

# BELFAST FILM FESTIVAL 2023



FESTIVAL OF  
INTERNATIONAL  
FILM



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# WELCOME TO BELFAST FILM FESTIVAL

We are thrilled to present a fantastic line-up of new international film, an impressive selection which includes titles from every continent across the world. We open with Andrew Haigh's brilliant *All of Us Strangers* and close with *Poor Things* directed by the incredibly visionary Yorgos Lanthimos.

The programme showcases the best of homegrown talent with Terry Loane's touching *The Last Rifleman* starring Pierce Brosnan; our Long Short weekend; Haunted Ulster Live on Halloween night; and Mark Cousins' new documentary *Cinema Has Been My True Love: The Work and Times of Lynda Myles*. We shine a spotlight on the importance of collective bargaining and industrial action as the WGA (Writers Guild of America) strike comes to an end and the SAG (Screen Actors Guild) strike looks likely to reach resolution soon. We're so excited that novelist, Oscar nominated screenwriter and multi-award winning director John Sayles and producer Maggie Renzi will join us. John and Maggie will be the joint recipients the festival's prestigious Réalta award for Outstanding Contribution to Film, and they will present John's latest novel *Jamie MacGillivray: The Renegade's Journey*.

A big thank you to our funders and sponsors for their partnership and generosity in helping to make this 23rd edition of our festival possible - and thanks also to you our audience, for your loyalty and sharing your love of film with us. We look forward to seeing you all soon.

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**Michele Devlin**  
Director

I know, as film critic, I lead something of a charmed existence, travelling year-round all over the world from festival to festival, seeing amazing movies in incredible cities. But it doesn't always feel like that from the inside, when your luggage has been lost for the third time in a row and you don't have a toothbrush and it's Sunday and all the shops are closed. But then I come to Belfast, for the second time as International Programmer, and after a period of intense this-is-never-going-to-come-together panic, I get this moment of calm, right now, when I can look at the programme and think wow, how is it possible that practically every single one of my favourite unreleased films of the past year is here? But it's the truth. I'm so, so excited to share my charmed existence's biggest 2023 charms with you.

---

**Jessica Kiang**  
International Programmer

There's so much I'm looking forward to in the festival this year it's hard to know where to begin. But we have a fantastic work-in-progress screening from horror director Aislinn Clarke; a rare chance to see *The Boxer*, an independent film made in 1970s Belfast; artist Frank Sweeney's latest work about censorship in Irish broadcasting, and a whole night of film and music dedicated to the inexplicable magnetism of stones. Plus the quiz is back! And look out for the AV night WERK! in the amazing space that is Riddel's Warehouse. Also it would be remiss not to mention the 16mm event happening to celebrate the centenary year of the medium! I've run out of space so you'll just have to read this programme to find out the rest. See you at the cinema!

---

**Rose Baker**  
UK & Ireland Programmer





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# BELFAST FILM FESTIVAL TEAM



**Michele Devlin**  
Director



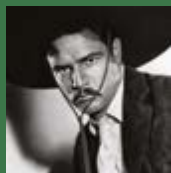
**Jessica Kiang**  
Programmer



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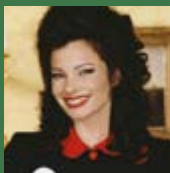
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# OPENING NIGHT FILM

## ALL OF US STRANGERS

DIR. ANDREW HAIGH  
UK | ENGLISH | 105 MINS | 2023

British filmmaker Andrew Haigh (45 Years, *Lean On Pete*, *The North Water*) has been quietly breaking and gently mending Belfast hearts since 2011, when we brought his gorgeous gay romance *Weekend*, in partnership with Outburst, to the festival. So it feels beautifully appropriate that we get to open our 2023 edition with his stunning new film, a loose adaptation of the 1987 novel *Strangers* by Taichi Yamada that Haigh seamlessly updates and transposes, turning it into an astonishingly subtle, poignant fantasy about love — familial and romantic — and its power to haunt.

There's also a lovely symmetry to starting BFF '23 with a Paul Mescal film, when we ended last year's edition with Mescal's outstanding turn in Charlotte Wells' *Aftersun*. However, as perfectly judged as Mescal is here, *All of Us Strangers* really belongs to Andrew Scott (*Fleabag*, *Sherlock*) who brings casual wit and extraordinary vulnerability to a performance that has to be one of the finest of the year. Adam (Scott) is a struggling screenwriter who embarks on a new relationship with neighbour Harry (Mescal)

just before he makes the dreamlike discovery that his parents (shimmering turns from Jamie Bell and Claire Foy) who were killed in a car accident 30 years prior, are alive and unchanged from the day they died, and living in his childhood home.

The premise allows Haigh, in tandem with his sublime quartet of actors, to cycle through all the colours of joy and grief, intimacy and loneliness, recrimination and forgiveness, as Adam moves between his parents and Harry like a man caught, as we all are somehow, between the ghosts of the past and the call of the future. And as a film of exquisite tenderness and feeling, for BFF '23, it's a soul-stirring promise of all that's to come.

— programme note by Jessica Kiang, Film Critic and Belfast Film Festival International Programmer

THURSDAY 2 NOVEMBER | 7.30PM  
CINEWORLD | £9.50/£8

# CLOSING NIGHT FILM

## POOR THINGS

DIR. YORGOS LANTHIMOS

IRELAND/UK/USA | ENGLISH | 141 MINS | 2023

**Distracted by the dreary business of being alive, seldom do we really think about what a strange and wonderful thing it is to have a mind and a body and a big, dumb, amazing world on which to let them loose. But the joyfully macabre, wild and sexy Poor Things, the Venice-winning phenomenon from director Yorgos Lanthimos (Dogtooth, The Lobster, The Favourite) adapted from Alasdair Gray's novel, has the power to remind us, and to brighten even the dulllest day.**

Bella (an utterly genius, unhinged and extraordinary Emma Stone) has the body of a young woman but the rapidly developing brain of a child, the result of a grotesque experiment by her doting, mad-surgeon adoptive father, Godwin (Willem Dafoe), aka God. God wants to keep Bella close and cloistered but, especially once she discovers the pleasure to be had from her body's secret places, her curiosity about the world outside God's rambling, steampunk-London mansion becomes too great to contain. Spirited away by caddish lawyer Wedderburn

(a hilariously meme-able Mark Ruffalo), whose plans to exploit her newfound sexual appetites come a cropper when he falls in jealous love, Bella embarks on a literal journey of discovery, a voyage out into the world that also reveals the vast horizons of intelligence and eccentricity within her.

BFF is honoured and, basically, giddy with excitement to be able to close our 23rd edition with a film that will be the talk of the upcoming Oscar season, but that contains a kaleidoscopically imagined message of feminine rebellion and rascally resourcefulness that will resound long, long after that.

— *programme note by Jessica Kiang, Film Critic and Belfast Film Festival International Programmer*

**SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER | 7.30PM**  
**CINEWORLD | £9.50/£8**



**DIR. TERRY LOANE**  
UK | ENGLISH | 100 MINS | 2022

This year's Gala Presentation is a heart-warming film based on a true story.

**Pierce Brosnan stars as Artie Crawford, an elderly WWII soldier who goes AWOL from his Northern Ireland residential home to attend the D-Day anniversary commemorations in France for the first time. As he makes his way through Ireland by train and to France by sea - stirring media interest in the process - the good-natured people he encounters on the way offer glimpses into their own lives as he remembers his own.**

Written and directed by Terry Loane and with a fantastic, international supporting cast that includes Clémence Poésy, John Amos and Jürgen Prochnow, as well as home-grown talents Tara Lynne O'Neill and Ian McElhinney. The film features a fine performance from emerging talent, Samuel

Bottomley, who incidentally also stars in one of this year's Belfast Film Festival International Competition selections, How To Have Sex.

The Last Rifleman is an odyssey through life experience, grief, and unexpected yet meaningful human connection.

We are delighted to present this film at the festival and will be joined by personnel and crew for this very special gala screening.

We will be joined by local cast and crew for this special presentation.

**THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER | 7PM**  
**CINEWORLD | £9.50/£8**



IN CONVERSATION WITH

## JOHN SAYLES AND MAGGIE RENZI

**In a year when Belfast Film Festival is themed around solidarity, strikes and workers' rights, it is an enormously appropriate honour that we get to host director John Sayles and producer Maggie Renzi as recipients of the BFF Réalta Award for Outstanding Contribution to Cinema.**

John Sayles and Maggie Renzi met in college in the early 1970s. After writing for Roger Corman on films like *Piranha* and *The Lady in Red*, Sayles got to make his first film as director, *The Return of the Secaucus Seven*, which told the story of notorious student protestors reuniting ten years later, and featured Renzi as an actress. It was on their film *Lianna*, a lesbian love story, that Renzi stepped up into the role of producer, helping to raise funds for a film that investors were reluctant to support. Since then, despite a degree of mainstream acceptance

that has seen Sayles twice Oscar-nominated for a Best Original Screenplay (for 1992's *Passion Fish* and 1996's *Lone Star*) they have forged together a truly independent and varied career, telling fearlessly political stories about real people facing real issues, from the urban tapestry of *City of Hope*, to the sci-fi infused racial commentary of *The Brother from Another Planet*, to directing three of the defining music videos of Bruce Springsteen's career on his *Born in the USA* album.

In this wide-ranging conversation, John and Maggie will discuss their decades-spanning, genre-hopping careers, the state of filmmaking and film-labour today and, in a time of increasing corporatisation and commercialisation, what advice they can give to the many emerging filmmakers who have been inspired by their uncompromisingly maverick example.

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 7.15PM**  
QFT | PWYC

# INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

After launching our International Competition last year, and having all sorts of first-year jitters, it was amazing to watch this new addition to BFF so quickly become a flagship fixture. Then a new kind of terror descended: how to follow up such a successful first edition? What if it was all a fluke?

Well, we're happy to report that the year to date has been just as rich in striking new movies from emerging filmmakers as last year was, and the challenge has been to confine the selection to just eight first or second feature-length films. Once again the lineup includes movies that premiered in festivals like Cannes, Berlin, Venice and Karlovy Vary, and that hail from across the globe, from Vietnam to Sudan, from Georgia to Sweden, from Spain to Mongolia, plus not one but two of the year's buzziest breakout debuts from the UK. We are so excited to present you with a competition selection that doesn't just reflect the best of global cinema right now, but looks to the future, and hints at the provocative, meditative, lyrical and satirical shape of things to come.

Co-sponsored by Yellow Moon, Belfast's leading post-production facility the prize fund of £10,000 will be divided into a £7,000 award for the director of the Best Film, plus two £1,500 awards, for Breakout Performance and Outstanding Craft Contribution, to be adjudicated by a panel of renowned filmmakers and industry insiders.

The winning film will be announced and shown again on the closing night of the festival, Saturday 11 November, QFT, 8.30pm.

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## INSIDE THE YELLOW COCOON SHELL

DIR. PHAM THIEN AN  
VIETNAM | VIETNAMESE | 182 MINS | 2023

"I cannot exist simultaneously in the light and in the dark," says a character in Thien An Pham's mesmerising debut, which won the coveted Camera d'Or in Cannes. But in a darkened cinema, when being under a projector beam feels more like being under a spell, you absolutely can.

After a freak lethal motorcycle accident that Thien (Lê Phong Vu) witnesses without knowing who was involved (an example of the film's superb long-take approach where the cutting is slow but every frame packed with incident) he discovers the victim was his sister-in-law. Thien now must take her body and her surviving five-year-old son to their countryside hometown. The gorgeous landscapes of rural Vietnam pale compared to the revealed landscapes within, as Thien encounters ghosts from his past and his nation's in a stunningly evocative film that envelops you in dreamlike darkness, while bathing you in transcendent light.

FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER | 5.30PM  
QFT | PWYC



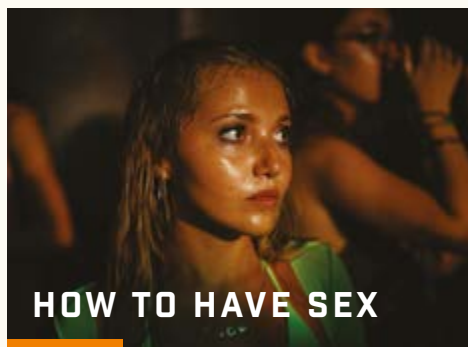
## TÓTEM

DIR. LILA AVILÉS  
MEXICO | SPANISH | 95 MINS | 2023

How much can a seven-year-old possibly feel in a single day? Lila Avilés' miraculous hubbub of a family drama suggests that if it's little Sol (an outstanding Naïma Senties), on the day her extended family gathers to celebrate her dying father's birthday, there is almost no limit.

Limitless, too, is the liveliness that Avilés, in just her second feature after the acclaimed *The Chambermaid*, can cram into every crowded frame, while still spending enough time on each face that you get to know everyone intimately. Every member of this big, boisterous family is navigating this difficult moment for themselves but, beautifully, also for each other. Joy, sorrow, cats, dogs, birds, bugs and babies —all of them are observed by Sol with the rapt, wishful fascination of a child learning how life coexists with death, and how endings, no matter how sad, are always also beginnings in disguise.

FRIDAY 3RD NOVEMBER | 6.15PM  
QFT | PWYC



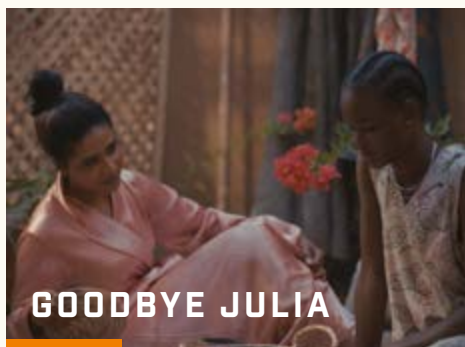
## HOW TO HAVE SEX

**DIR. MOLLY MANNING WALKER**  
UK | ENGLISH | 98 MINS | 2023

Winner of the top prize in Cannes' Un Certain Regard section, it's immediately apparent why Molly Manning-Walker's dynamic and ultimately devastating debut has been one of the major breakouts of the year.

16-year-old Tara (star-in-the-making Mia McKenna-Bruce) and her two besties go on a hedonistic, acid-neon holiday to Crete on a mission to drink and flirt their way through their end-of-school celebration. Events take a sinister but superbly judged turn, though, when an encounter on the beach in a haze of drunkenness and dubious consent has unforeseen consequences. That Manning Walker has managed to so adeptly navigate the minefield of post-#MeToo, Gen-Z sexual politics without preaching and without judging makes her remarkable first film into a melancholic, glow-in-the-dark anthem for all the hurt our teenage selves can hide beneath a glittery, sunkissed surface.

**THURSDAY 2 NOVEMBER | 8.45PM**  
QFT | PWYC



## GOODBYE JULIA

**DIR. MOHAMED KORDOFANI**  
SUDAN | ARABIC | 120 MINS | 2023

Two women are bound together by the tragedy that must eventually also tear them apart in Mohamad Kordofani's gorgeously modulated melodrama, which vividly reflects and refracts the social and political rifts that led to the division of Sudan.

In Khartoum, in the years leading up to the establishment of an independent South Sudan, Mona (Eiman Yousif) and Julia (Siran Riyak) represent the opposite sides of almost every divide: rich and poor, Muslim and Christian, north and south, light-skinned and dark. And yet despite a terrible secret that Mona is keeping from Julia when she hires her as her housekeeper, the women become friends. The rich cinematography and the effortless chemistry between the leads embellish a morality thriller so gripping that it's possible not to notice just how much you are learning about the root causes of strife in a country that in 2023 has tragically once again been plunged into civil war.

**TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER | 6.15PM**  
QFT | PWYC



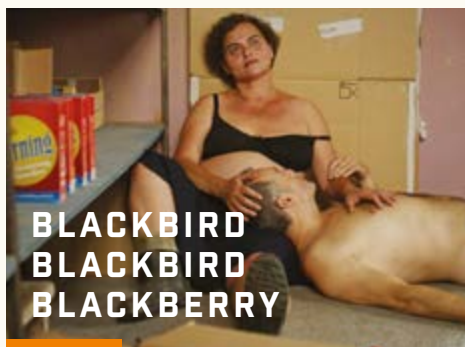
## THE HYPNOSIS

DIR. ERNST DE GEER  
SWEDEN | SWEDISH | 98 MINS | 2023

If it even slightly bothered you that the main character of *The Worst Person in the World* never really came close to being the worst person in the world, Ernst De Geer's first feature may just be the squirmy, satirical comedy of social awkwardness for you.

Ok, so Vera (Asta Kamma August) is not a genocidal terrorist or anything, but there are times when it does seem – especially to her hapless boyfriend André (*Worst Person's* Herbert Nordrum) – that she's at least the worst person in the room. Following a quit-smoking hypnotherapy session, Vera's personality changes in initially harmless but eventually downright alarming ways, especially considering she and André are about to attend a make-or-break entrepreneur networking event, at which Vera's sudden lack of social filter will lead to more than one hilariously uncomfortable showdown. But is Vera losing her mind or finding it?

THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER | 6PM  
QFT | PWYC



## BLACKBIRD BLACKBIRD BLACKBERRY

DIR. ELENE NAVERIANI  
GEORGIA | GEORGIAN | 112 MINS | 2023

Dark like a blackbird, tart like a berry, Georgian director Elene Naveriani's wryly funny coming-of-middle-age dramedy is a strangely reassuring tale of a woman who finds, through a process of change, that she actually really likes the person she already was.

A near-death experience sets 48-year-old Etero (a wonderful Eka Chavleishvili) on a journey of self-discovery, sexual exploration and the occasional sly jab of vindication against the other women of the village. They have written Etero off as a peripheral, pitiful, childless loner, marooned in solitude since the deaths of her overbearing father and brother. But, beautifully played by Chavleishvili, her expression always averted beneath dramatic brows, Etero is about to learn how to be the star of her own life in this droll, gently surreal ode to all the blessed women who, like blackberries, ripen a little later than the rest of the forest.

MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER | 6PM  
QFT | PWYC



## IN CAMERA

DIR. NAQQASH KHALID  
UK | ENGLISH | 96 MINS | 2023

**A sly, scabrous satire on the UK film industry — its tokenised representation of non-white talent, especially, and all its barriers to entry — Naqqash Khalid's pacy, clever debut announces not just his arrival, but also that of his terrific lead, Nabhaan Rizwan.**

Aden (Rizwan) is a handsome, dedicated, charismatic actor hustling for his big break while being constantly relegated to bit-parts by an industry that will grudgingly make room for maximum one British-Asian star at a time. His white flatmate Bo (Rory Fleck Byrne) an overworked, hallucinating junior doctor is distracted at best, but when lifestyle guru Conrad (a fantastically glib Amir El-Masry) also moves in, Aden begins to wonder if maybe the key to success is acting, not just during the gigs he irregularly books, but all the time. But if you fake it till you make it, when you make it, is it really you?

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 6.15PM**  
QFT | PWYC



## CITY OF WIND

DIR. LKHAGVADULAM PUREV  
MONGOLIA | MONGOLIAN | 104 MINS | 2023

**Among the skyscrapers and shopping malls of a modern, urban Mongolia that we rarely get to see onscreen, two quiet, slightly outsidersy teens make a fragile but formative connection in Lkhagvadulam Purev-Ochir's beautifully judged debut.**

When you think of a shaman, you think of a grizzled old-timer, dispensing cryptic wisdom to the faithful. But "Grandfather-Spirit" Ze (newcomer Tergel Bold-Erdene who won Best Actor in Venice's Horizons section), when not wearing his shaggy shamanic costume, is 17 and in his final year of high school in thrumming Ulaanbaatar. Then Ze meets Marala (Nomin-Erdene Ariunbyamba), at a ritual she is reluctantly undergoing to protect her during her upcoming heart surgery. A hesitant but meaningful romance begins which makes him question his place in the world, suspended as he is between Mongolia's rich, storied ancient traditions, and the nightclubs, instagrams and smart tech of modern life.

**WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER | 6.30PM**  
QFT | PWYC

## Inside the Yellow Cocoon Shell: Wide Awake and Dreaming

WRITTEN  
BY TIM  
GRIERSON

**How tired are you right now? Overstressed and under-rested, we're all grappling with some level of chronic fatigue. If we could close our eyes right now, we would — and, god, wouldn't that be lovely? Instead, we have to keep moving, have to get the next thing done. So many of us are asleep while standing up.**

It might seem perverse to suggest that Vietnamese writer-director Phạm Thiên An's remarkable feature debut is ideally suited for those fighting to stay awake. After all, this meditative drama — three hours long, full of languid long takes and tranquil shots of nature — is the epitome of "slow cinema." And isn't the main character himself in a constant battle with slumber? Thiên (Lê Phong Vũ), a young man who produces wedding videos, suffers from sleep issues, spending parts of the film's runtime randomly lying down, dozing off or seamlessly entering dream states. Even the whisper of a plot concerns loss of consciousness, though of a more permanent kind: Thiên's sister-in-law has died in a motorcycle crash, forcing him to care for her toddler Đào Nguyễn Thịnh. Leaving Saigon to return to the family's small rural village, Thiên sets out to bury Đào's mother and search for the boy's father, Tam — Thiên's brother — who went missing years ago.

Slow cinema is championed as a defiant response to mainstream cinema's caffeinated busyness, which insists that audiences be entertained within an inch of their life at all times. Proponents argue for the purity of these films' deliberate pace, as if by denying ourselves the expected instant gratification, we'll reach a state of transcendence. Which, yeah, okay, sure, that's true, but what slow-cinema fans don't always acknowledge is that, sometimes, slowness can be wonderfully sleepy. People equate "sleepy" with "boring," but what's really happening is a state of hypnotisation — a surrendering to a film's drowsy rhythms. We're letting go, giving in, succumbing. Why do we fear that sensation? What is so wrong about drifting off if you're being brought somewhere beautiful?

Exhaustion in many forms envelops *Inside the Yellow Cocoon Shell* in the same way that the lush, hushed countryside starts to seep into Thiên's pores. Spiritually and emotionally somnolent — alive but inert, disconnected from religious faith or romantic attachment — Thiên will gradually be roused from his existential stupor. But to gain that higher consciousness, first he, like the viewer, must go under.

I've seen *Inside the Yellow Cocoon Shell* twice, and both times I went in exhausted. The first was at Cannes, dashing across the Croisette, desperate to grab a free seat, convinced my lack of sleep and the hot weather would conspire to leave me snoozing. The second time, I was at home, recovering from a late night and settling into my most comfortable chair — no way I wasn't going to conk out once or twice. But both times, I was jolted back to life, energized by the film's beauty and formal command. We go to bed to be reborn — we go to the movies for the same reason. A cocoon is a temporary sanctuary until an insect is ready to face the world — Phạm creates a similar mental way-station for his weary journeyer. Aptly, Thiên ends the film flat on his back, restored, dreaming but at last awake.

*Tim Grierson is the Senior U.S. Critic for Screen International and the author of This Is How You Make a Movie.*

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## *Blackbird Blackbird Blackberry: Solitary Sister*

WRITTEN  
BY RORY  
O'CONNOR

Etero, the lead character of Elene Naveriani's *Blackbird Blackbird Blackberry* is a woman from Georgia, 48 years of age, living in a rural town, who thinks about aging the way most people think of a move to Santorini. I'm 35 years old, male, and have lived in cities my entire life. What chance do I have of understanding this film, let alone writing about it? The treacly old adage of cinema as an empathy machine might be out of fashion, but reports of its death have been greatly exaggerated.

Watching *Blackbird* at the Sarajevo Film Festival in August (where it deservedly won Best Film and Best Actress) was a revelatory experience — the rare multilevel thrill of discovering a film of unique color and ideas, as well as two remarkable talents in Naveriani and her fantastic lead.

Etero is played by Eka Chavleishvili, a Georgian actress with a face that can switch, quick as a flash, between owlish stoicism and childlike uncertainty. (Fans of Naveriani's *Wet Sand* and the work of Soso Bliadze whose *A Room of My Own* picked up a screenplay award at BFF '22, will already be well acquainted.) Chavleishvili's expressiveness is essential to *Blackbird*, a film that thrives on cautious joy and quietly earth-shifting revelations. The early twist is that Etero is still a virgin, and the erotic encounter we witness — a sensual rummage on the floor with a delivery man — and the subsequent romance, are both first-times. The drama progresses toward delicious paradox: will she settle for the hard-won serenity of her life to date or risk the turbulence of something new?

In one of the most thrilling moments, she does no more than duck in for a kiss. In another, she turns on the radio and slowly sways to the music. When the time comes to look back on the films of 2023, Chavleishvili's face in these disarmed moments might be the first thing I think of. Is there a more endearing romantic archetype than a stranger to passion being faced with all its thrills and spills for the first time? It's there in all the greats: the spiritual trio of *Far From Heaven*, *All That Heaven Allows* and *Ali*, *Fear Eats The Soul*; in Celia Jackson's eyes in *Brief Encounter*; in the way Meryl never seems to know what to do with her hands in *The Bridges of Madison County*. But what separates *Blackbird* is that Naveriani never feels it necessary to suggest that Etero would be any less fulfilled without these new experiences. When asked what she will do with all her time, she explains, "I will sit and cross my legs. Read a book."

Cinematic loners are not always opposed to their loneliness. Indeed, acceptance of it is one of the deepest veins of the American Western. But loner women in that genre are less likely to be granted the benefit of the doubt than their cowboy counterparts. And even the great Yasujiro Ozu who spent many decades making films about widows who eventually choose solitude over companionship rarely gave us a character who does so with Etero's winning defiance. That is *Blackbird's* greatest novelty: no matter how much her will is tested or what things Naveriani leaves unresolved, just as she is and always will be, Etero is enough.

*Irish-born, Berlin-based Rory O'Connor is regular contributor to The Film Stage, with bylines also in Frieze, The Playlist, and CineVue.*

# NEW CINEMA



A carefully curated selection of the most exciting as-yet-unreleased new films of the year, encompassing everything from well-known world-cinema auteurs and major festival-winners to breakout first-timers, this year's New Cinema lineup is the place to catch early the films that everyone will be talking about in the coming months.

So it's very much the selection to check out if you want the bragging rights of being ahead of the curve, if you're the kind of cinephile who gets consulted by friends for advice, or if you simply enjoy sitting in smug, serene silence while people discuss new releases thinking "*That* film? Oh I saw that ages ago at the Belfast Film Festival."



DIR. CHRISTOS NIKOU

AUSTRALIA/USA | ENGLISH | 113 MINS | 2023

The most purely romantic film in our programme, and maybe the most purely romantic film of the year, the funny, yearning second feature from Greek director Christos Nikou (*Apples*) stars Jessie Buckley (*Men, I'm Thinking of Ending Things*, *The Lost Daughter*) and Riz Ahmed (*Four Lions*, *Sound of Metal*, *Mogul Moggli*) as co-workers resisting their growing, glowing mutual attraction because in the parallel world they inhabit, a couple's love is a test that they have not passed.

Unbeknownst to her 100%-certified love-compatible boyfriend Ryan (*The Bear's* Jeremy Allen White) Anna (Buckley in a beautiful, quiet turn that shows off her approx. 400 different types of smile) has taken a job at the Love Institute, which teaches couples how to deepen their bond to better their chances of achieving their coveted, in-love certification. But her eyes cannot help but stray to fellow technician

Amir (Ahmed, at his most soulful and gorgeous) with whom she shares a rapport and a flickering, electric connection despite, or perhaps because of, his bad jokes and solo dancing — the film also boasts a terrific soundtrack ranging from Yazoo's *Only You* to Frankie Valli's *The Night* to Christopher Stracey's plangent piano-based score.

Shot on warmly textured, autumnal 35mm by master cinematographer Marcell Rév (*White God*, TV phenomenon *Euphoria*) this is a sci-fi rom-com that doesn't adhere to any of those formulas, instead tracking with a lovely ache of longing, a hesitant, slow-build, science-defying romance, in which all the sweetness is edged with just a little pain, because love that doesn't hurt a bit is hardly love at all.

THURSDAY 2 NOVEMBER | 6.15PM  
QFT | PWYC



DIR. JUSTINE TRIET

FRANCE | FRENCH/ENGLISH/GERMAN | 151 MINS | 2023

**Justine Triet's tense and fluid courtroom thriller won the Palme d'Or at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival and from its gripping beginning though its lurching revelations — navigated by an astonishing Sandra Hüller (also the star of Jonathan Glazer's outstanding BFF '23 selection *The Zone of Interest*) — right to its scorchingly ambivalent ending, it's easy to see why.**

A man falls to his death from a window of his isolated Alpine home, but did he trip, did he jump or was he pushed? There are two witnesses: the man's son, Daniel, who is blind and Daniel's dog Snoop who is, well, a dog — and neither of them were nearby at the time. The only surviving person who can know what really happened is the man's wife, Sandra (Hüller), but one year later, she is on trial for his murder.

From this evocative premise there spirals out a drama of increasing psychological complexity. Sandra

maintains her innocence. Daniel, already bereaved, has to testify knowing that his words could also deprive him of his mother. But is the trial really for murder or for other unspoken social crimes like being more successful than your spouse, or having an unstable marriage, or being a less-than-traditional homemaker? Every time the court's sympathies swing one way, Triet's fiercely smart movie swings us another, even as Sandra code-switches between English, German and French (her character is a celebrated author and translator) and makes us wonder if this fascinatingly unreadable woman uses one language to lie in and another to tell the truth. If there even is a truth to discern, beneath the crisp and coldly perfect surface of a new fall of snow.

**FRIDAY 3 NOVEMBER | 8.30PM**  
QFT | PWYC



## THE TASTE OF THINGS (AKA THE POT-AU-FEU)

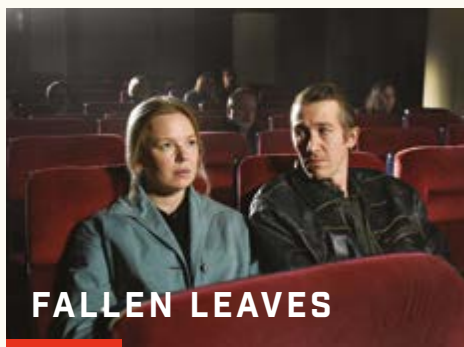
DIR. TRAN ANH HUNG

BELGIUM/FRANCE | FRENCH | 145 MINS | 2023

A pot-au-feu is a traditional French family dish similar to a stew. It's the rustic original title of Vietnamese-French director Trần Anh Hùng's mouthwatering period drama, in which Juliette Binoche and Benoit Magimel play a cook and a connoisseur respectively, whose shared love of food has matured into simple shared love.

Dodin (Magimel) has always wanted to marry Eugénie (Binoche) but while she has been his lover, building her reputation as a chef from within his large household, she has always refused his proposals. Perhaps, when Dodin finally cooks for her, she will change her mind? The two great French actors have never been more *charmant*, but whether it is they or the smorgasbord of sumptuously shot dishes that are the real stars is up for debate. Don't come hungry. Or do — you're going to leave that way no matter what.

**SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER | 6PM**  
QFT | PWYC



## FALLEN LEAVES

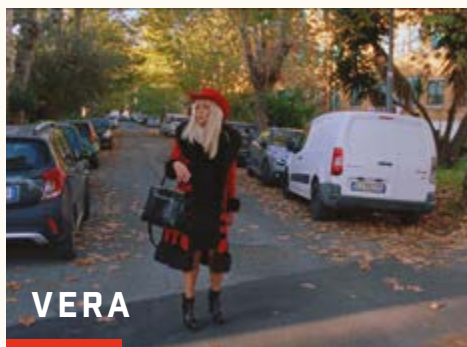
DIR. AKI KAURISMÄKI

FINLAND/GERMANY | FINNISH | 81 MINS | 2023

Like only a handful of other filmmakers — among them Jim Jarmusch, who is wittily referenced here — Finnish legend Aki Kaurismäki (*The Other Side of Hope*, *Leningrad Cowboys Go America*) has a sensibility so singular, film culture has had to adjectivise his name in order to describe it.

And full of droll, deadpan scenarios in which taciturn characters act out beautifully observed little pen-portraits of melancholic — and often alcoholic — absurdism, *Fallen Leaves* is certainly entirely *Kaurismäkian*. But there is also just a tincture of something new in the mix in his Cannes Jury Prize-winner: the story of two lonely blue-collar workers tending a fragile connection, pivots into an unexpectedly wise and hopeful little romance, in which the consolations of meeting a potential mate in middle-age outweigh the obvious drawbacks. These leaves might be falling, but there's a sniff of spring in the air.

**SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER | 6.30PM**  
QFT | PWYC



## VERA

**DIRS. TIZZA COVI & RAINER FRIMMEL**  
AUSTRIA | ITALIAN | 115 MINS | 2022

**In Tizza Covi and Rainer Frimmel's fantastic docufiction, Venice Horizons Best Actress-winner Vera Gemma plays a version of her real self — which seems part-fictional anyway, given her surgical enhancements, blonde extensions and flashy, Barbie-cowgirl sense of style.**

Vera is the actress daughter of Spaghetti Western star Giuliano Gemma, a fact she simultaneously embraces and tries to transcend, along with the judgements of those around her. When she's involved in an accident that injures a young child, she becomes closely entwined with the child's struggling family, and seems to find the genuine connection she yearns for. But, featuring another celebrity daughter in Vera's friendship with Asia Argento, *Vera* is a character portrait that moves in unpredictable ways, undoing our expectations and prejudices, as we emerge with a profound admiration for a remarkably lovely person, who despite her loneliness, continually gives love out into a world that doesn't always love her back.

**FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER | 6PM**  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | PWYC



## MONSTER

**DIR. HIROKAZU KORE-EDA**  
JAPAN | JAPANESE | 125 MINS | 2023

**After journeying to Korea for *Broker* (BFF '22) Palme d'Or-winning director Hirokazu Kore-eda (*Shoplifters*) returns to his native Japan, and to his recurring themes of family, childhood and generational alienation with the deeply moving *Monster*, which won him both the Queer Palm and the Best Screenplay award in Cannes 2023.**

Here, Kore-eda's trademark compassion is infused into the deceptively poignant story of a single mother (the great Sakura Andō) who confronts a teacher after she notices abrupt changes in her son Minato's behaviour. But the reasons for Minato's sudden secretiveness are both more heartbreaking and less sinister than they initially appear, having much to do with his neglected but sweetly ebullient friend Hori, and the secret world the boys construct. Accented by a beautiful swan-song score from the late Ryuichi Sakamoto, *Monster* is a light-and-life-filled puzzle box that becomes more haunting the closer you come to solving it.

**TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER | 9PM**  
QFT | PWYC



DIR. JONATHAN GLAZER

UK/POLAND | ENGLISH | 106 MINS | 2023

**There is a famous legend that in Auschwitz, no birds sing, which suggests the kind of uncanny, unnatural absence that pervades the eerie atmosphere of Jonathan Glazer's *The Zone of Interest*. Loosely based on a novel by the late Martin Amis, the film won the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival, and already feels like, in the future, it will be regarded as perhaps the single most significant cinematic achievement of the year.**

Unfolding almost entirely in a house built right up against the outer wall of Auschwitz, with the death camp's chimney stacks smoking in the background, *Zone* unfolds to the rhythm of domestic routine: housekeeping, tending to the garden, supervising the servants, preparing for a relative's visit. In the house live camp commandant Rudolf Höss (Christian Friedel), his wife Hedwig (Sandra Hüller, who also leads BFF '23 selection *Anatomy of a Fall*), and their

family. But as the score by Mica Levi descends like a shiver and the detached, chilly frames become sharper, more alien and more precise, what we notice more than anything is what is not there: warmth, decency, humanity.

As the Holocaust begins to pass out of living human memory, we are faced with the question of how to memorialize its devastation — how to *never forget*. Glazer, already established through *Sexy Beast*, *Birth* and *Under the Skin* as one of the master filmmakers of our time, proposes one radical route to remembrance: by looking obliquely but with forensic intelligence to one side of the atrocity, he does not just powerfully evoke the gaping absence at the centre, he makes it unforgettable.

**SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER | 8.45PM**  
QFT | PWYC



## THE SHADOWLESS TOWER

DIR. ZHANG LU  
CHINA | CHINESE | 144 MINS | 2023

**A sensitive, amusing look at the mortifications and consolations of middle age, Chinese director Zhang Lu's latest film is also a highly unusual tribute to Beijing, a megacity rarely portrayed with this kind of warmth and serendipitous intimacy.**

Gu (Xin Baiqing) is a failed poet turned restaurant critic, who is going through a very polite midlife crisis. His mother has recently died, he is estranged from his wife and his father, and only occasionally sees his adorable little daughter Smiley. He is at an impasse in the middle of his life, neither rooted to the past behind him, nor discerning the future ahead, as though, just like the legend attributed to the White Pagoda tower near his home, he casts no shadow. Then he strikes up a sorta-romance with a free-spirited photographer, and through her, and through Gu's own gentle prodding, the world begins to turn again.

**SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER | 2PM**  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | PWYC



## LIE OF THE LAND

DIR. JOHN CARLIN  
NORTHERN IRELAND | ENGLISH | 80 MINS | 2023

**Nigel O'Neill and Ali White play an ageing farming couple in dire financial straits. With few options left, they decide to escape their crippling debts and make a deal with a mysterious stranger who promises to help them find a new life in the sun. Things don't go to plan however, and their devious scheme soon descends into outright chaos.**

This tense thriller from Derry director John Carlin won the Best Irish First Feature at the 2023 Galway Film Fleadh, featuring a plethora of great performances from familiar faces. *Lie of the Land* is a fine addition to the recent Northern Irish canon of gritty rural thrillers.

This screening will be followed by a Q&A with cast and crew.

**TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER | 8.30PM**  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | PWYC



## SILENT ROAR

DIR. JOHNNY BARRINGTON  
UK | ENGLISH | 90 MINS | 2023

**Described as a “tale of surfing, sex and hellfire” this funny and stylish film set in Scotland’s Outer Hebrides is the story of a teenage boy’s confrontation of grief in a small coastal town.**

Northern Irish actor, Louis McCartney, stars as Dondo as he dreamily drifts on the waves on his surfboard searching for his father who was lost at sea. Giving him a dose of reality is his confident and outspoken friend, Sas, played with perfectly pitched humour and warmth by Irish actor, Ella Lily Hyland. A wider ensemble cast makes up the charismatic village community, whose eccentricities and religious fervour make the film a colourful and creative, tongue-in-cheek look at the clash between tradition and teenage discovery. Fresh from opening the Edinburgh Film Festival, this is a film with strong creative ties to Northern Ireland and this will be its Island of Ireland premiere.

We’re thrilled that the composer of the film’s brilliant score, Bangor’s own Mercury Prize nominated Hannah Peel, will be joining us alongside the film’s director and producer for a Q&A after the screening.

**MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER | 8.30PM**  
QFT | PWYC



## EMBERS

DIR. CHRISTIAN COOKE  
UK | ENGLISH | 102 MINS | 2023

**Ruth Bradley gives a tour-de-force as a sex surrogate assigned to a man with a violent past in this superbly performed, tense psycho-sexual drama. Co-lead Christian Cooke also directs, and approaches his directorial debut with a maturity and sensitivity that a seasoned filmmaker would envy. Clearly an actor’s director, the nuance and physicality of the performances enhance the intelligent dialogue from writer, Dave Florez, while the starkness of locations acts as a blank page with which to create a story.**

The film conjures questions about the burden of emotional labour, the threat of male violence against women, hidden vulnerability, inner strength, human connection and the prospect of rehabilitation. With a small but strong supporting cast including David Wilmott (Ordinary Love) and Clare Perkins (Medusa Deluxe).

The filmmaker will be in attendance at this screening.

**SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER | 12.15PM**  
QFT | PWYC



## NOT A THING

DIR. FANNI SZILÁGYI  
HUNGARY | HUNGARIAN | 90 MINS | 2022

Films about identical twins often take the tricky route, delving into doubling and doppelgänger theory. But Fanni Szilágyi's fresh-faced, confident debut uses the idea to probe identity and womanhood in a more spontaneous way, even if there remains a shiver of the uncanny, in the way two people so alike can remember the same events so differently.

Éva and Adél are both played by Natasa Stork (*Preparations to be Together for an Unknown Period of Time*) who effortlessly differentiates the women in every gesture. Adél is a junior doctor about to emigrate, who feels socially inferior to her glamorous, pregnant sister Éva and her seemingly perfect, wealthy suburbanite life. When both women are drawn to the same man, a reckoning beckons, but Szilágyi gratifyingly keeps the focus on the side of the love triangle that extends between the two sisters, who perhaps share more than a face after all.

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 10.30AM**  
QFT | PWYC



## ALL TO PLAY FOR

DIR. DELPHINE DELOGOT  
FRANCE | FRENCH | 112 MINS | 2023

Belgian-French actress Virginie Efira (*Benedetta, In Bed With Victoria, Other People's Children*) has made her recent career defining a role we used to lament did not exist: the woman in her forties who is attractive because of, not despite, the mileage of her maturity, and who manages to retain sense of herself despite the responsibilities of family life.

Delphine Deloget's moving debut, *All To Play For* (more accurately titled *Rien à Perdre / Nothing to Lose* in French) gives us an electrifying example of this archetype in Sylvie (Efira) the loving, busy single mother of a teenage boy and a younger son who, in an enraging example of state overreach, has the younger boy taken away from her by social services. Sylvie's attempts to reunite her family form the narrative of this absorbingly humane melodrama, but it's a deeply empathetic Efira who brings the fire and the fight.

**FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER | 12.30PM**  
QFT | PWYC



**DIR. WILLIAM OLDROYD**  
UK/USA, ENGLISH, 96 MINS, 2023

**Director William Oldroyd gave us a complex, dramatic heroine for the ages when he cast Florence Pugh in her breakout role in his debut film *Lady Macbeth* (2016). And now he gives us two — played by a dazzling Anne Hathaway and a deceptive Thomasin McKenzie — in his fabulously twisted, slyly subversive noir follow-up *Eileen*, an adaptation of bestselling author Ottessa Moshfegh's novel.**

In 1960s New England, Eileen (McKenzie) is a dowdy misfit who works in a boy's penitentiary and lives a humdrum, sexless life with her alcoholic, constantly belittling father (the always terrific Shea Whigham). But one day a new prison psychologist arrives in the impossibly glamorous form of Dr. Miss Rebecca St. John (Hathaway), a gorgeous sophisticate in clicking heels and a peekaboo scoop of Marilyn-blonde hair, and Eileen is immediately transfixed. Befriended by

Rebecca, her life — and her appearance — changes radically but little does Rebecca suspect that Eileen is a far more ruthless, and possibly perverse, personality than her mousiness initially suggested.

In its gorgeously rich cinematography and costuming, and in the storyline of attraction between a worldly older woman and younger naïf, the film has unmistakable echoes of Todd Haynes' *Carol*, but this is a curdled version of that kind of love story, in which shocking revelations and unforeseen twists (including an extraordinary cameo from Marin Ireland) suggest that not all journeys of self-discovery are the same. Sometimes, it's a very strange, very dark self that is discovered.

— programme note by Jessica Kiang, *Film Critic* and  
*Belfast Film Festival International Programmer*

**FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER | 9.15PM**  
QFT | PWYC

# SUNFLOWER

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Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*



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## Tótem: Where I End and You Begin

WRITTEN  
BY LESLIE  
FELPERIN

Lila Avilés, the director of *Tótem* said in a recent interview, “I totally don’t want to be the one-location director.” But both of her two feature films take place mostly in single, stand-alone locations. Her debut, *The Chambermaid*, unfolds entirely within the skyscraper hotel where the housekeeper-protagonist works. She steps beyond the revolving front door into the street only at the very end.

*Tótem* mirrors that transition by having seven-year-old Sol (Naima Senties) arriving at the suburban Mexico City house that is the centre of her family’s life and staying put for the rest of the movie. But where the high-rise in *The Chambermaid* feels glassy and cold, the house in *Tótem* is entirely enveloping, a multi-chambered womb full of clutter and crumbs, memories and animals and art. Cakes burn in the oven, lanterns burn in the garden. By the end, it’s further packed with relatives and friends, there to celebrate what’s very likely the last birthday of Sol’s father Tono, an artist in his 30s who is dying from terminal cancer. And yet, despite this bleak destination just visible on the horizon, the film is full of humour and charm. It’s the movie equivalent of a hug.

*Tótem* was shot during Covid-19 lockdown, with cast and crew practically living together. Though the pandemic is never mentioned, the film is a microcosm of what was going on everywhere in 2020-22 as people retreated into protective bubbles where the sick, like Tono, could be nursed, while children were schooled and minded by distracted adults. Sol’s mother Lucia (Iazua Larios, Senties’ aunt in real life) leaves her kid for the day with Tono’s sisters, bossy Alejandra (Marisol Gase) who has teenage kids, and secret alcoholic Nuria (Montserrat Marañón) who has a little girl, Ester (Saori Gurza), a few years younger than Sol. As Ester and Sol play and draw and wait for the excitement to start, the aunts stress about the arrangements for the party. They bicker and console and debate whether to honor Tono’s wishes to stop treatment or look for funding for more c-h-e-m-o-t-h-e-r-a-p-y — a word that has to be spelled out so the kids won’t ask questions.

In another room, their psychoanalyst father Roberto (Alberto Amador) harumphs and grumbles through an electro larynx while clients pour out their problems, spied on by the little girls. You’d think he’d remember to close the door! But privacy is not a priority with this brood. Avilés captures that intense, almost stifling intimacy of families, a feeling of being so tightly entwined with brothers and sisters, parents and children, it’s hard to know where you end and they begin, much like the ritual object of the title, a trunk of wood with faces carved into it in succession.

Near the end of the film, Sol and Lucia become a living totem of sorts during a home performance for Tono, putting on a little clown drag show with Sol perched on her mum’s shoulders. It’s the knockout emotional climax of the movie: the point of the party may be to celebrate Tono, but *Tótem*, which Avilés dedicates to her own daughter, feels more like a celebration of female energy in all its dirty, bitchy, brilliant glory.

*Leslie Felperin writes about film (and other stuff) for The Hollywood Reporter, The Guardian and The Financial Times, among other outlets.*

# KILL YOUR JOB BEFORE IT KILLS YOU

A different kind of *Not Safe For Work*, this section of BFF '23 is the one your boss definitely does not want you to explore.

2023 has been a year of strikes and significant social protest movements all around the world. In part, we surmise that's down to the very different experience of life we all had during the years of the pandemic, which fundamentally altered the way many of us had to approach our jobs. Perhaps it made us question, as we seldom had before, the structures and hierarchies under which we spend so much of our lives labouring,

whether engaged in the endless, stressful hustle of gig work, or the daily — but equally stressful — grind of an office routine.

Come and be energised and galvanised with two of the most acclaimed, entertaining, original and subversive new films of 2023, a classic American crime drama presented as part of the ongoing Normal Cinema Club and an archive film montage of Ulster's working history set to a live DJ set in the spectacular industrial surroundings of Riddel's Warehouse.





DIR. RADU JUDE

ROMANIA | ROMANIAN | 164 MINS | 2023

**It's rare that the film which (in your humble BFF International Programmer's opinion) is the best film of the year also has the best title, but who could possibly not expect as much from a film called *Do Not Expect Too Much From the End of the World*?**

From the blazingly smart, scabrously funny and deeply furious mind of Romanian madman Radu Jude, who won the Berlinale Golden Bear for his last film *Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn* (BFF '21), comes an unquantifiable, uncategorisable, monumental achievement in mischief-making.

We follow Angela (loose-cannon lightning rod — yes I know that's a mixed metaphor and I don't care — Ilinca Manolache) an overworked and underslept production assistant, through a whirlwind day of gofer work, minding her mother, necking Red Bulls, cracking jokes, driving till she drops and recording

obscene Tiktok videos in the satirical persona of Bobita, a character she bases on celebrity misogynist and accused sex trafficker Andrew Tate.

This is one of the most inventive and entertaining films of the year — even incorporating cameos from Nina Hoss and Uwe Boll and fragments of a classic 1981 Romanian movie. But underneath all the high- and low-pop-cultural riffs, it is righteously angry too, not just at the way corporate capitalism exploits the people who do all the actual work, but at the distractions we've developed as a coping mechanism.

They might help numb the pain of everyday drudgery and gig-economy instability, but they mean that the best and brightest among us are too busy doom-scrolling social media to notice that the house is on fire and the landlord is sneaking away with the petrol can. *Do Not Expect* is a funny, freaky, formidable poke in the ribs, to get us to wake up and smell the smoke.

**SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER | 12.15PM**  
QFT | PWYC



## THE DELINQUENTS

DIR. RODRIGO MORENO  
ARGENTINA | SPANISH | 180 MINS | 2023

Argentinian director Rodrigo Moreno's ticklish saga follows the surreal intertwined journeys of two colleagues who collude in stealing back their lives from the bank where they work.

Morán (Daniel Elías) is a clerk in a scruffy local bank, which one afternoon around quitting time, he robs. This is among the weirdest heists in history – not only does Morán expect to get caught, he has also taken only the precise amount he would have earned had he stayed at work until retirement age. Calculating he'll go to prison for three years but after that will be free to never have to work again, all he needs to do now is recruit co-worker Román to stash the cash until he's released. Morán believes he has it all figured out. But where Moreno takes his increasingly strange, increasingly deadpan-hilarious story of doubling and destiny and dumb luck, is deliciously, wildly unpredictable.

SATURDAY 5 NOVEMBER | 12PM  
QFT | PWYC



## NORMAL CINEMA CLUB - BLUE COLLAR

DIR. PAUL SCHRADER,  
USA | ENGLISH | 114 MINS | 1978

*"They pit the lifers against the new boys, the young against the old, the black against the white. Everything they do is to keep us in our place."*

The anger, the alienation and the absurdism of being working class is deeply felt and expressed in the raging directorial debut of Paul Schrader. Richard Pryor, Harvey Keitel and Yaphet Kotto play three Detroit autoworkers at the end of their rope. Overworked and underpaid, they decide to stick it to the man and hatch a plan to rob their own union. Featuring beloved character actors, a soundtrack from Captain Beefheart and an unforgettably harrowing death scene.

In today's landscape of corporately packaged and self-satisfying class consciousness, *Blue Collar* is refreshingly sceptical of the world we live in, and angry about the conditions we are forced to accept.

THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER | 7PM  
BEANBAG CINEMA | £5





For one night only we ask you, the workers of Ulster, to unite for this special audio-visual event.

**According to Rishi Sunak, Northern Ireland is currently “the world’s most exciting economic zone”. With that claim in mind, this film archive event is an exploration into just how exciting industry and working life has been for the people of Ulster over the past century. On average, people spend 90,000 hours of their lives at work - so economically exciting!**

In the imposingly atmospheric industrial setting of Anne Street’s historic Riddel’s Warehouse, we’re bringing together built heritage and on-screen social history, with a banging live soundtrack from Marion Hawkes (Ponyhawke/Sound Advice). Prepare to join the workers party!

BBC footage courtesy of BBC Northern Ireland.

UTV footage courtesy of the UTV Archive Partnership (PRONI, ITV, and Northern Ireland Screen).

Explore thousands of BBC archive clips from Northern Ireland and across the UK at [www.bbc.co.uk/rewind](http://www.bbc.co.uk/rewind)

Archive curation supported by Northern Ireland Screen’s Digital Film Archive.  
[www.digitalfilmarchive.net](http://www.digitalfilmarchive.net)

Supported by the Department for Communities.

**FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER | 8PM**  
**RIDDEL’S WAREHOUSE | PWYC**

# LONG SHORT WEEKEND COMPETITION SHORTS

2023 is the inaugural year of our Long Short Weekend, three days dedicated to celebrating local talent. Each day is filled with screenings and opportunities to meet fellow filmmakers, so don't miss out!



# COMPETITION SHORTS JURY

## MARIE-THÉRÈSE MACKLE

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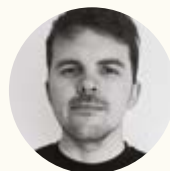


**Marie-Thérèse is an experienced producer and has been in production in Ireland for 20 years.**

Her many production credits include Derry Girls, My Left Nut and Dublin Murders, and she produced her first feature Mandrake in 2020, which premiered at the Belfast Film Festival in 2021.

## JOE LOFTUS

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**Joe Loftus is an award-winning animator/filmmaker based in Ireland.**

He has worked in animation for over 10 years and has animated and directed on projects for Disney, BBC, Hasbro, Warner, Sky and RTE. His previous film Still Up There won the jointly-awarded Best Short Film at the Belfast Film Festival 2022, and he is now working on an animated musical/horror project.

## MARK KEANE

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**Mark Keane is a filmmaker based in Dublin. His first film, Sour Milk, won the jointly-awarded Best Short at the Belfast Film Festival 2022.**

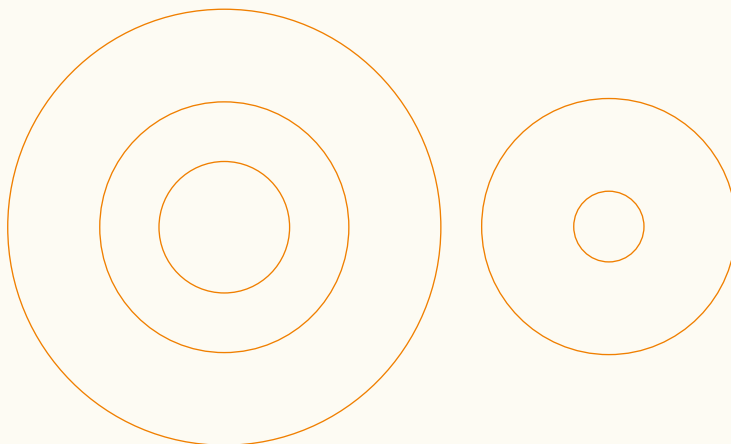
He previously wrote for the Virgin Media TV drama series Red Rock.

## LUMI JURY

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**LUMI**

Decided by a jury of 18-26 year old LUMI programmers from the QFT, the LUMI Award will be given to the film which engages young audiences and is innovative in its approach to filmmaking.



# COMPETITION SHORTS

## PROGRAMME ONE



**DIRS. ÉABHA BORTOLOZZO, JACK KIRWAN** | 10 MINS

Young boy Oisín descends into the Bog where he discovers the buried memories of his recently deceased father, and is taken on a spiritual journey where he learns to express his feelings. Featuring lush animation, *BOG* is a touching film with a powerful message about grief.



**DIR. IAN MANTGANI** | 16 MINS

Georgie is a primary school pupil with a problem - he can't stop picking his nose. He becomes the laughing stock of the classroom, until something more sinister reveals itself hiding up there. Recalling the practical B-movie thrills of the 1980s, *Nosepicker* uses snot-based special effects and a creeping paranoid style to a viscerally entertaining end.



**DIR. HANNAH MAMALIS** | 9 MINS

The surreal experience of pregnancy is anxiously explored in this comedy short which follows a soon-to-be mum following the advice of a dated self-help tape. Funny, inventive and moving, first-time director Mamalis finds the humour and the horror in expecting childbirth.

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER | PROG 1 | 11AM**  
QFT 1 | PWYC

# COMPETITION SHORTS

## PROGRAMME TWO



### GOOD CHIPS

DIR. NELL HENSEY | 17 MINS

The young daughter of a Vietnamese family struggles to find her place in 1980s Dublin, whether working in their failing takeaway business or chatting to a local boy on the estate. This moving drama contemplates the immigrant experience, touching on difficulties which still resonate today.



### SOUND & COLOUR

DIR. EMMA FOLEY | 14 MINS

Emotionally repressed Irish family dynamics are brought to the fore in this nuanced short focusing on Hannah, returning home for the first time after attempting suicide. Sound & Colour is a powerful short which reveals itself through gestures and looks.



### NO SUCH THING

DIR. PETER YOUNG | 12 MINS

The unique bond between grandfather and grandson is put through the wringer in this atmospheric horror short, as an obsession with mythical 'banshee' unravels family secrets and untold fears. This compelling two-hander features great performances and striking night-time photography.

SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER | PROG 2 | 12.30PM  
QFT 1 | PWYC

# COMPETITION SHORTS

## PROGRAMME THREE



**DIR. SHANE ROBINSON | 18 MINS**

Curtis is a straight-laced, no-nonsense TV licence inspector; his partner Fiachra is hard-drinking and quick-talking. Together, they try to rein in the residents of a remote Irish island and convince them to pay their license fee. Highly stylised and featuring a cast of Tory Islanders, this unconventional buddy comedy is bursting with energy.



**DIR. CONOR KEHELLY | 9 MINS**

The chaotic poetry of everyday life is translated into a surreal home drama riffing on the nuclear family in this rich, funny and absurd animation. Kehelly's short is immensely playful; manipulating textures, sound design, and even accents to create a scattershot portrait of a deeply insecure society in crisis.



**DIRS. NATHAN FAGAN, LUKE DALY | 18 MINS**

Ryan and his excited mum are getting ready for his 12th birthday party, but as the night draws on, he wonders if her erratic behaviour might bring everything to a halt. Brimming with colour and life, this short film is nonetheless a sensitive portrait of a flawed but loving family unit.

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER | PROG 3 | 2PM**  
**QFT 1 | PWYC**

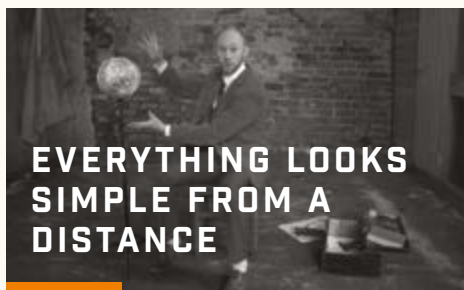
# COMPETITION SHORTS

## PROGRAMME FOUR



**DIR. CALEB J. ROBERTS | 11 MINS**

Following an emotionally abusive relationship, a man seeks couples counselling with a sock puppet in place of his ex-boyfriend, Malcolm. Returning talent Roberts communicates the complexities of a difficult relationship with humour and authenticity, aided by an accomplished cast of actors.



**DIR. CONOR TONER | 12 MINS**

In 1969 Northern Ireland, one dreamer believes he has the answer to all the troubles and strife - to get our wee country to be the first people on the moon. Toner's refreshing brand of comedy contemplates the struggle to stay positive in a divided society, and the optimism/ignorance necessary to fight on, anchored by a powerhouse performance from Cailum Carragher.



**DIR. AIS BRADY | 13 MINS**

Maurice, an aging pensioner, realises how fickle life can be. Looking around his unkempt home, he decides to make a change and reconnect with the outside world. Festival favourite Lalor Roddy is front and center in this wordless short, a keenly observed portrait of a life filled with regrets.



**DIRS. EMMA MARTIN, HUGH O'CONOR | 10 MINS**

This strikingly original dance film is composed of multiple tableaux vivants reflecting on humanity in all of its facets; glory, innocence, desperation, power and vulnerability. The omniscient camera captures all, from convulsing bodies to anguished faces, making this an immensely cinematic experience.

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER | PROG 4 | 3.30PM**  
QFT 1 | PWYC

# LONG SHORT WEEKEND

NEW  
IRISH  
SHORTS



# NEW IRISH SHORTS PROGRAMME ONE

## PUPPET TEARS

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DIR. EMMA BRENNAN | 3 MINS

A lonely puppeteer cares for his lonely puppet child, if only his wife would stop nagging him. *Puppet Tears* is a creeping nightmare, spooky and atmospheric.

## A SONG FOR STRAYS

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DIR. CONOR KELLY | 11 MINS

In a dark fantasy world, a showband singer joins a travelling group of 'strays'; misfits who don't belong anywhere else. Though initially frightened, she finds an unexpected connection. Wonderfully realised through rich production design, *A Song For Strays* is filled with offbeat and melancholic charm.

## POSTPARTUM

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DIR. TANIA NOTARO | 11 MINS

Postpartum depression becomes a hellish nightmare in this surreal psychological short from actor/director Tania Notaro. The expectations of motherhood become spectres which haunt recent mother Mary, her psychosis rendered through warping visuals and an unnerving soundscape.

## GINNY REAPER

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DIR. NIAMH MCKEOWN | 15 MINS

On her first holiday in 100 years, Ginny, a Grim Reaper, hopes to let off some steam. That is until the ghosts of her own past come back to haunt her, and she must reckon with her own shortcomings (aside from being the manifestation of Death). Starring Sex Education's Tanya Reynolds and directed by returning talent McKeown, this mockumentary is funny and delightfully quirky.

## ANIMUS

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DIR. DANIEL WILSON | 10 MINS

A mysterious traveller ventures to the top of a mountain to make a sacrifice in this animated fantasy epic. The soothing sound design compliments the striking visuals, creating an impressive world which plays with myths and legends.



SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER | PROG 1 | 10AM  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | PWYC

# NEW IRISH SHORTS PROGRAMME TWO

## THE BARREL

DIR. KATIE MCFADDEN | 10 MINS

An experimental work of autofiction which captures the lasting impressions that an environment can have. A personal recollection leads to a ruin of historical significance, culminating in a tale of bizarre local folklore. This bewitching short makes for a wistful and meditative experience.

## SUSPICIOUS MINDS

DIR. IMELDA O'REILLY | 15 MINS

A Halloween rave, Elvis Presley, Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz: a tale as old as time. Two Irish expats reminisce about their homeland, the diaspora, and the magical mysticism that connects them in this absurd but ultimately sweet story of homesick dreamers.

## DOUBLE VODKA AND BLACKCURRANT

DIR. DEAN CONWAY | 10 MINS

Capturing the messy hangover from the night before, this slice-of-life short focuses on the relationships of four friends as they try to recover and reflect. Following last year's *Shea and Hannah*, Conway returns with another perspective on the Belfast youth experience.

## LITTLE RIOTS

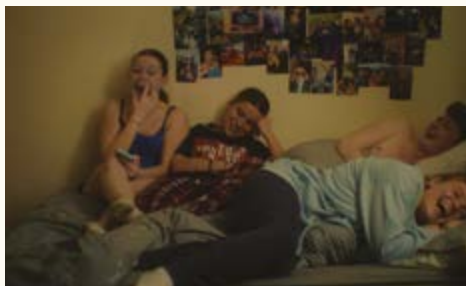
DIRS. CHARLOTTE ROSE AINSWORTH,  
LORNA JUDE LENNON-DALZIEL | 15 MINS

Saoirse and Emma have £2.50 in their bank accounts, but they solemnly vow to have the best night of their lives. Blending poetry, archive footage and digital camcorder aesthetics, this short captures the highs and lows of a perfectly messy night out.

## LATE BLOOMERS

DIR. SARAH AHERN | 9 MINS

Over the course of a wandering summer day, the tender relationship between two friends becomes something more. Captured with beautiful bright colours, this warm and genuine short feels authentically sweet; an uplifting balm amongst a sea of heartbreak.



SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER | PROG 2 | 11.15AM  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | PWYC

# NEW IRISH SHORTS PROGRAMME THREE

## 2% BABY

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DIR. RÓISÍN SINAI KELLY | 4 MINS

This experimental animation follows a young girl taking refuge from a storm in an old fridge, her memories of what once was seeping in and dissolving around her. Transfixing and beautifully textured, *2% Baby* is a captivatingly abstract experience.

## BLOOD OF THE CROPS

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DIR. RORY CARROLL | 14 MINS

In rural Ireland in the 1840s, a land dispute makes a man kill his brother. He buries the body at the bottom of his field but soon, his crops begin to die. This earthy horror blends the pagan traditions of the English folk horror cycle with more surreal and paranoid sensibilities, viscerally placing you into the protagonist's deteriorating mind.

## HANGNAIL

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DIR. GRACE CONNOR | 10 MINS

Erin lives in admiration of her older cousin Blair, but when she is invited to a party with her she discovers Blair's life is not as idyllic as she once thought. This unconventional coming-of-age story depicts the teenage experience with stylised intensity.

## COCAINE OVERKILL

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DIR. BENJAMIN PORTER | 12 MINS

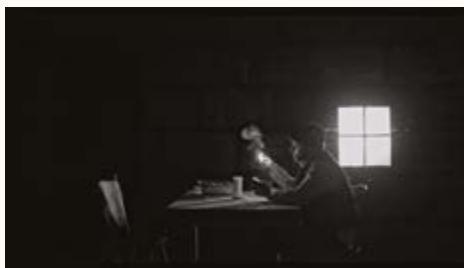
In 1980s Miami, wildcard detective Lewis Cannon declares war on cocaine and vows to rid the streets of real bad hombres. This love-letter to action cinema plants its tongue firmly in cheek and revels in the joy of genre-filmmaking.

## THE SILENT PEOPLE

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DIR. KEITH O'GRADY | 17 MINS

A young mixed-race Scots woman and a singer from Tallaght find themselves out on the streets after being evicted by a ruthless landlord. After chancing upon him a year later, they take him hostage and make their peace with him. Astutely reflecting the current economic crisis we are living through, this short angrily addresses the rampant landlordism ruining people's lives.



SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER | PROG 3 | 12.30PM  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | PWYC

# NEW IRISH SHORTS PROGRAMME FOUR

## WE GATHER

DIR. DOMINIC CURRAN | 16 MINS

A young man struggles with regret, as the passage of time gives way to a flowing narrative of fractured memories. This impressionistic short from returning talent Dominic Curran is engaging and deeply moving, its unique manipulation of form capturing the all-encompassing effects of grief.

## THREE WISHES

DIR. WILL MCCONNELL | 10 MINS

Three teenagers wander the streets of Belfast looking for something to do, and they wonder, what would each of them do with three magic wishes? This sweet and tender coming-of-age story ruminates on hopes, dreams and unrequited love; complimented by gorgeous visuals and a dreamy guitar score.

## SHEE

DIR. LIA CAMPBELL | 10 MINS

Set in Nairobi, this short follows same-sex couple Shee and Magnus as they deal with the aftermath of an unexpected pregnancy. A difficult conversation between two lovers is depicted with sensitivity and compassion by Campbell, this story is as powerful as it is necessary to be told.

## STABLE

DIR. AISLING O' REGAN SARGENT | 11 MINS

Julie, a young woman struggling to come to terms with a recent attack, returns home to the family farm and tries to overcome her feelings of guilt. Writer and star Laura Whelan delivers an affecting performance, her mental state viscerally portrayed by O'Regan Sargent.

## SCRUMPY

DIR. DAN HOLMWOOD | 9 MINS

Who/what/why is Scrumpy? This delightful short aims to tell you by painting the portrait of a 10 year old on the eve of his 11th birthday, reflecting on his loves, losses and obsessions. Fast-moving and free-wheeling, Holmwood doffs his cap to Wes Anderson but finds his own emotional niche to conclude on.



SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER | PROG 4 | 1.45PM  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | PWYC

# NORTHERN IRELAND SCREEN SHOWCASE

To herald the start of our shorts weekend, Northern Ireland Screen presents a curation of some of their latest talent; showcasing the broad range of stories and ideas to come from our region.

## I KNOW YOU

**DIR. COLM HERRON** | 23 MINS

After his brother falls ill, runaway Gerard returns to his family home and must confront the memories and regrets he left behind.

## MUIRGEN

**DIR. JOHN PATRICK HIGGINS** | 10 MINS

What begins as a meet-cute at the beach becomes an eerie and dreamlike fable, soaked in seawater and Irish folklore.

## NEVER MIND WALNUT STREET

**DIR. MARTA DYCZKOWSKA** | 13 MINS

When Marta Dyczkowska moved to Belfast for the punk scene, she knew nobody but found a home. This short documentary is a loving tribute to a friend, a city and a moment in time, as well as a lament for a Belfast left behind.

## NORTHERN CHIRISH

**DIR. DIANA CHEUNG** | 15 MINS

Young people from the Chinese-Irish community talk candidly about their dreams and aspirations, their identity and heritage, and what it means to be Northern Chirish.

## SOUL OFFICE

**DIR. RYAN LOUGHRAN** | 10 MINS

Goldy and Declan are dead, but before they can move onto the next life they have to see through some unfinished business: stealing an ATM machine.



## SMASHING & ENTERING

**DIR. JOE LAVERTY** | 10 MINS

Goretti, a headstrong and fearless activist, fights off fraudsters, burglars and pre-conceived notions about aging and womanhood in this ode to independent women.

## STAN BY ME

**DIR. RACHEL DIXON** | 10 MINS

Stan and Merv are long-time neighbours but not best friends, not according to the downbeat Merv anyway. Stan takes it upon himself to show Merv the joys that elderly life still has to offer.

## THE GOLDEN WEST

**DIRS. ROSS WHITE, TOM BERKELEY** | 24 MINS

After the success of their global sensation, An Irish Goodbye, directors Ross White and Tom Berkeley set their sights west and tell the story of two sisters who flee the famine in Ireland to seek their fortunes in the Gold Rush.

**FRIDAY 3 NOVEMBER | 3PM**  
BLACK BOX | PWYC

## NORTHERN IRELAND SCREEN NETWORKING BREAKFAST

To jump start our second day of the weekend, make sure you come along to our networking breakfast at the QFT, hosted by Northern Ireland Screen. This will be a great opportunity to meet fellow filmmakers before settling in to watch our competition screenings. Coffee, pastries, the brightest and best of emerging talent; this event has it all! Register your place by visiting [www.belfastfilmfestival.org](http://www.belfastfilmfestival.org)

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 9.30AM**  
QFT | FREE, BOOKING REQUIRED



The second edition of this regular retrospective for Irish short filmmakers focuses on the work of Lisa Keogh of Farset Films.

Lisa is one of Ireland's most productive short filmmakers, both as a writer-director and a producer for other filmmakers. Through her production company Farset Films, Lisa creates stories about women by women; tackling issues like abortion, bereavement and menstruation with honesty, empathy and humour across both documentary and fiction films.

Lisa will join us for a Q&A, as we screen a selection of her films, to talk about her career path, influences and progression as a filmmaker.

Films x Conversation, but short. This is the Short Take.

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 8PM**  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | £5



**Lisa Keogh**  
Farset Films

## SCREENSKILLS SHORT FILM AWARDS EVENING

And finally, we invite all filmmakers to our closing event of the weekend: our awards ceremony where we will announce the recipient of the Screenskills Award for Best Short Film, and the LUMI Award. Supported & hosted by Screenskills, this event will be a chance to have a couple of drinks, talk about the great work you've seen and hatch some schemes to make the next film! Register your place by visiting [www.belfastfilmfestival.org](http://www.belfastfilmfestival.org)

**SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER | 7PM**  
BLACK BOX | FREE, BOOKING REQUIRED



## The Hypnosis: When the Better You Turns Out to Be the Worst

WRITTEN  
BY GUY  
LODGE

It's an arc we've seen traced in countless films before, usually to upbeat, supposedly inspiring effect. A tensely buttoned-up character learns to unclench, revealing their looser, kinder, truer self in the process, and their best life follows in due course. Would that reality always adhered to this formula so reliably: for many of us, any attempts to let it all hang out result only in bad hangovers and regrettable lower-back tattoos.

At once hilarious and exquisitely agonised, Swedish director Ernst De Geer's debut film *The Hypnosis* takes the same premise to a rather more intriguing place, as Vera (Asia Gamma August), a sweet, sensible, slightly beige young woman, unleashes a more daring, spontaneous new self on the eve of an all-important business presentation. There's just one catch: the new, improved Vera might just be a bit of a nightmare. This is not a possibility that most feelgood self-realisation stories usually want us to consider. Does the sexy, vinyl-wrapped Sandy who emerges for the final number of *Grease* radiate long-term good vibes? In *Mary Poppins*, mightn't the whimsically freed, kite-flying Mr. Banks start to grate after a few days of unemployment? *The Hypnosis* offers cathartic release with a caveat: be yourself, by all means, but don't expect to be better.

Vera's personality switch is triggered by a session of progressive hypnotherapy intended to quell her smoking habit. But really, De Geer's far-reaching satire points to any number of external prompts behind the change, from a corporate hierarchy premised on marketable "authenticity" to the online spread of pop-psychology empowerment. Together with her seemingly supportive boyfriend André (Herbert Nordrum), Vera is preparing to launch an app promoting women's healthcare in developing countries. How, exactly, we never find out, but that hardly matters. In this world of startups, pitches and fledgling entrepreneurship, a good cause is worth as much as a good effect.

André worries that Vera's earnest presentation style isn't dynamic enough — not that she should change anything about herself, of course, except to be, well, *more* somehow. That's where Shake Up comes in — a ghastly weekend of presentation-coaching for budding app developers, where the unleashed, updated Vera emerges in quirky fits and starts, gradually morphing into another woman entirely, to André's doltish mortification. Among other things, *The Hypnosis* succeeds as a classic careful-what-you-wish-for fable, reimaged for the LinkedIn age.

Where does assertive self-expression tip into straight-up selfishness, and who has the right to curb it? As reactions to the all-singing, all-dancing, all-barking Vera 2.0 shift from amusement to bemusement to outright hostility, De Geer trades in that most skin-prickling of comic forms: the extreme embarrassment farce. Think of prime Alan Partridge or Larry David given an extra-tinge coat of packaged millennial sincerity.

*The Hypnosis* invites us to sort of hate these two flailing characters — played with brilliant, anxious-but-fearless abandon by August and Nordrum, who played the gawky, smoke-breathing seducer of *The Worst Person in the World* — as much as we defensively love them. You may see shades of yourself in them either way, and not necessarily your most flattering hues. Turns out that when Fiona Apple sang, "Here it comes, a better version of me," it was both a rallying cry and a warning.

*Guy Lodge is a London-based film critic for Variety, a columnist for The Observer and co-editor of the weekly review site Film of the Week.*

# JOHN SAYLES & MAGGIE RENZI RETROSPECTIVE

Belfast Film Festival is honoured to host two of American Independent cinema's greatest pioneers, writer-director John Sayles and producer Maggie Renzi at this year's festival.

Together, Sayles and Renzi have amassed a formidable body of work that is known globally for its ferociously independent spirit (as recently as 2020, Sight & Sound magazine described Sayles as "the guiding light of American indie cinema") and for its intelligent, consummately crafted investigations into politically, socially and culturally significant moments and movements throughout history.

As part of the tribute to Sayles and Renzi, BFF is screening four of their finest films: *Matewan*, *Men With Guns*, *Lone Star* and the Donegal-set *The Secret of Roan Inish*. And we are very proud to be mounting an In Conversation event during which Belfast audiences can hear this maverick filmmaking team discuss their 40-plus years of pioneering storytelling.

See page 13 for the In Conversation With John Sayles and Maggie Renzi event.





## LONE STAR

DIR. JOHN SAYLES  
USA | ENGLISH | 135 MINS | 1996

If the '90s represented the last heyday of American Indie cinema, it's only fitting that Sayles, the most independent of them all, should in the middle of the decade have created what is his most enduring masterpiece, *Lone Star*.

Sam Deeds (Chris Cooper) is the mild-mannered sheriff of a Texas border town, living in the shadow of his father, Buddy (played in flashback with lazy affability by Matthew McConaughey). But when a rusted sheriff's badge is found alongside a skull in the desert, Sam starts to investigate his idolized father's involvement in the disappearance of the vicious prior sheriff (a toweringly nasty Kris Kristofferson). Featuring a lovely turn from the late Elizabeth Peña as the woman Sam has always loved, *Lone Star*, for which Sayles received a screenplay Oscar nomination, is everything: a fiercely romantic, tragic and intelligent dissection of generational secrecy and the cult of personality that can evolve when lawmen put themselves above the law.

THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER | 6PM  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | PWYC



## MATEWAN

DIR. JOHN SAYLES  
USA | ENGLISH | 132 MINS | 1987

Marking a pivot-point in Sayles' career and giving us the gift that is Chris Cooper in his debut role (the Oscar-winning star of *Adaptation* — which is also screening in BFF '23 — would go on to become a Sayles regular) it's remarkable how *Matewan*, the handsome, deeply absorbing account of a 1920 miners' strike, has lost none of its urgency or relevance in the years since its Reagan/Thatcher-era release.

In West Virginia, a community of white, Black and immigrant Italian workers gradually comes together to fight the exploitation of their coal-company's ruthless enforcers, leading to violent showdown. The story is straightforward, but only in the way a great western is straightforward, and with actors who breathe life and eccentricity into their archetypal characters, *Matewan* builds into equivalently epic drama, delivered here with a deftness that somehow turns a gritty, grimy historical episode into a rousing ballad for the dignity of workers everywhere.

WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER | 8.30PM  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | PWYC



## THE SECRET OF ROAN INISH

DIR. JOHN SAYLES

USA/Ireland | English | 103 mins | 1994

A beguiling, family-friendly mystery that celebrates both Celtic myth and the lyricism of the language and the landscapes of Donegal, *The Secret of Roan Inish* with its magical flourishes, can be seen as a departure for a director more often known for stirring realism. Yet Sayles brings his compassionate eye to bear on this gentle fairy tale with trademark sincerity and grace.

In the tiny fishing town of Roan Inish in 1946, Fiona (Jeni Courtney) is sent to live with her grandparents, after the loss of her mother and baby brother Jamie at sea. She makes friends: with a gull, a gray seal and a cousin, and listens to her grandfather's tales of the selkie — a seal who can take the form of a human. Soon, she stumbles on a secret that may bring Jamie back to her, and help to heal her grieving family.

*Filmmakers John Sayles and Maggie Renzi will be present to introduce the film.*

MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER | 7PM  
THE AVENUE | £16



## MEN WITH GUNS

DIR. JOHN SAYLES

USA | SPANISH/ENGLISH | 127 MINS | 1997

In an unnamed Central American country, the well-off Dr. Fuentes is reaching retirement age. He decides to take a trip into the rainforest and visit his past pupils, who dispersed to smaller villages to spread the wonders of modern medicine. He imagines a celebratory journey, where he can take satisfaction in seeing his teachings put into practice, but is instead faced with the brutal realities of living in a country ruled by men with guns.

Like many of Sayles' films, *Men with Guns* was independently financed and distributed, dealing with difficult topics and uncomfortable truths that would never cross the mind of a Hollywood executive. It considers the uneasy relationship between class and ignorance, and how easy it is to turn a blind eye to the horrors being committed in your own country, as well as the legacy of the United States' 'interference' in Central America.

TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER | 7PM  
BEANBAG CINEMA | £4.50

## How to Have Sex: A Girl Walks Home Alone

WRITTEN  
BY ROSE  
BAKER

There are many sharply observed moments in Molly Manning-Walker's debut feature. There is a reality to this film, within the unreal aesthetic landscape of an escapist 'Brits Abroad' summer holiday, that achieves a truthfulness in fiction filmmaking sought after so badly by practitioners it renders it on the level of the Holy Grail.

One image in particular stands out long after the credits have rolled. Perhaps it even stands out a little too much, as most of the film flows with free-moving camerawork, woozy close-ups and club scenes in which the permeating darkness is accented by colourful pools of light. This shot, however, is fixed, wide and looks like it was lifted straight out of a western, as the stark whiteness of the morning sun beats down on the Cretan resort's main street and our hero, Tara (Mia McKenna-Bruce), walks alone in the centre. She's like an embattled gunslinger, returning for a reckoning, adrift amongst last night's broken bottles and drunkenly discarded takeaways.

It also resembles the famous final scene in Carol Reed's *The Third Man*. There, a woman also walks alone towards the camera, flanked by bare trees that line a wide avenue. A man she knows is waiting for her in the foreground, but when she reaches him she keeps walking, past him, past the camera, out of shot. There's no kiss-and-make-up here. It's a moment of liberation.

Yet another moment comes to mind. Louis Malle's *Elevator to the Gallows* has Jeanne Moreau, in an emotional performance heightened by Miles Davis's legendary score, drifting through the streets of 1950s Paris searching for her lover. Illuminated by street lamps and reflected in shop windows, she is a part of the city.

Or remember instead Marilyn Monroe walking away from the camera in glorious Technicolor in *Niagara*. Directed by Henry Hathaway (best known for his work in the western genre), that scene was called "the longest walk in cinema" and sees Monroe at her most iconic — literally: Andy Warhol used the publicity for the film for his famous print series. But her character is doomed. Her journey is to the place where she'll meet her end.

Not all ambitious women end up dead for wanting more from life. Tess McGill (Melanie Griffith) in Mike Nichols' *Working Girl*, walks with determination amongst fast-paced white-collar Manhattan commuters. She's often alone and on the move, on the street or in an office, striding towards the lens through vast floors of typists, swapping trainers for high heels when she gets to a desk. Walking around New York is made to appear as arduous as Tess's tough, obstacle-strewn career progression, in a film that is all about the effort it takes for women to get anywhere in this world.

And so back to *How to Have Sex* and the idea of freedom in the image of a woman or girl walking in solitude. The night before she appears in that western-inflected shot, Tara is also seen walking, but this time with someone who strides ahead and doesn't notice her hang back and slip off into the darkness. It's a moment of relief that brings the message home: sometimes, you're better off alone.

*Rose Baker is pursuing a PhD in Northern Irish television archive, and is the UK/Ireland programmer of the Belfast Film Festival.*

# NEW IRISH HORROR





## HAUNTED ULSTER LIVE

DIR. DOMINIC O'NEILL

NORTHERN IRELAND | ENGLISH | 78 MINS | 2023

**It's Halloween night, 1998. As darkness falls, TVNI begins broadcasting a spooky special event, *Haunted Ulster Live*. Veteran presenter Gerry Burns and children's presenter Michelle Kelly team up to investigate a house supposedly disturbed by poltergeist activity. What begins as a harmless bit of fun soon descends into something creepier... who is leaving scratches on the wall? Why did a seance suddenly cause chaos? Where are all these footprints coming from?**

The film utilises a found-footage UTV aesthetic, creating an uncanny familiarity to the haunted house proceedings that follow. As funny as it is unnerving, *Haunted Ulster Live* also boasts great performances, an eerie score and a production design that pulls you back, kicking and screaming, to the late 1990s.

A playful love letter to the haunted house genre, whilst paying clever homage to the legendary *Ghostwatch*, this debut feature from local writer/director Dominic O'Neill is not to be missed. Especially not on Halloween night!

Cast and crew will be in attendance for a post-screening Q&A.

**TUESDAY 31 OCTOBER | 9PM**  
QFT | £8.40



## DOUBLE BLIND

DIR. IAN HUNT DUFFY

IRELAND | ENGLISH | 90 MINS | 2023

**Leading a talented ensemble cast, Millie Brady plays Claire, a participant in an experimental medical study.**

Meeting the rest of the cohort, personalities clash as the testing develops, and they begin to realise it might not be the easy money they thought it would be. When the unknown drugs begin to take effect, things go from bad to worse, but can they work together to make it through the night?

With a refreshingly un-supernatural subject, the film blends suspense and body horror with the inescapable private terrors of the human mind. Playing with ideas around irresponsibility and over-monetisation of patients since the opioid crisis in the United States and elsewhere, Big Pharma is a sinister force set against the naivety of the young volunteers. This minimalistic debut from filmmaker Ian Hunt-Duffy adds much to the growing field of new Irish horror and is a psychological study in itself.

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 8.30PM**  
QFT | PWYC



**The Belfast Film Festival is extremely excited to present this very special Work In Progress event around, *Fréamhacha*, the new Irish language horror feature from writer-director, Aislinn Clarke.**

Clarke is one of Northern Ireland's most exciting filmmakers, having made *The Devil's Doorway* (2018) and written the Irish language screenplay for *Doineann* (2021), the groundbreaking thriller produced by DoubleBand Films. *Fréamhacha* is a Cine4 film produced by DoubleBand and Wildcard in Dublin.

Meaning 'roots', *Fréamhacha* is the story of agency carer, Shoo (Clare Monnelly), assigned out to look after elderly and frail, Peig (Brid Ní Neachtain). The

two women forge a bond, but past traumas from both their lives are woken and memories and nightmares merge into one.

Key cast members and the film's director will be with us to talk through clips from this work in progress. Audience members are reminded that they are generously giving us an exclusive sneak preview of an unfinished film, offering a rare opportunity to gain insight into an ongoing creative process.

**WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER | 9PM**  
QFT | PWYC

## *In Camera:* All the World's a Stage

WRITTEN  
BY BEN  
NICHOLSON

To exist in the hyperconnected and perpetually online present can often feel like navigating an endless, morphing cognitive dissonance. We must forge genuine human connections within a miasma of self-promotion – our own included. We should be authentic, while also modulating our behaviour for an expanding array of physical and virtual audiences. We're being conditioned to gauge our self-worth in likes and to scroll past news of a friend giving birth or a devastating natural disaster in the same, endlessly unspooling social media feed.

Something similar to that last comparison has been made by director Naqqash Khalid when discussing his blistering feature debut, *In Camera*. To him, the jarring nature of modern digital life is inherent to the surreal world of his film. Using a fragmented non-linear structure, it studies the slippery interplay of performance and identity – and the performance of identity – by probing the internal life of a jobbing actor, Aden (Nabhaan Rizwan). At around the film's midpoint, a photographer learns of Aden's profession and confesses to being an erstwhile thesp herself, but says it made her feel like "all these tiny little pieces, separated and examined."

This is essentially how Khalid presents Aden, in a jumble of moments, real and imagined, through which the entire individual must be gleaned by the viewer. This is the crux of *In Camera* – that the notion of wholeness is unreliable, particularly in a world so predicated on images and impressions. Our communal nature means that we already temper our conduct to better assimilate, but we are nowadays accomplished in manufacturing a broader array of functioning identities than ever before. In Aden's case, this issue is exacerbated by the fact that he spends his life immersing himself in other personalities, to the extent that he – whoever "he" really is – is being subsumed.

Deciphering the puzzle that is Aden is one of the film's most alluring and perhaps impossible elements. Rizwan's performance regularly reads as impassive, like the implacable face of a Noh mask which takes on meaning through the most infinitesimal of gestures. Aden is outwardly like a blank, there to be projected onto or remodelled into whatever the role requires. He's a shapeshifter. In glimpses, however, such as in the apartment he shares with Bo (Rory Fleck Byrne) and Conrad (Amir El-Masry), there is an apprehensive quality to him, hinting at a version of Aden who is more likely constrained by anxiety than deliberately detached.

We watch Aden go through a gruelling series of auditions in which often finds himself in a room of similar-looking young men of South Asian heritage – his cultural and racial identity commodified. Elsewhere, he inhabits the persona of a woman's deceased son as an aid during grief counselling. These roles, assigned to him by others, become a part of his internal discourse, wrangling with one another to the extent that eventually, only intense self-confrontation can bring catharsis. *In Camera* both sifts through the tiny pieces of contemporary identity and cobbles them dramatically together – and the result is exhilarating.

*Ben Nicholson is a London-based writer and curator specialising in film and artists' moving image.*

# SCREENWRITERS ON SCREEN

"Write what you know" has to be one of the least useful bits of writing advice to have been trotted out so frequently it's become a cliché. Given that all films start with a screenplay, if all writers wrote only what they knew, our cinemas would be awash in stories about screenwriters writing only what they know.

Instead, it's comparatively rare for Hollywood to take so interior and unglamorous a pastime as screenwriting as its subject. Which means that on the infrequent occasions it's done, and the even more infrequent occasions it's done well, the resulting films can feel like a glimpse into an arcane world, delivering often scabrous takes on an industry which historically undervalues the contributions of the very people who keep the lights on.

As a small token of our appreciation for the craft, and of solidarity with the recent Writer's Guild of America strike, we've programmed this year's retrospective around three brilliant examples of screenwriters writing what they know and ending up on the screen, against all odds in stone-cold classics that shed light not just on their writerly tribulations but on the wonderful absurdity of human creative endeavour in general.





## BARTON FINK

DIR. JOEL COEN

USA | ENGLISH | 117 MINS | 1991

When Joel and Ethan Coen's unclassifiably brilliant *Barton Fink* won Best Director, Best Actor (John Turturro) and the Palme d'Or in Cannes (which, of course, pales in comparison to being immortalised, in Barton's iconically owlsh spectacles, on the cover of the BFF '23 programme), it prompted a change in the festival's rules. Meaning *Barton Fink* will always be the only film ever to score that particular success.

It would come as a surprise to Barton himself (Turturro), a nebbish playwright who is thoroughly disavowed of the idea that his talent and condescension to "the common man" will elevate the Wallace Beery boxing picture he's been brought to Hollywood, during its silent-era heyday, to write. Living in a crumbling, oozing hotel, befriended by a jocular salesman (John Goodman, unforgettable) things take a turn for the surreally, hilariously sinister as Barton's creative ego gets — rather deservedly — crushed in the maw of the industry machine.

WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER | 7PM  
THE AVENUE | £16



## SUNSET BOULEVARD

DIR. BILLY WILDER

USA | ENGLISH | 110 MINS | 1950

It's one of the oldest rules in Hollywood: if you're trying to get ahead in the movie business, don't sleep with the writer. But for ageing screen diva Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson), hungry to launch a comeback decades after her silent-film glory days, what choice does she have?

She has no industry contacts left, not least because she hasn't left her mouldering Sunset Boulevard mansion in years — so when young aspiring screenwriter Joe Gillis (William Holden) accidentally turns into her driveway, Norma seizes upon him.

Billy Wilder's immortal 1950 black comedy is both a wincingly relevant showbiz satire and a real-world vampire movie, awash in swirling Gothic atmosphere and savage gender politics, and boasting one of the most dazzlingly meta star turns in film history. Herself returning to the screen after years away, Swanson is both villain and victim, bristling with ambition, radiant with madness.

TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER | 7PM  
THE AVENUE | £16



## ADAPTATION

DIR. SPIKE JONZE  
USA | ENGLISH | 115 MINS | 2002

Susan Orlean's 1998 bestseller *The Orchid Thief*, about a curious case of horticultural criminality in South Florida, was supposed to become the kind of Hollywood prestige drama that pleases crowds and sweeps up Oscars. Why anyone thought to hire Charlie Kaufman, the deranged mind behind *Being John Malkovich*, to write such a film is a mystery, but thank heavens they did.

Stumped by the assignment, a creatively blocked Kaufman instead wrote this ingeniously self-reflexive farce on his own struggle with the task at hand, splitting himself into two characters: Charlie, the anxious artist aiming for greatness, and his imaginary twin Donald, the soulless commercial hack. Both are brilliantly played by a never-better Nicolas Cage, with a riotous Meryl Streep as Orlean herself and Chris Cooper (who actually did win an Oscar) as her ornery subject. The industry script factory has never been so dizzyingly deconstructed.

THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER | 7PM  
THE AVENUE | £16



## EVENT SCREENWRITERS PANEL

As part of our Screenwriters on Screen event, a panel of celebrated screenwriters will discuss the challenges of a changing industry, with particular reference to the 2023 Writers' Guild of America strike (and the associated SAG/AFTRA actors' strike).

What were the key issues that prompted such a long and arduous action? What kind of a threat does AI pose to creative endeavour and how will the strike's gains and losses impact an industry that, more often than most, pits commercial interests against creative integrity, on an uneven playing field?

In what promises to be an invigorating and inspiring session, we aim to raise public awareness of issues that do not just affect this one small segment, but that have knock-on effects for audiences and practitioners alike. Come join in on a frank and forthright discussion with panellists who, as emerging and established screenwriters, find themselves on the frontlines of an industry imperilled as never before.

SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER | 3.30PM  
QFT | PWYC

## City of Wind: Between Old and New

WRITTEN  
BY ELENA  
LAZIC

Sooner or later, most of us who used to be top of the class, and whose identity revolved around the “intelligence” inferred from our grades, had to wake up and face the non-meritocratic, deeply confusing real world. Hopefully, we could eventually understand that this was a common experience, and if it meant we were not special snowflakes after all, at least there was comfort in knowing that we were not alone.

However, few are the films that represent this very real type of coming-of-age. Most kids growing up fast in the movies have friends, or at least a best friend and are not obsessed with studying — nerdier students can seem simply too unexciting or unpleasantly misanthropic to be cinematic. There is a part of *City of Wind*, the debut feature from Mongolian director Lkhagvadulam Purev-Ochir, where protagonist Ze (Tergel Bold-Erdene) comes to look with disgust at school, with all its rules and responsibilities, and at the goody-two-shoes he used to be. But more than mere dislike of authority, or longing for popularity, what motivates Ze is a profound psychic change, a search for new values to replace those he has lost.

On the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar, the Mongolian capital, an imposing disguised figure with a low, guttural voice gives advice to a desperate older man. This stunning opening sequence ends with the shocking revelation that under the traditional shaman costume is 17-year-old Ze, dutiful student and son. Being this “spirit” and supplying guidance is his job within what is essentially a family business. Yet this seeming hypocrisy does not bother Ze. At school, he ignores the mockery of his peers, and focuses on his work. What eventually comes to undermine all that he thought he knew is, naturally, a girl.

More specifically, it is all the joy and fun that she brings with her. Ze meets Maralaa (Nomin-Erdene Ariunbyamba) when hired by her superstitious mother to perform a shamanic ritual at her house before an important surgery, and it is Maralaa’s vitriolic insult afterwards that makes Ze dream of her later that night. The two develop a cute, relaxed relationship, and being with her gives Ze permission to open up and to experience a kind of carefree happiness he has never felt before. She seems, to Western eyes, like a normal girl, because she prioritises pleasure and readily embraces a modern capitalist culture that Ze, by contrast, is indulging in for the first time. By abandoning the tough and sometimes very restrictive principles that once guided his life, Ze doesn’t simply gain a certain freedom — he also loses a solid, old-fashioned but time-honoured foundation. And nothing is left in its place.

*City of Wind* sensitively captures the sensation of loss, and of being lost, that so many of us experience when finishing school and entering adulthood. But while many of his peers will slip seamlessly into the comfort and structure of a workforce that comes with its own ready-made set of values and allows its participants the gratifications of consumerism, Purev-Ochir leaves Ze facing a choice they cannot know. With one foot in the modern city that Maralaa opened up for him, and one foot still in the spiritual world, he must decide where he wants to go.

*Elena Lazic is a film critic with Cineuropa and the editor-in-chief of Animus magazine.*

*Linen House*



# FILM, FOOD & FIZZ

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**2<sup>ND</sup> NOV**

UNTIL  
**11<sup>TH</sup> NOV**

**GET 10% OFF ACROSS ALL  
LINEN HOUSE VENUES**

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BELFAST  
**FLAXX**  
BRUNSWICK ST.

# DOC YARD

Although we have our dedicated documentary festival, Docs Ireland, in June, the Belfast Film Festival is pleased to present a small selection of documentaries within the wider programme. These three films are very special and have come to us at such a point in the festival calendar that we just cannot wait until later in the year to screen them.

One of the films, *My Lost Russian Mother*, participated in Docs Ireland's inaugural festival Marketplace in 2019, and we are thrilled to see the completion of the project culminating in this home screening. Belfast filmmaker, Sam Jones, will be in attendance.

Mark Cousins, who is at this point more family of the festival than simply a friend, returns with his latest film, a simple and elegant portrait of film programmer and producer, the legend, Lynda Miles.

And we highlight cinema heritage with a very special screening of Jane Giles and Ali Catterall's *Scala!!!* in the Strand cinema ahead of its hugely anticipated National Lottery Heritage Fund restoration project beginning early next year.





## MY LOST RUSSIAN MOTHER

DIR. SAM JONES

IRELAND | ENGLISH | 86 MINS | 2023

We're delighted to host this screening of one of the participant films of Docs Ireland's inaugural Marketplace in 2019.

**Belfast filmmaker, Sam Jones, met American citizen Gabe while travelling and working in Russia. At first, he seemed like many other young travellers working as English teachers while abroad, but soon it became clear Gabe's story was quite unusual, and his reasons for being in Russia were very personal. Having been adopted from Russia as a child, he had returned to try and find his birth mother.**

From this fascinating starting point, the film takes us on this young man's journey as he determinedly rejects the warmth of Florida and embraces a rural

Russian winter. As he reacts to what he finds, the film asks questions about assumptions and judgements from the protagonists but also from the viewers. A challenging and revealing story about belonging, secrets, lies and expectations.

The filmmaker will be in attendance and take part in a Q&A led by Docs Ireland programmer, Stuart Sloan.

**SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER | 10AM**  
QFT | PWYC



DOCS IRELAND



## SCALA!!!

DIR. JANE GILES & ALI CATTERALL  
UK | ENGLISH | 96 MINS | 2023

**Originally created as a UK equivalent to the grindhouse cinemas of America, this documentary tells the story of the legendary/infamous London picture house that blazed a trail for the unconventional and the rebellious at the heart of Thatcher's Britain.**

Featuring testimonies from the likes of John Waters, Stewart Lee and Ben Wheatley, *Scala!!!* is a down-and-dirty love letter to a cinema culture that has all but disappeared.

The film will be preceded by a discussion about the cinema's history and its infamous years of rebellion and debauchery. This screening is in partnership with Strand Arts Centre's 'The Lasting Picture House' heritage programme.

**MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER | 6PM**  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | £7.50/£6



## CINEMA HAS BEEN MY TRUE LOVE

DIR. MARK COUSINS  
UK | ENGLISH | 72 MINS | 2023

**Mark Cousins is back with an inspirational portrait of film festival programmer, producer and author, Lynda Myles.**

Myles directed the Edinburgh International Film Festival from 1973 to 1980, where she was the first woman to helm a major international film festival. Her feminist programming was pioneering and in 1972 she, along with Laura Mulvey and Claire Johnston, held The Women's Event, a space for discussions and screenings within the wider EIFF programme.

A champion of emerging and enduring talent, she screened Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* three times over her tenure. During a period of industry and creative change, she screened early works by George Lucas, Martin Scorsese and others, and would go on to coin the term "The Movie Brats" in her book of the same name co-written with Michael Pye.

The film is at once relaxed and thrilling, with Cousins positioned as friend rather than interviewer, and Myles's remarkable career described in her own words. This light touch compliments the film's dream-like interplay of candid stills and present-day Myles, revealing the depth and breadth of one woman's work.

There will be Q&A with Mark Cousins after the film.

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 12.45PM**  
QFT | PWYC

## Goodbye Julia: Hello, Sadness

WRITTEN  
BY LOVIA  
GYARKYE

Grief pervades the atmosphere of *Goodbye Julia*, Mohamed Kordofani's debut feature which tracks an unlikely friendship between two Sudanese women in a country on the cusp of secession. You can see it in how the characters move. Rounded shoulders are weighed down by the routine of survival; feet shuffle as if shoes are filled with stones. In Kordofani's film, as in life, grief stirs the spirit, haunts the psyche and impales the heart. But rarely does it happen only in private. Grief is also a public act and embracing its unruly path can offer catharsis and clarity.

Early in *Goodbye Julia* the title character, played by model Siran Riak, breaks down during a religious service. A days-long search for her husband, Santino (Paulino Victor Bol), whom audiences know was fatally shot in the film's opening sequence, has yielded no answers. The owner of the photo studio where he works hasn't seen him. The Khartoum police refuse to help Julia because they are racist against southern Sudanese people — despite growing up in Khartoum, she is still seen as a southerner. Julia wonders if Santino has run off with another woman or simply abandoned her and their young son, Danny.

With no information or leads on Santino's whereabouts, Julia attends a public funeral service in the hopes of finding his body. The scene is leaden with solemnity. A priest, robed in a purple garment, recites a prayer for the lost souls. Julia stands in the makeshift outdoor pew, head bowed like the others. Perhaps it's the sight of an older woman crying into her handkerchief or the priest's methodical, almost mechanical, recitation, but something pushes Julia to rise when the other worshippers sit.

With a kind of otherworldly grace, she walks to the front, where coffins house the bodies of these anonymous men. After signing the cross before the large wooden statue of a crucified Christ, Julia, in a manic search for Santino, frantically pulls away the white sheet covering each coffin. The priest and his deacons try to stop her, but, as if possessed, Julia pushes them off, her whisper "Leave me alone" rising to a yell: "I want to find him" and "Let me look for him!" Her cries are devastating; anyone who has experienced loss will hear in her voice a kind of cosmic pleading and spiritual negotiation.

This scene is brief (Kordofani cuts quickly to Julia slumped outside the church), but it gets to a truth about grief: It is as much about searching as it is about sadness. "Let me look" is a mourner's song.

When I first saw *Goodbye Julia*, I had just lost three friends. Their deaths were not violent but the abrupt nature of their passings felt like a violation nonetheless. What do you do when you wake up without the person, or people, you loved? How do you communicate the depth of your loss? Tucked into *Goodbye Julia*'s sweeping sociopolitical narrative and quiet domestic drama is an answer: You scream, you cry and you look for relief — in private and in public.

*Lovia Gyarkye is a critic for The Hollywood Reporter based in New York.*

# NI

# INDEPENDENTS

A selection of new and innovative  
longer-form works hailing from  
Northern Ireland.





## HEAVEN SCENT

**DIR. MICHAEL MCNULTY**

NORTHERN IRELAND | ENGLISH | 89 MINS | 2023

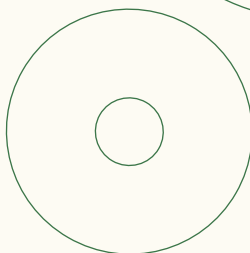
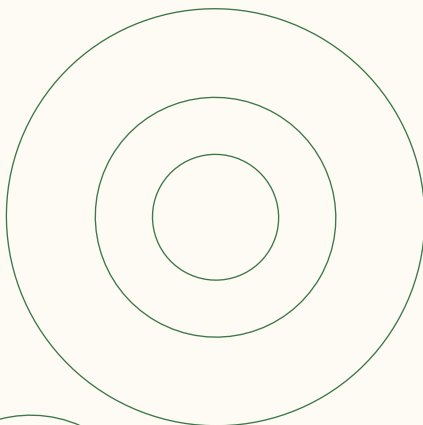
*A fragrance you will believe in.*

The mysterious poisoning of a detective friend leads Kent, a retired English teacher, on the search for a transforming perfume that could shape the political and religious stability of Northern Ireland.

Presented in that latest version of scratch and sniff "Smell-o-vision" technology, audience members will be given a card with ten scents that can be scratched throughout the feature and uncover the smells as Kent delves deeper into the funk underworld.

This family-friendly detective feature is set and shot in Belfast.

**SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER | 6PM**  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | PWYC





**DIR. MARIE CLARE CUSHINAN | 23 MINS**

In the near future, where the world faces inevitable climate collapse and overpopulation, elderly people are encouraged to 'opt out' early, and go out with dignity and grace. Nicole and Justin are hosting a dinner party as their final farewell before they opt out, but tensions rise and ideologies clash, and their daughter Ellie prepares to say goodbye.

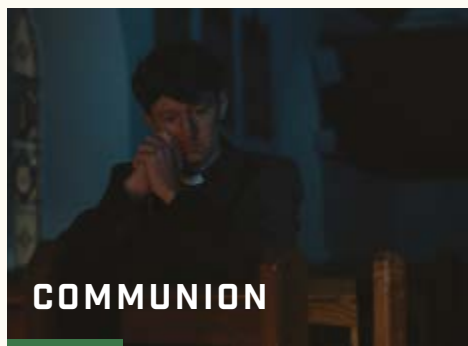
**3.00PM**



**DIR. KC CONNOLLY | 25 MINS**

In small town Ireland, no object has as much value as a secret not told. Desideratum tells the darkly comic story of a priest, a GP and two police officers whose roles as official secret keepers come into question after an unexpected standoff.

**4.20PM**



**DIR. SEAN COYLE | 29 MINS**

A recently bereaved widow and the priest of a declining parish find an unexpected connection through their crisis in faith. This meditative and measured take on how our lives are shaped through our relationships considers the role of religion in our modern age, and the difficulties of believing in faith.

**3.40PM**



**DIR. KEVIN J. MC CORRY | 27 MINS**

Traumatised by a brutal attack, Alexander Hutton's psyche is fractured into two. Mr Positive and Mr Negative are locked in a battle of the minds to either save or destroy their host. This psychological thriller features a high-concept approach and is carried along by a strong central performance from Richard Sherwood in three distinct roles.

**5.00PM**

**SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER | 3PM**  
**STRAND ARTS CENTRE | PWYC**

# SPECIAL EVENTS





**DIR. ROBERT LAKATOS**

HUNGARY/ROMANIA | HUNGARIAN | 80 MINS | 2022

**The Belfast Film Festival team are a bunch of soppy dog lovers and are thrilled to present a dog-friendly screening! Yes, bring your cinema-loving canines with you to watch a film... about dogs!**

Robert Lakatos's film is about the search for a mate for his ageing Hungarian Kuvasz, Talpas who gives one of the funniest entrances in documentary history. Robert is a member of the Hungarian minority from Romania, and while on his quest to save a rare breed gets involved in dog breeding politics, nuanced ideas around nationalism and ethnicity, and meets many, many opinionated people. And dogs.

This satirical film features 'talking' dogs whose words are visible in speech bubbles above their heads. These loose translations will not be needed for the dogs in the room, who already speak fluent 'dog'. You might think it would go without saying, but please only buy a ticket if you are confident your dog will be comfortable in a dark(ish) room of other dogs. We take the safety and comfort of our four-legged, and two-legged, friends very seriously.

**TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER | 7PM**  
BLACK BOX | PWYC

ASTHULL  
FILM  
FEST



***Puffin Rock Agus Cairde Nua* at Belfast Film Festival (Thursday 19th October) marks the beginning of Film Hub NI's *Collective* tour across Northern Ireland. *Collective* is an initiative funded by the BFI's Film Audience Network, which sees Irish and Northern Irish film titles screen across a wide range of community venues.**

Since 2018, titles such as *Bump Along the Way*, *Nowhere Special* and *Róise & Frank* have screened to delighted audiences across NI.

Screening across NI in October and November, the *Puffin Rock/ Puffin Rock Agus Cairde Nua* tour will stop at:

Newcastle Community Cinema  
Dungannon Film Club  
Portrush Film Theatre  
Nerve Centre, Derry  
Raidió Fáilte, Belfast  
Ionad na Fuisgeoige, Belfast  
Flowerfield Arts Centre, Portstewart  
Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre, Limavady  
Ormeau Community Cinema, Belfast

Screening in both Irish and English versions depending on venue. Dates and times for each venue will be announced soon and all details can be found on the Film Hub NI website [www.filmhubni.org](http://www.filmhubni.org)





GRÁNITE PRESENTS

## LAST THINGS + VICKY LANGAN

GráNite is a series of events celebrating old stones and the history & folklore that surrounds them.

Inspired by iconic megalithic monuments; stone circles, cairns, passage mounds, dolmens, and portal tombs, GráNite aims to explore the rich geology, history, folklore, and cultural significance of ancient stones through music, art, film and discussion. These old stones, often overlooked, many still uncovered, can tell us a lot about the past and our connection to the land. The project seeks to foster a deeper appreciation for the stones themselves, their shapes & forms, landscapes, discoveries, stories and energy. GráNite started in 2022 by Rachael Campbell-Palmer. @granite\_belfast

We are delighted to work with GráNite on this special screening of Last Things (2023) by renowned artist/filmmaker Deborah Stratman. Her film is a meditation on the permanence of rock and stone, which exists all around and underneath us. It is a reminder of the processes of formation happening on earth for millennia, but also acts as a kind of salve for current fears of climate crisis and extinction.

The screening will be followed by a 'stone' inspired DJ set from artist and filmmaker Vicky Langan. Vicky Langan is a Cork-based artist whose practice operates across sound, performance, and film.

[www.vickylangan.com](http://www.vickylangan.com)

FRIDAY 3 NOVEMBER | 7PM  
BLACK BOX | PWYC



AEMI EVENT

## SÚITÚ

### aemi 2023 touring programme: SÚITÚ

A new touring programme curated by aemi (Artists' & Experimental Moving Image) featuring contemporary moving image works by Irish & international artists.

'Súitú' – an Irish language term pronounced Suet-two – signifies the sucking in-and-out sound made as the sea moves through stones at the shoreline, pulling them into water before rolling them back onto dry land. Evoking the elemental, the programme's pacing picks up not just on the familiar ebbs and flow of the sea, but also the external forces that circumscribe contemporary lived experience. From inner psychological journeys to the phenomenological, the seven films in this programme together offer an emotional, embodied and sensory experience.

'Súitú' is an aemi programme that forms connections between contemporary moving image work by Irish and international artists. aemi is touring 'Súitú' to venues nationally and internationally across 2023.

#### Film information (Running time 80 mins)

Fábio Andrade, *Contorno/Contour*, 2021,

Brazil, 10 mins

Susan Hughes, *Eyes Like Cats*, 2022,

Northern Ireland, 3 mins

Morgan Quaintance, *A Human Certainty*, 2021,

United Kingdom, 20 mins

Bárbara Lago, *Yon*, 2021, Argentina, 8 mins

Sofia Theodore-Pierce, *Other Tidal Effects*, 2021,

USA, 7 mins

Lisa Freeman, *Hook, Spill, Cry Your Eyes Out*, 2020,

Ireland, 3 mins

Holly Marie Parnell, *Cabbage*, 2023, Ireland, 28 mins

**SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER | 4PM**  
BLACK BOX, GREEN ROOM | PWYC



## FEW CAN SEE

DIR. FRANK SWEENEY

IRELAND | ENGLISH | 42 MINS | 2023

**In the late 1980s, as violence continues in the north of Ireland, censorship is increasingly being enforced on television. In response, broadcasters across Ireland and Britain have entered into a blackout strike. The workers have occupied several stations and are transmitting a programme bringing censored voices back onto the airwaves.**

'Few Can See' examines the legacy of broadcast censorship of the conflict in the north of Ireland and political movements during this era. The project attempts to recreate material absent from state archives due to censorship, based on contemporary oral history interviews with people censored during this time period. Within a late 80s current affairs television format, actors verbatim re-enact edited transcripts from 18 oral history interviews, later dubbing their own performances. This technique is inspired by the use of actors to dub the voices of censored people during the conflict.

The story is inspired by several blackout strikes which took place at broadcasters across Ireland and Britain in response to censorship. Most of the film is shot on old live broadcast tube cameras, resurrected for the production.

**SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER | 6.30PM**  
BLACK BOX, GREEN ROOM | PWYC



**DIRS. MERIAN C. COOPER & ERNEST B. SCHOEDSACK**  
USA | ENGLISH | 104 MINS | 1933

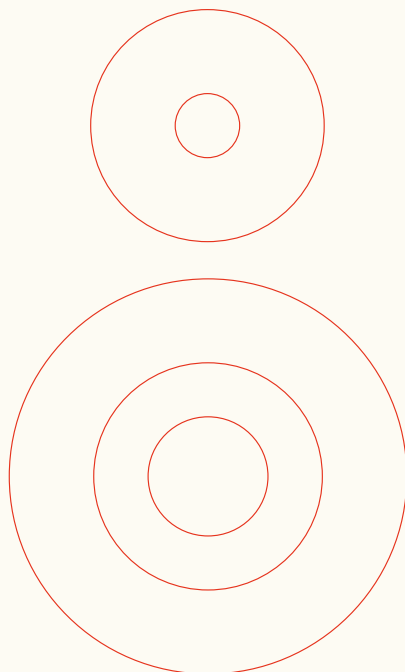
**King Kong (1933) presented on 35mm film,  
celebrating its 90-year anniversary.**

The sensational thrill that started millions! STILL the most amazing show on any screen!

Actress Ann Darrow (Fay Wray) and director Carl Denham (Robert Armstrong) travel to the Indian Ocean to do location shoots for Denham's new jungle picture. Along the way, the actress meets and falls for rugged First Mate John Driscoll (Bruce Cabot). Upon arriving at a mysterious island, Ann is taken hostage by natives who prepare her as a sacrifice to the enormous ape Kong who rules over their jungle. But when Ann is rescued and Kong is captured, the real trouble begins.

**FRIDAY 3 NOVEMBER | 8.15PM**  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | £7/£5

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 2.30PM**  
STRAND ARTS CENTRE | £7/£5





NISDFA EVENT

## THE BOXER

DIR. BRIAN DRYSDALE  
UK | ENGLISH | 50MINS | 1979

**We're lucky enough to be able to present this beautifully photographed independent film made in Belfast in the 1970s, currently being restored by Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive.**

Like any story, this one has an inciting moment: meeting a drunk boxer on Botanic Avenue, near Queens University. However, this story took five years in the telling, as it turned into a 48 minute 16mm film drama, much of which was filmed in a car driving through Troubles-era Belfast at night. Each night involved being checked by the security forces, at one point the Arriflex 16 BL film camera was on a bonnet mount with director Brian Drysdale strapped to a roof rack (to start and stop the camera), this got the security forces thinking that the camera was a rocket launcher and he was going to fire it. Another time they were asked if they'd spotted a sniper... And those were the easy parts.

This screening will provide an early opportunity to see a new restoration of the film, and hear the original, work-in-progress soundtrack and audio mix by Score Draw Music. Director, Brian Drysdale will introduce the film.

Supported by Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive.

**SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER | 12PM**  
QFT | PWYC



NISDFA EVENT

## REVISION

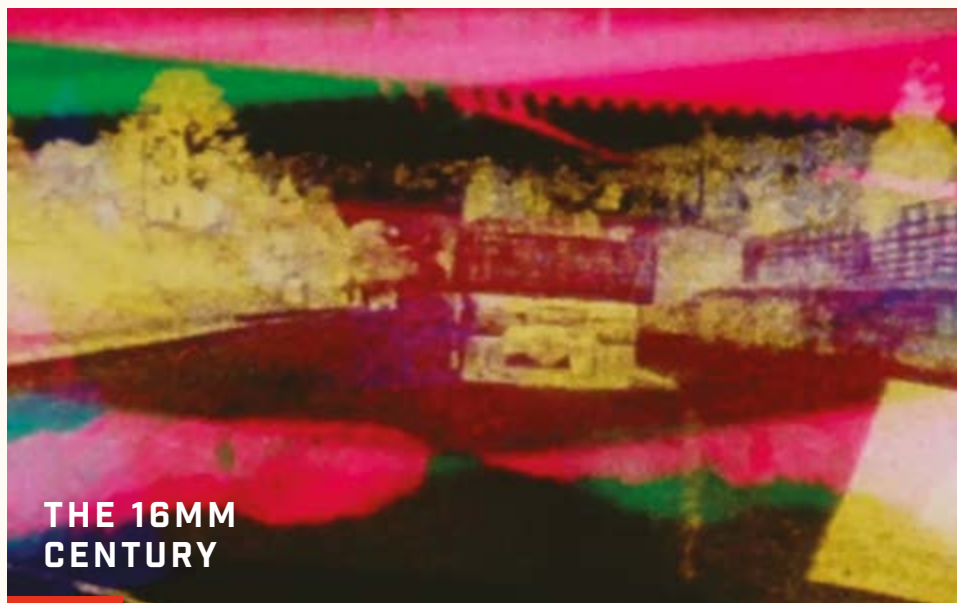
**Film archives aren't static. Retelling, reimagining and repurposing archive to create new archive helps collections grow and evolve.**

Amateur filmmakers, students of filmmaking and young people rummaged in Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive to create their own stories. This is a programme of short films inspired by what they found there.

Watch their films, hear how they learnt to make something new out of something old, and what the Digital Film Archive means to them.

Supported by Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive. .

**SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER | 10AM**  
QFT | PWYC



## THE 16MM CENTURY

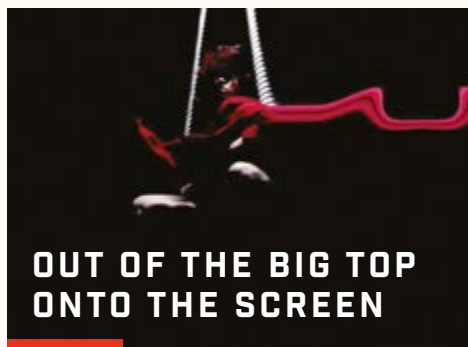
**One hundred years ago this year, the world of filmmaking and spectatorship was forever changed by the creation of 16mm film.**

Introduced by Kodak Eastman in 1923, it was primarily a more affordable option targeted at amateur and home movie makers. As the decades progressed, its inexpensiveness, combined with the lightweight cameras and portable projectors associated with the medium, made it the perfect film gauge for at-large news reporting and documentary, and of course made it very appealing to artist and experimental filmmakers, with almost every notable experimental filmmaker of the 20th century using 16mm in their work.

The ease of projecting 16mm films made it possible to take audiences out of the cinema and create screening spaces anywhere, with the 1960s seeing psychedelic 'happenings' use colourful projections to add to the experience of tripping out. The new openness of possibility was a revolution.

This special event to celebrate 16mm is an illustrated conversation between BFI curator and Experimenta programmer William Fowler and award-winning artist-filmmaker, Mairéad McClean. They will present classic and lesser-known short films on 16mm that they have selected. Of course, the links between experimental film and music can't go unacknowledged, so join us for a DJ set in the QFT bar after the screening.

**THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER | 8.30PM**  
QFT | PWYC



### Circus on screen.

Dive, vault and splat into the emerging and exciting world of circus on screen. Selected short film from circus artist and film makers re imaging how to present circus on the screen

Film from a diverse range of award winning local and international artist.

Hosted by Ken Fanning co-founder of Tumble Circus and member of the Vault collective.

**FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER | 8PM**  
CIRCUSFUL | £5



**DIRS. LAURA ÀNGEL RENGIFO AND NOAH DEBONIS**  
COLUMBIA | 88 MINS | 2022

### *Colloquium: Strangers to Peace: Documentary Film and the Politics of Transitional Justice*

This event includes a screening of the critically acclaimed Colombian documentary, *Strangers to Peace* (Laura Àngel Rengifo and Noah Debonis, 2022, 87 mins.), followed by a panel discussion responding to the film and exploring relations between documentary filmmaking and questions of post-conflict memory and transitional justice – both more widely, and closer to home. The film's producer, Colleen O'Brien, will be in attendance to introduce the film. The event is organised in partnership with The Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice.

Three ex-fighters of the Colombian guerilla army FARC face anxiety and fear as they try to reintegrate into a society that views them as terrorists.

For over half a century, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) have been fighting to overthrow the Colombian government, which they blame for the corruption and inequality that prevails in the country. This film is an intimate portrait of three people who made the difficult decision to demobilize and return to civilian life after years of bloody conflict. Ricardo, a young man who does not hide his ideals; Alexandra, an indigenous woman who left her family at the age of 13; and Dayana, who is discovering her identity as a trans woman, all long for peace and acceptance but must carefully hide the truth about their past. To the general public they are enemies, traitors to their former comrades-in-arms.

**WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER | 3.30PM**  
QFT | PWYC



## MOVIE-OKE

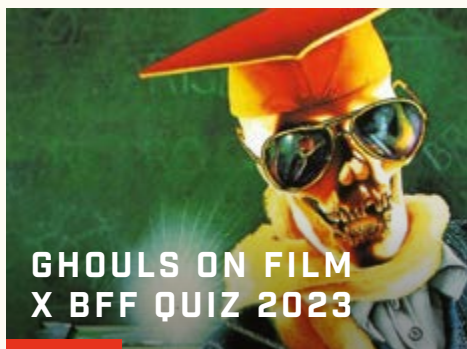
**If the title of this festival event hasn't explained it already, it's a movie-themed karaoke night!**

There are some unforgettable song-filled scenes in cinema - Bohemian Rhapsody lip synced in a car in *Wayne's World*, Daisy Daisy sung by the sinister computer Hal in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, even karaoke itself from Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson's characters in *Lost in Translation*.

You must have a favourite scene you're dying to re-enact, and we're here to facilitate that. The catch is, we'll prioritise songs from non-musicals\*. Sound like fun? Come along to the Black Box and give it your all.

\* Don't worry, we'll have a catalogue to choose from!

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 7PM**  
BLACK BOX | PWYC

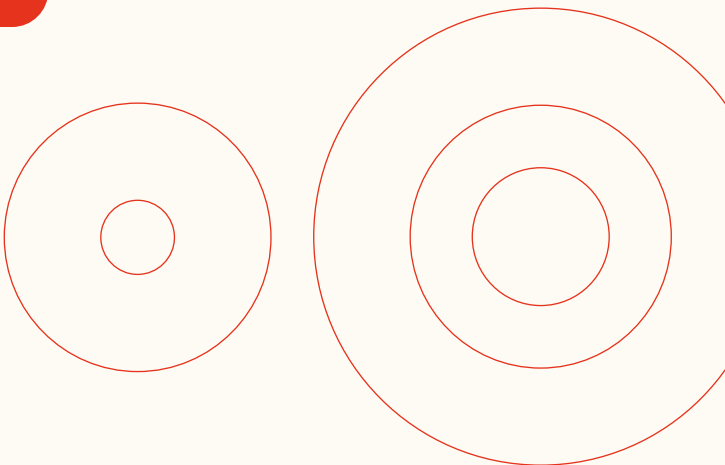


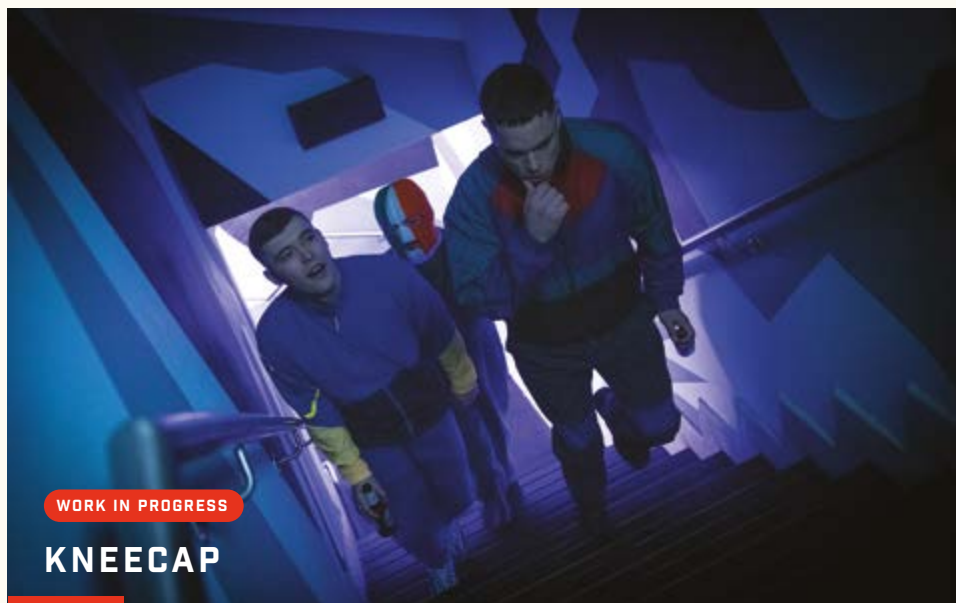
## GHOULS ON FILM X BFF QUIZ 2023

**Have you been dying to show off your film knowledge but had no opportunity to impress anyone?**

Well, look no further! The Belfast Film Festival Quiz is back, and this time with a twist. Our wonderful friends at Ghouls on Film, Belfast's dedicated feminist horror film club, are taking the helm and bringing you a night of trivial terrors (not terrible trivia) - with prizes to be won. And don't worry if you're not a complete horror freak, there will be some general film knowledge in there too, so shake off those cobwebs and come along!

**WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER | 8PM**  
BLACK BOX | £4.50





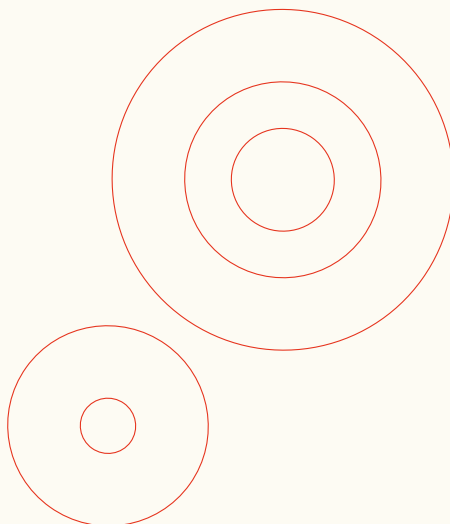
WORK IN PROGRESS

## KNEECAP

Unless you've been living under a púróg for the past few years you won't need an explanation of who Kneecap are. Centring the minority Irish language as an inspirational force, the West Belfast hip hop artists, Mo Chara, Móglai Bap and DJ Próvaí have made headlines with their provocative and political lyrics and colourfully controversial murals. With disarming humour they have alienated both RTE and the DUP, and won over a huge number of fans. They draw attention to uniquely Ulster problems, contradictions and hypocrisies, making them more like neighbourhood jokers than stereotypical Angry Young Men. The upcoming black comedy Kneecap, the origin-story of the group, will premiere early next year.

Belfast Film Festival is absolutely thrilled to present this very special, sneak preview event. The Fine Point Films team behind the project will be with us to share exclusive clips and chat us through the creative process of making what will no doubt be a firmly anti-establishment, beats & rhymes biopic like no other.

MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER | 8PM  
BLACK BOX | PWYC



# BELFAST XR FESTIVAL

Welcome back to the Belfast XR Festival 2023, running from 4th to the 5th November. This year we are proud to partner with groundbreaking StoryFutures Xperience who have provided 20 pieces of virtual reality content made by Oscar and BAFTA award-winning filmmakers that showcases the best of local and international immersive technology content. As well as

inviting audiences to The Black Box, we have also added a VR Cinema at the Bean Bag Cinema, where audiences will be able to share new ways of experiencing VR. Our ambition is to create an unmissable annual gathering for XR that inspires storytelling where our underlying ethos is to bring virtual and augmented reality content to new audiences locally.



Photo Credit:  
Jim Corr

# BELFAST XR FESTIVAL



**FILMMAKERS:** PILOT THEATRE | 12 MINUTES

Experience radiant renderings of a Northern moor, city and coast with sweeping soundscapes and poetic monologues from Hannah Davies, Carmen Marcus and Asma Elbadawi. This is an arresting testament to the inextricable link between person and place.



**FILMMAKERS:** BOOM CLAP PLAY | 8 MINUTES

Take an epic journey through the history of the cosmos via the medium of poetry and music. Stunning animations enriched by orator Boston Williams with a captivating soundtrack by Olga Wojciechowska.



**FILMMAKERS:** ANAGRAM | 9 MINUTES

Narrated by Tilda Swinton, be guided through the many true realities of Goliath. Winner of Grand Jury Prize at 78th Venice International Film Festival and nominated for Emmy Award 2022. **Content warning:** The following content contains mental health scenes.



**FILMMAKERS:** MBD | 2 X 10 MINUTES

Hear the forgotten stories of South Asian and Caribbean soldiers in World War One. As the journey continues to the present day, focus turns to the changes of the last 100 years alongside the impact of migration and racism.



**FILMMAKERS:** SCANLAB PROJECTS | 12 MINUTES

Meet Tim and Pam Fogg, passionate rope specialists and speleologists as they explore Tullyard cave, Northern Ireland. Award winning ScanLAB studio uses LiDAR to create stunning immersive environments which may well hold the secrets to climate change.



**FILMMAKERS:** ELECTRIC SKIES | 8 MINUTES

Based on the remarkable true story of one aspirational LGBTQ+ parent's groundbreaking journey through the adoption process in the UK. Selected for 79th Venice International Film Festival, award winning Electric Skies bring you a story of family and belonging.

## THREE LIGHTS

**FILMMAKERS: VIRTUS STUDIOS & ELECTRIC SKIES**  
9 MINUTES

Join three soldiers, one month after the Battle of the Somme. A sometimes gritty, sometimes magical, but always authentic, exploration of family, love and life in World War One.

## THIS IS YOUR COUNTRY TOO

**FILMMAKERS: STRICTLY IMMERSIVE** | 13 MINUTES

An interactive comedy adapted from a BBC Radio play by Avin Shah. A satire on the immigration system and how our identity can ultimately be defined by strangers.

## THE LONGEST WALK

**FILMMAKERS: SOMEWHAT UNSETTLING** | 10 MINUTES

Emotionally resonant, biographical, BAFTA nominated, urging people to recognise the symptoms of depression and encourage those who are suffering to reach out for help. **Content warning:** The following content deals with depression and suicide ideation.

## LIFE CYCLES

**FILMMAKERS: SURROUND VISION** | 10 MINUTES

Explore the impact of two wheels and frame on the very fabric of our culture. Turn the cinemascope, pump up a tyre and activating the city via the magic of hand tracking.

**SATURDAY 4 & SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER**  
BLACK BOX | £9.90

### SESSIONS ARE AVAILABLE BETWEEN 10AM AND 17.15PM

Each session is 75 minutes. Works vary in length and age certificate. 3 of the pieces come with a content warning and viewer discretion is advised and may not be suitable for younger audiences. This is an exhibition experience and we would expect audiences to be able to view 4 to 5 pieces during their session.

Group bookings: Are available on both days between 10am and 12.45noon, please contact [deepa@discoverneon.com](mailto:deepa@discoverneon.com)

## PROMENADE

**FILMMAKERS: SHROOM STUDIO** | 10 MINUTES

Visit de-constructed Blackpool to hear Mike Hatjoulis' story. A second generation Greek Cypriot restaurant worker who went onto become an influential Royal College of Arts Textile Designer and Master Printmaker.

## UNEARTHED: THE BEETLE STORY

**FILMMAKERS: FACTORY 42** | 15 MINUTES

Set in the Amazon and Tongass National Forest dive into our planet's biodiverse richness. Created in conjunction with Meta. Voiced by Indira Varma and Richard Ayode.

## LOCKER ROOM: RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE

**FILMMAKERS: REMATCH** | 12 MINUTES

It is 1974 in Zaire. You are the Muhammad Ali about to face George Foreman in the biggest fight of your life. Enter the locker room and understand what it felt like to be part of the greatest boxing match to ever take place on the planet.

## DROP IN THE OCEAN

**FILMMAKERS: VISION3** | 10 MINUTES

Understand why there is an urgent need to protect the ocean. Created by the grandson of the ocean pioneer Jacques Cousteau and brought to us by multi-Oscar winning studio Vision3.

## [HI]STORY OF A PAINTING: WHAT'S THE POINT?

**FILMMAKERS: MONKEYFRAME** | 9 MINUTES

Journey into the story behind Georges Seurat's famous La Grande Jatte and discover how this underdog became a world renowned artist.

## OFF THE RECORD

**FILMMAKERS: NO GHOST** | 10 MINUTES

Celebrate British South Asian musical heritage that charts the rise of Bhangra and the Asian Underground scene from the 1970s through to the joyous daytime raves of the early 2000s.

## MRS SHERLOCK HOLMES

**FILMMAKERS: DILLMEADOW MEDIA** | 13 MINUTES

Inspired by Sally Swain's Great Housewives of Art, Mrs Sherlock Holmes is part of the Great Housewives of Fiction trilogy of immersive musicals that embrace the notion that behind every great Victorian Hero... is a woman clearing up.

## GET PUNKED!

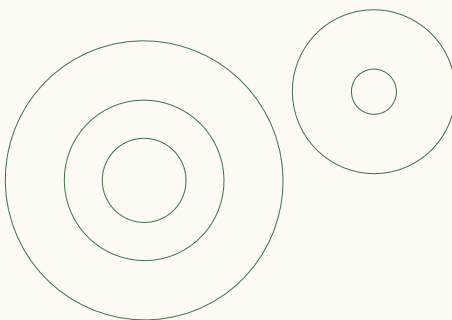
**FILMMAKERS: VISUALISE** | 10 MINUTES

Meet Alex through her teenage diary as she expresses her growing love of punk music and culture through the 1970s and 80s utilising a wealth of BFI and BBC archive footage.

## MISSING 10 HOURS

**FILMMAKERS: ELECTRIC SKIES** | 15 MINUTES

The visitor witnesses Mara, a young woman, gradually losing control as the effects of GHB, a drug used for sexually motivated attacks, takes hold. The power to change how the night unfolds is in your hands. **Content warning:** The following content addresses sexually motivated crimes.



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## BELFAST XR VR CINEMA

We are excited this year to run VR Cinema for the first time at the Bean Bag Cinema, where audiences will be able to watch VR content through their own headsets but will hear shared audio, as in a normal movie showing. We have selected Kindred and Empire Soldiers for VR Cinema."

This session is 40 minutes long. Each audience member will be invited to sit and wear a VR headset

and will experience normal surround sound. This is a unique way to experiencing VR in a shared space.

Sessions are available between 12noon and 4pm

Group bookings: Are available between 12noon and 13.50pm, please contact [deepa@discoverneon.com](mailto:deepa@discoverneon.com)

**SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER**  
VR CINEMA, BEAN BAG CINEMA | £6

# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

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# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

## TUESDAY 31 OCTOBER

9.00pm	New Irish Horror	Haunted Ulster Live	QFT	Page 60
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## THURSDAY 2 NOVEMBER

6.15pm	New Cinema	Fingernails	QFT	Page 26
7.30pm	Opening Film	All Of Us Strangers	Cineworld	Page 10
8.45pm	International Competition	How To Have Sex	QFT	Page 16

## FRIDAY 3 NOVEMBER

3.00pm	Long Short Weekend	Northern Ireland Screen Shorts Showcase	Black Box	Page 52
6.15pm	International Competition	Tótem	QFT	Page 15
7.00pm	Special Events	Granite X Last Things	Black Box	Page 77
8.15pm	Special Events	King Kong 35mm	Strand Arts Centre	Page 79
8.30pm	New Cinema	Anatomy Of A Fall	QFT	Page 27

## SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER

9.30am	Long Short Weekend	Networking Breakfast	QFT	Page 52
10.30am	International Competition	Not A Thing	QFT	Page 33
10am-6pm	Alternate Realities	BXRF Festival	Black Box	Pg 85-88
11am-4pm	Long Short Weekend	Competition Shorts	QFT	Page 41
12.45pm	Doc Yard	Cinema Has Been My True Love	QFT	Page 70
6.15pm	International Competition	In Camera	QFT	Page 18
7.00pm	Special Events	Movie-oke	Black Box	Page 83
7.15pm	In Conversation	John Sayles and Maggie Renzi	QFT	Page 13
8.30pm	New Irish Horror	Double Blind	QFT	Page 60

## SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER

10am-6pm	Alternate Realities	BXRF Festival	Black Box	Pg 85-88
10am-2.45pm	Long Short Weekend	New Irish Shorts	Strand Arts Centre	Pg 48-51
12pm	Kill Your Job	The Delinquents	QFT	Page 39
12pm-4pm	Alternate Realities	BXRF Festival - VR Cinema	Beanbag Cinema	Page 88
12.15pm	New Cinema	Embers	QFT	Page 32
3.00pm	NI Independents	Viva	Strand Arts Centre	Page 74
3.30pm	Screenwriters On Screen	Screenwriters Panel	QFT	Page 65
3.40pm	NI Independents	Communion	Strand Arts Centre	Page 74
4.20pm	NI Independents	Desideratum	Strand Arts Centre	Page 74
5.00pm	NI Independents	Three Way Mirror	Strand Arts Centre	Page 74
6.00pm	NI Independents	Heaven Scent	Strand Arts Centre	Page 73
6.00pm	New Cinema	The Taste Of Things/The Pot Au Feu	QFT	Page 28
7.00pm	Long Short Weekend	Screenskills Shorts Award Party	Black Box	Page 53
8.45pm	New Cinema	The Zone Of Interest	QFT	Page 30

## MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER

6.00pm	International Competition	Blackbird, Blackbird, Blackberry	QFT	Page 17
6.00pm	Doc Yard	Scala!!!	Strand Arts Centre	Page 70
7.00pm	John Sayles & Maggie Renzi Retro	The Secret Of Roan Inish	The Avenue	Page 57
8.00pm	Special Event	Kneecap Work In Progress	Black Box	Page 84
8.30pm	New Cinema	Silent Roar	QFT	Page 32

## TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER

6.15pm	International Competition	Goodbye Julia	QFT	Page 16
7.00pm	Special Events	Whose Dog Am I?	Black Box	Page 76
7.00pm	John Sayles & Maggie Renzi Retro	Men With Guns	Beanbag Cinema	Page 57
7.00pm	Screenwriters On Screen	Sunset Boulevard	The Avenue	Page 64
8.30pm	New Cinema	Lie Of The Land	Strand Arts Centre	Page 31
9.00pm	New Cinema	Monster	QFT	Page 29

# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

## WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER

3.30pm	Special Events	Colloquium: Strangers In Peace	QFT	Page 82
6.30pm	International Competition	City Of Wind	QFT	Page 18
7.00pm	Screenwriters on Screen	Barton Fink	The Avenue	Page 64
8.00pm	Special Events	Ghouls On Film Quiz	Black Box	Page 83
8.30pm	John Sayles & Maggie Renzi Retro	Matewan	Strand Arts Centre	Page 56
9.00pm	New Irish Horror	Fréamhacha	QFT	Page 61

## THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER

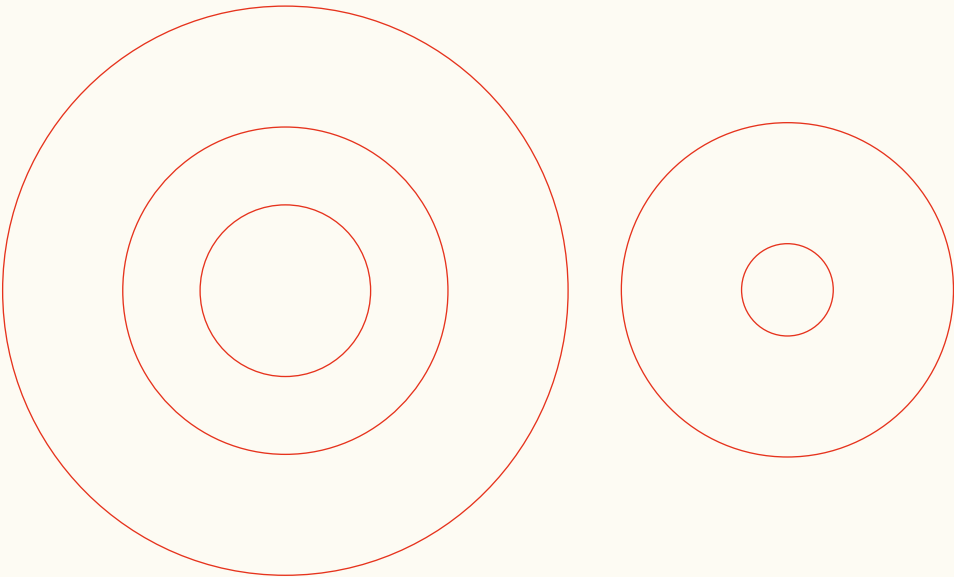
6.00pm	International Competition	The Hypnosis	QFT	Page 17
6.00pm	John Sayles & Maggie Renzi Retro	Lonestar	Strand Arts Centre	Page 56
7.00pm	Screenwriters On Screen	Adaptation	The Avenue	Page 65
7.00pm	Gala Screening	The Last Rifleman	Cineworld	Page 12
7.00pm	Kill Your Job	Normal Cinema Club: Blue Collar	Beanbag Cinema	Page 39
8.30pm	Special Events	The 16mm Century	QFT	Page 81

## FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER

12.30pm	New Cinema	All to Play For	QFT	Page 33
5.30pm	International Competition	Inside The Yellow Cocoon Shell	QFT	Page 15
6.00pm	New Cinema	Vera	Strand Arts Centre	Page 29
8.00pm	Kill Your Job	WERK!	Riddel's Warehouse	Page 40
9.15pm	New Cinema	Eileen	QFT	Page 34

SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER

10.00am	Special Events	ReVision	QFT	Page 80
10.00am	Doc Yard	My Lost Russian Mother	QFT	Page 69
12.00pm	Special Events	The Boxer	QFT	Page 80
12.15pm	Kill Your Job	Do Not Expect Too Much From The End Of The World	QFT	Page 38
2.00pm	New Cinema	The Shadowless Tower	Strand Arts Centre	Page 31
4.00pm	Special Events	AEMI - Súitú	Black Box	Page 78
6.30pm	Special Events	Few Can See	Black Box	Page 78
6.30pm	New Cinema	Fallen Leaves	QFT	Page 28
7.30pm	Closing Film	Poor Things	Cineworld	Page 11
8.30pm	International Competition	Competition Winner Film	QFT	Page 14



# VENUE INFORMATION

## THE AVENUE



Castle Court Shopping Centre,  
Royal Ave, Belfast BT1 1DD

**w.** [theavenuecinema.com](http://theavenuecinema.com)

## BEANBAG CINEMA



5 Exchange Place  
Belfast BT1 2NA

**t.** 028 9032 5913

**w.** [belfastfilmfestival.org](http://belfastfilmfestival.org)

## BLACK BOX



18-22 Hill Street,  
Belfast, BT1 2LA

**t.** 028 9024 4400

**w.** [blackboxbelfast.com](http://blackboxbelfast.com)

## CINEWORLD



SSE Arena Belfast  
The Odyssey Arena,  
2 Queens Quay,  
Belfast BT3 9QQ

**t.** 0330 333 4444

**w.** [cineworld.co.uk](http://cineworld.co.uk)

## QFT / QUB FILM STUDIO



Queen's University,  
20 University Square, Belfast BT7 1PA

**t.** 028 9097 1097

**w.** [queensfilmtheatre.com](http://queensfilmtheatre.com)

## RIDDEL'S WAREHOUSE



87 Ann Street,  
Belfast BT1 3GH

**w.** [hearthni.org.uk](http://hearthni.org.uk)

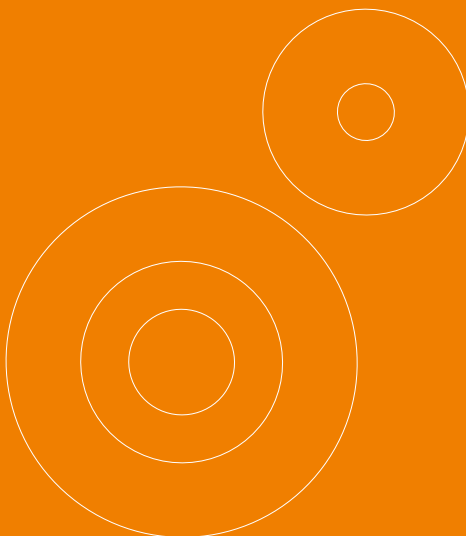
## STRAND ARTS CENTRE



152-154 Holywood Rd,  
Belfast BT4 1NY

**t.** 028 9065 5830

**w.** [strandartscentre.com](http://strandartscentre.com)

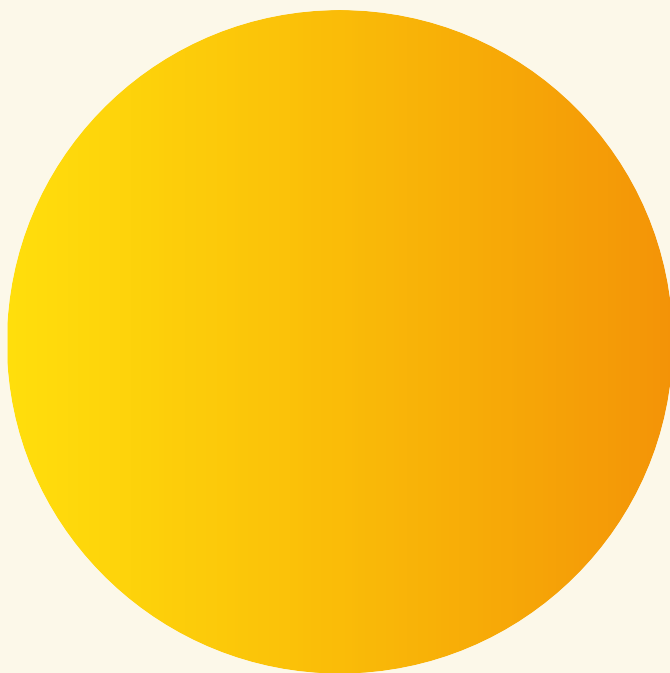


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