Longlist Announced: BIFA Raindance Maverick Award 2026

Fifteen films make the 2026 longlist, from a Sundance-winning protest documentary to a Victorian found-footage horror shot in a circular frame

LONDON, 19 October 2026 - Raindance today announces the fifteen-film longlist for the **Raindance Maverick Award** at the 2026 **British Independent Film Awards** (BIFA).

Raindance, the UK's largest independent film festival, founded BIFA in 1998 and created the *Maverick Award* to honour filmmakers who get bold work made on tight budgets. The award is open to fiction features made for under £1.5 million and documentaries made for under £500,000.

This year's longlist spans fiction, documentary and hybrid essay film, and more than half the titles are debut features. Several were self-funded or made outside the usual financing routes. The selection returns again and again to memory, identity and community.

Winner of the Special Jury Award for Civil Resistance at Sundance 2026, Felipe Bustos Sierra's ***Everybody to Kenmure Street*** recounts the 2021 morning when Glasgow neighbours surrounded an immigration van to stop two residents being deported, blending phone footage with dramatisations featuring executive producer Emma Thompson and Kate Dickie. Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor's ***Act 3***, in Official Competition at this year's BFI London Film Festival, is an essay film on ageing, legacy and creative partnership, told through their own project about the artists Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore. Beatrice Gibson's debut ***At Night***, which won Best Emerging Director at Locarno, follows six women through a single night in Paris, shot on 16mm by Ben Rivers.

From the team behind last year's longlisted ***Departures***, Lloyd Eyre-Morgan and Neil Ely's queer sci-fi ***Chatlines*** connects two terminally ill men through a Chatroulette-style app, each convinced he is living in a different year. Suki Chan's debut documentary ***Conscious*** explores what it means to be conscious through the lens of dementia, with author Wendy Mitchell and neuroscientist Anil Seth. In Bertil Nilsson's self-funded ***Masc***, a young, queer, autistic Londoner moves through temporary jobs and relationships in search of a place to belong; the film was made with a largely neurodivergent cast and crew working strict eight-hour days.

Harry Sherriff's debut ***Misper*** is a dark comedy set in a fading seaside hotel, where staff unravel after a colleague vanishes; it went on to win at Manchester Film Festival. Actor-director Bradley Banton's self-funded ***More Life***, backed by Michael Fassbender's DMC Film, unfolds entirely as an Instagram livestream as old friends reunite in Copenhagen. Jake Kuhn and Noah Stratton-Twine's black-and-white horror-comedy ***The Peril at Pincer Point***, winner of the NEON Auteur Award at SXSW, sends a hapless sound recordist to a spectral island in pursuit of the perfect sound.

Joseph Archer's ***Snapshot***, made because nobody would back the team's first feature, presents newly unearthed footage of an all-female Victorian ghost-hunting society, shot entirely in a 1:1 circular frame. In ***Something Familiar***, which premiered in the main competition at CPH:DOX, Rachel Taparjan, adopted from Romania to England as a child, searches for the siblings she never knew.

Comedian Nina Conti's directorial debut ***Sunlight*** is an off-kilter road-trip romance between a suicidal radio host and a woman who will not take off her monkey costume.

Three documentaries complete the longlist. Rich Felgate's ***We, the Hated***, which opened Sheffield DocFest 2026, is an intimate portrait of the Just Stop Oil protestors, filmed with insider access, that asks what it really costs to take a stand. Ben G. Brown's debut ***Ultimate Thunder***, made as an unfunded passion project over three years, follows a Leeds punk band whose members have learning disabilities and Down syndrome as they fight funding cuts and health scares to reach a bigger stage. Terry Loane's ***Tomorrow's Too Late*** follows former X Factor singer Dylan Holloway as he transitions, knowing it means losing the voice that built his career.

Full Longlist:

ACT 3 - Dirs/Wris. Christine Molloy, Joe Lawlor Prods. Alex Thiele, Hannah Patterson

AT NIGHT - Dir/Wri/Prod. Beatrice Gibson, Prods. Scott O'Donnell, Denna Cartamkhoob

CHATLINES - Dir/Wri/Prod. Lloyd Eyre-Morgan, Dir/Prod. Neil Ely, Prod. Paul Mortlock

CONSCIOUS - Dir/Wri/Prod. Suki Chan, Prods. Aimara Reques, Teresa Grimes

EVERYBODY TO KENMURE STREET - Dir. Felipe Bustos Sierra, Prod. Ciara Barry

MASC - Dir/Wri/Prod. Bertil Nilsson

MISPER - Dir/Prod. Harry Sherriff, Wri/Prod. Laurence Tratalos, Prod. Tom Leatherbarrow

MORE LIFE - Dir/Wri/Prod. Bradley Banton

THE PERIL AT PINCER POINT - Dirs/Wris/Prods. Jake Kuhn, Noah Stratton-Twine

SNAPSHOT - Dir/Prod. Joseph Archer, Wri/Prod. Cathy Wippell

SOMETHING FAMILIAR - Dir. Rachel Taparjan, Prods. Monica Lăzurean-Gorgan, Elena Martin, Aleksandra Bilic

SUNLIGHT - Dir/Wri. Nina Conti, Wri. Shenoah Allen Prods. Sam Parker, Will Machin, Keagan Karnes, Tabitha McDonald

TOMORROW'S TOO LATE - Dir. Terry Loane, Prod. Mark Huffam, Hannah Shipley

ULTIMATE THUNDER - Dir/Prod. Ben G. Brown, Prods. Lia Hayes, Stuart Ramsay

WE, THE HATED - Dir/Prod. Rich Felgate

Raindance founder, Elliot Grove, said: *"We created the Raindance Maverick Award to champion filmmakers with the nerve to follow their own instincts and the determination to get their films made. This BIFA longlist celebrates that independent spirit. Congratulations to every longlisted filmmaker: you remind us why discovering new voices matters."*

In 2025, the Raindance Maverick Award went to Irish filmmaker Myrid Carten for ***A Want in Her***, her portrait of the search for her missing mother. The BFI Doc Society-backed film took three BIFAs on the night, also winning Best Feature Documentary and Best Debut Director - Feature Documentary.

The final BIFA 2026 nominations will be announced on **Tuesday 3 November 2026**. Winners will be revealed at the BIFA ceremony at Camden's Roundhouse, London, on **Sunday 6 December 2026**.

The Raindance Maverick longlist announcement comes hot off the heels of Raindance launching **Raindance Vertical**, the UK's first major vertical film festival and finance market. The one-day event takes place on **Friday 4 December 2026** at the Karma Sanctum Hotel in Soho, between Content London and the BIFA ceremony, when both the international vertical sector and the UK independent industry are in town. The festival marks a new dawn in Raindance's forthcoming evolution. Submissions are open to UK and international filmmakers via FilmFreeway until **13 November 2026**.

Images from longlist titles can be found here

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Interviews available on request with Elliot Grove (Raindance)

Notes for Editors

Raindance was founded in 1992 by Elliot Grove. The Raindance Film Festival launched in October 1993 and runs annually in London's West End, attracting more than 16,000 visitors a year. It is recognised by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, BAFTA and the British Independent Film Awards, which Raindance co-founded in 1998. Alumni of its training courses include Christopher Nolan, Guy Ritchie, Sacha Baron Cohen, Tom Hooper and Julian Fellowes. raindance.org

The **Raindance Maverick Award** is presented at the British Independent Film Awards to fiction features made for under £1.5 million and documentaries made for under £500,000. bifa.film

Raindance Vertical takes place on Friday 4 December 2026 at the Karma Sanctum Hotel, Soho, London, and is operated by Raindance Festivals & Events Ltd.