



## SPOTLIGHT ON NEW TALENT: LEO LEBEAU Filmmaker and BAFTA Prince William Scholar



### **What did getting a BAFTA Scholarship mean to you and what opportunities has it created for you?**

Being British I have been aware of BAFTA for as long as I can remember. Because of my family background, becoming a BAFTA scholar was the only way I could afford to take on my course.

The scholarship allowed me to focus on being the best that I could be without financial distraction.

During my time at the National Film and Television School I was able to create two films, my Graduation project and another extra-curricular production. BAFTA opened up many doors for me. The name itself holds prestige, trust, a sense of excellence. Being chosen by BAFTA gave me confidence and helped me to secure a team of talented filmmakers for both projects.

### **Which filmmakers do you admire and how important do you think it is to have mentors in order to develop your career?**

I admire and have drawn inspiration from Directors such as Luc Besson, Quentin Tarantino and Joss Whedon. Yet I would say my true mentors are the creative people that surround me. Those who have listened to and advised me in my early career, and who continue to support me today.

I owe so much to my filmmaking partner James Bell, who I have collaborated with since my days as a visual artist. Also to all the people I met through BAFTA directly, such as Producer Linda Shire and my mentors Lydia Hampson and Helen Soden. Their advice has been invaluable as I begin to take my scary first steps outside of the NFTS.

### **What are you working on at the moment that you'd like to tell the BAFTA Academy Circle about?**

I am currently working on my short film *Birthday Boy*. The film tells the story of a transgender teenage boy as he struggles with bullying at an all-girls private school. He ultimately overcomes this and finds acceptance in an uplifting narrative that positively portrays a trans character.

The project has already amassed quite a following, as well as some media attention. One of my proudest career achievements to date was putting together a crew that mostly identify as LGBTQ+.

What started out as an idea between two friends has now become a reality thanks to the overwhelming support of so many people who believed in the importance of the story. Post production during the era of COVID has not been easy - however my team all rose to the challenge and discovered ways to work remotely!

To find out BAFTA's international scholarships programme please visit:  
[www.bafta.org/supporting-talent/scholarships](http://www.bafta.org/supporting-talent/scholarships)