

## Blast Theory's *Bloodyminded* Sets A New Benchmark for Politically Engaged Live Cinema Helen W. Kennedy & Sarah Atkinson

*Bloodyminded* - Blast Theory's live interactive film, sits at the vanguard of experimental, technical, commercial and critical interest into 'live cinema phenomena'. Shot in one take, with one camera, and streamed live online and to cinema auditoria, audiences were able to interact online and via an app to influence and respond to the film's narration in real time. With *Bloodyminded*, Blast Theory successfully unified live cinema production, broadcast, exhibition, and audience interaction in which participants were witness to the moments of the film's making, whilst simultaneously being exposed and able to influence the mechanics of its creation.

This experience is situated in the context and infrastructure of live cinema broadcasts which have been evolving since 2003, first initiated by a David Bowie concert broadcast live by satellite, and made mainstream by the Metropolitan Opera and National Theatre's frequent live transmissions of their performances to cinemas. *Blast Theory* have long been leading and influencing this area of creative practice and artistic innovation with their interactive film *My One Demand* in 2015 which was shot in a single 90-minute take and which was streamed live online.

Hollywood cinema have even been getting in on the act with *Lost in London LIVE* – directed and starring Woody Harrelson - shot in one take, in real time, with one camera, entirely on location in London in the early hours of a January morning in 2017 whilst simultaneously broadcasting live to cinemas.

In contrast to digital viewing habits where streaming platforms engender modes of personal and highly individualised viewing, *Bloodyminded* afforded a collective viewing experience, bringing the audience in close proximity to the producers and the creators, in both form and content, with its themes of collective political and artistic activism. *Bloodyminded* presents a fictionalised account of a young woman's response to a world fraught with inequality, war and interracial conflict, in this context she seizes on the political protest of her idolized grandfather as a spur to make her own political statement – a solo, personal and risky attempt to bury her grandfather's ashes on the military base where he was imprisoned as a conscientious objector. At the moment at which the character live streams her protest actions via her mobile phone to her social media network, these actions are simultaneously live streamed to the *Bloodyminded* audience, *Blast Theory* successfully capture and define a zeitgeist of aesthetic and political intervention. Landmark historical, archival and personal testimony of violence, brutality and resistance are digitally sutured to our own contemporary moment in which young people are seizing the alliance building and mobilising possibilities of streaming technology across a spectrum of political engagement and activism.

Irrefutably, live cinema is now a significant sector within the global cinema ecosystem, developing new audiences, supporting technological innovation and prompting aesthetic experimentation. Award winning pioneers in this domain; *Blast Theory* continue to push these boundaries further with the politically and historically charged narrative *Bloodyminded*.