

STEPHANIE ZARI
Film & TV Director
www.stephaniezari.com
UK & US Nationality
BAFTA | WGGB | Directors UK | RTS

Stephanie is an award winning, BAFTA long-listed filmmaker who recently directed a block of 4 episodes for ITV's award winning, world renowned continuing drama EMMERDALE, which broadcast in July 2024. Prior to Emmerdale, she directed a block of 4 episodes on BBC's BAFTA and RTS winning children's drama series THE DUMPING GROUND in 2023.

Stephanie's feature directorial debut ZEBRA GIRL is a psychological thriller which she also co-produced and developed the screen story for from the critically acclaimed Edinburgh Fringe one woman show 'Catherine & Anita'. Starring Tom Cullen (Weekend, The Gold, Insomnia), Jade Anouka (Dune: Prophecy, His Dark Materials, Fool Me Once) and Sarah Roy (Glue), it had a UK theatrical release in 2021 and was nominated for a 2022 National Film Award for Best Thriller. Zebra Girl is now streaming globally on Amazon Prime, Apple TV and all major VOD platforms.

She is the creator, director and EP of comedy horror HOUSE HACK, a live-action interactive feature film commissioned by Whatifi, the social story-hacking platform for original interactive films. HOUSE HACK was produced under her banner FORGE FILMS, which she founded in 2017. The film stars Amar Chadha-Patel (Willow, The Creator), Jenny Funnell (Everything I Know About Love, As Time Goes By) and Ann Akinjirin (I May Destroy You, Moon Knight). It launched in 2021 to great success and was voted a Top Game App in 2021 by Google Play.

IN OUR BLOOD is a modern gothic thriller currently in development that received a BFI Development Award. Written and directed by Stephanie, the screenplay was a semi-finalist in the Shore Scripts feature competition out of 2,500 submissions. The project received further development through the Birds Eye View/BFI FILMONOMICS programme headed by Mia Bays, EIFF Talent Lab and Galway Film Market. Stephanie also received the prestigious John Brabourne Award to support script completion.

Her short films have achieved festival, critical, online and broadcast success screening at OSCAR, BAFTA and BIFA qualifying festivals worldwide. MARIGOLDS was broadcast on BBC HD Shorts and won Best Director at Underwire Film Festival. DAWN was BAFTA long-listed and BEING KEEGAN starring Stephen Graham was broadcast on My5 and is streaming on VOD platforms worldwide. She was chosen for the 2018 BAFTA x CREW Talent Development Programme for directing and also mentored for the BAFTA/BFI Film Academy Alumni Programme.

She has over 15 years industry experience, firstly as an actor, then as a successful Promo Producer and First Assistant Director before concentrating on directing and producing her own projects. She has worked with top tier talent, broadcasters and production companies including Netflix, Westbrook, 72 Films, BBC, BFI, ITV, Channel 5 and Sky and is in development on several film and TV projects. She is a member of BAFTA, RTS, WGGB and Directors UK and holds dual UK/US citizenship.

SELECT AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

2022 NATIONAL FILM AWARDS, UK - (NOMINATION) BEST THRILLER (ZEBRA GIRL)
2022 MOONWALKER FEATURE (NOMINATION), NÒT FILM FEST, Italy (ZEBRA GIRL)
2022 WINNER - BEST CULT FILM, PORTLAND FILM FESTIVAL, USA (ZEBRA GIRL)
2022 BEYOND THE CURVE, Paris, France - WINNER: Best Women's Film, Best Actress (Jade Anouka) NOMINATION: Best Feature, Best Director (ZEBRA GIRL)
2022 WINNER – MIDNIGHT MOVIE - PORTLAND FILM FESTIVAL, PORTLAND, OREGON, USA (ZEBRA GIRL)
2022 A NIGHT OF HORROR FILM FESTIVAL, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA 2022 - CLOSING NIGHT FILM (ZEBRA GIRL)
2022 SHOCKFEST FILM FESTIVAL, USA 2022 - BEST CULT FILM (NOMINATION) (ZEBRA GIRL)
2021 BEING KEEGAN – CHANNEL 5/MY 5
2018/19 BAFTA x CREW TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (DIRECTOR)
2018 JOHN BRABOURNE AWARD (IN OUR BLOOD)
2018 BEST DIRECTOR (Nomination), UNDERWIRE FILM FEST (BEING KEEGAN)
2018 WINNER - BEST SHORT DRAMA + BEST ACTOR, INT'L FILM FESTIVAL WALES (BEING KEEGAN)
2018 WINNER - BEST SHORT DRAMA, SMHAF (BEING KEEGAN)
2017/18 CREATIVE ENGLAND/BFI TALENT DEVELOPMENT FUND + EIFF + GALWAY FILM MARKET (IN OUR BLOOD)
2017 BEV/BFI FILMONOMICS PROGRAMME (IN OUR BLOOD)
2017 PIA PRESSURE NEW VOICES AWARD (BEING KEEGAN)
2016 SHORE SCRIPTS SEMI-FINALIST (IN OUR BLOOD)
2014 BAFTA LONG LIST, (DAWN)
2012 BBC BROADCAST (MARIGOLDS)
2010 WINNER - BEST DIRECTOR, UNDERWIRE, BEST SCREENPLAY NOMINATION (MARIGOLDS)
2010 BRANCHAGE DIRECTOR'S LAB with mentors Kate Leys, Rebecca Mark Lawson and Paul Welsh

FILMOGRAPHY

EMMERDALE (SE53 - 2024) - ITV

Director

Directed a block of 1 x 60' and 2 x 30' episodes for Series 53 of the globally renowned, award winning continuing TV Drama.

THE DUMPING GROUND (SE10 - 2023) – BBC/CBBC

Director

Directed a block of 4 x 30' Episodes (11,12,15,16) for Series 10 of the popular BAFTA and RTS winning children's TV show.

In a children's home known as the 'dumping ground', growing up in a care home brings all sorts of challenges for a tight-knit group of kids. Drama Spin-off of the beloved British hit TV series The Story of Tracy Beaker (2002) based on the best-selling novel by Jacqueline Wilson.

ZEBRA GIRL – Psychological Thriller – (79 mins) starring Tom Cullen, Jade Anouka, Sarah Roy

Director, Co Producer, Screen Story by

UK CINEMA RELEASE 2021, Streaming globally on all VOD platforms

Catherine's seemingly perfect rural life is turned upside down after she discovers her husband is hiding a dark secret that leads her to the unthinkable. Murder. Cue Anita, Catherine's mysterious best friend who shows up to help dispose of the body. As Catherine and Anita reminisce whilst chopping up and bagging up, their intimately intertwined and tortured past rears its ugly head. Reality blurs as Catherine's tragic past is slowly revealed along with a secret she's hiding to fight for the future.

ZEBRA GIRL is a psychological thriller with a bold streak of dark humour that tackles themes of abuse and mental illness.

FESTIVALS - AWARDS – DISTRIBUTION

National Film Awards, UK 2022 - BEST THRILLER (Nomination)

Beyond the Curve, Paris, France 2022 - WINNER - Best Women's Film, Best Actress (Jade Anouka) NOMINATION: Best Feature, Best Director

NOT FILM FEST, Italy 2022 - Moonwalker Award (Nomination)

Portland Film Festival, Portland, Oregon, USA 2022 - WINNER - Midnight Movie

A Night of Horror Film Festival, Sydney, Australia 2022 - Closing Night Film

Shockfest Film Festival, USA 2022 - BEST CULT FILM (Nomination)

SENSEI Tokyo Film Fest, Japan 2022 - Various Nominations

Spooky Empire's Horror Film Festival, Orlando, USA 2022 - Honourable Mention

HOUSE HACK – Live-action Interactive Comedy Horror Film/Game (95 mins) Amanda Shodeko, Jenny Funnell, Ann Akin, Amer Chadha Patel

Director, Creator, Story By, EP Forge Films

Released on Whatifi platform March 2021

A budding R&B artist finds herself under attack by otherworldly forces when babysitting for her superstar DJ friend. Left alone with a spooky seven-year-old, the house smart tech quickly turns evil.

Stephanie's interactive comedy horror "House Hack" was commissioned by Whatifi, the social storyhacking platform for original interactive films. The live-action feature boasts 16 possibly endings and produced under Zari's FORGE FILMS banner. "House Hack" launched in March 2021 to great success and won Google's 2021 Top Game App.

HOUSE HACK introduces newcomer Amanda Shodeko in the lead role of Max, an aspiring singer who finds herself under attack from the "smart tech" in a modern haunted house. It also features rising British talent Amar Chadha Patel (WILLOW, THE CREATOR), Ann Akinjirin (MOON KNIGHT, I MAY DESTROY YOU), Jenny Funnell (AS TIME GOES BY) and Stephen Agnew (WILD BILL).

Whatifi unlocks the ability to debate and decide what happens next in the movies you and your friends watch on smartphones, offering dozens of plotlines, character arcs, and endings.

"We seek filmmakers who instinctively get that young viewers come to movies with a different mindset. They watch stuff on their phones, often with friends. They're portrait-mode natives. And they're keen on dynamic stories that traditional narrative formats don't permit. Stephanie jumped at the chance to essentially make 16 movies rolled into one — out of her comfort zone, at a crazy-fast schedule. Look out for good old scares, insane twists, silly fun, and stellar performances from a cast that clicks with House Hack like demons on a sugar high." ~ Jaanus Juss, Whatifi Co-Founder

IN OUR BLOOD – Gothic Thriller - Feature Film (advanced development)

Writer, Director

After the devastating death of their sister, two surviving triplets struggle to overcome the harrowing grips of grief. Confined to their family home on an isolated Island, they embark on a dangerous and twisted quest to regain their identity. As devotion turns to obsession, an unsettling presence threatens to break their bond forever.

IN OUR BLOOD is a modern gothic supernatural thriller that explores the ramifications of losing a triplet at a young age and the lengths one would go to be whole again. Produced by BAFTA, RTS & BIFA winning Producer Jennifer Monks, the script reached the semi-finals of the SHORE SCRIPT feature competition out of over 2,500 entries. The script was selected for BFI/Birds Eye View FILMONOMICS feature film scheme and awarded Creative England/BFI Emerging Talent Development Funds. The project was also chosen for the EIFF Talent Lab and Galway Film Market.

AWARDS

John Brabourne Award, 2018

Galway Film Market 2018

EIFF Talent Lab 2018

CREATIVE ENGLAND/BFI Emerging Talent Funds 2017/18

FILMONOMICS IV 2016/17 Emerging Female Filmmaker Programme 2017

Semi Finalist, Shore Scripts Feature Script Competition 2016

VINEGAR - Feature Film - Comedy, Horror, Drama (In Development)

Director, EP Forge Films

When a middle-aged Woman's parents miraculously resurrect from the dead, it shakes the very foundation of her loving yet mundane marriage. Faced with their own mortality, the exasperated couple crash into an existential mid-life crisis as they figure out what to do with her undead parents in an endearing tale of love, death and the horrors of pickling vinegar.

Purgatory may be rather dull for the dead, but for the living it's hell.

Stephanie optioned 'VINEGAR' under Forge Films, an absurdist existential comedy horror written by emerging Northern UK writing duo Michelle Lindsay-Baharie & Rob Baharie.

LOVE'S A BITCH – Feature Film – Romance, Comedy (In Development)

Director, Writer

An off-beat, body-swap romcom set in Kent currently in development with writer Gabriella Apicella, founder of the ground-breaking Underwire film festival.

BEING KEEGAN starring Stephen Graham - 22 mins – Drama – Watch on Amazon Prime

Director/Producer

Growing up in Liverpool Football Club's 1970's heyday, 10-year-old Jay and his best friend Sean spend their days playing football in the backstreets of marginalised Liverpool, gripped by the rise of celebrity footballer Kevin Keegan. We follow Jay's journey and explore the ramifications of childhood trauma into adulthood. After escaping to the Royal Navy 25 years ago, Jay is forced to return home to the city he once knew that becomes a landscape for his atonement.

FESTIVALS - AWARDS – DISTRIBUTION

Amazon Prime, My5 (CH5)

Omeleto, 2023

Film Shortage Daily Pick, 2021

Discover Film, 2021

British Shorts Berlin, Germany, 2020

Still Voices Film Festival, Ireland, 2019
 Tyneside Film Night Hosted by BFI NETWORK | Film Hub North, 2019
 Manchester Film Festival, UK, 2019
 HollyShorts Film Festival, USA, 2018 (Oscar Qualifying)
 Underwire Film Festival, UK, 2018 (BAFTA Qualifying), BEST DIRECTOR, BEST SCREENWRITER Nomination
 Norwich Film Festival, UK, 2018 (BIFA Qualifying)
 Cambridge Film Festival, UK, 2018 (BAFTA and BIFA Qualifying)
 Winchester Film Festival, UK, 2018, BEST BRITISH SHORT Nomination
 World FICTS Olympic Committee Championship of Television, Cinema, Sport and Culture, Italy, 2018, FINALS – HONOURABLE MENTION
 International Film Festival Wales, Wales, 2018, WINNER - BEST SHORT FILM, BEST ACTOR
 Matera Sports Film Festival, Italy, 2018
 Liverpool International Film Festival, UK, 2018
 Nottingham Film Festival, UK, 2018
 FICSAM Mental Health Festival, Portugal, 2018, BRONZE WINNER – AUDIENCE AWARD
 Bolton Film Festival, UK, 2018
 Liverpool Independent Film Festival, UK, 2018
 Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival, UK, 2018, WINNER – Best International Short Drama
 New York Lift Off, USA, 2018
 Lighthouse International Film Festival, USA, 2018
 Long Island International Film Expo, USA, 2018
 TMFF, 2018, UK, WINNER: Audience Award, Best Actor, Best Editor, Best Score, Best Cinematography (nomination)
 IndieFlicks, UK, 2018, WINNER - Directors Choice Award
 BCN Sports Film Festival, Spain, 2018
 Manchester Lift Off, UK, 2018
 Shorts On Tap, UK, 2018

Distributed by [7 Palms Entertainment](#)

PIA Pressure New Voices Award 2017

Indiewire's Project of the Week

Awardeo and Film Shortage, Trailer and campaign of the week

Screen Craft Short Production Award – shortlist

Danish Decibel Arts Fund Award

Merseyside Arts Funds

In-kind support from Oscar and Bafta winning post-production teams at Peter Jackson's Park Road Post, Rushes, Goldcrest and Company 3

DAWN - Drama - 28 mins (BAFTA Longlisted)

Amazon Prime, Wilde.TV, Discover Film

Writer, Director, Co-Producer

Dawn is a psychological drama exploring the bond of triplets, broken at birth, that sends surviving siblings Jude and Madison on an intimate quest to fill their sense of loss, grief and loneliness. On their 36th birthday, the missing link in their trinity lays just around the corner.

FESTIVALS - AWARDS - DISTRIBUTION

Amazon/IndieFlix (distribution)

Shorts On Tap, Women in Revolt Series, 2015

BAFTA longlisted (final 15) 2014

Hunger.tv, Film of the Week, 2014

Collabor8te, Film of the Week, 2014

POW Festival, Portland, US 2014

Cinema Jam, Poland & London, 2014

Aesthetica Short Film Festival, UK 2013

Dublin International SFF, Ireland 2013

Pentedattilo Film Festival, Italy 2013

NYC Downtown Film Festival, USA 2013

Busan International Short Film Festival, South Korea 2013

A Corto di Donne, Italy 2013

London Short Film Festival, UK 2013

Cannes Court Metrage, France 2012

MARIGOLDS - Drama - 16 mins

Writer, Director, Producer

BBC HD Shorts (Broadcast), Wilde.TV, Discover Film

Susannah is living a typically quiet and dusty life in the suburbs with her husband Paul, when an unexpected visit from her son, Piers, surfaces a dark secret that has been brewing since he left the nest 15 years ago.

REVIEWS

[Little White Lies](#)

[4**** Varsity Online](#)

[Directors Notes](#)

[Smoke Screen](#)

[Best for Film](#)

FESTIVALS - AWARDS - DISTRIBUTION

BEST DIRECTOR, Underwire Film Festival, UK

BEST SCREENPLAY (Nominated), Underwire Film Festival, UK

BBC HD SHORTS (broadcast 2012)

SCREEN 25 screening with BAFTA Nominated documentary Three Identical Strangers, 2019

BBC FILM NETWORK

Filmdoo

Shorts On Tap, Women in Revolt Series, 2015

IndieFlix/Xbox/Roku

Shooting People, Film of the Month Finalist, 2014

Hunger.tv, Film of the Week, 2014

Collabor8te, Film of the Week, 2014

Women Mujeres Spanish Film Festival, UK 2012

BBC Film Network 2011

London Short Film Festival, UK 2011

New Filmmakers Los Angeles, US 2011

Cannes Court Metrage, France 2011

Britspotting, Berlin 2011

L.A. International Women's Film Festival, US 2011

Underwire Film Festival, UK 2010 (Best Director)

Branchage International Film Festival, UK 2010

30th Cambridge Film Festival, UK 2010

Lady Filmmakers Festival, L.A. 2010

ArtsFest Birmingham 2010, UK 2010

Salon des Refuses, UK

Bestival, UK 2010

GOLDFRAPP 'Tales of Us' - 30 mins

Producer

'Tales of Us' is a unique cinema event marking the return of one of music's most breathtaking and critically acclaimed artists. A never before seen film inspired by the remarkable new album, followed by an intimate live performance exclusively for cinema audiences, resulting in a stunning state of the art audio and visual cinema experience.

FESTIVALS - AWARDS - DISTRIBUTION

SLANT MAGAZINE TOP 25 MUSIC VIDEOS, 2014 (DREW) & 2015 (STRANGER)

LIVE BROADCAST STREAM – To over 300 cinemas worldwide, followed by live performance.

BFI – Special screening with Ingmar Bergman's 'Persona'

BEST FILM (MUSIC), Byron Bay Film Festival, 2014

London Short Film Festival, 2014 + Q&A with I AM DORA

PROGRAMMES/MENTORING

BFI Network BAFTA X CREW, Director, 2018/19

Mentor for BAFTA Mentoring - BFI Film Academy Alumni Programme, 2018

Creative England/BFI Emerging Talent Funds 2017/18

Producer: Jennifer Monks, Script Consultant: Ludo Smolski

Filmonomics IV Emerging Filmmaker Programme 2017

RADA – Mentor for Third Year Technical Students in Short Film Production Module

Branchage Director's Lab

Mentors: Rebecca Mark Lawson (Development), Gillies MacKinnon (Director), Kate Leys (Development), Christopher Barwell (Editor)

Met Film School

Filmmaking Certificate

Raindance Film School

Filmmaker Foundation Certificate

John Truby's 22-Step Story Structure

The Actors Network, Toronto

Various seminars, courses and masterclasses.

OTHER SELECT CREDITS

FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FEATURING</u>	<u>COMPANY/PRODUCER</u>
Showmax Revolution	Eric Cantona	Premier League SA/Big Small TV
Queen Cleopatra (4 x Episodes)	Adele James	Netflix/Westbrook/Nutopia Jada Pinkett-Smith, Will Smith, Maxine Watson, Ben Goold, Jane Root, Jonathan Phillips, Simon Breen
Deus	Claudia Black David O'Hara Phil Davis Richard Blackwood Lisa Eichhorn	Goldfinch Studios/ Thomas Mattinson
Sniper (10 Episodes)		Arrow Media/PBS/Netflix
Albert (Prep 4 x Episodes)		Channel 5
I am A Killer (10 Episodes)		Netflix/Sky Vision/A&E, Ned Parker
Elizabeth I Secret Agents		72 Films/BBC
Elizabeth I	Lily Cole	Channel 5/OFTV (NTA nom)
Six Wives of Henry VIII	Charlie Clement	Channel 5/OFTV

Witch Hunter		Channel 5
Russell Howard's Good News	Russell Howard	Avalon for BBC2
Light Years	Beth Orton	Third Films/BFI/ Samm Haillay
Kill Your Friends (2 nd Unit)	Nicholas Hoult	Pinewood Films
Montana (2 nd Unit)	Lars Mikkelsen	Moli Films/Mark Foligno
Last Passenger (2 nd Unit)	Dougray Scott	Pinewood Films
Sam Smith		HSI
Jesse Ware		HSI
Little Mix Ft. Jason Derulo		Atlantic Records
Ed Sheeran		Pulse Films
Jesse J		Pulse Films

PROMO PRODUCER

Honda	Passion Pictures/Lost Boys
IO Interactive	Passion Pictures
Ballantines	Cap Gun/M&C SAATCHI
Activia	Cap Gun Collective/Naked
Goldfrapp	Cap Gun Collective/Mute
TV2 DENMARK	TV2 DENAMRK (DK) 2012- 4 x Olympic Games Virals