



Press Release  
For Immediate Release

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**Directors UK and Creative Skillset Announce First Candidates for  
2017 High End TV Drama Directors Career Development Programme**

Directors UK and Creative Skillset's High End TV (HETV) Council are delighted to announce the first two directors who have been selected to take part in the new High End TV Drama Directors Career Development Programme.

Directors Tina Gharavi and Samantha Harrie have been selected as placement directors on two of the UK's most popular High End drama productions: Kudos' *The Tunnel: Vengeance* and Neal Street Productions' *Call The Midwife*.

Tina Gharavi, the BAFTA-nominated and award-winning filmmaker is working alongside director Gilles Bannier (*Tin Star*, *In The Dark*, *The Tunnel: Sabotage*) on *The Tunnel: Vengeance*, the Kudos produced thriller for Sky Atlantic, starring Stephen Dillane (*Game of Thrones*) and Clemence Poesy (*The Ones Below*)

Samantha Harrie, an RTS nominee, who made her TV debut on Channel 4 with single drama *Call it a Night*, has been selected to join BBC's award winning production *Call the Midwife* with Neal Street Productions, and will be working with director Syd Macartney (*Last Tango in Halifax*, *The Syndicate*, *Call The Midwife*).

Launched to help progress and diversify the directing talent in HETV drama, six directors from over 200 applicants, will be selected to take part in the scheme that includes a 12-week paid placement with High End drama production companies and broadcasters across the UK, working alongside a show's lead director throughout the entire duration of the show.

Four additional candidates selected as part of the training will be announced later this year.

Laura Adams, Head of Member Services at Directors UK, said: "We are thrilled to be working with Creative Skillset again for the High End TV Drama Directors Career Development Programme. It was incredibly difficult to narrow down the candidates, from over 200 applicants for the scheme, but both Tina and Samantha showed incredible skill and potential. In an already competitive industry, offering a unique opportunity for under-represented groups to learn and develop their skills within High End drama is necessary to help the industry to improve and diversify its current landscape and encourage aspiring directors."

Kaye Elliott, Programme Lead of High End TV at Creative Skillset, said: "Ensuring full representation behind-the-scenes in High End TV productions is imperative if HETV is to be reflective of society. This is why the Council and levy are fully supportive of initiatives such as the High End TV Drama Directors Career Development Programme, and we are delighted that two female directors have secured such high profile placements and look forward to acknowledging the success of the other directors."

Toby Welch, Producer of *The Tunnel: Vengeance* at Kudos said: "We're delighted to be welcoming Tina, who is an incredibly exciting talent, to *The Tunnel*. There is nothing more valuable than practical work experience, and we are confident that the time spent with our wonderful director Gilles Bannier and the rest of the team will be a collaboration that bears fruit."

Dame Pippa Harris, Executive Producer for *Call the Midwife* at Neal Street Productions, said: “Neal Street Productions are proud to be one of the first production companies to place a director as part of the training programme. *Call the Midwife* in particular has a very strong history of female directors - across the last six series, the majority of our directors have been women who are responsible for two out of every three episodes, twice as many as the men! We can’t wait for Samantha to join us on set as we begin filming series 7.”

The High End TV Drama Directors Career Development Programme follows on from the 2015 pilot scheme and aims to give directors a broader understanding of working in HETV drama, and how they differ from lower-budget and continuing drama productions. Directors will gain an insight into all areas of HETV drama including pre-production, shooting, and post-production; ultimately giving them the skill set needed to be able to direct an episode in the future. As part of the career development programme, directors will also have access to post-placement support from Directors UK, as well as networking and advice from the production company and the lead director.

There is also a commitment to give the placement director the opportunity to direct 2nd unit where appropriate, and therefore gain an on-screen credit to showcase their experience and help advance their careers within HETV drama.

In light of our ongoing campaigns highlighting the gender and diversity disparity within UK television, Directors UK continues to work closely with broadcasters and commissioners to help increase visibility and access to work opportunities, for fairer employment and career progression for under-represented groups.

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#### **About the directors:**

##### **Tina Gharavi**

Tina Gharavi is a BAFTA-nominated, award-winning filmmaker. Her first short, *Closer*, a 35mm film was an official selection at Sundance. Tina’s next major production *Mother/Country*, was broadcast on Channel 4 in the UK where the national press gave it top billing and the London Evening Standard described it as “genuinely moving.”

Tina has made films from unique perspectives on subjects as diverse as Muhammad Ali, teenage sexuality, Yemeni-British sailors, The Lackawanna 6, death row exonerees, refugees and lighthouses. She recently completed her first feature, *I Am Nasrine*, a coming of age story of two teenage Iranian refugees, which was nominated for a BIFA & BAFTA in 2013. Further works include *The King of South Shields*.

Tina currently resides in Northern England and Paris where she is currently working on her follow-up feature, *The Good Iranian*, with the BFI and Film4; a gangster tale set in France and Iran, and a documentary called, *Tribalism is Killing Us*.

##### **Samantha Harrie**

Samantha trained at the NFTS and her fiction graduation film *Love Letters* was nominated for a Royal Television Society Student Television Award.

After award winning short films such as *Breathe* and *Copier*, Sam made her TV debut on Channel 4 with single drama *Call it a Night*, part of *Coming Up* 2013. In 2016, Sam was selected for the BBC New Directors Scheme and has since directed on BBC series *Doctors*. Alongside her TV career, Sam is also working on two feature projects: A sci-fi, black comedy, *The Pod*, with writer Melissa Iqbal and revenge-thriller *Orchestra* as a writer/director. In recent years Sam has been selected for Network EIFF, Guiding Lights and Microwave.

#### **Notes to Editors:**

- **Directors UK** is the professional association of UK screen directors. It is a membership organisation representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 6,400 members - the majority of working TV and film directors in the UK. Directors UK collects and distributes royalty payments and provides a range of services to members including campaigning, commercial negotiations, legal advice, events, training and career development. Directors UK works closely with fellow organisations around the world to represent directors’ rights and concerns, promotes excellence in the craft of direction and champions change to the current landscape to create an equal opportunity industry for all.

- **Creative Skillset** works with the UK's screen-based creative industries to develop skills and talent, from classroom to boardroom. We support high quality professional development across TV, film and related sectors – identifying skills needs, targeting skills investment, developing key skills and growing diverse talent networks. Through our industry partnerships Creative Skillset helps to improve productivity, creativity and employability across the UK's screen-based creative media industries.

- **Kudos** is part of Endemol Shine Group, with the third series of Grantchester currently airing (ITV), forthcoming credits include Man In An Orange Shirt (BBC ONE), The Boy With The Top Knot (BBC TWO), Tin Star (Sky Atlantic) Gunpowder (BBC ONE) and Troy: Fall of a City (BBC ONE/ Netflix). Recent titles include Apple Tree Yard (BBC One), Broadchurch III (ITV) Humans (Channel 4 / AMC), Flowers (Channel 4), River (BBC One) and Capital (BBC One).

- **Neal Street Productions** was formed in 2003 by Sam Mendes, Pippa Harris and Caro Newling, and Nicolas Brown joined in 2013 to work across the film and TV portfolio. The company has been successful in film, theatre and television with hit movies including *Revolutionary Road*, *Jarhead* and *Starter for 10*. Their diverse television slate includes the award-winning *Stuart: A Life Backwards* and the hugely successful *Call the Midwife*. All six series to date have gained over 10m viewers, it is the UK's most watched TV drama series and it has recently been voted the Best Drama of the 21st Century in the BFI & Radio Times Festival Audience Poll. A third and final series of *Penny Dreadful* aired on Showtime in the US and Sky Atlantic in the UK in Spring 2016. Neal Street also produced the critically acclaimed and award-winning *The Hollow Crown* - a series of Shakespeare films for the BBC/PBS, and a second series; *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses* which received rave reviews. Their latest show, *Britannia*, a major new original drama series will air on Sky and Amazon in 2017.