** For immediate release **



33rd Raindance opening gala: World Premiere of Christopher M. Anthony's fight film **HEAVYWEIGHT** starring **Nicholas Pinnock, Jason Isaacs, Jordan Bolger**

Closing gala: International Premiere of Camilla Guttner's art school drama **THE ACADEMY**

33rd Raindance Film Festival: 18 – 27 June at host cinema Vue Piccadilly
www.raindance.org/festival

The UK's leading indie film festival, Raindance is fighting fit and ready to challenge, provoke, and entertain. The past five editions saw Raindance batten down the hatches as the festival navigated the choppy waters of the post-pandemic world – but now Raindance has re-charted its course. The **33rd Raindance Film Festival comprises 70 narrative and documentary features** – that's a 90% increase on last year's edition, and the first time since 2019 that Raindance will champion so many films.

Similarly, Raindance returns for the first time since 2019 to Vue Piccadilly. Situated in the heart of London's West End, this landmark cinema will host Raindance exclusively and entirely for the festival's full duration, complemented by an opening gala at Vue Leicester Square and a party at the Waldorf Hilton's lavish Palm Court. In recent editions, Raindance adapted its mandate to focus primarily on first features – and although this year Raindance upholds its commitment to emerging filmmakers (40 films i.e. 58% of the feature programme are debut features), this generously-sized edition has the capacity to showcase much more, including new films by more seasoned indie auteurs. The programme also includes **113 short films and 32 immersive projects**.

With support from **main sponsor Canon Europe**, the festival will take over not only Vue Piccadilly but also One Ninetyfour, which will be utilised by filmmakers and guests as **Raindance's industry hub, the Canon Lounge.** Industry highlights include a special Cinematography Day Presented by Canon.

Intrinsically poised to embrace the vanguard, this year Raindance also marks **a decade of XR innovation with the 10th edition of Raindance Immersive,** incorporating the Immersive Showcase and Immersive Summit at Vue Piccadilly plus a month-long online festival in VRChat (6 - 29 June).

"Raindance is always one to punch above its weight, so it's appropriate that the festival's 33rd edition should open with the World Premiere of a British debut feature about a wildcard boxer," **says Raindance founder Elliot Grove**. "Throughout this edition, Raindance continues to champion new voices and under-the-radar films that many other festivals overlook. With our new main sponsor Canon Europe, we have an even greater ability to enable filmmakers to focus on the stories they are determined to tell. We're also celebrating a decade of XR innovation at Raindance with the 10th Raindance Immersive – proving that being a wildcard equals being ahead of the curve. Stay ahead of the curve by joining our celebration of indie cinema in the heart of London."

OPENING GALA: HEAVYWEIGHT (WORLD PREMIERE)

The 33rd Raindance Film Festival opens 18 June at Vue Leicester Square with the **World Premiere of Christopher M. Anthony's debut feature HEAVYWEIGHT** (dir: Christopher M. Anthony, UK). Starring Nicholas Pinnock (*Top Boy, Marcella, For Life*), Jordan Bolger (*Peaky Blinders, The Woman King*), Jason Isaacs (*Harry Potter series, Death of Stalin*) and cast including Jamie Bamber, Sienna Guillory, Blake

Harrison and Joplin Sibtain, it follows wildcard boxing contender 'Diamond' Derek Douglas and his support team ahead of a title fight he doubts he can win. The pressure escalates in realtime, as dirty tricks and revelations are revealed. An intense and visceral experience exploring a side of elite sport rarely seen. Followed by a gala opening party at the Waldorf Hilton's Palm Court, plus this year's **Raindance Icon Award** presentation (details to come).

CLOSING GALA: THE ACADEMY (INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE)

The festival closes with the **International Premiere of Camilla Guttner's feature THE ACADEMY** (dir: Camilla Guttner, Germany) with a strong lead performance from Maja Bons (award-winner for German TVs *Everyone Is F*cking Crazy*) as Jojo, a student who experiences a baptism of fire when she's accepted by a prestigious art school. But the dazzling art world soon reveals itself to be a ruthless terrain, and Jojo does everything she can to stay true to herself in this toxic environment. Presented with the support of German Films.

MAIN SPONSOR: CANON EUROPE

The 33rd Raindance Film Festival welcomes Canon Europe as Main Sponsor. As Main Sponsor, Canon's presence will be central to many aspects of the festival. This year's industry hub will occupy One Ninetyfour: located under the BAFTA building at 194 Piccadilly, this space will be re-branded the **Canon Lounge**, a film-focused place created to inspire a new and upcoming generation of indie filmmakers. Within the Canon Lounge will be a dedicated area where filmmakers can interact with Canon experts throughout the festival, alongside showcase elements that demonstrate the full scope and potential of Canon products including a 360-degree photobooth.

Raindance's Industry Programme of talks and masterclasses will feature a special **Cinematography Day Presented by Canon**, with guest speakers and brand ambassadors exploring Canon's wide-ranging product lines. This year's festival trailer was shot using the latest Canon equipment, and Canon cameras will be utilised by Raindance's production and marketing/social media teams throughout the festival.

FEATURE HIGHLIGHTS

>> INTERNATIONAL FEATURES: premieres of maverick independent films

DREAM! (dir: Paul Spurrier, Thailand) World Premiere. One of the biggest independent films ever made in Thailand, this lavish and cinematic Christmas-set musical follows a young girl who flees her mountain home, beginning a magical journey across Thailand to find a new family.

GRANNY MUST DIE (dir: Yi Jung Chen, Taiwan) International Premiere. Debut feature. This dark absurdist comedy portrays three generations of a family living in a tiny Taipei apartment when love, duty and lunacy spiral delightfully out of control.

LOVE SONG FROM HIROSHIMA (dir: Hideyuki Tokigawa, Japan) European Premiere. A call to peace and togetherness as a benevolent alien wanders around present-day Hiroshima.

NAWI: DEAR FUTURE ME (dir: Vallentine Chelluget, Apuu Mourine, Kevin Schmutzler, Kenya) UK Premiere. Debut feature. Highlighting the plight of child brides in Africa, and acclaimed at multiple film festivals and at the African Movie Academy Awards, it follows a 13-year-old whose father is selling her to a much older man for a herd of goats, and so she embarks on a journey to reclaim her dream of joining high school.

NO BEAST. SO FIERCE. (dir: Burhan Qurbani, Poland/France/Germany) UK Premiere. Following its World Premiere at Berlin, this adaptation of Richard III by award-winning director Burhan Qurbani sees actress Kenda Hmeidan dazzle as the daughter of an Arab clan who, in the aftermath of a bloody gang war, plots against her male siblings to become the undisputed boss of the Berlin underworld.

PATERNAL LEAVE (dir: Alissa Jung, Germany/Italy) UK Premiere. Debut feature. A champion at Berlin and BCN film festivals, it follows a teenage girl's journey to Italy's northern coast, seeking her unknown biological father.

SHAKESPEARE'S THE TEMPEST (dir: Garret Replogle, USA) European Premiere. Debut feature. *Star Trek* meets Shakespeare in this tale of a spaceship captain marooned on a desert planet who orchestrates a series of events to confront the crew who betrayed him.

SRISHTI (dir: Paul Antar, India) World Premiere. Debut feature. The story of a photographer, haunted by childhood guilt, who travels to remote Himalayan Sector K to investigate a mysterious phenomenon – this mystery/drama highlights the plight of children forced to work trawling through giant rubbish heaps in search of things that can be monetised.

TAPE (dir: Bizhan Tong, UK/Hong Hong) UK Premiere. Set in modern-day Asia, this bold reimagining of Richard Linklater's cult classic sees three high school friends reunite, only to confront a harrowing secret from their past.
THE PARTY'S OVER (dir: Elena Manrique, Spain/Belgium) UK Premiere. Debut feature. Beatriz Arjona won "Best Lead Actress" Carmen Award for her role as a wealthy divorcée in southern Spain whose life is disrupted when a young Senegalese immigrant seeks shelter in her toolshed.
WET MONDAY (dir: Justyna Mytnik, Poland). UK Premiere. Debut feature. When repressed trauma from a sexual assault resurfaces, a teenage girl develops a strange fear of water. Thanks to a new-found friend, she confronts it in an unusual way.

>> INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARIES: powerful & relevant global stories

BEAM ME UP, SULU (dir: Timour Gregory, Sasha Schneider, USA) World Premiere. Debut feature. The search for a lost fan film made by young Trekkies in 1985 opens a window into the extraordinary life of *Star Trek* star George Takei and the ongoing fight for equality and representation.
CHILDREN IN THE FIRE (dir: Evgeny Afineevsky, Ukraine) World Premiere. Debut feature. War-wounder Ukrainian children share their stories through a blend of live footage and animation, bringing their experiences to life.
GOD AS MY WITNESS (dir: Lindsay Q. Pitre, USA) World Premiere. Debut feature. Decades after losing his brother, a man begins to uncover dark secrets within the Archdiocese of New Orleans, exposing a generations-long cover-up of betrayal, sexual abuse and corruption.
I HOPE THIS HELPS! (dir: Daniel M. Freed, USA) UK Premiere. Debut feature. Executive produced by Matthew Modine and Adam Rackoff, this multi-award winner sees journalist Daniel Freed enlist the help of Google's first AI chatbot "Bard" to collaborate on a documentary about AI, exploring the benefits and risks of this world-changing innovation.
SAINT DAMIAN (dir: Gregorio Sassoli, Alejandro Cifuentes, Italy) UK Premiere. Debut feature. Following a Polish man who arrives at Rome's Termini Station with just 50€ to his name, this is an uncompromising, no-holds barred look at homelessness and mental illness.
THE SOCIAL TRAP: 5 WOMEN VS THE BIG 5 (dir: Elisa Jadot, France) UK Premiere. Adolescents who use smartphones for more than 5 hours a day are 66% more likely to suffer suicidal symptoms than those who use it for 1 hour a day. Facing tech giants like Meta, TikTok, X and Snapchat, five women decide to take action.

>> UK: discover the best homegrown narrative features & documentaries

BREAKWATER (dir: Max Morgan, UK) World Premiere. Debut feature. Portraying the tentative romance between young Oxford student Otto and retired angler John, and with a cast including William Gao (*Heartstopper*), this is the second film to be made with the involvement of Oxford University – the first being 1982's *Privileged*, which famously launched the Hollywood career of Hugh Grant amongst others.
DALI (dir: Mickey Angelov, UK) World Premiere. Debut feature. Exploring themes of cultural identity and nature vs nurture, we follow a Bulgarian-born American-raised rapper who dies and so must relive his tumultuous past to determine whether he belongs Above or Below.
EMMA: ONE LAST DANCE (dir: Maya Amin-Smith, UK) World Premiere. Debut feature. The story of Emma Hayes, the most successful manager in WSL history, charting her last six months at Chelsea Football Club as she attempts to lead her team to victory one more time.
IN SYMBIOSIS (dir: Helena Berndl, Francesco Maria Gallo, UK) World Premiere. From land to lab, this environmental doc unveils the driving forces behind a broken food system.
POISED (dir: Toby Robson, UK) European Premiere. Debut feature. Nominated for Best Documentary Feature at Cinequest, it charts a man's hopes to use mixed martial arts (MMA) to save a group of disadvantaged young people in a post-industrial north-east England.
ROW (dir: Matthew Losasso, UK) World Premiere. Debut feature. Shot on the open sea, and with a cast including Bella Dayne (*Humans*) and Sophie Skelton (*Outlander*), this thriller sees a woman wash ashore on a blood-stained rowing boat after a failed trans-Atlantic world record attempt. With all her crewmates missing, presumed dead, she must piece together fractured memories of the ordeal to prove her innocence.
THE RENDLESHAM UFO: THE BRITISH ROSWELL (dir: Roderick Godman, Mark Christopher Lee, UK) World Premiere. Narrated by William B. Davis of *X-Files* fame, this thrilling and sometimes hilarious investigation delves into the 1980 Rendlesham UFO incident where a mysterious craft was reportedly seen landing near a U.S. airbase.

THE TWO OF US (dir: Owen Ward, UK). World Premiere. Debut feature. Tim Edwards, whose daughter Elle was a victim of gun crime, tries to deal with the trauma of loss by embarking on an epic walk spanning the length of the UK, accompanied by comedian and actor John May. A rare and deeply human perspective on the impact these violent crimes have on the victims' families.
THIS IS YOUR CAPTAIN SPEAKING (dir: Tristan Loraine, Sandra Skibsted, UK) World Premiere. Former airline captain Tristan Loraine explores what the aviation industry really knows about the quality of the air you breathe onboard aircraft.

>> RAINDANCE HORROR: rebooted & expanded horror strand + "New Blood" debuts
DEFORMELODY: AN AMERICAN NIGHTMARE (dir: Joshua Rivera, USA) International Premiere. Debut feature. Shot by a crew of two over 3 years for $4,000 on a mobile phone, this horror satire follows a pop-culture-obsessed serial killer who terrorizes L.A.
DIRTY BOY (dir: Doug Rao, UK) UK Premiere. Debut feature. Graham McTavish (*Outlander*, *The Hobbit* trilogy) stars in this tale of a reclusive schizophrenic raised in an oppressive cult, who discovers he's being framed by cult leaders for a series of ritualistic murders.
DUI SHAW (dir: Nuhash Humayun, Bangladesh) UK Premiere. A portmanteau of unsettling tales from Bangladesh, including a deadly curse, a magic village, and a morbid marriage. A sequel to *Pett Kata Shaw*, winner of Raindance's Best International Feature in 2023.
THE RUN (dir: Paul Raschid, USA/Italy) World Premiere. A famous fitness influencer's morning run turns into a fight for survival in this interactive film, where the audience gets to vote on her choices. With cameos from horror icons Dario Argento and Franco Nero.
WHITE GUILT (dir: Marcus Flemmings, UK) World Premiere. Set on a US plantation, affluent white individuals sample an 'inverted slavery experience' through a pay-to-play service.
ZHAZA (dir: Darkhan Tulegenov, Kazakhstan). UK Premiere. In this action thriller, a corrupt mayor learns that his daughter has been raped by the chief-of-police. He takes him hostage and fights off the rape squads, while trying to save his daughter and establish a relationship with her.

A full A-Z list of features is available by request, or online at www.raindance.org/festival

20th ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE SCREENING: MRS PALFREY AT THE CLAREMONT

Starring the incomparable Dame Joan Plowright alongside Rupert Friend, **MRS PALFREY AT THE CLAREMONT (dir: Dan Ireland, UK/USA)** tells of an elderly woman, all but abandoned by her family in a London retirement hotel, who strikes up a curious friendship with a young writer. Twenty years after the film's release, and almost a decade since its director Dan Ireland passed away, **Raindance will present in tribute a 20th anniversary screening of this heartfelt film**. As a tireless champion of independent films, both as a director and as co-founder of the Seattle International Film Festival, Dan Ireland epitomized the spirit of indie cinema. *Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont* is both a love letter to London and a testament to his storytelling.

"Dan Ireland understood the soul of cinema and the power of connection. I remember *Mrs Palfrey* was originally estimated to cost £10 million or more to make in London, but longtime Raindance collaborator Matthew Devlen made it possible to get the film off the ground for under £1 million by first creating a full backlot in and around Hyde Park. As Raindance marks its 33rd year, we're proud to celebrate Dan's unwavering indie spirit and to pay tribute to the late Dame Joan Plowright for her radiant performance in this beloved film." – **Elliot Grove, Founder, Raindance Film Festival**.

IN COMPETITION: ACADEMY AWARD® QUALIFYING SHORT FILM PROGRAMMES

Raindance is an **Oscar-qualifying festival**. The recipient of Raindance's Best Live Action Short, Best Animation Short, and Best Documentary Short are eligible for consideration in the three Short Films categories of the Academy Awards® without the standard theatrical run (provided the film otherwise complies with the Academy rules).

Highlights this year include **THE MAN WHO COULD NOT REMAIN SILENT (dir: Nebojša Slijepčević, Croatia).** Winner of the 2024 "Best Short Film" Palme d'Or at Cannes and nominated for an Oscar®, it's set on a passenger train that is stopped by paramilitary forces in an ethnic cleansing operation in Bosnia & Herzegovina in 1993 – and only one man dares to stand up to them. Winner of "Best International Short" at this years' Sundance, **GRANDMA NAI WHO PLAYED FAVOURITES (dir: Chheangkea, Cambodia)** sees dead Grandma Nai sneak away from her afterlife after hearing that her queer grandson is about to get engaged to a woman. A night in the life of a Tokyo taxi driver is portrayed in **MIDNIGHT (dir: Takashi Miike, Japan),** a vibrant short film by the renowned director of

classic features including *Ichi the Killer* and *Audition*. A man grapples with personal demons while pursuing a seemingly mundane goal in **O (dir: Rúnar Rúnarsson, Iceland/Sweden)**, the latest short by this Oscar® nominated director.

A young woman ponders life's mysteries in a confession box in **OUR FATHER (dir: Aisling Bea, Ireland)**, the directorial debut of acclaimed actor, stand-up comedian and writer Aisling Bea. Actor Susan Wokoma writes and directs her second short **DARK SKIN BRUISES DIFFERENTLY (dir: Susan Wokoma, UK)**, and stars as a teacher whose integrity is threatened when one of her students lies. Oscar® winning actor Cate Blanchett features in sci-fi short **BOZO OVER ROSES (dir: Matty Sidle, Hungary/USA**). And Oscar® nominated actor Barkhad Abdi features in **MAGAN'S FARE (dir: Christopher Knoblock, Dana White, USA**) as a driver taking a woman back to her nursing home, only to find they have given up her bed.

Altogether there are 113 short films across shorts programmes including: *Abstract Notions, Animation, B-reel, Documentary, Female Shorts, Gone Astray, Horror Show, LGBTQIA+, Lost Cause, Nova Express, Radical Agendas, Relative States, Traditional Cuts, Transient Ventures, Young Bloods*.

RAINDANCE x NETFLIX DOCUMENTARY TALENT FUND

Raindance are pleased to announce as part of this year's festival the **Global Premiere of six films created as part of the Netflix Documentary Talent Fund.**

In its third year, the Netflix Documentary Talent Fund supports emerging filmmakers to nurture and support a new generation of documentary storytellers. The six films were selected out of thousands of applications inspired by the prompt "you're never gonna believe this…" Each received a budget of £30,000 to produce a short documentary between 8-12 minutes long, participated in Netflix hosted workshops covering all aspects of production including legal, creative, HR, production and finance along with year-long guidance on their films from Netflix and filmmaking professionals.

The fund aims to champion underrepresented voices – values that Raindance also share and uphold. Now completed, these six powerful and relevant stories will have their World Premieres on Thursday 26 June during the 33rd Raindance Film Festival, ahead of their release on Netflix's YouTube channel. Screening as part of Raindance's Official Selection, these documentary shorts will each be eligible to be considered for Raindance's Oscar®-qualifying "Best Documentary Short" jury award.

Full list of films: **BEYOND THE DIVIDE** (dir: Imoje Aikhoje), **THE ANGRY BIRD** (dir: Lisa Smith & Jack Lilleywhite), **THE GOOD FARMER AND THE FAILED SON** (dir: Ailill Martin & Peter Kilmartin), **BAND** (dir: David Chabeaux & Owen Tooth), **THE HERRING QUEEN** (dir: Eilidh Munro & Isabella Bassett), **TOO DISGUSTING TO BE CONFUSED** (dir: Maya Avidov & Savannah James-Bayly).

IN COMPETITION: AWARDS AND JURY

The 33rd Raindance Film Festival jury awards honour features in ten categories: *Best International Feature*, *Best Documentary Feature*, *Discovery Award for Debut Feature*, *Best Debut Director*, *Best Performance in a Debut Feature*, *Best UK Feature*, *Best Director of a UK Feature*, *Best Performance in a UK Feature*, *Best UK Cinematography* and the *Spirit of Raindance Award*.

Raindance further honours shorts in four categories: *Best UK Short, Best Live Action Short, Best Animation Short, Best Documentary Short*.

This year's jury: **Antonia Campbell-Hughes** (filmmaker: *It Is In Us All, Cordelia, 3096 Tage*), **Ashley Walters** (actor: *Adolescence, Top Boy*), **Cristo Fernández** (actor: *Ted Lasso*), **Emily Beecham** (actor: *Pursuit Of Love, Cruella, Little Joe*), **Iain Glen** (actor: *Game of Thrones, Resident Evil, The Rig*), **Iwan Rheon** (actor: *Vicious, Misfits, Game of Thrones*), **Jason Flemyng** (actor: *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels, The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, Boiling Point*), **Jo Hartley** (actor: *Swede Caroline, In My Skin, After Life*), **Natascha McElhone** (actor: *Laurel Canyon, Carmen, Surviving Picasso*), **Ng Choon Ping** (director: *Femme, What It Feels Like for a Girl*), **Theo Barklem-Biggs** (actor: *Rogue Heroes, Cherry, Make Up*), **Tosin Cole** (actor: *Supacell, Children of Blood and Bone, Till*), **Waad Al-Kateab** (director: *For Sama, We Dare To Dream, Death Without Mercy*), **Fred Hogge** (co-founder & original producer of BIFA), **Joshua Trigg** (director: *Satu - Year Of The Rabbit*, World Premiere at 32nd RDFF), **Kemal Akhtar** (producer), **Neil Norman** (film critic), **Sam Crane** (director: BIFA winning *Grand Theft Hamlet*), **Sonja Klaus** (production designer: *Gladiator, American Gangster*), **Vineeta Misra** (head, NFDC Film Bazaar India).

RAINDANCE INDUSTRY SESSIONS @ CANON LOUNGE (Neon, 194 Piccadilly)

This year's **Raindance Industry Sessions** present a dynamic lineup of talks, panels, and workshops, all hosted at the Canon Lounge (Neon, 194 Piccadilly), named in celebration of the festival's main sponsor Canon. Designed to empower emerging filmmakers, the sessions are themed by day, covering key areas of the industry such as cinematography, post-production, and distribution.

Highlights include talks on the Future of Storytelling hosted by **TOOFAR MEDIA**, a panel with **NETFLIX** to discuss their new Documentary Talent Fund, and an interview with the filmmakers behind the 2024 **BIFA Raindance Maverick Award winner, *Grand Theft Hamlet***. Unique features this year include an AI filmmaking masterclass by **MOONMAX**, part of a wider focus on creative AI and its impact on film production, and Oscar®-winning guidance by **LONDON FLAIR PR**.

10th RAINDANCE IMMERSIVE: "STEP INTO THE LIGHT"

Celebrating a decade of championing independent XR creators, Raindance Immersive's vanguard programme continues to define the future of storytelling with a dynamic array of 32 projects, including World Premieres and first-look previews. Notably, 27 projects are showcased on immersive social VR platforms like VRChat, Resonite, and Orion Drift, underscoring the growing power of these social spaces for both creation and play.

For the landmark 10th edition, the Raindance Immersive festival beckons you to **Step Into The Light**, and witness stories unfold around you, blurring the lines between observer and participant. The visionary curation team of **Mária Rakušanová, Joe Hunting, Joanna Leigh, Mary Lee Desmond** and **Jiyue Hu** present Raindance Immersive's standout selections. Among their top VR game picks are the gripping dark fantasy claymation adventure **THE MIDNIGHT WALK (creators: Moonhood Games)**, the blockbuster puzzle sensation **GHOST TOWN (creators: Fireproof Games)**, the thrilling e-sports contender **ORION DRIFT (creators: Another Axiom)**, and iconic VRChat masterpiece **BULLET TIME AGENT (creator: Lakuza**).

Beyond gaming, Raindance Immersive extends into VRChat and Resonite, where attendees can embark on unique guided tours of fully hand-crafted art worlds led by their visionary world builders and immerse themselves in the palpable energy of live performances, from electrifying music shows and immersive theatre to captivating dance, spoken word artistry, and even insightful spiritual sessions with meditation guides and tarot card readers. **HOMMAGE (creators: Nanotopia and Rixx)** is a love letter to Jean "Moebius" Giraud's visionary legacy, paying tribute to his seminal collaborations with Alejandro Jodorowsky, René Laloux, and the revolutionary spirit of Metal Hurlant. **NATURA'S QUEENDOM (creator: Anders Fray and Starheart**) is a surreal, hand-painted world brought to life by whimsical music. **CINEMATIC NEON CLUB: MONA LISA OVERDRIVE (creators: Cinematic Neon Club)** is a cyberpunk-inspired world created for a unique live music show. **A CHRISTMAS CAROL (creators: Agile Lens)** is a groundbreaking VR adaptation of Dickens' timeless classic, blending full-body motion capture, real-time theatrical storytelling, and an interactive audience experience.

Furthermore, this year's narrative category strongly emphasizes VR for impact documentaries, underscoring XR's powerful potential to drive social justice. Having been presented at COP29 in Baku, **BREAK THE SILENCE (creators: Dnipro NGO, Mriya Production)** illustrates the environmental catastrophe unfolding in Ukraine as the fourth year of the full-scale invasion progresses**.** Journey to Tanzania in **SANDS OF TIME (creator: Dopay)** to learn about the devastating costs of unchecked sand mining. A deeply personal interactive mixed-media piece, **THE TIME BEFORE (creator: Leo Metcalf**) delves into the elusive nature of childhood, glimpsing fractured memories of an abusive father and a mother lost in the haze of the past. And **ANCESTRAL SECRET VR (creators: Francisca Silva, María José Díaz)** is an immersive glimpse into the living traditions of the Q'ero community of Peru, the last inheritors of Inca culture.

For the third year, Raindance proudly spotlights emerging talent with a dedicated showcase of short films from the burgeoning VRChat filmmaking community. The selection of short films created within VRChat is curated by **Joe Hunting**, the acclaimed filmmaker whose Sundance-nominated documentaries *We Met in Virtual Reality* and *The Reality of Hope* were groundbreaking for being filmed entirely in VRChat. This programme includes **A DUTCHMAN IN VIRTUAL JAPAN (creator: Madame Kana, cast: Kaerun), BROKEN PAST (creator: SlapNap), OUR PRECIOUS AUTUMN (creator: Penrose Studios), STARCROSS COAST (creator: Danny Grey).**

This year's **Raindance Immersive Showcase will run in London from June 19th to 22nd at Vue Piccadilly,** including the annual Immersive Summit on June 20th. The virtual festival will run from **June 6th to 29th within VRChat** with additional events in Resonite and Orion Drift. The nominated immersive experiences will compete for 8 awards: *Best Narrative for Impact, Best Game, Best Art World, Best Art Experience, Best Music Show, Best Live Performance, Best Immersive Theatre* and *Best Short Film of VR*. www.raindanceimmersive.com

Full Raindance Immersive press release available by request.

For more information, images, screeners, or interview requests:

Stuart Haggas: press@raindance.co.uk

Press accreditations: www.raindance.org/festival/press-accreditations/

EDITORS NOTES:

Raindance Film Festival is the largest independent film festival in the UK and it has been recognised by Variety as "one of the world's top 50 unmissable film festivals". Raindance showcases the boldest, freshest content from British and international filmmakers. Industry and the public attend cutting-edge panels, talks and workshops. Raindance is a qualifying festival for Oscars®, BAFTA and BIFA. www.raindance.org/festival

Raindance is dedicated to fostering and promoting independent film around the world. Founded in 1992, it combines the Raindance Film Festival, film training courses, and Raindance Higher Education. Training courses are at the heart of the Raindance structure, aiming to give individuals the tools to start shooting their film, and covering screenwriting, production, directing, and virtual reality. Moreover, Raindance has developed three fully accredited Higher Education Film Programmes, becoming the only major film festival in the world to offer higher education. www.raindance.org

About Canon Europe

Canon Europe is the EMEA strategic headquarters of Canon Inc., a global provider of imaging technologies and services. Canon Europe has operations in roughly 120 countries, with approximately 12,300 employees and contributes to approximately a quarter of Canon's global revenues annually.

Founded in 1937, the desire to continuously innovate has kept Canon at the forefront of imaging excellence throughout its 85 plus year history and has commitments to invest in the right areas and capture growth opportunities, from cameras to commercial printers, and industrial equipment to healthcare technologies.

Canon's corporate philosophy is Kyosei – 'living and working together for the common good'. In EMEA, Canon Europe pursues sustainable business growth, focusing on reducing its own environmental impact and supporting customers to reduce theirs using Canon's products, solutions and services.

A-Z OF FEATURES:

500 Days in the Wild ** A Cell Phone Movie ** Abducted Files ** Aiming To The Top - Accra Underground ** Beam Me Up, Sulu ** Breakwater ** Children in the Fire ** Corina ** Dali ** Deformelody: An American Nightmare ** Dirty Boy ** Dream! ** Dui Shaw ** Emma: One Last Dance ** Flamingo Camp ** God As My Witness ** God Teeth ** Granny Must Die ** Heavyweight ** Hole (original title: Jama) ** I Hope This Helps! ** If You Should Leave Before Me ** Immortals ** In Symbiosis ** James ** Loner ** Love Song from Hiroshima ** Mrs Palfrey At The Claremont (Special Screening) ** Nawi: Dear Future Me ** No Beast. So Fierce. ** One-Way Ticket to the Other Side ** Our Happy Place ** Our Journey with Lobular Breast Cancer ** Palestine Comedy Club ** Paternal Leave ** Pet Peeves ** Poised ** Reaching for Light ** Regina ** Row ** Saba ** Saint Damian ** Saturnalia ** Shakespeare's The Tempest ** Shaman ** Snatchers ** Sock ** Somewhere in Love ** Srishti ** Tape ** The Academy ** The Dark Fantastic ** The Invisible Half ** The Last Grail Hunter ** The Last of the Whale Shark ** The Lonely Musketeer ** The Lost Episode ** The Party's Over ** The Red List ** The Rendlesham UFO: The British Roswell ** The Run interactive film ** The Social Trap: 5 Women vs The Big 5 ** The Two of Us ** Thinestra ** This Is Your Captain Speaking ** Turtle Walker ** Wet Monday ** White Guilt ** Zhaza **

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