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Press Release

Tuesday, 9th May 2017

Directors UK & ARRI Challenge ALEXA 2017 Winners Screening

Directors UK, the professional association for British screen directors, and ARRI teamed up once again for the return of their annual *Challenge ALEXA Competition*.

Last night saw the special screening of six *Challenge ALEXA* films at the Ham Yard Hotel, with cast and crew from the ALEXA films joined by Directors UK members.

Now in its fifth year, *Challenge ALEXA Competition* is a programme created to encourage a varied range of stories from a diverse talent pool. Since its launch, the competition has grown bigger than ever, attracting many entrants annually, offering a rich mix of stories and genres, each one giving its own unique take on a set theme.

The competition, open to Directors UK members, gave directors the chance to win free access to ALEXA shooting equipment, and create new and original content in the form of a short film, short documentary, teaser trailer, commercial or music video.

The six winning projects, chosen by the Board of Directors UK, were selected to go into production, shoot for two days each with an ALEXA shooting package, containing an ALEXA, ALEXA Mini and Anamorphic Primes.

This year the camera manufacturer is celebrating its 100th anniversary and to commemorate the occasion, Directors UK and ARRI have selected six directors to create a short film that incorporates the chosen theme, relevant this year's significant milestone: *Anniversary*. A special showcase screening of the films selected offered a rich mix of stories, each one giving its own unique take on the theme, including:

Prawn, a black revenge comedy with themes of objectification and entitlement, directed by **Nicola Quilter**.

Our Father, is a scene from a feature film of the same name, directed by **Sami Abusamra**.

Home to the Hangers, directed by **A D Cooper**, is a film about soldier and poet Edward Thomas returning home to the place he loved most, the rolling landscape of Hampshire.

Pulling, directed by **Vicki Kisner**, is a film about a teenage girl, Sylvie, who is suffering from trichotillomania: An impulse control disorder where you pull out your own hair.

Cicatrix, is a contemporary ghost story following Brian, a recently widowed pensioner, as he is forced to face up to his past, directed by **David Beauchamp**.

Gypsy's Kiss, directed by **Paul Murphy**, is a drama about an elderly woman who reasserts her own sense of independence with an unconventional yearly pilgrimage to her late husband's grave.

Ahead of the showcase screening each director spoke about their film and what they'll take away from the experience.

Nicola Quilter said, "I've learnt a lot making this film in this way. It really is a special opportunity."

Vicki Kisner said, "It's an amazing opportunity to be able to work with this top of the range Arri package. Both Directors UK and Arri were amazing collaborators throughout the whole process so it's worth using them to help you make the best film that you possibly can."

Sami Abusamra said, “I took Challenge ALEXA as an opportunity to have a crack at something that no one in my usual working life would expect me to do (or ever let me do!).”

A D Cooper said: “I would never have worked with an ALEXA if not for this project. It’s well outside the no/low budget short filmmaking that’s been the norm for me to date. I grabbed the opportunity to gain experience with the camera and lenses. I plan to use this film made to help get selected by academy-qualifying film festivals over the coming year, and to use it as a calling card to prove ability for further directing opportunities. ”

David Beauchamp said: “Challenge ALEXA has been absolutely fantastic, allowing us to make a film not otherwise possible and looking more beautiful than we could have dreamt of. I have learnt so much about shooting with anamorphic lenses and the ALEXA and truly hope my next project, indeed all future projects, will be shot this way. If anyone is considering entering the Challenge next year my advice is don’t hesitate. It’s the chance of a lifetime!”

Paul Murphy said: “I think the best advice would be to apply first and foremost. We so nearly didn’t, we submitted at the eleventh hour and succeeded, so if we can do it anyone can. The last six months has been a massive journey of doubt, fear, excitement, joy, pain, sorrow and more fear, but we got through it all, and we’re so proud to be able to show the fruits of our labour to all at Directors UK. We can hold our heads high; we did it, we achieved.”

Abigail Berry, Member Services and Events Manager at Directors UK said: “We are so proud of the films showcased today, all six directors and cast and crew involved have created wonderful pieces of work. It’s important that we at Directors UK continue to create and support similar programmes to help increase visibility and access to work opportunities, for fairer employment and career progression for all directors in UK television.

“So much of what we do for the Challenge Alexa Competition is made possible through the great partnership we have with ARRI and I want to acknowledge and thank them for their continued support, and congratulate them on their milestone anniversary.”

Milan Krsljanin, Director of Group Business Development at ARRI said: “Collaborating with Directors UK is the best part of my job. It was delightful to see such a wide range of creative treatments and looks from this year’s directors. The proof of Challenge ALEXA is in the screening, to paraphrase an old saying, and indeed it was marvellous to watch what the teams had come up with. We at ARRI wish them every success in the future. ARRI may be 100 years old this year, but in spirit the company is as youthful as the talent it works with.”

All six of the Challenge ALEXA films were screened at a special Directors UK event at the Ham Yard Hotel on Monday 8th May 2017.

Additional information and feedback on each directors experience is available on the Directors UK website at <https://www.directors.uk.com/news/challenge-alexa-2017-directors-talk-to-us-about-their-experience>

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Notes to Editors:

- **DIRECTORS UK** is the single voice of British screen directors representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 6,000 members – the overwhelming majority of working film and television directors in the UK. Directors UK campaigns for the rights, working conditions and status of directors in the industry and works closely with fellow organisations in the UK, Europe and around the world to represent directors’ rights and concerns. It also promotes excellence in the craft of direction both nationally and internationally, and champions change to the current landscape to create an equal opportunity industry for all.
- **ARRI** is the industry-leading provider of technology and services for motion picture, television and commercials productions. ARRI’s ALEXA digital camera system is behind Oscar-winning movies such as The Revenant and Bird Man, and is ubiquitous on the sets of blockbuster feature films worldwide. ALEXA is also the camera of choice for countless television productions, with 28 of the top 30 UK dramas having been shot on ALEXA, from Doctor Who and Sherlock to Victoria, Poldark, Cold Feet, Call the Midwife, Peaky Blinders, Game of Thrones and more.
- ARRI will provide fine-tuned shooting kits – light and compact, yet delivering image quality worthy of a movie screen for a truly cinematic experience.
- Directors UK has also created an archive of films made by members from previous years. A range of comedies, dramas, teasers, test ads and the wide variety of projects that have been part of the Challenge ALEXA competition are available to watch <https://www.directors.uk.com/about/challenge-alexa>.
- Further information can be found at www.directors.uk.com
- Directors UK Social Media handle: **@directors_UK #ChallengeAlexa**

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