



**EXPERIMENTA PRESENTS: PREMIERE**

# Wayfinder

*+ Q&A with director Larry Achiampong and Executive Director of Knowledge and Collections, BFI National Archive, Arike Oke*

*Wayfinder* is Larry Achiampong's first feature and most ambitious film to date.

Set during a pandemic, the film tracks the movements of its central protagonist – The Wanderer, a young girl (played by Perside Rodrigues), on an intrepid journey across England.

Travelling from North to South, The Wanderer passes through different regions, towns and landscapes, encountering people, stories and situations on her way.

Presented across six chapters, including 'The North', 'The Land of Smoke' and 'The Kingdom of the East', this epic film builds a dialogue around the themes of class and economic exclusion, belonging and displacement, cultural heritage and the meaning of home.

With the film set during an unknown point in the not too distant future during a discursive moment in time. The Wanderer acts as a witness to accounts, conversations, places and histories – both known and dormant.

Setting out from Bowness-on-Solway, a village that separates England from Scotland, the film follows the Wanderer's journey across the ancient paths of Hadrian's Wall and other significant environments thereafter. From Hemmingwell housing estate in Wellingborough to the National Gallery deserted at night, through the international port London Gateway (in Essex), eventually reaching the sea at Margate.

A road movie of sorts, *Wayfinder* draws on British traditions of travel and exploration of the sublime landscape and the sea – reflecting on division and crisis in this nation today. Addressing an unreconciled history of empire and inequality, it asks: Who is allowed to feel that they belong?

The film combines sweeping shots with poetic voice-over narratives, melded with real 'vox pop' testimonies, field recordings and an original orchestral score composed by Achiampong.

The film's cast includes former athlete Anita Neil OLY, who is Britain's first Black female Olympian, musician and artist Mataio Austin Dean (who plays The Griot), and a trippy dialogue-driven scene (set within East London café E. Pellicci in Bethnal Green) portrayed by Maa Afua and Russell Tovey among others.

## **Director's Statement**

This project feels like a poignant moment for me, not just professionally and as a maker of films, but also personally. It has felt very important and necessary, especially at this point in time, to be able to bring this range of subject matter and conversations to the table at what is increasingly becoming a contentious moment of our times.

I am so excited to share the expansive vision of this story, which marks a new and exciting stage in my art practice. I never set out to create a film of this

size, but due to the scope of ideas that evolved along the way, it increasingly became inevitable that this would become my first feature film.

### **Production notes**

**Larry Achiampong**'s solo and collaborative projects employ film, still imagery, aural and visual archives, live performance, objects and sound to explore ideas surrounding class, gender, cross-cultural and post-digital identity.

With works that examine his communal and personal heritage – in particular, the intersection between popular culture and the post-colonial position, Achiampong crate-digs the vaults of history. These investigations examine constructions of 'the self' by splicing the audible and visual materials of personal and interpersonal archives, offering multiple perspectives that reveal the deeply entrenched inequalities in contemporary society.

Recent projects include commissions with The Line, London; The Liverpool Biennial 2021 and Art on the Underground, Roundel designs and a permanent sculptural intervention for Transport for London's Westminster Underground Station, London (2019 and 2022). Recent solo exhibitions include *Wayfinder*, Turner Contemporary/MK Gallery/ BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Margate, Milton Keynes, Gateshead (2022-2023); *Relic Traveller: Where You and I Come From, We Know That We Are Not Here Forever*, Phi Foundation for Contemporary Art, Montreal (2021); *Beyond the Substrata*, curated by Norman Rosenthal, Copperfield Gallery at Frieze Focus, 12 Piccadilly Arcade, London (2020); *When the Sky Falls*, John Hansard Gallery, Southampton (2020); Pan African Flag For The Relic Travellers Alliance & Relic Traveller, Phase 1, 019, Ghent (2019); *Dividednation*, Primary, Nottingham (2019).

Achiampong (b. 1984, UK, British Ghanaian) is a Jarman Award nominated artist (2021). He completed a BA in Mixed Media Fine Art at University of Westminster in 2005 and an MA in Sculpture at The Slade School of Fine Art in 2008. In 2020 Achiampong was awarded the Stanley Picker fellowship and in 2019 received the Paul Hamlyn Artist award in recognition for his practice. He lives and works in London and Essex, and was a tutor on the Photography MA programme at Royal College of Art between 2016 – 2021. Achiampong currently serves on the Board of Trustees at Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) facilitating art policies in the UK and internationally and also holds a place on the board of trustees for Elephant Trust and is represented by C Ø P P E R F I E L D.

**Arike Oke** is a noted cultural leader, a registered archivist, and curator. She leads the screen heritage collections at the BFI in the role of Executive Director of Knowledge and Collections. Her practice is rooted in social justice and the role of culture in giving strength to, and inspiring, individuals and communities. Formerly she was the Managing Director for Black Cultural Archives, the home of Black British history.

She's worked in heritage for over 15 years, from the seminal Connecting Histories project in Birmingham, to developing Wellcome Collection's archive, and co-convening Hull's first official Black History Month. Her interest in supporting the sector includes assessing funding applications for Wellcome, the Royal Society and the National Archives, assessing impact for REF and judging the 2022 Write on Art Prize.

Her fiction is published in magazines and anthologies. Her critical art writing has been featured in *The Girls Are* and *This Is Tomorrow*. Her factual writing has appeared in journals. She has written an anti-racism book for children which is to be published in 2022.

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#### WAYFINDER

*Directed & Produced by:* Larry Achiampong  
*Executive Producer:* Nephertiti Oboshie Schandorf  
*Production Supervisor:* Louise Searle  
*Location Management:* Louise Searle, Hayleigh-Joy Rose, Sian Morse, Priyesh Mistry  
*Production Documentation:* Reece Straw  
*Production Assistant:* Zara Truss Giles  
*Written by:* Larry Achiampong, Aida Amoako  
*Directors of Photography:* Larry Achiampong, Rhea Storr  
*Camera Work by:* Rhea Storr, Samara Addai, Reece Straw, Larry Achiampong  
*Drone Operator:* Larry Achiampong  
*Edited by:* Larry Achiampong, Rhea Storr  
*Costume Design by:* Dawuud Kangudi Loka, Larry Achiampong  
*Music Composed by:* Larry Achiampong  
*Field Recordings by:* Larry Achiampong  
*Sound Design & Audio Mix by:* Look Mama! Productions  
*Machine Operators (Dreamland, Margate):* Richard Cadell, Ross Pearson  
*Typeface Design:* Jess Latham (Blue Vinyl Fonts)  
*Unit Driver:* William Anderson  
*Guardians to Ms Rodrigues:* Alida Rodrigues, Louise Searle

#### Cast

Zael Grace Rose-Achiampong (*voice #1*)  
Nephertiti Oboshie Schandorf (*voices #2, #4*)  
Perside Rodrigues (*The Wanderer*)  
Mataio Austin Dean (*The Griot*)  
Marla Brown (*voice #3*)  
Anita Neil OLY (*herself*)  
Marla Brown (*voice #5*)  
Mataio Austin Dean (*voice #6*)  
Russell Tovey (*Russell*)  
Maa Afua (*Aunty Comfort*)  
Hayleigh-Joy Rose (*voice #7*)  
Laura Achiampong Seinti (*voice #8*)

UK 2022

84 mins

Courtesy of Verve Pictures

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#### IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

##### **Burning an Illusion + intro by actor Cassie McFarlane**

Mon 27 Jun 18:00

##### **Preview: The Afterlight + Q&A with director Charlie Shackleton**

Wed 29 Jun 18:20

##### **Seniors Premiere: Reel Stories: An Oral History of London's Projectionists + Q&A**

Tue 5 Jul 11:00

##### **Seniors' Free Matinee: From Trinidad to Lagos + Q&A with author Stephen Bourne**

Tue 5 Jul 14:00

##### **Art in the Making: Give Us This Day + intro**

Thu 14 Jul 18:10

##### **Silent Cinema: Phil-for-Short + intro by BFI Curator Bryony Dixon**

Sun 17 Jul 13:10

##### **Experimenta: The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies?! + live experimental music introduction by The Howling**

Wed 20 Jul 18:15

##### **Woman with a Movie Camera: The Mirror Has Two Faces + intro by BFI Events Programmer Kimberley Sheehan**

Thu 21 Jul 18:00

##### **African Odysseys: Commemorating Marikana**

Sun 24 Jul 12:00-17:40

##### **Relaxed Screening: Electricity + intro and discussion**

Mon 25 Jul 18:15

##### **Projecting The Archive: The Bay of Saint Michel (aka Pattern for Plunder) + intro by BFI curator Josephine Botting**

Tue 26 Jul 18:30

##### **Terror Vision: Blood Games**

Thu 28 Jul 18:20

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Programme notes and credits compiled by the BFI Documentation Unit

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