

# The Royal Society of Edinburgh

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## Media Information

### Film Experts to debate what it takes to be a 'National' cultural flagship in Film

"Cold Mountain" Producer, Iain Smith, Edinburgh International Film Festival's Ginnie Atkinson, award-winning Producer, Leslie Hills and the Director of Screen Academy Scotland, Robin MacPherson are to debate what it takes to be a 'National' cultural flagship in Film. Organised jointly by the Edinburgh International Film Festival and The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE), the discussion at the RSE this Thursday 26 June at 6pm is free and open to all.

In the context of new nations and nationalisms, and government cultural policies, how do institutions representing different art forms respond to the challenge of being 'National'? In this seminar, the speakers and audience will debate the challenges and opportunities involved in operating under a 'National' remit. Questions to be addressed include the challenge of achieving and maintaining artistic excellence; the duty to preserve and nurture our national heritage while encouraging experimental work and the importance of playing a leading role in the strategic development and organisation of the art form nationally, including collaborating with smaller companies and taking responsibility for training the artists of the future.

RSE Vice-President (Arts and Humanities), Professor Jan McDonald said:

*Discussions on national cultural identity, and in particular, collaboration between the Society and Scottish cultural institutions such as the Edinburgh International Film Festival form an important part of the RSE's expanding programme in the Arts and Humanities. All of our Speakers have a wealth of experience and we are looking forward to a fascinating debate.*

### Notes for Editors

#### Leslie Hills

Leslie Hills is a director of Skyline Productions. She develops and produces drama and documentary, acts as executive producer to international productions, provides consultancy and research to feature films and provides script analysis and project assessment for film commissions and companies. Film credits include Thomas Riedelsheimer's multi-award-winning international co-productions, *Rivers and Tides*, *Andy Goldsworthy working with time*, and *Touch the Sound-A Sound journey with Evelyn Glennie*. For Skyline she has written and produced documentary, factual, drama and dramatised programs for BBC, ITV, C4, arte, Discovery, NKH, 3sat, BR, ORB, YLE, NRW, ZDF, WDR, Le Sept and MTV. Recent projects include the acclaimed *Holocaust Tourist*, by Jes Benstock, shot in Poland, *living lightly*, by Robin Burke, shot in Canada and edited in Kentucky, *Karelian Cowgirls*, shot in Finland and

edited in Scotland and Riedelsheimer's *Alison Watt – A Painter's Eye*, shot in London, Edinburgh and Orkney, post-produced in Munich. A fourth film with Thomas Riedelsheimer is in preparation. She has numerous awards for her work, has served on many boards, is a member of BAFTA and of the German Film Academy and currently chairs Filmhouse, Edinburgh, the home of the Edinburgh International Film Festival.

### **Iain Smith OBE**

Iain Smith was born in Glasgow in 1949 and graduated from the London Film School in 1971. He worked in London for several years before returning to his native Scotland to make "My Childhood", for the British Film Institute, the first of the [award](#) winning trilogy by the late Bill Douglas.

He formed his own production company in partnership with Jon Schorstein and produced television commercials, documentaries, children's feature films and low budget dramas, and in 1978 production managed Bertrand Tavernier's "Deathwatch" starring Romy Schneider and Harvey Keitel. A year later he joined David Puttnam and Hugh Hudson to make "Chariots of Fire" starring Ian Charleson and Ben Cross.

He went on to line produce a variety of films for David Puttnam including Bill Forsyth's "Local Hero" starring Burt Lancaster and Peter Riegert, Roland Joffe's "The Killing Fields" starring Sam Waterston and Haing Ngor, and Roland Joffe's "The Mission" starring Robert de Niro and Jeremy Irons. He also produced Brian Gilbert's "The Frog Prince".

In 1987 he formed Applecross Productions and went on to co-produce Richard Marquand's "Hearts of Fire" starring Bob Dylan and Rupert Everett followed by Michael Austen's "Killing Dad" starring Richard E. Grant, Denholm Elliott and Julie Walters. In 1991 he co-produced Roland Joffe's "City of Joy" starring Patrick Swayze and Pauline Collins, and in 1992, executive produced Ridley Scott's "1492 - Conquest of Paradise" starring Gerard Depardieu and Sigourney Weaver.

In 1994 he co-produced Stephen Frears' "Mary Reilly" starring Julia Roberts and John Malkovich, for Tristar Pictures, followed by Luc Besson's "The Fifth Element" in 1996, which starred Bruce Willis and Gary Oldman, and was produced by his company Zaltman Films Ltd for Gaumont.

He then produced Jean-Jacques Annaud's "Seven Years in Tibet" starring Brad Pitt and David Thewlis, for Columbia Pictures, followed by Jon Amiel's "Entrapment" with Sean Connery and Catherine Zeta-Jones, for Twentieth Century Fox.

After this he executive produced Tony Scott's "Spy Game" for Universal Pictures which starred Robert Redford and Brad Pitt, followed by Anthony Minghella's "Cold Mountain" for Miramax starring Jude Law, Nicole Kidman and Renee Zellweger. He went on to produce Oliver Stone's "Alexander" for Intermedia starring Colin Farrell, Anthony Hopkins and Angelina Jolie followed by producing Darren Aronofsky's "The Fountain" for New Regency/Warner Bros. starring Hugh Jackman, Rachel Weisz and Ellen Burstyn, and Alfonso Cuarón's "Children of Men" for Strike Entertainment/Universal Pictures, and Timur Bekmambetov's "Wanted" for Universal Pictures.

Iain Smith is a board member of the Scottish Screen/Scottish Arts Council joint board, and is a director of the Edinburgh International Film Festival. He has served as a board member of the UK Film Council, on the Scottish Film Council, the Scottish

Film Production Fund, the Scottish Film Training Trust and as a Governor of the National Film and Television School. He is currently Chair of the Film Skills Strategy Committee, Deputy Chairman of the British Film Advisory Group and is a director of the Children's Film and Television Foundation.

### **About the RSE**

The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) is an educational charity, registered in Scotland.

Independent and non-party-political, our wide-ranging educational activities include:

- Organising lectures, debates and conferences
- Conducting major independent inquiries
- Providing educational activities for school students throughout Scotland
- Distributing over £2 million to top researchers and entrepreneurs
- Showcasing to the World the best of our research and development
- Increasing two-way international exchanges
- Encouraging, promoting and rewarding excellence
- Offering state-of-the-art conference facilities
- Publishing internationally respected learned journals

The RSE was founded in 1783 by Royal Charter for the “Advancement of Learning and Useful Knowledge”. It is regarded as Scotland’s National Academy of Science and Letters. Today it has around 1400 Fellows whose expertise encompasses the full spectrum of the sciences, medicine, engineering and technology, education, law, the arts, humanities, social sciences, business, industry, the professions and public service. This multi-disciplinary perspective makes the RSE unique amongst the United Kingdom’s learned societies. It is funded by a range of carefully selected charitable, public and private bodies. Its mission today is providing public benefit through the advancement of learning and useful knowledge. The Royal Society of Edinburgh, Scotland's National Academy, is Scottish Charity No.SC000470.

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