

MIKE LEIGH

BAFTA: A Life in Pictures in conversation with Amy Raphael

Five-time Oscar nominee, BAFTA winner, the only British director to have won the top prize at both Cannes (for *Secrets & Lies*) and Venice (for *Vera Drake*) - Mike Leigh is unquestionably one of world cinema's pre-eminent figures. Now, in this definitive career-length interview, he reflects on all that has gone into the making of his unique body of work.

Initially trained in theatre, Leigh devised his own method for the making of first plays and then films, based on months of improvisation and rehearsal with his actors prior to shooting. Leigh creates characters with his actors, leading them on a journey to discover the world and the meaning of the film. No wonder those actors have uniformly found Leigh a career-changing revelation.

With their mixture of bleakness and humour, Leigh's films recreate the tragi-comic world of people whose everyday lives are far from glamorous: a world in which 'the done thing' usually prevails, contrary to our inner hopes, wants or needs. Leigh's work has always reflected its times and entered the vernacular, whether the harsh studies of *Meantime* and *Naked* or the humour of the now-legendary *Abigail's Party* and *Nuts in May*. Above all, Leigh is an accomplished storyteller, and these films deal with universal themes: births, marriages and deaths, parenthood and failed relationships, families and their secrets and lies.

Tonight Leigh speaks to Amy Raphael more openly than ever before of his life and inimitable working method, revealing himself as passionate, forthright, no sufferer of fools, but the owner of a dry and playful Mancunian wit.

Amy Raphael was born in London in 1967. She has worked on *The Face*, *Elle* and *Esquire* and now freelances for *The Observer* and *The Telegraph*. Her first book, *Never Mind the Bollocks: Women Rewrite Rock*, was published by Virago in 1995.

BAFTA

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts supports, develops and promotes the artforms of the moving image, by identifying and rewarding excellence, inspiring practitioners and benefiting the public. Excellence is acknowledged and rewarded at the Academy's various award ceremonies throughout the year.

Alongside the award ceremonies, the Academy's Learning & Events' programme offers events year-round throughout the UK and London: this events' programme gives members and the public alike the opportunity to experience the best work from practitioners in film, television and video games. We also take speakers and mentors into schools, reach out to community groups and offer special events for students in universities, as well as a full monthly programme at our headquarters, 195 Piccadilly, London.

In 2005 BAFTA launched its regional programme of screenings and events run throughout England in partnership with regional partners, festivals, cultural organisations, venues and Regional Screen Agencies. Since its launch, BAFTA in the regions has held over 200 screenings and events in over 25 different towns and cities across England and reached over 20,000 people.

Our regional events include pre-release screenings, interviews, workshops and masterclasses across film, television and games sectors with industry luminaries such as Stephen Woolley, Steve Coogan, Paul Abbott, Robert Thirkell, Sir Richard Eyre, Virginia McKenna OBE, Jimmy McGovern, Andrea Calderwood, Joe Wright, Louis Theroux and Suzie Templeton.

BAFTA: A Life in Pictures is a special strand of events celebrating film, exploring a major and distinctive contribution by a BAFTA winner or nominee. Past focuses have included Anthony Minghella, Tilda Swinton, Paul Greengrass, Cate Blanchett, Amitabh Bachchan, Alfonso Cuarón, the Coen Brothers and Virginia McKenna OBE.

To find out more about BAFTA and its Learning & Events' activity across the UK visit www.bafta.org

SCREEN SOUTH

Screen South is the strategic agency for the film and moving image industry in the South East of England. The nine Regional Screen Agencies were set up between 2002 and 2004 by the UK Film Council to help fulfil the Council's aims of creating a more dynamic and sustainable film industry.

Screen South is passionate about developing a dynamic environment in which film and media culture can flourish.

Screen South provides a first port of call for funding and information relating to film in the region and collaborates with organisations to develop hubs of activity and expertise and encourages networking and collaboration between media practitioners. Screen South also works with the industry to set standards for excellence, creativity and innovation and acts as an advocate for the region's film and media industry nationally and internationally.

Screen South helps to profile the region for inward investment and finds ways of developing audiences and promoting opportunities for education and wider access. Screen South is the key route for filmmakers to The UK Film Council and other Regional organisations.

This is Screen South's second BAFTA: A Life In Pictures event. Their first event hosted an evening with Virginia McKenna OBE in conversation with Duncan Kenworthy OBE on the Isle of Wight in April 2007. Screen South and BAFTA also host regular Sunday screenings with Brighton Duke of York's Cinema.

For more information please go to www.screensouth.org

