



The Arts Foundation Futures Awards

PRESS RELEASE

7 January 2026

The Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 for Film Shortlist Artists Announced

The Arts Foundation announces the four Shortlisted Artists of the Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 for Film, one of the UK's leading fellowships for artists.

Dorothy Allen-Pickard, Myrid Carten, Jessi Gutch, and Alice Russell have been shortlisted for the prestigious £20,000 Arts Foundation Futures Award 2026 for Film.



Myrid Carten A Want in Her, 2024. Photo: Megan Doherty

The Film Award supports exceptional early-stage career filmmakers, highlighting emotive and inventive storytellers working in non-fiction.

The independent Jury members are Asif Kapadia, Director, writer, and producer; Danny Leigh, Chief Film Critic, Financial Times; and Lindsay Poulton, Editorial Director, Film & TV and Head of Documentaries, The Guardian, who said:

“It’s been a great pleasure to join the jury of the Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 for Film. Independent documentary is a powerful artform as well as a tool for truth, empathy and dialogue, but independent filmmaking is increasingly at risk. Despite the challenging landscape, I was really encouraged by the range and extraordinary artistry of filmmakers across the UK. All the shortlisted filmmakers demonstrate a clear artistic purpose and such a confident command of their craft. Dorothy Allen-Pickard brings a remarkable clarity of vision to her filmmaking, while creating generous space for her collaborators and subjects to shape the work alongside her. Myrid Carten’s moving and captivating work carries a strong sense of momentum and creative ambition. Alice Russell has found a distinctive voice through her impactful first feature, and Jessi Gutch’s filmmaking style is grounded and inventive.”

Jury member Danny Leigh added:

“It has been invigorating to join the Film Award jury and support the work of such compelling and hard-working filmmakers. Dorothy Allen-Pickard’s films reveal a rare openness to process and iteration, giving her work a living, evolving quality that feels deeply responsive and alive. Myrid Carten’s filmmaking is moving and powerful, marking a bold moment of transition as she steps beyond the deeply personal into new creative territory. Jessi Gutch’s work is striking in its elegance, offering a fresh perspective on place and identity. Alice Russell’s filmmaking demonstrates a remarkable assurance; her recent first feature shows an artist confidently in command of her craft.”

Dorothy Allen-Pickard

Dorothy Allen-Pickard works across narrative, documentary and theatrical modes of filmmaking, and her collaborative approach is often inspired by her protagonists' lived experiences. Currently, her projects focus on state systems of control and the possibilities of collective resistance. She tackles complex subjects head-on, with an intimacy, warmth and an unflinching gaze. She has a particular interest in blurring the line between performance and reality, and is a founding member of Breach Theatre, and an associate artist of Kestrel Theatre, who run theatre and film workshops in prisons. Dorothy’s work has screened at festivals including London Film Festival, Hot Docs, Clermont Ferrand, Palm Springs, Doc NYC, and Sheffield DocFest, and on news and broadcast channels including PBS, Guardian Documentaries and BBC iPlayer. She has been awarded Best UK Short at Open City Doc Festival and 16 Days 16 Films, a Special Mention at Oberhausen, Grand Prix at Arts Convergence, shortlisted for a Grierson, and received many Vimeo Staff Picks. Dorothy is currently developing her debut feature, [*pending title*](#), supported by Doc Society, due for release in Summer 2026.

Myrid Carten

Myrid Carten is an artist filmmaker based between the UK & Ireland. She makes films for cinemas and galleries. Using documentary and fiction, and often a playful combination of both, Myrid's work interrogates both the struggle for intimacy and the ways we are compromised by our pasts. She explores, with generous ruthlessness, the universal desire to be both known and hidden, and the costs involved in both of these complicated commitments. Myrid's recent debut feature, *A Want in Her*, premiered in IDFA's international competition 2024. It won three BIFAs in 2025 and Best International Film at DocPoint Helsinki 2025, Best International Documentary and the Audience Award at Dublin Film Festival 2025, Pull Focus Best Irish Documentary at Docs Ireland 2025 and a special mention in the International Competition at 2025 Millennium Docs Against Gravity Poland. Originally from the Irish Gaeltacht, she trained in Artists' Film at Goldsmiths University and Fine Art at Central Saint Martins in London. Her films have screened internationally and been supported by the Doc Society, Screen Ireland, NI Screen, New Dawn Fund, and the Netherlands Film Fund.

Jessi Gutch

Jessi Gutch is an award winning writer/director, who makes films whilst also trying not to die of an incurable ovarian cancer called Sertoli-Leydig. She is interested in reflexive films about big political ideas that don't take themselves too seriously. Jessi's work touches on themes of grief, mortality, psychogeography, nostalgia, compassion, and community, always trying to imagine something with more nuance, empathy, humour and unknowingness. Jessi's debut non-fiction feature, *Blue Has No Borders*, premiered in the International First Feature Competition at Sheffield DocFest 2025, and was BIFA longlisted for the Debut Documentary Director award. She is an alumni of BAFTA Elevate, BFI NETWORK@LFF, Edinburgh Talent Lab, Radical Film School and a selected artist-in-residence at Derek Jarman's Prospect Cottage. Jessi's *The Forgotten C* was nominated for BIFA Best British Short 2020; *Blind as a Beat* was the winner of the Listening Pitch 2021, semi finalist at Reel Abilities Film Festival and Best Experimental Film at Women Over 50 Film Festival; *Until The Tide Creeps In* took home both Best Documentary and Best of Festival awards at Aesthetica 2022. Jessi is currently working on their next non fiction feature, a social essay and participatory experiment on the impossibilities of a middle class led revolution.

Alice Russell

Alice Russell is a documentary filmmaker who works with outlaws and romantic rebels, outsiders who are agents of change. Her first short film, *Men Buy Sex*, won the SIMA Creative Activism Award as well as Vimeo Staff Picks Best of the Month. Alice's debut feature documentary, *If the Streets Were on Fire*, had its world premiere at BFI London Film Festival, broadcast on BBC Storyville, and had a limited theatrical release. It was nominated for four British Independent Film Awards where it won Best Feature Documentary and the Raindance Maverick Awards, and was also longlisted for BAFTA Outstanding Debut 2024. She was recently selected for BAFTA Breakthrough (2024). Alice has directed a variety of formats from shorts to feature docs for the likes of the BBC, Channel 4 and Vice News. She has

worked on flagship current affairs strands Panorama and Dispatches, and her films have screened at festivals worldwide.

The Arts Foundation has a long history of supporting film, and Mary Jane Edwards, Director of The Arts Foundation, says:

“The four shortlisted non-fiction filmmakers represent the calibre and ambition of non-fiction film today, creating work that expands our understanding of lived experience, interrogating the world around us and bringing vital, often unheard stories into public view. Documentary and non-fiction work is notoriously difficult to finance, and we are proud to champion these incredible storytellers and the power of cinema as a tool for insight and change.”

The winning Fellow, receiving £20,000, will be revealed at an Award Ceremony on 2 February 2026, with all Shortlisted Artists awarded £1,000 towards their artistic practice.

You can explore the Shortlisted Artists' work on the [Arts Foundation website](#) and watch the award announcements via [Instagram Live](#) on 2 February 2026.

Press Pack & Images

The Film Shortlist Press Pack and Images can be viewed [here](#).

The Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 Press Pack can be viewed [here](#).

Media Enquiries

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Notes to Editors

About The Arts Foundation

The Arts Foundation is a registered charity that supports individual artists and creatives in the UK with unconditional financial fellowships through the Arts Foundation Futures Awards.

Since 1993, the Arts Foundation has awarded over £2 million to the most promising artists in the UK at a pivotal moment in their careers to enable them to concentrate on their creative development, experiment, and realise their artistic potential.

The annual Arts Foundation Futures Awards provide five transformative £20,000 Fellowships, with all Shortlisted Artists receiving £1,000 towards the development of their practice.

The vital contribution of the Arts Foundation Futures Awards to the arts in the UK is demonstrated by its past Fellows, many of whom are regarded as contemporary pioneers and have gone on to become leaders in their respective art forms, including: Wayne McGregor (1994), Alice Oswald (1996), Sarah Kane (1998), Asif Kapadia (2001), Ali Smith (2001), Rufus Norris (2002), Carol Morley (2003), Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (2006), and more recently, Simon Fujiwara (2009), Sam Lee (2011), Alice Birch (2014), Hollie McNish (2015), Evan Ifekoya (2017), Holly Hendry (2019), Onyeka Igwe (2020), Klein (2020), and Bethany Williams (2020).

The Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 are generously supported in partnership with The David Collins Foundation, The Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Fund of the Sidney E. Frank Foundation, and The Yoma Sasburg Estate.

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