



URCHIN

Written and Directed by **Harris Dickinson**
Starring **Frank Dillane** and **Megan Northam**



Marketing material to be downloaded [here](#)

SHORT SYNOPSIS

URCHIN follows Mike, a rough sleeper in London, trapped in a cycle of self-destruction as he attempts to turn his life around. Raw and absurd, the film is a story about the strange patterns that keep pulling us back.



Produced by	Archie Pearch and Scott O'Donnell
Director of Photography	Josée Deshaies
Costume Designer	Cobbie Yates
Production Designer	Anna Rhodes
Hair and Make-Up Designer	Lisa Mustafa
Music by	Alan Myson
Casting by	Shaheen Baig
Edited by	Rafael Torres Calderón

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CINETIC MEDIA

Alexa Tombs

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Sunday May 18th
8.30am | Salle Debussy

Sunday May 18th
5.00pm | Salle Debussy

Monday May 19th
1.30pm | Cineum Aurore



PRODUCTION STORY

URCHIN is a deeply personal story for writer-director Harris Dickinson, shaped by his experiences growing up around people struggling with addiction and difficult circumstances they couldn't escape. Through his work with various homeless charities, Harris became closely acquainted with the realities and challenges faced by those affected.

As he explains: *"Being surrounded by these people made me realize that no matter how advanced we are as humans, we still have flaws and cycles that pull us back into the same behavioral patterns. In my local community in Walthamstow, there was an organization called Project Parker that helps with homelessness. They created a commune, providing a safe space, food, and welfare checks for unhoused individuals in the area. Around 2019/2020 I was becoming disillusioned with politics as a whole and wanted to take action on a more local level. So I began to lend a helping hand with very small localised things, it's where I really started to understand how many people in that community were incredibly vulnerable and in need of support —let down by society and the system."*

Harris also continually works with the volunteer-led charity Under One Sky and even helped establish its Hackney division: *"They have teams across London who go out each night to offer conversation, food, welfare checks, and referrals to those in need. Working with them brought me even closer to the issue."*

Determined to tell these stories and highlight the work of these organizations, Harris knew he wanted to set URCHIN in his own community: *"I started to sculpt and adapt my story around the things that were happening around me, really trying to understand the issue. I wanted to tell a story about a young man in my area. Stories about addiction, homelessness, and trauma can often feel heavy-handed, so I wanted to weave in comedy too—because with great tragedy often comes humour and levity. At its core, this is a story about cyclical behaviour. I worked on it for a long time, scrutinizing it with advisors from probation services, mental health support, and prison reform. I wanted to fully understand this world to find the story within it."*

The first time producer Archie Pearch worked with Harris on his short film 2003 he knew that he had found a unique creative partnership: *"Harris and I met eight years ago, and we hit it off immediately, realising we had very similar sensibilities."* Pearch co-founded Devisio with Dickinson in 2024: *"Urchin marks an exciting debut for Devisio and a bold step for Harris as a writer and director".* As a filmmaker, *"Harris embraces risk, bringing raw emotion and a distinct vision to the screen. Whilst there have been social realist films about homelessness, Harris' unique approach deploys both realism & something more poetic & unexpected - a kind of magical realism. Its a film that could only emerge out of his deep personal connection to these issues and his ongoing work in his community."*

BBC Film commissioned Harris' short film and was eager to support his feature debut. For fellow producer Scott O'Donnell, their involvement was instrumental in bringing the film to life: *"The script was developed with the support of BBC Film, and then BFI and Tricky Knot came onboard. They've all been exceptionally supportive-not just financially, but also critically-bringing immense enthusiasm and commitment to the project. We were under no illusions about how challenging this film would be to make, so it's been incredible to have partners who share the same passion we did."*

Harris drew from a wide range of influences when developing the script and throughout the filming process. As he reflects: *"I've grown up on the likes of Mike Leigh, Ken Loach and Shane Meadows. That's been my bread and butter. They're incredibly political filmmakers that hold a huge importance in film. I didn't want to make something that undermined the issues of the film or just showed them on a very basic, archetypal level. Working class cinema has the tendency to be bleak at times, and that's also a reflection of the stories out in the*



world that need to be told. My goal was to aim for something in the middle, combining elements of heightened cinema with the more grounded and investigated approach. That way, I think people can find a way into these themes whilst also going on a journey with a character, allowing them to laugh and fall with them too"

When reading Harris' script for the first time, Scott was struck by the balance of humour and heaviness: *"One of the things I loved about the script from the start was its use of humour and lightness in the face of very heavy subject matter. The levity pulls you in and connects you with the material—it almost sneaks up on you, drawing you into a film about serious issues, but still making it an enjoyable experience. The script was incredibly strong, nuanced, full of life, humanity, and humour, which made it immensely engaging. It took you on a real journey."*

MIKE: ONE OF MANY

During casting, Harris and the creative team immediately recognized that Frank Dillane brought something uniquely compelling to the role. As Harris reflects: *"Frank has such charm, but he also brought comedy and lightness, which were absolutely essential. Without that, the character could have easily become just a cantankerous, unruly stereotype."*

When developing the character of Mike, Harris drew inspiration from a variety of individuals he encountered while working with homeless charities. *"Mike was an amalgamation of several people—some I'd been close to, and others I'd worked with,"* he explains. *"But I think he truly became his own person when Frank came on board and brought him to life. There was a lot in the writing, but Frank found his own way into the character, making him feel like a real person."*

Harris further elaborates, *"Frank came on board about seven or eight months before we shot the film, and from the start, it was clear he was the right person for the role. I connected him with a few charities, and he did a lot of his own prep work. I emphasized that understanding the world of homelessness and addiction, even if you can't fully experience it, would really benefit his performance."*

Frank's preparation proved invaluable to his portrayal of Mike. *"Before this project, I had been working with the Single Homeless Project and had close friends who were vulnerable to rough sleeping and substance issues,"* he shares. *"I already had a deep connection to this world. But working with Under One Sky was crucial for meeting people, hearing their stories, and understanding their experiences."*

Despite his prior knowledge, Frank admits feeling nervous about playing a character so distant from his own life: *"With most characters, you owe them your body and soul for the time you're filming, but with Mike, I felt a real responsibility. His life felt very far from mine, and I had to catch up. I quickly saw how exhausting it must be to not have a place to call home. It's physically tiring, and there's no escape—you're always on guard."*

Archie praises Frank's dedication to the role and the depth of his research: *"When I met Frank, it was clear he completely embodied the role. The level of detail he brought to building Mike was profound. Watching Harris' cut for the first time, I felt everything I hoped to feel—I loved him, I hated him, I cried, I was frustrated. That's a testament to Frank's brilliance." Frank delivers an incredibly vulnerable and unexpectedly humorous performance that makes this film truly special.*

The character of Mike is not presented for judgment but exists within a failing system. As Scott explains: *"Harris made it clear from the start—this film isn't about judging Mike or anyone. It's not about judging the system either. It's simply showing the reality of what happens. It portrays the complexities of Mike's world, illustrating*



that, at times, even the best efforts aren't enough. Harris wanted to show that overcoming addiction is often a messy and difficult process, where people fall multiple times before they can truly conquer it."

THE CYCLICAL NATURE OF ADDICTION

When writing the script, Harris didn't want the primary focus to be solely the journey of an addict. As he explains: *"I didn't want it to just be about drugs because there's a narrative that every addict is destructive, or every homeless person is addicted to drugs. That's simply not the case. Yes, there is a high rate of drug use in that community, but often as a coping mechanism. I wanted to highlight that someone can revert to a darker version of themselves, whether that's through alcohol, drugs, or other means."*

For Frank, addiction is a deeply human struggle, and this is explored in a compelling way through the film: *"We're all addicted to all sorts of things. When you're cold, a whisky warms you up. When you're sad, substances can make you feel better. It's simple in many ways. The real question is what happens when you take away everything you have and see what crutches you rely on."*

In addition to the theme of addiction, Harris wanted to explore the complexities of self-help: *"I wanted to weave this in because it can be incredibly comforting and helpful, but at the same time, it can also be quite frustrating—especially the more pseudo-intellectual forms of therapy. The tape that Mike listens to exemplifies this—it can be positive, but at other times, he just thinks it's nonsense and doesn't want to hear it."*

For Archie, the film sparks conversations about topics that are often considered taboo. As he explains: *"It wasn't long ago that the Ex-Home Secretary claimed that homelessness is a lifestyle choice. And the truth is, most people would likely walk right past someone in that situation without a second thought. This film aims to create a dialogue about an urgent issue, presenting it in a unique way and showing a different perspective on people who are often overlooked. It's a vital story that needs to be told now."*

Scott notes the importance of recognising how easily this life can happen to anyone: *"You realise that most of us are just one or two instances away from being in the same situation. It only takes a few things to go wrong, and suddenly your life can take an entirely different direction."*

HARRIS: WRITER-DIRECTOR

Throughout the development process, Harris worked as an actor with various acclaimed directors, so was able to have conversations with them about his feature-debut: *'I was working with Ruben Östlund, Sean Durkin, Halina Reijn, who were all a massive help. I tried not to annoy them too much, but I was always thinking about my film and trying to get advice. They really helped me, and they still do. They would give me nuggets of information and encouragement, which is great as it is such a strange process making something and then opening it up for thoughts and ideas. Their insights were invaluable.'*

Harris also worked closely with his Director of Photography, Josée Deshaies, to prepare for the shoot: *"Josée is incredibly experienced. She told me it takes both intellectual and physical stamina. As a director, I quickly realised you need a lot of brain capacity, you're constantly being asked questions and making decisions. We made sure the script was fully explored with advisors. I watched a lot of films and discussed them with Josée, which helped us determine the artistic style we wanted to achieve."*



Given Harris's background as an actor, Archie was confident in his ability to work well with his cast: *"He's incredibly humble in his approach and just really understands actors. I've never seen anyone communicate and engage with them so well."*

Scott was equally impressed by Harris's directing abilities: *"What impressed me most was his diligence and how well he understood all the technical aspects of filmmaking. He was very decisive about what he wanted but also a fantastic collaborator. Everything he does is with such humility, and that inspires everyone around him to work hard and go the extra mile."*

Archie also commends Harris and the production team for their efforts given the tight shooting schedule: *"We had thirty-nine locations in twenty-eight days, and we mostly shot at night. The film was an emotional journey – it starts one way and then takes you on a completely different path. It was brutal, but we had the best time, with the best crew. We all became like a family. We couldn't have asked for better people."*

Frank was deeply grateful to have someone with Harris's level of dedication as the director: *"I had complete faith in Harris as an artist. You don't meet people like him every day. He's emotionally intelligent, driven, and truly believes in what he's doing. He wanted to explore different ways of telling this story, so whenever we encountered something too generic, we'd change it on the spot and try something new. He's definitely an actor's director, and I really enjoyed working with him."*

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Archie and the creative team were thrilled when Josée Deshaies joined the project: *"We adored her from the moment we met her. She's made incredible films, and she quickly connected with Harris. Her approach and sensibility were exactly what we needed. The visual style she and Harris chose was still and simplistic, focusing on single takes and wider framing. She's a phenomenal DOP."*

Harris agrees: *"Josée really supported and encouraged my desire to not do excessive coverage. We wanted something more specific and precise, and she helped me find my way into that style. We constantly challenged the material, always asked - 'how do we make this better?' It goes beyond framing and lighting, it's also her understanding of choreography and movement that made this so exciting for me."*

Scott adds: *"She had never shot in London before, which was exciting because we wanted to break away from the usual British social realist aesthetic. Her fresh perspective brought something new to the look of the film."*

Production designer Anna Rhodes' work was also vital in creating the film's world: *"Anna had the tough job of turning locations into real spaces. She made everything work within our budget, and she pushed us out of cliché colour schemes. She's a genius at what she does."* Scott praises Anna's ability to add warmth: *"Production design is often overlooked, but Anna did an amazing job balancing authenticity with a slightly heightened sense of reality."*

Harris was also deeply involved in recreating places from his past, like the hotel he worked at as a teenager. *"I worked with Anna to recreate some of these environments, the hotel where I worked while auditioning, and the South Bank, where I had a similar job as a litter picker when I was younger."*

The film's aesthetic was also shaped by hair and make-up designer Lisa Mustafa and costume designer Cobbie Yates. Harris reflects: *"Lisa had a tough job with Mike's character, shifting between his pre-prison and post-prison look. She found a way to do it beautifully and truthfully."* Similarly, Cobbie was crucial in avoiding



the typical British crime drama look: *“Cobbie wasn’t afraid of colour and pushed me to explore options that felt right for the story. His collaboration was vital.”*

Frank, who worked closely with Cobbie, adds: *“Cobbie was fantastic, interpreting my ideas and Harris’ script to help shape Mike’s look.”*

“Love can do amazing things when you bring it to a situation like this” - Harris Dickinson

Harris highlights the film’s deeper themes about the struggles many face within a failing system. Scott explains: *“This film makes us question how we treat others and hopefully provides something fresh. In these uncertain times, it taps into the need for human connection and inspires people to be better versions of themselves.”*

For Archie, the film poses daring questions: *“It’s challenging to watch, but I believe people should remain open to it. It will take you on a journey and make you reflect on things you’ve never considered before.”*

Frank hopes the film encourages understanding: *“We often prefer seeing ourselves as superheroes, but life is more complicated. This film sheds light on real, often overlooked lives and shows the richness of those stories.”*

Harris hopes the audience is immersed in Mike’s journey: *“I want people to truly understand Mike’s character and the journey he goes on. I want the film to spark conversation—whether good or bad—and provoke thought and compassion on important issues.”*



ABOUT THE CAST

Frank Dillane – Mike

Frank Dillane started acting at a young age, appearing in *HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE* and *PAPADOPOLOUS & SONS* before leaving school. He then attended RADA and, upon graduation, immediately booked the role of "Coffin" in Ron Howard's *IN THE HEART OF THE SEA* for Warner Brothers and then landed the lead role in *FEAR THE WALKING DEAD*, which became the biggest series premiere in cable history.

Since then, he has cemented himself as one of the UK's best and most versatile young actors with starring roles in Apple's *THE ESSEX SERPENT* opposite Claire Danes and Tom Hiddleston, opposite Beanie Feldstein in *HOW TO BUILD A GIRL* and in the most recent season of *THE GIRLFRIEND EXPERIENCE* to name a few. He can most recently be seen in Sally Wainwright's *THE BALLAD OF RENEGADE NELL* for Disney+, the limited series *JOAN* for ITV opposite Sophie Turner, and in Athina Tsangari's *HARVEST* opposite Caleb Landry Jones for Sixteen Films.

Megan Northam – Andrea

Megan Northam, a Franco-British actress, worked with Constance Meyer for her film *Robuste* then with Mikhaël Hers in *LES PASSAGERS DE LA NUIT* (Berlinale 2022). She then appeared in Jeanne Aslan and Paul Saintillan's first feature film, *FIFI*, and in Cédric Klapisch's *SALADE GRECQUE* series. In 2023, she was awarded the Séries Mania prize for female revelation. In 2024, she starred in *PENDANT CE TEMPS SUR TERRE* by Jérémy Clapin, *RABIA* by Mareike Engelhardt - for which she was nominated at the 2025 César Awards in the Female Revelation category - and *FARIO*, by Lucie Prost. She will next be seen in *Urchin* by Harris Dickinson and *L'ÉTRANGÈRE* by Gaya Jiji, as well as in the series *DES VIVANTS*, by Jean-Xavier de Lestrade.



ABOUT THE CREW

Harris Dickinson – Writer / Director

BAFTA-nominated British actor Harris Dickinson burst onto the scene in Eliza Hittman's 2017 Sundance hit *BEACH RATS*. He was nominated for 'Best Male Lead' at the Independent Spirit Awards, and 'Breakthrough Actor' at The Gotham Awards for his first screen role as 'Frankie'. Since then, Harris has gone from strength to strength and continued to build an impressive and varied career.

Harris can currently be seen in Halina Reijn's *BABYGIRL* opposite Nicole Kidman, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival. The film follows 'Romy' (Kidman), a high-powered CEO, as she puts her career and family on the line when she begins a torrid affair with 'Samuel' (Dickinson), her much younger intern. It is an emotionally charged drama that explores themes of self-discovery, relationships, and the complexities of human connection.

In 2023, Harris starred in Sean Durkin's *THE IRON CLAW* for A24 opposite Zac Efron and Jeremy Allen White and in the FX limited series *A MURDER AT THE END OF THE WORLD* from The OA creators Brit Marling and Zal Batmangliji, alongside Emma Corrin and Clive Owen. He also starred in the British independent feature film *SCRAPPER*, which won the World Cinema Dramatic Grand Jury Prize at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival. In 2022, Harris led Ruben Östlund's Palme d'Or winning, Academy Award and BAFTA-nominated satirical comedy film *TRIANGLE OF SADNESS*, alongside Woody Harrelson and Charlbi Dean.

Other film credits include *BLITZ*, *WHERE THE CRAWDADS SING* opposite Daisy Edgar-Jones, *SEE HOW THEY RUN* starring alongside Sam Rockwell and Saoirse Ronan, Matthew Vaughn's *THE KING'S MAN*, Joanna Hogg's *THE SOUVENIR: PART II*, among others.

Harris pursued acting and filmmaking from a young age, training in theatre with Raw Academy and participating in the LAMDA examination program. At the age of 16, he won council funding to write and direct his first short film. His short '2003' premiered at The BFI London Film Festival in 2021. In 2022, Harris was selected as one of the five EE BAFTA Rising Star Nominees.

Archie Pearch – Producer

Born and raised in London, Archie Pearch is a British producer who has trained under some of the industry's most established producers across multiple BAFTA and Academy Award winning projects.

He began his career at Working Title before joining Heyday Films in 2018 as assistant to David Heyman. During his time at Heyday, Archie worked across a slate of high-profile films including Quentin Tarantino's *Once Upon A Time in Hollywood*, Noah Baumbach's *Marriage Story* and *White Noise*, *Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore*, as well as Warner Bros.' *Wonka* starring Timothée Chalamet and Greta Gerwig's *Barbie*, starring Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling.

Beyond large-scale studio productions, Archie has developed a strong voice in the independent space. He has produced award-winning shorts selected for the BFI London Film Festival, BFI Flare, and the London Short Film Festival. His work has also received accolades including Best Short at New Renaissance, the Canadian Film Festival, and INDIE-Lincs International Film Festival.

His formative years collaborating with a diverse range of established and emerging filmmakers have shaped a creative sensibility that bridges the commercial and the arthouse. In 2023, Archie co-founded Devisio Pictures



with longtime collaborator Harris Dickinson, following the commissioning of Dickinson's debut feature *Urchin* by BBC Film. Backed by BBC, BFI, and Tricky Knot, *Urchin* is written and directed by Dickinson and is set for release in 2025.

Scott O'Donnell – Producer

Scott O'Donnell is a BAFTA winning Film Producer and Executive Producer who currently oversees the Film division at UK Production company Somesuch. Scott has worked as a producer for over 20 years with feature credits including Aneil Karia's debut feature film *SURGE* which premiered in Sundance with star Ben Whishaw being awarded the Special Jury Award for Best Acting.

His other feature projects include Leo Leigh's debut *SWEET SUE* which was released via Curzon in 2023 - and Beatrice Gibson's feature debut *LA NUIT* which is currently in post-production. Both films were backed by BBC Films.

He is also a producer on Harris Dickinson's directorial debut *URCHIN* – a co-production with Archie Pearch and Devisio Pictures. The BBC and BFI backed feature is due for release in 2025.

He has produced a host of award winning shorts including *BEAT* (dir. Aneil Karia), BIFA nominated *MOTHER* (dir. Leo Leigh), BAFTA nominated *WORK* (dir. Aneil Karia), BAFTA Winning *HOME* (dir. Daniel Mulloy) and *TROKAS DURAS* (dir. Jazmin Garcia) -which was awarded the US Jury Award for best Short Fiction at Sundance 2025. He also Executive Produced BIFA and Oscar winning short *THE LONG GOODBYE* (dir. Aneil Karia) and the Cillian Murphy starring *ALL OF THIS UNREAL TIME* (dir. Aoife McArdle).

Josée Deshaies – Director of Photography

Born in Canada, Josée Deshaies studied Art History in Italy before beginning her career as a DOP on Bertrand Bonello's first films. She splits her time between Paris and Montreal, working primarily on feature productions.

Recent credits include Ira Sachs' *PASSAGES* and Bertrand Bonello's *THE BEAST*.

Lisa Mustafa – Hair and Make-up Designer

Lisa Mustafa is an award-winning Hair & Make-Up Designer working across film, television, commercials and music videos. Her recent feature *BIRD*, directed by Andrea Arnold and starring Barry Keoghan and Franz Rogowski was released last year to critical acclaim. Prior to this, she collaborated numerous times with Aneil Karia on projects including *HAMLET* starring Riz Ahmed and Morfydd Clark, *THE GOLD* for the BBC and Paramount+ starring Jack Lowden and Dominic Cooper, and *THE LONG GOODBYE*, which won an Oscar for Best Short Film.

Lisa won a BIFA last year for Best Make-Up & Hair Design for *UNICORNS* directed by Sally El-Hosaini & James Krishna Floyd. Her upcoming credits include *THE MAN IN MY BASEMENT* directed by Nadia Latif for Protagonist Pictures and *Sacrifice* directed by Romain Gavras for Iconoclast.

Anna Rhodes – Production Designer

Anna Rhodes is a London-based Production Designer with a versatile background in film, TV, commercials and music videos. Films include Raine Allen-Miller's *RYE LANE* which earned her a BIFA nomination for Best



Production Design in 2023, and BIFA and BAFTA-nominated *BEING A HUMAN PERSON* directed by Fred Scott. Her award-winning shorts include *BOAT* for Film4, directed by Louise Stern, *METHOD* directed by George Belfield and *DIAGNOSIS* directed by Eva Riley. In 2022 Anna was named as one of Screen Daily's Screen Stars of Tomorrow.

Cobbie Yates – Costume Designer

Since transitioning into film and television costume design, Cobbie Yates has garnered significant recognition, including being named one of Screen Daily's Stars of Tomorrow in 2022 and a BAFTA Breakthrough Artist in 2024. His impressive portfolio includes co-designing costumes for the critically acclaimed film *THE SILENT TWINS*, which premiered at Cannes and starred Letitia Wright and Tamara Lawrance. Cobbie also designed costumes for Amrou Al-Kadhi's *LAYLA*, which had its world premiere at Sundance, his short films work includes Myah Jeffers *BATHSHEBA* starring Cecilia Noble and Naqqash Kalid's *FLINT* starring Rory Fleck Byrne.

On television, Cobbie's work can be seen in Sky's *The Fear Index*, ITV's *Without Sin*, Channel 4's *Queenie*, and Netflix's *Harlen Coben* series, *Missing You*. Upcoming projects include Anthony Wonke's narrative feature *In the Shadows* and Raine Allen-Miller's feature film *The Roots Manouvere* for Plan B Pictures.

Shaheen Baig – Casting Director

Working across film and television Shaheen has cast award winning work with new and established directors. Film credits include debut features from Anton Corbijn, William Oldroyd, Aleem Khan, Francis Lee, Sally El Hosani and Georgia Oakley. Established directors include Sean Durkin, Peter Strickland, Clio Barnard and Ben Wheatley.

Film work includes multi nominated and award-winning features *AFTER LOVE*, *MOGUL MOWGLI*, *ALI & AVA*, *CALM WITH HORSES*, *LADY MACBETH* and debut features from Georgia Oakley (*BLUE JEAN*), Mahalia Belo (*THE END WE START FROM*) and Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner *SCRAPPER*. Upcoming Features include *ANEMONE* starring Daniel Day Lewis, *THE THING WITH FEATHERS* and the *PEAKY BLINDERS* film.

In television Shaheen has cast all six series of *PEAKY BLINDERS* and all series of *I AM*, the female led anthology series for CH4. As well as award winning dramas *THREE GIRLS*, *BLACK MIRROR* (CH4), *MAN LIKE MOBEEN*, *THE VIRTUES*, *SOUTHCLIFFE*. Most recent television includes *THE DEATH OF BUNNY MUNRO*, *GET MILLIE BLACK*, *SHERWOOD 2*, *BOILING POINT* and *THE LISTENERS*.

Shaheen is a member of BAFTA, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the Casting Directors Guild of Great Britain & Ireland. A trustee for Open Door, a non-profit organisation that helps young people access drama schools and co-founder of the Casting Assistant Certificate course with the National Film & Television School, she works to encourage and support a more inclusive industry.

In 2023, Shaheen was awarded the Baird Medal by Royal Television Society for her contribution to screen.