

TIFF ANNOUNCES FOUR INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS FOR RISING STARS PROGRAMME

Mamoudou Athie, Vinnie Bennett, Lina El Arabi and Jessie Buckley join four Canadian TIFF Rising Stars to complete talent programme

TORONTO — The Toronto International Film Festival® announced today four outstanding actors who will participate in the newly expanded TIFF Rising Stars programme. Renowned as an annual showcase of emerging Canadian talent poised on the brink of success, the additional set of talent hails from across the globe and consists of **Mamoudou Athie** (USA), **Vinnie Bennett** (New Zealand), **Lina El Arabi** (France) and **Jessie Buckley** (Ireland).

They will join the four previously-announced Canadian Rising Stars — Daniel Doheny, Mary Galloway, Théodore Pellerin and Ellen Wong — in specialized programming and events organized by TIFF's Industry team, including seminars with casting directors, one-on-one meetings, sessions with leading filmmakers, media training and a series of unique networking opportunities.

"These four actors impressed us with their nuanced performances and on-screen charisma," said Kathleen Drumm, TIFF Industry Director. "We are thrilled to be able to showcase their talent and support their creative development, at a point where they will be discovered by audiences at TIFF and around the world."

All of the international Rising Stars have experienced recent success on the big screen. Athie was most recently seen in the breakout hit *Patti Cake\$* (17) and will soon be seen in Oscar-winner Brie Larson's *Unicorn Store* (17). Larson's directorial debut will see its World Premiere at this year's Festival. Bennett recently appeared in the sci-fi thriller *Ghost in the Shell* (17), and landed his first starring role in director Nic Gorman's debut feature, *Human Traces* (17).

After starting her career on stage, El Arabi was chosen by filmmaker Stephanie Strecker to play the lead role in her recent feature *A Wedding* (16). She appears next in *Eye on Juliet* (17), the latest film from Oscar-nominated filmmaker Kim Nguyen, which will premiere at this year's Festival. Buckley most recently appeared on the small screen in the BBC's 2016 adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, and in *Taboo* (17-), starring Tom Hardy. She stars in the feature film *Beast* (17), playing a troubled young woman who falls for a mysterious outsider, which will premiere at this year's Festival in the Platform programme.

Mamoudou Athie

NY-based Mamoudou Athie is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama. In 2015, Athie made his New York stage debut in *The Mystery of Love and Sex*, for which he received critical praise. He starred as Grandmaster Flash in *The Get Down* (16–17) for Netflix, and he can be seen alongside Emma Watson and Tom Hanks in *The Circle* (17). Athie appears in Brie Larson's directorial debut, *Unicorn Store*, which will receive its World Premiere at TIFF '17.

Vinnie Bennett

New Zealand actor, Vinnie Bennett has appeared in both television and film. His television credits include *Power Rangers Dino Charge* (15–16), *The Shannara Chronicles* (16–), and *Filthy Rich* (16–). His film credits include *Fantail* (13), *Ghost in the Shell* (17) and *Beyond the Known World* (17). He takes a starring role in the new feature film *Human Traces* (17).

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Lina El Arabi

Lina El Arabi is a Paris-based actor who has appeared in *Ne m'abandonne pas* (16) and *A Wedding* (16), which received the award for Best Actress at the Angoulême Francophone Film Festival. El Arabi will appear on stage this autumn in a one-character play called *Mon Ange*, in a solo performance that has already received rave reviews. She stars in *Eye on Juliet*, which will make its World Premiere at the Venice Film Festival, and will screen at TIFF '17.

Jessie Buckley

Jessie Buckley is an actor from Killarney, Ireland. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, her stage credits include the revival of Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* (08–09), *The Tempest* (13), and *Henry V* (13). Buckley recently appeared in BBC's 2016 adaptation of *War and Peace* and in *Taboo* (17–), starring Tom Hardy. She will star in the upcoming TV series *The Woman in White* and *The Last Post*. This year, Buckley stars in *Beast*, which has its world premiere at TIFF.

The actors were chosen based on nominations from TIFF's international Festival programmers, with a TIFF Jury (Rising Stars Producer Natalie Semotiuk, Industry Programming Manager Lynne Crocker and Industry Director Kathleen Drumm) deciding the final selection.

Festival tickets go on sale September 4 at 10am (TIFF Member pre-sale September 2 from 10am to 4 pm). Buy tickets online at tiff.net, by phone at 416.599.TIFF or 1.888.599.8433, or in person at a box office. See box office locations and hours at tiff.net/tickets.

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About TIFF

TIFF is a charitable cultural organization whose mission is to transform the way people see the world, through film. An international leader in film culture, TIFF projects include the annual Toronto International Film Festival in September; TIFF Bell Lightbox, which features five cinemas, major exhibitions, and learning and entertainment facilities; and innovative national distribution programme Film Circuit. The organization generates an annual economic impact of \$189 million CAD. TIFF Bell Lightbox is generously supported by contributors including Founding Sponsor Bell, the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, the City of Toronto, the Reitman family (Ivan Reitman, Agi Mandel and Susan Michaels), The Daniels Corporation and RBC. For more information, visit tiff.net.

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TIFF's Industry initiatives are supported by the Share Her Journey campaign.

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For more information on the TIFF Rising Stars programme, please contact Karina Thevenin at 416.599.8433 ext:2688 or email kthevenin@tiff.net.

For information, contact the Communications Department at 416.934.3200 or email proffice@tiff.net.

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