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PRESS RELEASE - For immediate use

**SHORT FILM *HULA* WINS BEST DRAMA AT BAFTA SCOTLAND NEW TALENT AWARDS/
BAFTA SCOTLAND NEW TALENT AWARD-WINNING DRAMA *HULA* TO PREMIER AT
XPONORTH**



Hula, a new short film starring Blythe Duff, has won Best Drama at the BAFTA Scotland New Talent Awards (14th April, in Glasgow). The ceremony was hosted by Muriel Grey and the Best Drama award was presented by actress Kate Dickie.

A gently humorous hip-shaking drama about liberation in a small Scottish Highland community, *Hula* is about uptight divorcee Clara (Blythe Duff) who is struggling to find a new purpose in life since her daughter left home for the bright city lights. She opens a B&B, and unexpectedly inspired by her guests, rediscovers the joys of life.

Highland filmmaker and young crofter, Robin Haig directed and co-wrote *Hula* as part of her MFA in Advanced Film Practice at Edinburgh Napier University/Screen Academy Scotland. Shot in Haig's home village of Dornie, it is her first BAFTA Scotland New Talent win (nominated previously for Best Director and Best New Work for *Dear Dad*, a documentary about reconciliation with her deer-stalker father).

The film has a strong female slant, and unusually in the film industry, was made by an all-female core creative team who are also graduates from Screen Academy Scotland. Alongside Robin Haig, the film was co-written by Scottish screenwriters Claire Nicol and Mandy Lee, and was produced by Lindsay McGee.

Focusing on Duff's main female character Clara, the film takes a tongue-in-cheek look at self-image, liberation and body confidence. It also weaves in the local Highland legend of the Five Sisters of Kintail; a group of sisters who waited on the shore until they turned into the famous

mountain range we see today. In the film, the five sisters are played by local girls - two sets of real life sisters and their mutual friend.

Hula will have its UK premier in June at XpoNorth in Inverness where, in conjunction with the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival, the event will showcase Haig's work including a Q&A session. XpoNorth will announce their programme later this week.

Future screenings are still to be announced as the *Hula* team are currently busy submitting it to film festivals all over the world. In Scotland, the film will screen in the Screen Machine, a mobile cinema that travels the Highlands and Islands bringing cinema to remote regions; the Inverness Film Festival and Edinburgh Filmhouse (Edinburgh Napier University graduation film showcase).

Robin Haig, *Hula* director and co-writer said:

"The inspiration for Hula came from my observations of women in the rural community I grew up in. I set out to make a film about being middle-aged, divorced and long-term single in the Highlands. I wanted to bring a protagonist to life who represented these women, and take the audience on a journey that was satisfying, uplifting and joyous."

"It is unbelievably exciting to win the BAFTA New Talent award and such an honour. It's testament to the hard work of the cast and crew who gave their time to make Hula happen. We are totally delighted!"

"It was amazing to work with Blythe. She brings the character of Clara right off the page and makes her strong and real. It was great fun to be on set and have analytical conversations about what her character would and would not do. Blythe spent a week in my home village of Dornie while we shot the film. We were a relatively young crew and as a veteran actor she was very generous with us. It was a fabulous week!"

Blythe Duff, *Hula* lead actress said:

"I was delighted when I heard the news and it was a shame I couldn't make the ceremony."

Amanda Millen, director of XpoNorth said:

*"I am thrilled to be able to show a film like *Hula* at XpoNorth."*

"It showcases not only the talent which is embedded in the Highlands and Islands, in terms of writing, directing, producing and shooting a high-quality film production, it also highlights the fact its locations are second to none."

"Hula, which was produced under the Screen Academy Scotland banner, was a well-deserved winner of Best Drama at BAFTA Scotland's New Talent Awards and I can't wait to share it with the delegates who attend XpoNorth in June."

*"It will be shown to an influential audience of creative industry insiders and I have no doubt that they will be as entranced as I was by this quirky and quite beautiful feel-good film. After the screening of *Hula*, Richard Warden of the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival, will chair a Q&A with its makers."*

Lindsay McGee, *Hula* producer said:

"Thank you BAFTA. You made our day, our month and year! We are beyond excited about winning Best Drama for Hula and feel hugely privileged to be premiering the film in the Highlands at XpoNorth. The community of Dornie and our generous sponsors; local businesses, cafes and individuals helped us so much, this is a massive thanks to them for their support."

Muriel Gray, ceremony host, said:

"This is now my fifth year hosting the BAFTA Scotland New Talent Awards and every year I am blown away by the pool of new talent in Scotland. I wish all winners the best of luck in their future careers."

Jude MacLavery, Director of BAFTA Scotland, said:

"The BAFTA Scotland New Talent Awards is dedicated to encouraging and nurturing up-and-coming talent in Scotland and, once again, we've seen there is no shortage of this. Tonight we applauded and celebrated some fantastic emerging talent and congratulations to our very worthy winners."

Notes to Editors

Hula was directed by Robin Haig, co-written by Robin Haig, Claire Nicol and Mandy Lee, and produced by Lindsay McGee, all graduates of Screen Academy Scotland/Edinburgh Napier University.

Hula stars Blythe Duff (*Taggart*, *The James Plays*) as protagonist Clara. Additional cast are Nalini Chetty (*River City*), Fiona Ormiston (*Ruth Ellis*), Anna Hepburn (*Consider The Lilies*, *Katie Morag*), Kern Falconer (*Slow West*, *Outlander*) and Ian Watt (*Blackbird*).

The BAFTA Scotland New Talent Awards 2016 took place on Thursday 14th April at the Drygate Brewery, Glasgow.

- More information on Robin Haig and the film: <http://www.robinhaig.com>
- Trailer for *Hula*: <https://vimeo.com/154969286>
- Facebook page for *Hula*: <https://www.facebook.com/hulawouldyou?>
- More info about XpoNorth: <https://xponorth.co.uk> They will issue a press release later this week about the festival line up.
- For more info on BAFTA Scotland New Talent Awards ceremony and winners: <http://www.bafta.org/press/press-releases/winners-announced-bafta-scotland-new-talent-awards-2016>
- More info about the Scottish Mental Health and Arts Film Festival: <https://www.mhfestival.com/>
- Full list of BAFTA Scotland New Talent Awards nominees and winners: <http://www.bafta.org/press/press-releases/winners-announced-bafta-scotland-new-talent-awards-2016>

PHOTOS:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/87n7e1mbrccbckm/AAC0diRUOIFbruyKfCy72vAVa?dl=0>

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