



BFI FAN New Releases Evaluation Summary Report 2018/19

Introduction

The BFI FAN New Release programme is a strategic initiative operating across the FAN Network and is led by Film Hub South West. The programme aims to increase the availability of, and therefore audiences for, a selection of new releases that meet a range of criteria around:

- Go beyond the mainstream offer and may be perceived as 'risky' or 'challenging'
- Have potential to engage diverse audiences (as per [BFI Diversity Standards](#))
- Show a diversity of on-screen portrayals, cultures and languages.
- Tell distinctive British stories – with a focus on non-London
- Make a particular contribution to the art of film (for example a distinctive style)
- FAN can impact on in terms of audience reach and engagement

The titles are also aimed specifically at reaching an audience of cinema goers aged 16-30 in alignment with BFI's 2022 strategy.

BFI FAN supports four new release films each year, selected by representatives from BFI FAN, BFI, Into Film and the Independent Cinema Office.

The four films to receive FAN support in 2018/19 are:

- *Utøya: July 22*
- *Shoplifters*
- *Burning*
- *Happy as Lazzaro*

Support for exhibitors includes:

- A Marketing Pack designed especially for exhibitors and containing event and marketing ideas, copy, images, assets, press and e-mail outreach templates
- Access to a small campaign budget for grassroots marketing or event activity
- An extended press and marketing campaign in each Film Hub area

In 2018/19 one venue from each Hub area (and three from Scotland, that were also taking part in the Film Hub Scotland *Amplify* Programme) were invited to receive more in-depth support for audience development round the four titles. The support comprised:

- An audience development workshop
- Support from a local freelance marketing consultant
- Access to a regional campaign budget for additional marketing or event activity
- Amplify venues also had a series of audience workshops to share experiences and practice

The audience development workshop and network of freelance marketing consultants supporting a smaller number of cinemas were new approaches for the programme.

The venues receiving the in-depth support were

Venue	Hub
Bridport Arts Centre, Bridport	South West
Courtyard, Hereford	Midlands
Cambeltown Picturehouse, Cambeltown	Scotland
Genesis, London	London
Magic Lantern, Tywyn	Wales
MacRobert Arts Centre, Stirling	Scotland
Mockingbird, Birmingham	Midlands
Saffron Screen, Saffron Walden	South East
Square Chapel, Halifax	North
Robert Burns Centre, Dumfries	Scotland
Queens Film Theatre, Belfast	Northern Ireland

Evaluation Objectives

At the time of this evaluation all four of the films had been released, however (given that all the strategic venues screen off date) most venues taking part in the programme had yet to screen *Happy as Lazzaro*, therefore this report focuses on the first three releases.

The objectives of this evaluation were to establish if and how the scheme achieved its aims, and identify learnings around the programme objectives of:

- Increasing bookings and audiences for the selected titles across the FAN network
- Supporting audience development capacity amongst the selected venues, enabling them to reach new and younger audiences.

Methodology

Evaluation activities focused on the venues receiving in-depth support and included

- Audience survey
- In-depth interviews with exhibitors
- Analysis of sales data from distributors and exhibitors

- Self assessment by exhibitors

Note – two of the New Release titles (*Shoplifters* and *Burning*) also received support from the BFI's Exhibition and Distribution fund.

The New Release Films

Utøya: July 22

Dir. Erik Poppe | Cert 15 | 1h 32min | Norway

Released 26 October 2018 by Modern Films

Shoplifters

Dir. Hirokazu Kore-eda | Cert 15 | 2hr 1min | Japan

Released 23 November 2018 by Thunderbird

Burning

Dir. Lee Chang-dong | Cert 15 | 2hr 28min | South Korea

Released 1 February 2019 by Thunderbird

Evaluation Conclusions

- BFI FAN's New Release programme continues to be valued by exhibitors and distributors.
- The initiative is making a significant contribution to supporting more 'challenging' titles to find audiences beyond the major cities and Film Hub Lead Organisations.
- Across the three titles 60% of overall box office was taken within FAN venues (excluding independent chains); demonstrating how vital FAN is to these selected releases.
- 54% of overall FAN box office was taken outside of Week 1 / Previews, demonstrating the value and potential for offdate FAN bookings to grow the market for these films.
- The focus on more in depth support of fewer (smaller and mid sized) venues had a positive impact on the participating venues in terms of both resourcing the individual film campaigns and enabling more long term audience development.
- Participating exhibitors particularly valued the sense of being in a 'programme' and the opportunity to share practice, experience and ideas with others in the cohort; building in opportunities to do this - face to face, through the freelancers or digitally - will be beneficial going forward.

- Whilst the initiative had a number of significant positive outcomes for distributors and exhibitors taking part, robust evidence of its success around the specific objective of reaching younger audiences is more limited.
- The introduction of the freelancer network proved positive for both exhibitors and distributors.
- Whilst there was some confusion about the role of the freelancers and their relationship with the Hubs, (which is not particularly surprising since this was a new development and it coincided with staff changes both within the Film Hub SW team, and amongst the freelancers themselves) there is now improved communication and clarity across the freelancers, the Hubs and the exhibitors.
- There could be more explanation of the process of selecting the New Release titles to exhibitors.
- Whilst there was considerable enthusiasm from the exhibitors taking part to contribute to the qualitative aspects of this evaluation, obtaining robust audience data continues to be challenge, reflective of both the capacity of the cinemas taking part and 'survey fatigue' of cinemas across the FAN network.
- There is scope for BFI FAN to raise awareness amongst distributors about what exhibitors (particularly those who screen off date) need from campaigns, based on the experiences of the freelancers and exhibitors taking part in the programme.
- Going forward it maybe more effective to distinguish between an initiative to grow audiences for cultural film generally in venues outside of major cities - which the New Releases has been very successful at achieving - and an initiative to reach a new audience of 16-30s for cultural film in these places. This is a greater challenge and requires a long term approach that is more responsive to the particular context of these exhibitors and these places (in particular the programming implications of local audience demographics).