



Subject: Casting announced for Open Palm Films: Simon Amstell's BENJAMIN, Lisa Mulcahy's UNDERCLIFFE and Bill Buckhurst's POND LIFE

Date: Monday 9 October 2017

- **Filming complete on Simon Amstell's BENJAMIN, Lisa Mulcahy's UNDERCLIFFE and Bill Buckhurst's POND LIFE**
- **Cast for the completed films includes Colin Morgan, Anna Chancellor, Jessica Raine, Mark Addy**
- **Open Palm Films boards TIDES, directed by Tupaq Felber and premiering at the BFI London Film Festival**

Open Palm Films continues its commitment to backing outstanding independent British films, with today's announcement that filming has wrapped on **Simon Amstell's BENJAMIN, Lisa Mulcahy's UNDERCLIFFE and Bill Buckhurst's POND LIFE, all of which were backed in production.** Cast for the completed films includes **Colin Morgan, Anna Chancellor, Jessica Raine and Mark Addy.** Also, Open Palm Films has also **boarded TIDES, directed by Tupaq Felber,** as Executive Producer. TIDES will have its **World Premiere at the BFI London Film Festival** on 14 October 2017, with an additional screening on 15 October 2017. The company's first feature MAKING NOISE QUIETLY was completed in May 2017.

Dominic Dromgoole, Founder of Open Palm Films, said: *"In our first year of operation, we have supported five independent British films, producing four of them and boarding the fifth as executive producers. We have been hugely lucky in the great talent we have been able to work with; five first time directors; five young female producers; a stunning array of acting talent, and some great stories. We now have a slate of five fresh, sincere, resonant stories and now looking forward to forging new partnerships and further developing our slate."*

Written and directed by **Simon Amstell, BENJAMIN,** is a comedy about intimacy and despair. A socially awkward and self-deprecating director and writer, Benjamin is desperate to make his current film as good as his last. BENJAMIN is a tragicomic tale of dizzying introspection and a painful, constant struggle for validation. Award-winning comedian, presenter, screenwriter, director and actor, Simon's debut feature film CARNAGE (BBC) was met with critical acclaim. He has written and published his first book 'Help' and has just started the UK tour of his stand-up show *What is This?*. Simon has previously written, alongside Dan Swimer, and starred in the critically acclaimed television series 'GRANDMA'S HOUSE (BBC Two).

The cast includes **Colin Morgan, Anna Chancellor and Jessica Raine.** Colin is best-known for playing the titular role in MERLIN, other credits include THE LIVING AND THE DEAD, HUMANS and THE FALL. Anna's screen credits include THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY, TESTAMENT OF YOUTH and THE HOUR, for which she was nominated for a BAFTA TV Award for Best Supporting Actress. **Jessica Raine** is currently starring in THE LAST POST, her other credits include CALL THE MIDWIFE, WOLF HALL and FORTITUDE. Other cast members include **Joel Fry** (W1A, DRUNK HISTORY: UK and GAME OF THRONES), **Phénix Brossard** (REVIERA) and **Ellie Kendrick** (THE LEVELLING, GAME OF THRONES, MISFITS).

Directed by **Lisa Mulcahy** and written by **Bruce McLeod, UNDERCLIFFE,** is set in Bradford, following a young man Stevie, who is left with severe memory loss after a brutal attack. As he begins to piece together his identity, he discovers the person he had become, and the price he will have to pay. Lisa Mulcahy's film credits include THE LEGEND OF LONGWOOD and SITUATIONS VACANT. Television credits include BBC's critically acclaimed THE MOONSTONE. Bruce McLeod's credits include THE WAR BOYS and FLYING BLIND.

The cast includes **Laurie Kynaston** (ENGLAND IS MINE and GUTTERDAMMERUNG), **Mark Addy** (THE FULL MONTY, GAME OF THRONES and THE THIN BLUE LINE) and **Stephanie Hyam** (BODYGUARD, DR WHO and PEAKY BLINDERS).

Set in summertime in 1994, **POND LIFE** is directed by **Bill Buckhurst** (*Sweeney Todd* now running on Broadway, following a transfer from the West End) and written by award-winning writer **Richard Cameron** (*The Glee Club, Stone, Scissors, Paper*). In a quiet mining village just outside Doncaster, the air is thick with the legend of a giant carp in the nearby decoy ponds. A brigade of young friends and neighbours embark on a night-time fishing expedition to see the legend for themselves. It turns out to be summer night none of them will ever forget. The cast includes **Esme Creed-Miles**, who also appears in UNDERCLIFFE (MISTER LONELY and DARK RIVER – Special Presentation at LFF, Platform at TIFF), **Tom Varey** (THE VILLAGE, NO OFFENCE and ACKLEY BRIDGE) and **Angus Imrie** (KINGDOM, THE HOLLOW CROWN and FATHER BROWN). The cast also includes **Siân Brooke** (DOCTER FOSTER, THE MOORSIDE and SHERLOCK), **Shaun Dooley** (GUNPOWDER and JAMESTOWN), **Siobhan Finneran** (THE LOCH, BENIDORM and HAPPY VALLEY) and **Julie Hesmondhalgh** (BROADCHURCH and CORONATION STREET).

TIDES, produced by Independent Content in collaboration with Elation Pictures, follows the story of four old friends navigating birth, love, death and the canals of southern England. Fuelled by booze, drugs and the stunning beauty of nature, their increasingly intimate reunion becomes an uplifting meditation on what it means to be middle aged in a world that refuses to grow up. Already an established film editor, TIDES – which he wrote, directed and edited – is **Tupaq Felber's** first feature film.

Open Palm Films was established in July 2016 by Dominic Dromgoole. The company's first feature MAKING NOISE QUIETLY was completed in February 2017. The film, an adaptation of Robert Holman's play of the same name, was directed by Dominic and filmed on location in Kent, Yorkshire and Germany. Open Palm Films' mission is to produce quality films which, in the tradition of direct, raw and honest storytelling, touch on themes that resonate in the present time.

ENDS

NOTES FOR EDITORS

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'Tides' will have its worldwide premiere at the **BFI London Film Festival** on **14 October 2017**. Its press and Industry screening is 13 October. For press and PR enquiries contact Emma Hewitt (emmahewitt333@googlemail.com / 07967 200745). To book tickets, please visit: <https://whatson.bfi.org.uk/lff/>

About Dominic Dromgoole

Dominic Dromgoole was the Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe from 2006 to 2016, directing several productions including a world tour of *Hamlet* (2014-16) which was performed in 197 countries. Dominic created a new VOD platform for the Globe to Screen films, and produced and edited 'The Complete Walk', 37 short films celebrating Shakespeare.

Dominic has recently founded a new theatre company, Classic Spring, which is currently producing a year-long celebration of Oscar Wilde that aims to offer a fuller picture of the man and the artist, and reveal this much-loved playwright as the brilliant renegade he was in his own time. Dominic has directed the first play in the season 'A

Woman of No Importance' which is currently playing at the Vaudeville theatre in the West End. Dominic's latest book, 'Hamlet: Globe to Globe', was published by Canongate earlier this year.