

**KINO LORBER**

# THE REASON I JUMP

**A feature documentary by Jerry Rothwell**

- \*\*Sundance Film Festival, Audience Award - World Cinema Documentary, 2020\*\*
- \*\*Vancouver Int. Film Festival (Canada), Audience Award - Int. Documentary, 2020\*\*
- \*\*Atmosphere Film Festival (France), Audience Award, 2020\*\*
- \*\*Rome Film Festival, Social Critic Award (Italy) - Best Foreign Film, 2020\*\*
- \*\*DocNYC Winner's Circle Selection, 2020\*\*
  
- \*\*Critic's Choice Documentary Award - Nominee for Best Cinematography, 2020\*\*
- \*\*IDA Documentary Award - Nominee for Best Feature, 2020\*\*
- \*\*IDA Documentary Award - Nominee for Best Director, 2020\*\*
- \*\*British Independent Film Awards - Nominee for Best Documentary, 2020\*\*
- \*\*British Independent Film Awards - Nominee for Best Music (Nainita Desai), 2020\*\*

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***“There’s a gap between what I’m thinking and what I’m saying. It’s like a reflex reacting to what I’ve just seen in some cases. Or to some old memories. As if I’m drowning in a flood of words. The big exception is words or phrases I’m familiar with. Like playing a game of catch with a ball.” —Naoki Higashida***

## **LOGLINE**

Based on the best-selling book by Naoki Higashida, *THE REASON I JUMP* is an immersive film exploring the experiences of nonspeaking autistic people from around the world.

## **SYNOPSIS**

Based on the best-selling book by Naoki Higashida, *THE REASON I JUMP* is an immersive cinematic exploration of neurodiversity through the experiences of nonspeaking autistic people from around the world. The film blends Higashida's revelatory insights into autism, written when he was just 13, with intimate portraits of five remarkable young people. It opens a window for audiences into an intense and overwhelming, but often joyful, sensory universe.

Moments in the lives of each of the characters are linked by the journey of a young Japanese boy through an epic landscape; narrated passages from Naoki’s writing reflect on what his autism means to him and others, how his perception of the world differs, and why he acts in the way he does: the reason he jumps.

The film distils these elements into a sensually rich tapestry that leads us to Naoki’s core message: not being able to speak does not mean there is nothing to say.

## **DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT**

Naoki Higashida’s descriptions of a world without speech provoke us to think differently about autism. For most of history, nonspeaking autistic people have been considered less than human: ostracized within communities, banished to institutions, even in some ages and places, killed en masse. Stigma is still a feature of most autistic people’s lives.

But Naoki’s evocative descriptions of the maelstrom of thoughts, feelings, impulses and memories which affect his every actions lead us, as David Mitchell writes in his introduction to *The Reason I Jump*, to understand that “inside the... autistic body is a mind as curious, subtle and complex as any.” Naoki debunks the ideas often held about the autistic spectrum — that at

one end there are geniuses and at the other fools. Instead he describes a magnificent constellation of different ways of experiencing reality, which for the most part, are filtered out by the neurotypical world.

For a filmmaker, this offers an opportunity to use the full potential of cinema to evoke these intense sensory worlds in which meaning is made through sounds, pictures and associations, as well as words. While no film can replicate human experience, my hope is that *THE REASON I JUMP* can encourage an audience into thinking about autism from the inside, recognizing other ways of sensing the world, both beautiful and disorientating. I hope the film takes audiences on a journey through different experiences of autism, leaving a strong sense of how the world needs to change to become fully inclusive.

– JERRY ROTHWELL, 2019

### DIRECTOR Q&A

#### **Why was making this film important to you?**

The idea for the film came from producers Stevie Lee and Jeremy Dear, who are the parents of an autistic teenager (Joss, who is in the film). They had read Naoki Higashida's book *The Reason I Jump* which had transformed their understanding of their son and they wanted to make it into a film.

When I was approached to direct it, I felt a strong affinity with the project. Autism has been very much a part of my life - both in my extended family and in my work. Back in the '90s I set up participatory media projects focused on disability rights and self-advocacy by people with learning disabilities - and my film *Heavy Load* in 2008 (also produced by Al Morrow) was about a punk band some of whom were autistic. I've always been disturbed by society's response to nonspeaking autistic people - who are constantly underestimated with labels like 'severe' and 'low functioning' which, as well as being misleading about people's capacity to think and understand, also indicates a kind of hopelessness which increases marginalisation.

When I first read Naoki's book it took me by surprise. So fluent and perceptive was the writing of this teenager that I - like some of Naoki's reviewers - wondered how much his original words had changed through the process of transcription and translation. It certainly ran against the established idea that autistic people lack a 'theory of mind', something that had never matched with my experience anyway. Meeting Naoki was revelatory too. His capacity to use his alphabet board unaided to type thoughtful answers to my questions - whilst at the same time being subject to distractions, impulses, and apparently random associations, was extraordinary to observe. During our conversation he would repeatedly stand up and go to the window before sitting down again to type the remainder of whatever sentence it was that had been interrupted by this impulse. When I asked him what it was that drew him to the window, he typed "I watch the wheels of cars". When I asked why, he typed "They are like galaxies rotating". Think of that, next time you're waiting for a bus.

Once you recognise the capacities of nonspeaking autistic people and how they have been

systematically overlooked, then our terrible history - of institutionalisation, behaviour modification, killings - becomes all the more shocking. I hope the film can play a role in changing those misconceptions. The idea of neurodiversity - that we all perceive the world in subtly different ways - is a powerful and important one, which I think helps build the bridges and solidarity we need for a more inclusive world.

### **What were the challenges and opportunities of using Naoki's ground-breaking book as a foundation for the film?**

In previous documentaries, I've tended to adopt a method which first finds a shape for the film and then looks for narrative in whatever situation I'm filming, gradually building a more and more detailed structure through the production process.

But the book *The Reason I Jump* is organized as answers to a set of 58 questions about autism. It has no plot and few characters other than Naoki and his family. It's beautifully written, but initially the idea of turning it into a film felt quite daunting - especially as the option of making the film about Naoki wasn't available, because Naoki didn't want to appear on screen; he wanted his writing to stand for itself.

So the film takes the book as a starting point and riffs on its themes and ideas. In the end, this became a strength and led perhaps to a more unusual film than an issue-led biopic. It felt to me that the film's structure should be a developing revelation of Naoki's ideas about autism whilst immersing us in the everyday experiences of other nonspeaking autistic people in different parts of the world. Naoki's words apply to himself - and as he says himself, he can't claim to speak for all autistic people - but they do provide a nudge to think about the things we're seeing on screen in a different way.

Not having a single story was a first for me - and really changed the production process. This process felt much more instinctive and responsive to the immediacy of whatever we were filming. There were plenty of dead ends, but as we developed the film a shape emerged: one which took an audience from an intense visual and auditory world to one of sensory overload through to finding a way to communicate, and to fighting stigma. I thought it was important to explore experiences of autism in the global south and so sought out contributors in Africa and India as well as the US and UK and, rather than intercut their stories, I gave them each a section where we can spend time with and get to know them.

### **Can you tell us about the research process?**

Our research took us into the literature of brilliant writing by other nonspeaking autistics - Tito Mukhopadhyay, Ido Kedar, Amy Sequenzia - and also to first-hand accounts about sensory experience from other autistic writers - such as Donna Williams' *Autism and Sensing* and Temple Grandin's *Thinking in Pictures*. There are common themes to this writing - describing a world in which removing the neurotypical filters points us towards aspects of human experience that many of us only half sense. Those ideas are echoed in some of the neuroscience around autism - and we spoke to Prof. Henry Markram about his 'Intense World' theory and looked at research around language and motor-sensory issues. We tried to build as

neurodiverse a production team as we could - and also drew on an advisory group of autistic people who were incredibly supportive and helpfully provocative at key moments.

**Tell us a little bit about the concept of having the Japanese boy journey through different landscapes?**

It felt to me important that when Naoki wrote the book he was only 12 or 13, and that much of what he writes about is his experience of being an even younger child - the beginnings of his awareness of difference, of his autism, of himself and the judgements of others. So I wanted to evoke the feeling that the words we hear from the book are about a young mind in a process of discovery - and a mind that has become really perceptive about the world because of, rather than despite his autism.

Naoki's now 25 and didn't want to appear in the film, so it felt interesting to visualise the child he's writing about almost as a spirit running through the film. That idea also grew from an image from Naoki's story *I'm Right Here* which is at the end of the book, in which a boy dies in an accident and is unaware that he is dead. He visits his family and they can't see him. At one point in the story he goes travels around the world as though without a body. So much of the book is about the sensation of being weighed down by a body that won't respond to intentions - like 'trying to control a faulty robot' - it felt to me that this weightlessness was Naoki's idea of Heaven.

I hope the boy evokes not only the younger Naoki, but also David Mitchell's comment that the book was an 'envoy' from his own son's world, which I think is a feeling common to many parents when they encounter the book. We are alongside the boy as he observes a world - both of nature and manmade structures - and the things that strike him in it. We were very fortunate to find Jim Fujiwara, a young nonspeaking Japanese-British autistic boy whose parents had encountered the book at the same time as their son's diagnosis. It felt to me that Jim represented a next generation who might grow up in a world for which Naoki's insights into autism are the norm and so a world that might be much more inclusive.

**Can you talk about how you approached drawing the audience into the world of autism from a visual and auditory perspective?**

Naoki remembers his childhood as one in which he faces huge barriers in communicating, and one which bombards him with distracting sounds and sights, intense memories and random associations and impulses. There are some key ideas about his sensory world that he writes about repeatedly - and these became our starting points for the way we used sound and visuals in the film. He describes a visual world in which he sees detail before the big picture and has to construct the world piece by piece, a world where sounds and sights can be beautiful and intense but also unsettling and confusing, where the attractions of light, water and repetitive movement provide some certainty and pleasure. So we used these visual ideas in the way we shot the film - often working with macro close ups in situations where we were also shooting observationally, and to keep us in the sensory world as much as possible we minimised the use of talking heads in the film.

Sound is really important in the film and we worked with sound artist Nick Ryan, who himself is synesthetic, to create a 360° Atmos sound design, starting from 360° recordings which we made in each location. There'll be a binaural, mix so that those listening on headphones can also experience that immersive sound world.

'Nonverbal autism' is a bit of a misnomer because most of the group of people it describes use some speech or make sounds though not necessarily in a conventional context or in ways that enable them to express needs and opinions.

In his book Naoki goes to some lengths to describe his difficulties with speech, which he likens to a sea in which he is tossed about like a small boat in a storm. It's as though he has two language processes going simultaneously: the words that he is able to spell out independently on a keyboard or letter board which express his sophisticated thinking about the world and the words which jump out his mouth involuntarily and might link to memories, associations or current impulses. He describes the letter board as a tool to 'lock down' words and phrases which would otherwise 'flutter away.'

Letter board or spelled communication has been highly controversial - in part because it can be subject to outside influence, and in part perhaps because aptitude with spoken language is taken to be an indicator of intelligence - and so nonspeaking individuals tend not to be believed when they spell out complex thoughts. I took this scepticism seriously, going back to some of the original research as well as more recent research around language capacity. Older quantitative studies were damning of the methods used to enable nonspeaking adults to spell to communicate, but there are now far more studies that support it than refute it. There's also plenty of evidence that nonspeaking people possess coherent language. We know that speech is a motor-sensory facility, and that autism is closely linked with apraxia and other neuro-motor issues. There's no question in my mind that Naoki is the author of his book - I've watched and filmed him type independently on a computer as well as a letter board - and when I met him he is at least as philosophically sophisticated as his books suggest. Others in the film have different capacities for communication - Ben and Emma have gone through a long process of learning to use a letter board and can now communicate clearly using it. I asked them to write pieces for the film as well as interviewing them 'live'. What is clear to me is that we hugely underestimate the understanding of people who don't speak.

### **What do you hope the film will achieve?**

I hope the film is part of a shift in the way we see autistic people who don't communicate in a neurotypical way - away from the simplistic and damaging ideas of 'mild' and 'severe', 'high functioning' and 'low functioning' and towards an understanding of the constellation of individual strengths and challenges people face. I feel that all of us can identify with some of the stars in that constellation, and that recognising this can help build solidarity with and support for people, and construct a more 'autism friendly' world.

## Glossary

### **Autism**

Autism is a neurological variation that occurs in about one percent of the population.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, [Autism Spectrum Disorder](#) is a group of complex disorders related to brain development. The word 'spectrum' is used because there is no set characteristic, gene, or biological marker expressed consistently by every autistic person. Common markers of autism include variations in communication and social interaction, and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests or activities. However, every autistic individual is different. The formal diagnosis of ASD has changed significantly with research and science, and will continue to evolve.

Look at "[Understanding the Spectrum](#)" to see a visual representation of the spectrum.

### **Apraxia**

Apraxia is the inability to initiate, stop or slow down a sequence of movements on demand. It affects the motor planning process it takes to execute movement.

### **Dysregulation**

When an autistic is triggered by an external or internal stimulus that causes their baseline level of a regulated state to become no longer balanced

### **Identity-First Language**

Identify-first language refers to identifying language where the condition, in this case "autism," comes before other descriptors, like "autistic person" or "Deaf person." [Many autistic people prefer identity-first language](#) in contrast to people-first language, which places the person before the condition or diagnosis, as in, "person with a disability." As with any group that faces stigma or marginalization, the best way to get identity language 'right' is to ask and then honor a person's individual preference with regard to how they identify themselves.

### **Minimally Speaking**

An individual who is minimally speaking can communicate longer and deeper thoughts by effectively pointing to letters in order to spell, and can communicate some basics with speech.

## **Nonspeaking**

Nonspeaking refers to individuals who do not have speech as a reliable or consistently reliable means to communicate their true thoughts. Use of speech is a motor skill, not a measure of an individual's capacity for comprehension or communication.

"Nonspeaking autistic" is the language preference of the people whose stories are being told in *The Reason I Jump*. It is identify-first and is preferred over "non verbal," since "verbal" in Latin translates to "without words." Though they do not use speech to communicate, the people in the book and the film do have a lot to say.

## **Neurodiversity**

This term refers to the myriad ways in which brains function differently from what is considered 'typical,' without assigning judgment to those differences. Autism is one form of neurodiversity.

## **Neurotypical**

Refers to brains that function within the ranges of what is statistically considered to be within the range of 'normal.'

## **Unreliably speaking**

An individual who is an unreliable speaker is not always able to use speech to communicate everything they want to say but wants others to know that they appreciate their effort to connect and recognize that they can't always know if there is more to share.

### **References:**

#### **[The Human's Guide to Supporting Autistics](#)**

Written by Autistic Subject Matter Experts: Adam Farrell, Alex Cormaney, Charlie Colligan, David Knight, Gordy Baylinson, Ian Nordling, & Nick Moore

#### **[Autistic Self Advocacy Network](#)**

***"The Significance of Semantics: Person-First Language: Why It Matters."***

## FILMMAKERS BIOS

### **JERRY ROTHWELL - Director**

Jerry Rothwell is a filmmaker whose work includes the award-winning feature documentaries: *The Reason I Jump*, based on the bestselling book by Naoki Higashida; *How To Change The World*, about the founders of Greenpeace; *Sour Grapes* (co-directed with Reuben Atlas) a film about a wine counterfeiter; *Town of Runners*, about two girls in an Ethiopian village who aspire to be athletes; *Donor Unknown*, about a sperm donor and his many offspring; *School In The Cloud*, about radical educationalist, Sugata Mitra; *Heavy Load*, about a group of people with learning disabilities who form a punk band, and *Deep Water* (co-directed with Louise Osmond), about Donald Crowhurst's ill-fated voyage in the 1968 round the world yacht race. His work has won numerous accolades including two Grierson Awards, a Sundance Special Jury Prize, an RTS Award, the IDA Pare Lorentz Award and a BAFTA nomination.

#### Director (Short Bio)

Jerry Rothwell's work includes the award-winning feature documentaries *How to Change the World*, *Sour Grapes*, *Town of Runners*, *The School in The Cloud*, *Donor Unknown*, *Heavy Load* and *Deep Water*. His films have won numerous accolades including two Grierson Awards, a Sundance Special Jury Prize, an RTS Award, the IDA Pare Lorentz Award and a BAFTA nomination.

### **JEREMY DEAR - Producer**

Jeremy started his career at the BBC in documentaries. He has created dozens of factual shows for a wide range of networks on both sides of the Atlantic, including the BBC, Netflix, Discovery, Nat Geo, Science Channel, PBS, History, Channel 4, SKY and many others. Past work includes the Emmy-nominated *Wave that Shook the World* (WGBH/C4), *Growing Children* (BBC), *Lawless Oceans* and *In the Womb* (National Geographic) and the controversial *Christianity: A History* (C4). He is now Director of International Programming at Wall to Wall Media in the UK. He is married to co-producer Stevie Lee (see below); the couple have a nonverbal autistic son, Joss, one of the film's contributors who spends a lot of time on their large trampoline.

### **STEVIE LEE - Producer**

Stevie began her career as a literary agent, before becoming a script editor and Head of Development at Contagious Films. In 2007 she launched her own company Runaway Fridge. She produced the critically acclaimed *Frank* for Film 4, the BFI and Irish Film Board. The film stars Michael Fassbender and received its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival. She also recently executive produced *The Dog Thrower*, written and directed by Jon Ronson and starring Matthew Perry, for Sky and *The Making of a Lady* with Joanna Lumley for ITV.

### **AL MORROW - Producer**

Al is an award-winning producer and Head of Documentary at MetFilm Production. Her latest film is *Last Breath* (Netflix/Creative Scotland/BBC). Previous films include *Sour Grapes* directed by Jerry Rothwell and Reuben Atlas for Netflix, Arte and VPRO; and Jerry Rothwell's *How to Change the World* and *The School in the Cloud*. *How to Change the World* (Sky Atlantic/

BFI/Impact Partners/CTV) won the Grierson Award for Best International Documentary on a Contemporary Theme and premiered as a Day One film at the Sundance Film Festival. AI has also produced Jeanie Finlay's *Pantomime* (BBC Storyville) and *The Great Hip Hop Hoax* (BBC/Creative Scotland); Sarah Gavron's *Village at the End of the World* which premiered at the BFI London Film Festival; Jerry Rothwell's *Town of Runners* (ITVS/Britdoc C4) which premiered at Tribeca; the Grierson nominated films *Donor Unknown* (More4/ITVS/Arte) and *Men Who Swim* (BBC Storyville/Arte/SVT/VPRO); *Heavy Load* (BBC Storyville, IFctv, ITVS); and *Deep Water* (Pathe/UKFC/FilmFour) winner of the Grierson Award for Best Cinema Documentary.

### **NAINITA DESAI - Composer**

RTS award winning composer Nainita Desai is an Ivor Novello, BIFA nominee; a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit, and the IFMCA Breakthrough Composer of 2020. Amongst various BAFTA, Oscar and Emmy acclaimed productions, Nainita's recent projects include **Oscar 2020 nominated** and **BAFTA & Cannes** winning feature doc *For Sama, The Reason I Jump, Bad Boy Billionaires*, Netflix's *American Murder*, BBC drama series *Unprecedented*, and the Interactive video game *Telling Lies* by Annapurna Interactive. **Film4** recently labelled her as one of the top 5 'composers of 2020 who should be on your radar' and her projects have been in the Top 5 Film Scores and Video Games scores of 2019 by Scala Radio. Nainita's musical foundations are rooted in world music and sound design where she moves seamlessly between working with orchestras, fusing her collection of custom made instruments, electronics, found sound and song-writing. Technical innovation fuels her powerful emotive scores, and her immersive approach involves deeply-researched collaborations to find those voices that are not usually heard, creating sounds that are truly unique. Her upcoming film scores for 2021 include Netflix series *The Sophy Story* (Dir: John Dowers | EP: Simon Chinn); HBO Max film *Persona* (Dir: Tim Travers Hawkins), and video games for *Electronic Arts* and *Project A*, the follow up to *Telling Lies* by Drowning Mermaid.

## **ABOUT THE BOOK**

**THE REASON I JUMP** became a New York Times and Sunday Times bestseller and has been translated into more than 30 languages. It has sold over a million copies world-wide.

### **NAOKI HIGASHIDA – Writer**

Naoki Higashida was born in Kimitsu, Japan in 1992. Diagnosed with severe autism when he was five, he subsequently learned to communicate using a handmade alphabet grid and began to write poems and short stories. At the age of thirteen he wrote *The Reason I Jump*, which was published in Japan in 2007. Its English translation came out in 2013, and it has now been published in more than thirty languages. Higashida has since published several books in Japan, including children's and picture books, poems, and essays. He continues to give presentations throughout Japan about his experience of autism.

### **DAVID MITCHELL – Co-translator**

David Mitchell is a best-selling British writer whose novels include *Cloud Atlas* and *Utopia Avenue*. He has been twice shortlisted for The Booker Prize and has received several literary

prizes, including The Sunday Times Prize for Literary Excellence. Alongside KA Yoshida, he translated Naoki Higashida's *The Reason I Jump* and *Fall Down 7 Times, Get Up 8* from the Japanese. His screen work includes *Sense8* and *The Matrix 4* (both collaborations with the Wachowskis). He lives in Ireland with his family.

### **KA YOSHIDA – Co-translator**

KA Yoshida was born in Yamaguchi, Japan, and specialised in English Poetry at Notre Dame Seishin University.

'The Reason I Jump' builds one of the strongest bridges yet constructed between the world of autism and the neurotypical world . . . [His] ideas are fascinating, but what's equally remarkable is that an autistic teenager so profoundly understands the need to communicate them to others. "It felt as if, for the first time, our own son was talking to us about what was happening inside his head," says Mitchell of first reading the book. I felt the same.' Charlotte Moore, *The Sunday Times*

'We have our received ideas, we believe they correspond roughly to the way things are, then a book comes along that simply blows all this so-called knowledge out of the water. This is one of them.' Marcus Berkmann, *Daily Mail*

'His description of the pain of autistic experience coexists with pride, and that is the book's beauty, because he makes us long for his experiences' Andrew Solomon, *The Times*

'It reads effortlessly, each page challenging preconceptions that autistic people lack empathy, humour or imagination.' Emma Claire Sweeney, *Independent on Sunday*

## **PRODUCTION COMPANY BIOS**

### **VULCAN PRODUCTIONS**

Vulcan Productions believes that storytelling can change the world. The company produces and distributes content that informs, inspires, and activates audiences – putting stories to work with far-reaching impact campaigns that advance new policies, shift individual behaviors, and contribute to significant institutional change. Its team includes both expert producers and seasoned impact strategists and movement builders. Leveraging platforms ranging from film and television to XR and other emerging media, Vulcan Productions' content and campaigns are at the center of some of society's most pressing challenges.

Vulcan Productions films include [Oliver Sacks: His Own Life](#), [Ghost Fleet](#), [The Cold Blue](#), Netflix Original: [The Ivory Game](#), the Sundance Special Jury Award-winner [STEP](#), News & Documentary Emmy®-nominated [Going to War](#), [Girl Rising](#), [Racing Extinction](#), the Academy Award®-nominated [Body Team 12](#), and emerging media works including [Ghost Fleet VR](#), [X-Ray Fashion](#), [Drop in the Ocean](#), and [Guardians of the Kingdom](#). Films currently in production tell searing, eye-opening stories on issues including climate change, ocean health, humanitarian disasters, criminal justice reform, and more. Follow Vulcan Productions

([vulcanproductions.com](http://vulcanproductions.com)) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

## THE BFI

The BFI Film Fund invests over £50 million of National Lottery funding a year into developing and supporting filmmakers with diverse, bold and distinctive projects, that have a cultural relevance or progressive ideas, and which reflect people from different backgrounds, as well as a range of activities to increase the opportunities for audiences to enjoy them.

The BFI slate includes Ken Loach's *Sorry We Missed You* and Jessica Hausner's *Little Joe* which both premiered in Competition at the Cannes Film Festival, where the latter was awarded the Best Actress prize for Emily Beecham; Tribeca Film Festival Best Documentary Feature *Scheme Birds* from directors Ellen Fiske and Ellinor Hallin; and *Saint Maud*, the debut feature from Rose Glass, and *Rocks* from award-winning director Sarah Gavron and producer Faye Ward, which both premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Recent titles include Oscar and BAFTA-nominated *Cold War* which brought Pawel Pawlikowski the Best Director award at last year's Cannes; Joanna Hogg's *The Souvenir*, winner of the World Dramatic Competition at the Sundance Film Festival; *Dirty God* from Berlin Film Festival FIPRESCI Prize winner Sacha Polak; Claire Denis' English language debut *High Life* and Locarno Film Festival Special Jury Prize and BIFA Best Debut Director award-winner *Ray & Liz* by filmmaker Richard Billingham.

Currently in prep, production or post are *Chasing Chaplin* from three-time BAFTA nominees Peter Middleton and James Spinney; Philippa Lowthorpe's *Misbehaviour* starring Keira Knightley, Gugu Mbatha Raw and Jessie Buckley; *Ammonite*, directed by Francis Lee starring Saoirse Ronan and Kate Winslet; Jessica Swale's *Summerland* starring Gemma Arterton and Gugu Mbatha-Raw; and *Herself* directed by Phyllida Lloyd and starring Clare Dunne.

The BFI is the UK's lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a distributor of National Lottery funding and a cultural charity that:

- Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of world cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online
- Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world
- Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers
- Works with Government and industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

## THE IDEAS ROOM

The Ideas Room was founded in 2014 by producer Jeremy Dear to make factual content across a range of genres, developing and producing for networks like PBS, Travel Channel and Science Channel. In 2016 it became a single purpose vehicle for the production of *The Reason I Jump*.

## **METFILM PRODUCTION**

Founded in 2007, by producer Jonny Persey, MetFilm Production is an independent production company making high-quality fiction and documentary films for theatrical audiences worldwide. Together with our sister companies, MetFilm Sales and MetFilm School, we provide a synergistic environment for both established and emerging talent. Films in post-production and to be released in 2020 are fiction film *23 Walks* starring Alison Steadman and Dave Johns and documentary *The Reason I Jump* funded by Vulcan and the BFI. Other recent releases include thriller documentary *Last Breath*, comedy *Swimming with Men*, starring Rob Brydon and directed by Oliver Parker, documentary *Sour Grapes* and the award-winning *How to Change the World*, which premiered at Hot Docs and Sundance respectively. Previous films include hit comedy *The Infidel* starring Omid Djalili, Grierson-winner *Deep Water*, *French Film* starring Hugh Bonneville, Sarah Gavron's *Village at The End of the World*, Jeanie Finlay's *The Great Hip Hop Hoax* and BAFTA-winning short *September* by Esther May Campbell.

## **RUNAWAY FRIDGE**

Runaway Fridge is a London based film and television production company that has built a reputation for discovering new writing talent and bringing high-end, authored drama to the small screen. Recent productions include *Frank*, *The Dog Thrower*, and *The Making of a Lady*.

## **KINO LORBER**

With a library of over 4,000 titles, Kino Lorber Inc. has been a leader in independent art house distribution for 35 years, releasing 30 films per year theatrically under its Kino Lorber, Kino Repertory and Alive Mind Cinema banners, garnering seven Academy Award® nominations in nine years. In addition, the company brings over 350 titles yearly to the home entertainment and educational markets through physical and digital media releases. With an expanding family of distributed labels, Kino Lorber handles releases in ancillary media for Zeitgeist Films, Cohen Media Group, Greenwich Entertainment, Artsploitation, Palisades Tartan, Menemsha Films, Raro Video, and others, placing physical titles through all wholesale, retail, and direct to consumer channels, as well as direct digital distribution through over 40 OTT services including all major TVOD and SVOD platforms. In 2019, the company launched its new art house digital channel Kino Now which features over 1000 titles from the acclaimed Kino Lorber library. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kino Marquee initiative was launched in 2020 pioneering "virtual theatrical" releases of art house films with revenue shares that allows audiences to support almost 400 local independent theaters.

## **CREDITS**

BFI presents AN IDEAS ROOM, METFILM, VULCAN PRODUCTIONS  
& RUNAWAY FRIDGE PRODUCTION

Directed by  
JERRY ROTHWELL

Produced by

JEREMY DEAR  
STEVIE LEE

Produced by  
AL MORROW

Executive Producers  
STEWART LE MARÉCHAL  
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PETER WEBBER

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Co-Executive Producer  
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