

Foray into film

Giant step into the



BIG SCREEN OUTING: cast and crew of *Asbo Bus*, which will be shown at the BFI next week

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YOUNG PLAYERS: Ashanti Chaso, 13, acted in *Asbo Bus*. Inset, Keji Fagboyegun, 14, starred in and helped write *The Game*

By JENNY CLOVER

A SERIES of short films made by school kids and residents of a council estate will be shown at one of the most prestigious cinemas in the country.

Children from St Michael and All Angels Academy in Camberwell, and people living on the nearby Wyndham Comber Estate, have written and directed a series of nine short films about living in the area that will be shown at the South Bank's British Film Institute (BFI) on Tuesday.

It is the first time all nine films will be screened together after a small selection made by the estate's older residents were shown in September.

The 40 film-makers - aged between 12 and 73 - are members of FILM LAB, a film training workshop based in Camberwell and organised by Antonio Ribeiro and his company, Storymakers TV.

He came up with the idea for the project to try to rebuild fractured relations between pupils from the school and the community.

The films tackle issues like racism, alcoholism and antisocial behaviour.

Keji Fagboyegun, 14, of Wyndham Road, helped write and produce a five-minute film called *The Game*, along with two other people, and also starred in it.

He said: "I saw people handing out flyers about the project and thought I'd get involved. We came up with a film about three brothers and a sister whose mother is struggling to get by."

"One day she wins some money on a



CAMERAS ROLL: filming *Asbo Bus*

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scratch card and buys her kids a football, which leads on to a whole other story for them."

He said the film took about nine weeks to complete and was only finished last week.

Keji said: "I really enjoyed it all. Everyone came together and it was nice to do something a bit different."

Ashanti Chaso, 13, of Crystal Palace Road, East Dulwich, acted in one of the short films, *Asbo Bus*.

Despite a tiring day of filming she enjoyed her moment in the spotlight.

She said: "I had to play a school kid on a bus who gets into an argument with some adults for playing loud music. I would never be that rude if someone asked me to turn my music down, but it was fun to set it."

"The film is only 15 minutes long but it took 10 hours to film from all the different angles."

Ashanti has never acted before but is now keen to get into the film or

music business.

The Sacred Heart pupil said: "The whole day was tiring but lots of fun. It made me want to study drama, because we only have one lesson a week at the moment."

The 12-week project was funded by Southwark council's Joint Security Initiatives scheme. The budding film-makers were taught script writing, interviewing, filming, post production and even make-up techniques.

Mr Ribeiro said: "To see participants who have never made a film in their lives walk in with ideas and walk out with three short pieces of fiction and three documentaries to their name sums up what we are about."

In December, FILM LAB was a winner at the South London Press's Let's Do It awards.

● The BFI screening is invitation only but you can see some of the films on www.storymakers-tv.com

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