

# Graduate nominated for BAFTA



A film created by a world-renowned Sunderland graduate and based on memories of growing up in the Black Country during the era of Margaret Thatcher has been nominated for a BAFTA.

Ray & Liz, written and directed by Richard Billingham, who graduated from BA Fine Art in 1994, is in the running for the title of Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer.

The drama delves into photographer and artist Billingham's troubled childhood growing up in council flat.

## **Return to AboutUS**

The 48-year-old came to prominence through his candid 1996 photography book Ray's A Laugh, which documents the life of his alcoholic father Ray, and obese, heavily tattooed mother, Liz.

Focusing on his parents, their relationship, and its impact on Richard and his younger brother Jason, Ray & Liz is Richard's, who now lectures at University of Gloucestershire, first feature film.

It premiered at Locarno Festival in August last year where it won a Special Mention and is due for cinema release later this year.

The synopsis on the British Council Film's website says: "On the outskirts of Birmingham and the margins of society, the Billingham family perform extreme rituals and break cultural taboos as they muddle through a life decided by factors beyond their control.

"Turner Prize-nominated and Deutsche Börse Prize-winning artist, Richard Billingham, returns to the striking photographs of his family during Thatcher-era Britain.

"The film is based on Billingham's memories, focussing on his parents Ray and Liz, their relationship, and its impact on Richard and his younger brother Jason.

"At times shocking and laced with an unsettling humour, three episodes unfold as a powerful evocation of experience of growing up in a Black Country council flat."



Billingham is a recent recipient of The Douglas Hickox Award and Davies of the Breakthrough producer Award at BIFA 2018.

In 2006, Richard Billingham exhibited a series of photographs and videos inspired by his memories of visiting Dudley Zoo as a child. The series, entitled Zoo, was commissioned by Birmingham-based arts organisation, Vivid.

The artist spent time studying animals in zoos throughout the world, from the UK to South America, to produce the work which was exhibited at venues including Wolverhampton Art Gallery.