Education Movie*, *Alice Lowe's Prevenge*, and Ben Wheatley's *Free Fire* in which he appeared opposite Brie Larson and Cillian Murphy.

Tom said: "I am completely overwhelmed at being named as a BAFTA breakthrough Brit. It's come as a complete and lovely surprise. For my future plans this is incredible, it will allow me to work and learn from some of the most renowned names in this industry. More than anything it has given me a massive confidence boost and a sense of acceptance to an institution as influential as BAFTA. Doors that may have seemed closed maybe being opened. Having a wealth of knowledge and advice being on hand as I embark on this new chapter. I'm buzzing to get started."

**Vinay Patel – Writer**

Vinay Patel, 30, grew up in the London Borough of Bexley and now lives in Kennington, south London.

Vinay spent several years working as a film school technician, before completing his MA in Writing at the Central School of Speech and Drama in 2011. He initially developed his craft by writing for the stage, winning Jack Studio Theatre's Write Now competition and being accepted onto HighTide Theatre's Escalator programme in 2013 before taking his play, *True Brits* to Edinburgh International Festival in 2014. Later that year, Vinay was commissioned by the BBC to write a short film for iPlayer. In 2015, following his participation in the Bush/Kudos TV writing scheme, Vinay was selected for Channel 4's prestigious 4Screenwriting Programme. His breakthrough as a writer for television came late in 2015 with honour killing drama, *Murdered By My Father*. The critically-acclaimed single drama starred Adeel Akhtar and aired on BBC Three and later on BBC One. Vinay is currently developing projects for BBC, ITV and his debut feature with the BFI.

Vinay said: "It feels like I can finally go to my grandparents and explain what I do for a living in a way they'll understand. Aside from that, I'm thrilled to have been named a Breakthrough Brit because it's always nice to be recognised for your work. I love writing and it's wonderful to be part of Breakthrough Brits, but no one teaches you how best to take advantage of success - mostly, I suspect, because you never really expect it. So I'm excited about the possibility of using that guidance as a way to make the most of my potential."