

## Entries open for second year of American Black Film Festival & Lightbox Documentary Initiative

### Initiative fosters diversity and supports emerging African American directing talent

**2 August 2018:** Award-winning production company Lightbox and the American Black Film Festival (ABFF) have announced that the second year of their Initiative to foster diversity in the feature documentary arena is now open for entries. The **ABFF & Lightbox Documentary Initiative** is aimed at African American filmmakers and any filmmakers interested in exploring non-fiction stories and themes that speak directly to the African American experience.

Selected films from the Initiative will be developed and produced by Lightbox and ABFF Studios, leveraging Lightbox's success in producing award-winning and commercially successful documentaries, with the ABFF's unparalleled pipeline and record of accomplishment for identifying many of the industry's most promising Black filmmakers.

More information about the Initiative and entry information can be found at: <http://abffventures.com/film/documentary-feature-initiative/>

The winner of the inaugural year of the Initiative, *Storm Over Brooklyn*, has been greenlit for production by HBO. Directed by Muta'Ali, the feature documentary tells the story of Yusuf Hawkins, a black American teenager who was shot and murdered after being trapped by a group of white youths in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, in 1989.

Jonathan Chinn and Simon Chinn, Co-Founders of Lightbox said: "Supporting filmmakers from minority communities and creating content which reflects every aspect of our society is one of the most important things we can do as documentary makers if we want the genre to remain relevant and engaging to audiences. We are honored to be launching the second year of this Initiative, and look forward to the winning project being just as prestigious as last year's winner."

"Authenticity within documentary filmmaking is paramount. The mission behind the Lightbox and ABFF Documentary Initiative is to help increase the opportunities and access for filmmakers of color, bringing new voices to the world stage. HBO is the perfect home for our first project *Storm Over Brooklyn*, we're eager to discover and help develop the next," said Jeff Friday, Founder & CEO of ABFF Ventures.

*Storm Over Brooklyn* is directed by Muta'Ali and executive produced by Jeff Friday, Simon Chinn and Jonathan Chinn. Academy Award®-winning directors Daniel Lindsay and TJ Martin, who directed Lightbox's Emmy® award-winning feature documentary about the 1992 Los Angeles riots, *LA 92*, have also come on board the project as Executive Producers and supporters of the initiative.

Lightbox was founded by Academy Award®-winning producer Simon Chinn (*Man on Wire*, *Searching for Sugar Man*, *Whitney*) and Emmy® Award-winning producer Jonathan Chinn (*LA 92*, *Fantastic Lies*, *Whitney*). *Whitney*, Lightbox's theatrical feature documentary about the global superstar, directed by Academy Award® winner Kevin Macdonald, had a special screening at the 2018 American Black Film Festival and was released worldwide this month. The company recently announced a new theatrical feature documentary, *Tina Turner* (working title), which will tell the full story – for the first time - of the global icon and undisputed Queen of Rock and Roll, to be directed by Dan Lindsay and TJ Martin.

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**ABOUT LIGHTBOX:**

Headquartered in London and Los Angeles, Lightbox is a multi-platform media company creating high quality non-fiction content for an array of distribution platforms. It was founded by two-time Academy Award®-winning producer Simon Chinn (*Man on Wire, Searching for Sugar Man, Whitney*) and Emmy®-winning producer Jonathan Chinn (*LA 92, American High, Whitney*). Lightbox's most recent release is *Whitney*, a major theatrical feature documentary directed by Academy Award® winner Kevin Macdonald, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival; The company is currently in production on *Diagnosis* (w/t) an innovative Netflix Original eight-part documentary series produced in partnership with Scott Rudin Productions and The New York Times; *Citizen Harvey* (w/t) a theatrical documentary on the Weinstein scandal which will also air on BBC 2; *Tina Turner* (w/t), a theatrical feature documentary which will tell the full story – for the first time - of global icon and undisputed Queen of Rock and Roll, directed by Academy® and Emmy Award winners Dan Lindsay and TJ Martin; *Gypsy's Revenge*, a feature length documentary for Investigation Discovery and *Food Exposed with Nelufar Hedayat* (8x60') for US Network FUSION. The company has previously produced documentary series including *Captive*, a major 8-part series for Netflix about international hostage crises; *LA92*, an Emmy-winning feature documentary on the 1992 LA riots for National Geographic Channels; *War Child* - an acclaimed feature documentary on the refugee crisis for Channel 4; *Absolutely Fashion: Inside British Vogue* for BBC Two and *The Traffickers* for Fusion, as well as content for Xbox Entertainment Studios, NBC Universal's Esquire Network and ESPN's prestigious *30 for 30* Strand.

**ABOUT ABFF:**

The American Black Film Festival (ABFF) is an annual event dedicated to showcasing quality film and television content by and about people of African descent. The festival is committed to the belief that Black artists and content creators deserve the same opportunities as their mainstream counterparts. ABFF founder Jeff Friday conceived the festival in 1997 as a vehicle to promote diversity in the motion picture industry, and strengthen the Black filmmaking community through resource sharing, education, artistic collaboration and career development. For more than two decades, the ABFF has been the standard-bearer of excellence in independent Black cinema, having premiered the works and supported the careers of many of today's most successful artists, including Ryan Coogler (*Black Panther*), Anthony Anderson (*Blackish*), Will Packer (*Girls Trip*), Issa Rae (*Insecure*), Omari Hardwick (*Power*) and Raoul Peck (*I Am Not Your Negro*). Today, it is the preeminent pipeline for Black talent, in front of and behind the camera, significantly expanding the range of talent in the entertainment industry at large. The ABFF is a property of ABFF Ventures LLC, a multifaceted entertainment company specializing in the production of live events, television and digital content, targeted to upscale African American audiences. The company is a joint venture between Film Life Inc. and Black Enterprise, two prominent media and event companies, each with legacies of showcasing the best of African American culture and achievement in media and entertainment.