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Sandstorm launches ‘Slates’ competition for budding film writers



In a bid to nurture the film world’s writing talent, the UK production company will fully fund and produce the winning films at their state-of-the art production studios in Badbury in 2023 and 2024.

One teenager, one camera, and one hell of a passion for filmmaking. That’s how Sandstorm Films started life several decades ago.

Fast-forward to 2023 and the company’s not-so-teenage (sorry Tom) Managing Director, Tom Ward, has launched ‘Slates’ – a new competition aimed at the world’s film writing talent.

The prize? A chance to see their idea from slate to screen, fully funded and produced at Sandstorm’s Wiltshire HQ.

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity

‘When I started out shooting indies as a teenager, it was impossible to get access to decent kit,’ Tom remembers. ‘Just the idea of a digital camera or a laptop you could edit a film on was completely ridiculous because everything was prohibitively expensive back then. It was tough and I wonder now, with everything we have here at Sandstorm, just what you could create. That’s why we’re launching Slates – we’re giving artists a chance to do exactly that.’



Sandstorm’s call-out for great short-form ideas, be it a pilot or a short film, is open to film writers with existing scripts that are ready to move forward. And the good news is, the company is looking to produce one to three short-form slates every year on an ongoing basis, with a view to scaling up to feature film slates when the production schedule at Sandstorm allows.

The first set of entries will be accepted until August 31st, 2023, and can be submitted via the company’s website at sandstormfilms.com/slates.

Tom and a panel of Sandstorm experts will then select the first film to move forward with and begin production at their Badbury studio, with a total budget of £140,000 across all shortlisted films.

Short-form productions with no brand agenda

As Tom explains, £140,000 goes a long way at Sandstorm. 'It's substantially more than the BFI would spend on such films, and we want to compromise as little on quality and message as possible – with access to full studio, kit and set build. Our aim is to create a portfolio of incredible films, without any agenda other than incredible, human-made ideas, championing global script-writing talent.'



Sandstorm's studios, which are based between Bristol and London, are home to an inventory of kit including Arri Alexa 35, Mini, and LF. As well as full use of this equipment, writers will benefit from a full production team, studios, location kit and full postproduction facilities to see their idea through to screen – all while retaining the rights to it.

Tom remembers: 'In lockdown we moved into the studio to carry on producing our clients' films. The result, free weekends to film whatever we liked, we couldn't leave after all. What we shot on the

weekends soon became the ‘thing’ we were known for and the Sandstorm Lockdown Series was born. That is now history and it’s time to re-ignite that passion for film-making and to allow other, much more talented writers to utilise all the tools and team we have here at Sandstorm.’

Ends



Press: Sandstorm Films is a full-service video production company based in Badbury, UK. The company’s facilities are just 200m off the M4 at Junction 15.

To enter all you need is a one page ‘Slate’ synopsis and a finished short form script (short form should be below 20 mins and can be an end-to-end short film or a pilot)

For full entry requirements and terms and conditions, visit sandstormfilms.com.

For queries and more info, contact Jenny Chapman on jenny.chapman@sandstormfilms.com or visit sandstormfilms.com.

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