

JACQUI DAVIES

PRESS RELEASE:
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CELEBRATED ARTIST RICHARD BILLINGHAM TO DIRECT HIS FIRST FEATURE FILM



Jacqui Davies announces RAY & LIZ: the first feature film by Turner-prize nominated and Deutsche Börse Prize winning artist, Richard Billingham.

The film will complete production in 2016. Daniel Landin (UNDER THE SKIN) will be the Director of Photography and Deirdre Kelly (UK REALITY STAR OF BENEFITS STREET/BIG BROTHER) has been cast to play Richard Billingham's mother, Liz.

Two decades since he shot to fame with the striking photographs of his family during Thatcher-era Britain, Billingham returns to these images with a feature film that has been in development with producer, Jacqui Davies, for the past four years with support from the BFI and agnès b.

A RAY & LIZ production Kickstarter campaign launches on 11th February 2016 with previously unseen work by the artist to be offered as a reward.

THE FILM:

On the outskirts of Birmingham and the margins of society the Billingham family perform extreme rituals and break cultural taboos as they muddle through a life decided by factors beyond their control. At times shocking and laced with an unsettling humour, three-interlinking episodes unfold as a powerful evocation of the artist's personal experience of growing up in a Birmingham council flat.

The project, RAY & LIZ, had its genesis with RAY: a single-screen video work that premiered at Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea, in June 2015. This artwork was realised with the support of agnès b, Arts Council Wales, Arts Council England, University of Gloucestershire, FIDLab, and Panavision. Some of the material that was shot in November 2014 will make up the first episode of Billingham's feature film, RAY & LIZ.

Billingham returned to shoot the first part of the film in the same tower block, in a flat on the same floor to that in which he grew up.

For his directorial debut, Billingham is working with award-winning Director of Photography, Daniel Landin BSC, best known for his stunning cinematography in Jonathan Glazer's UNDER THE SKIN (2014), and on ground-breaking music videos for artists like Björk, Radiohead and Madonna.

After a long process of casting, theatre actor Patrick Romer played the part of Billingham's father, Ray, whilst Deidre Kelly (aka White Dee), took on the role of Billingham's mother, Liz, in her first acting role. Kelly came to public attention as the star of the Channel 4 series, BENEFITS STREET: a candid documentary set in an area close to Billingham's Cradley Heath.

Billingham has noted that, 'Dee was a good choice because what happened to her on Benefit's Street and Big Brother is almost what could have happened to Liz in real life.'

The BFI have already committed their support to the production of this film. In order to unlock this funding and to complete the second and third parts of the film, an exciting crowdfunding campaign will launch on 11th February 2016. Through a unique collaboration with The Photographers' Gallery, RAY & LIZ's Kickstarter campaign intends to raise further funding through a selection of exclusive rewards, but also to build a wider audience for the project.

Speaking about the campaign rewards Jacqui Davies commented:

'We are really happy to be partnering with The Photographers' Gallery to produce a beautiful limited edition photograph to support this campaign. Richard's photograph captures an intimate moment between his parents, shot in the 90s in the 11th floor lobby of their Black Country tower block (the 11th floor flat becomes the actual location for RAY & LIZ.) This wonderful image is from Richard's archive and has not been seen by the public.'

Another really exciting reward is an opportunity for our Kickstarter audience to contribute to the casting of RAY & LIZ. We are using both traditional casting and auditioning techniques of known actors, as well as 'street casting' in the Black Country. Responding to images and the backstory of the fantastic characters in the film, this reward will enable members of the public to send us their ideas for the cast, whether stars or non-actors, which will be included in our online casting page. Anyone casting any parts will receive an on screen credit in the film!

For further information, images and interview requests please contact Miranda Townsend Production Assistant on info@jacquidavies.com or +44(0)7887473942.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Launch Events:

There are two screening events to launch the Kickstarter Campaign on 10th and 17th February: Producer, Jacqui Davies, and The Photographers' Gallery Director, Brett Rogers OBE will present Richard Billingham's video work RAY that is the genesis for RAY & LIZ. The screening for private invitees will be followed by a drinks reception/Kickstarter fundraising event with Jacqui Davies, Brett Rogers, Richard Billingham, Deirdre Kelly and Daniel Landin where guests will be the first to access exclusive rewards including a beautiful limited edition photograph produced in collaboration with The Photographers' Gallery.

RAY (2015)

Single screen HD video, 5.1 surround sound, 33min, looped

RAY is supported by Arts Council Wales, Arts Council England, agnès b, FIDLab and Panavision, University of Gloucestershire and Glynn Vivian Art Gallery.

By Richard Billingham. Produced by Jacqui Davies. Courtesy Anthony Reynolds Gallery

RAY& LIZ Synopsis:

Part I

Ray, 1990, is about addiction and control. Alcohol makes Ray a prisoner in his own bedroom. Neighbour, Sid visits daily to deliver home brew beer. Ray's estranged wife, Liz arrives periodically for money. Sid and Liz battle for control over Ray: Sid with alcohol and Liz with the lure of being reunited.

Part II

Lol, 1980, is about vulnerability and punishment. Richard's uncle Lol is framed by his nephew Phil. Liz, with Phil's help, beats Lol with one of her new shoes and kicks him into the street. Richard, aged 10 reveals to his mother that Phil's deception was recorded on an audiotape. Liz sends the children to bed and deletes the tape.

Part III

Moonshine, 1985, is about neglect. Jason, now 10 is left to his own devices. One night he sleeps in a cold shed, he's found stiff and frozen in the morning. At school Jason's headmaster states that he is to be taken to live with foster parents that day. Jason seems fine with this. When Ray and Liz are told, Liz cries a little, but quickly forgets.

Key credits

RAY & LIZ

Written and directed by Richard Billingham

Producer Jacqui Davies

Director of Photography Daniel Landin BSC

RAY & LIZ is the winner of the Panavision / Air France Prize at FID Marseille 2014.

Richard Billingham

Richard Billingham (b. 1970, Cradley Heath, England) shot to fame in 1996 with his groundbreaking photographic series 'Ray's a Laugh', extraordinary images of family life in his childhood home, a tower block in Cradley Heath in the West Midlands. 'Ray's a Laugh' was exhibited internationally and featured in the pivotal show, Sensation (1997) at The Royal Academy of Arts. He was awarded the Citibank (now Deutsche Börse) Photography Prize that year, and was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2001.

He has continued to photograph his family, and presented a major new body of work in 2010. An ongoing engagement with landscape has seen Billingham working in Britain (Norfolk 'Constable Country' in Suffolk, the South Downs, Black Country, the Gower) and further afield (Ethiopia, Greece, Germany, Italy, Pakistan). In his series of photographic and video works entitled Zoo (2001-2006) he explored the lives of animals in captivity.

His work is held in numerous private and public collections worldwide, including Tate, Arts Council England, the V & A, Moderna Museet Stockholm, the Fotomuseum Winterthur, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Billingham lives near Swansea, Wales, with his wife and two children, and teaches Fine Art and Photography at the University of Gloucestershire. He was recently appointed Professor in the Creative Industries at the University of Middlesex. He is represented in London by Anthony Reynolds Gallery.

Jacqui Davies

Jacqui Davies is a London-based producer and curator.

Since 1997, Davies has worked internationally with artists on projects involving film and video. Working independently across all platforms – producing, commissioning and curating – Davies has facilitated projects for television, galleries, site-specific, stage, cinema and online.

In 2007, Davies co-founded Animate Projects, which built on the existing Arts Council England / Channel 4 commissioning programme, ANIMATE! As Head of Production and Gallery Exhibition she commissioned several projects, including *A Letter to Uncle Boonmee* and *Phantoms of Nabua* by Apichatpong Weerasethakul (2009), and *Unfolding the Aryan Papers*, Jane & Louise Wilson (2009).

Jacqui Davies Limited was launched in 2011, uniquely situated between the Art and Film worlds, working with both. The company commissions and produces art and film projects for stage, television, gallery, site-specific and cinema, as well as curating exhibitions.

Between 2011 and 2013, Davies produced 25 artists' films for Random Acts, Channel 4, which were co-commissioned by FACT, Liverpool. This included films by Marina Abramovic, Richard Billingham, James Franco, Johan Grimont, Lewis Klahr, Mark Leckey, Martha Rosler, Phillip Warnell, and Apichatpong Weerasethakul.

More recently, Davies was the Associate Producer on Phillip Warnell's feature film, *Ming of Harlem*. She is also the producer of *THE SKY TREMBLES AND THE EARTH IS AFRAID AND THE TWO EYES ARE NOT BROTHERS* by Ben Rivers, and *RAY & LIZ*, a new feature film in development by the artist Richard Billingham.

In 2015, Davies curated *EMBODIED*, presented by Nikolaj Kunsthal & CPH:DOX, an exhibition presenting a series of encounters between documentary and performance.

Image: *RAY* (2015). Production still. Deirdre Kelly (Liz) and Patrick Romer (Ray).

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