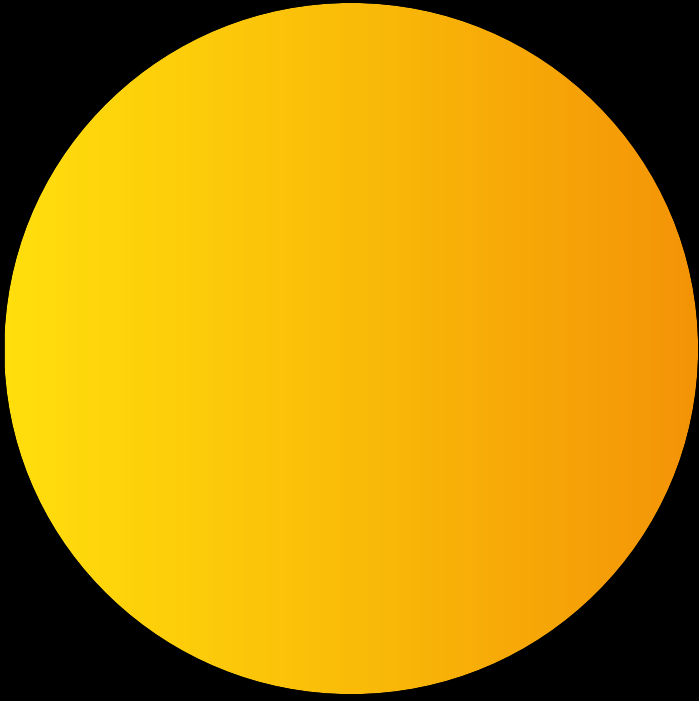




# BELFAST FILM FESTIVAL 2024

31ST OCT -  
9TH NOV

[BELFASTFILMFESTIVAL.ORG](http://BELFASTFILMFESTIVAL.ORG)



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# BELFAST FILM FESTIVAL TEAM



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**Jessica Kiang**  
Programmer



**Rose Baker**  
Programmer



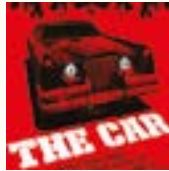
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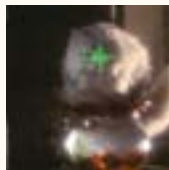
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# WELCOME TO BELFAST FILM FESTIVAL 2024

Welcome to our 24th edition!

**This year in a gesture of solidarity we are proud to join hundreds of exhibitors around the world partnering Palestinian film festival, FilmLab, with a screening of Naila and The Uprising directed by Julia Bacha.**

In addition to our programme of new international films, we will be showcasing an array of home-grown talent. Ar Oíche Shamhna tá lúchair orainn an chéad taispeántas de Aislinn Clarke's Fréwaka a chuir i láthair. On Halloween night we are delighted to present the Irish premiere of Aislinn Clarke's, Fréwaka. The Wise Guy directed by Sam O'Mahoney will be our closing show. And in-between we have an abundance of World, UK and Irish premieres. Special events and guests include our Belfast 2024 events series as part of The Hearth project; a 40th anniversary screening of Anne Devlin; the renowned Romanian writer/director Radu Jude; an award for one of our national hero's of acting – Lalor Roddy, and much more. Ten days of filmic joy, horror, politics and drama... what's not to love!

---

**Michele Devlin**  
CEO

Here we are again! It's always a privilege to programme the Belfast Film Festival and this year is no different. There are so many facets to the role, but by far the most exciting aspects are being able to discover wonderful new films. After considering how they will fit together in the festival and writing about them, we finally get to share them with other cinema lovers. It's always fun to hear what people think of all the films they've seen in the programme over the ten days, so I'm looking forward to hearing those reactions and once again having some great conversations. Enjoy!

---

**Rose Baker**  
Programmer

"We stay moving, we stay light, we stay agile." So begins our fab 2024 trailer which I believe really captures the dynamic spirit of this year's programme, which skids giddily around Ireland and the UK before taking flight across the globe. Our International Competition alone hops from Mongolia to Martinique to Massachussetts while our New International Cinema section voyages even further afield, taking in disparate continents, countries and cultures – sometimes within the very same movie. I couldn't be prouder of an edition that, like the world it reflects, is in constant motion. Good thing the seats are bolted down.

---

**Jessica Kiang**  
Programmer

# NEW IRISH CINEMA



# OPENING NIGHT FILM

## FRÉWAKA



DIR. AISLINN CLARKE  
IRELAND, UK | IRISH. ENGLISH | 103 MINS | 2024

**Belfast Film Festival is proud to present Aislinn Clarke's second feature as its opening film, 2024. The Northern Ireland filmmaker has returned to the horror genre, bringing a visually rich, studied film that takes Irish language cinema to new heights.**

A stylistic departure to her found-footage first film, *The Devil's Doorway*, and following from her script for the DoubleBand-produced Irish language thriller, *Doinnean*, *Fréwaka* draws on well-known features of traditional Ireland and presents them as an uncanny menagerie. With these in-built visual motifs, an expert use of lighting, colour and sound that create the ever-present, rising tension of the genre, Clarke's writing and direction set her out as a modern Irish auteur.

Shot in and around Carlingford and Ravensdale, the film captures an atmospheric Ireland - one steeped in history, folklore, secrets and religious iconography. It tells the story of care assistant Shoo, who rather than confront the death of her mother, takes a job looking after an elderly woman in a large and remote country house.

As the two women slowly come to trust each other, events take a turn that mean they are forced to face up to the truth about each other's lives.

*Fréwaka* was produced by Dermot Lavery of Belfast's DoubleBand Films and Patrick O'Neill of Dublin-based Wildcard.

THURSDAY 31 OCTOBER | 7.00PM  
CINEWORLD | £12/£10



# CLOSING NIGHT FILM

## THE WISE GUY

DIR. SAM O'MAHONEY  
UK | ENGLISH | 87 MINS | 2024

From award-winning Belfast production house **Out of Orbit** comes a heartfelt and original family drama. Or is it a comedy? You decide! The film centres around Francis, an 11 year old boy whose parents are splitting up. Thrown into confusion about his changing situation, he spends lonely weekends at his dad's new place - hippy digs in the middle of a forest. When all seems doubtful, a chance encounter with an enigmatic yet familiar stranger brings what matters most into sharp relief.

With stand-out performances from Senan Jennings and Darrell D'Silva, the film covers a diverse range of themes from atheism, belief, faith and belonging, to being able to swear profusely when no one is around. With cinephile influences ranging from classic gangster movies of the 70s and 80s to such dreamlike films as Céline Sciamma's *Petite Maman*, this is a clever film that keeps you wondering even after it's over.

**SATURDAY 9 NOVEMBER | 7.00PM**  
CINEWORLD | £12/£10

# GALA SCREENING

## DEAD MAN'S MONEY

DIR. PAUL KENNEDY  
UK | ENGLISH | 82 MINS | 2024

**The Belfast Film Festival is delighted to present a gala screening of the latest film from writer-director, Paul Kennedy. Taking Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as its jumping off point, *Dean Man's Money* brings a light touch to some dark themes.**

Ambitious Young Henry works in the pub owned by his uncle, Old Henry. When Old Henry starts a new relationship with local woman 'The Widow' Maureen Tweed, Young Henry hatches a plan with his wife

Pauline to secure the inheritance. When he brings on the services of a shady pub customer called Gerry The Wheels, things take a dark turn. Can Young Henry bring things back from the brink?

With performances from Ciaran McMenamin, Pat Shortt, Judith Roddy, Gerard Jordan, and *Derry Girls'* fantastic, Kathy Kiera Clarke.

SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER | 6.00PM  
QFT 1 | PWYC



## BRING THEM DOWN

**DIR. CHRIS ANDREWS**  
IRELAND | ENGLISH | 105 MINS | 2024

This debut feature from Christopher Andrews is a refreshing stylistic take on the Irish rural drama. With compelling performances from a fantastic ensemble cast including Barry Keoghan (*Saltburn*, *The Banshees of Inisherin*) and Christopher Abbott (*Catch-22*, *Possessor*), and an eerie score from Bangor's own Hannah Peel.

Set in Galway, two neighbouring sheep farms with a troubled history unhappily co-exist. When an act of thoughtless vandalism occurs, it spirals into a pattern of ever more violent tit for tat reprisals. A gory film at times, the film expertly builds the solidity of its characterisation, the brutality of rural farming life, and its depiction of the toxicity of the frustrated male psyche.

We're delighted that both the director, Christopher Andrews and composer Hannah Peel will be present at the screening.

**FRIDAY 1 NOVEMBER | 6.00PM**  
QFT 2 | PWYC



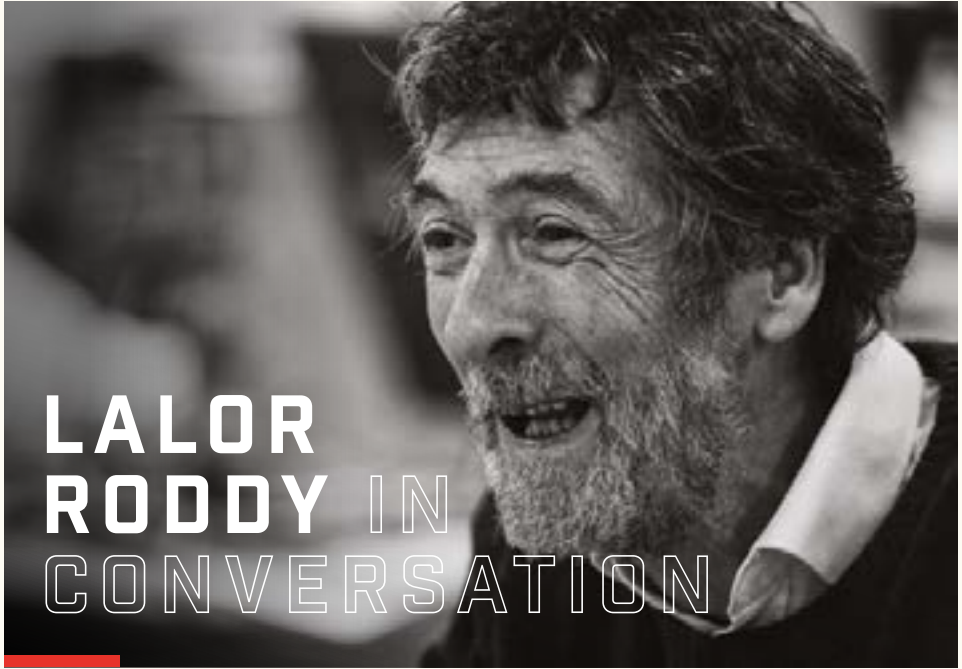
## HOUSEWIFE OF THE YEAR

**DIR. CIARAN CASSIDY**  
IRELAND | ENGLISH | 77 MINS | 2024

This documentary from Ciaran Cassidy made its debut in Galway earlier this year. Telling the story of this now largely forgotten Irish beauty pageant, it weaves together participants' perspectives on the social norms of the day, the lack of contraception and choice, the Magdalen laundries, and of course the women's everyday lives - and the opportunity to escape the quotidian boredom by being in a pageant!

A funny and at times sweet portrait of a uniquely Irish approach to the pageant format (one that was immortalised in the *Lovely Girls* episode of *Father Ted*), the film also reveals a troubling gender dynamic and a backward age of strict moralism.

**SATURDAY 9 NOVEMBER | 6.30PM**  
QFT 2 | PWYC



**The Belfast Film Festival is proud to present actor Lalor Roddy with an award for Outstanding Contribution to Irish Film.**

Perhaps the most prolific actor in Irish cinema, Lalor Roddy has worked with pretty much everyone. From his beginnings as a founder member of Tinderbox theatre company, it's hard to overstate the diversity of roles and productions of which he has been a part. From filmmaker Steve McQueen and his critically acclaimed, award-winning *Hunger*, to countless fledgling short film makers on the island of Ireland, Lalor has supported projects of every budget with his dedicated skill. In terms of the diversity of subject, style and role that Lalor

takes on, the two biggest Irish films of this year encapsulate exactly this, with Lalor appearing in both Irish rap comedy, *Kneecap*, and Pat Collins' contemplative John McGahern adaptation, *That They May Face the Rising Sun*, in which his performance as ageing farmhand, Patrick, is deeply affecting and truly unforgettable.

Having been an audience member of the festival many times in the past, Lalor Roddy will this year take part in an illustrated conversation about his wide-ranging and impressive career. He will be joined by Film Hub NI's Hugh Odling-Smee.

**TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER | 7.20PM**  
QFT 1 | PWYC





# RADU JUDE IN CONVERSATION

They say never meet your heroes, but you can see for yourself if that's good advice when Belfast Film Festival programmer and *Variety* and *New York Times* film critic Jessica Kiang sits down for a chat with multi award-winning Romanian filmmaker Radu Jude, who would be very embarrassed to be described as one of hers.

(Hyper)Active since the early 2000s, Jude made his first big splash on the international festival circuit when his beautifully shot, scabrously funny period satire *Aferim!* won Best Director at the 2015 Berlin Film Festival, where Jude would go on to take the top prize, the Golden Bear, in 2021 for his

zany, uncategorizable political provocation *Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn* (BFF'21). He was also awarded the top prize at the 2018 Karlovy Vary Film Festival for the brilliantly angry black comedy *I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians*, and with Best Director in Locarno in 2023 for another of his wordcount-defying titles *Do Not Expect Too Much From the End of the World*, which played in BFF'23 and which Jessica Kiang maintains is her favourite — and therefore empirically the best — movie of last year. Join us for what is sure to be a highly unpredictable and enjoyable conversation with one of world cinema's true mavericks, who we are also honoured to have serve on this year's International Competition jury.

SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER | 6.30PM  
QFT 2 | PWYC

# INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

A carefully curated selection of 8 first or second features representing the most exciting emerging filmmaking from around the world, to be adjudicated by a panel of international luminaries.

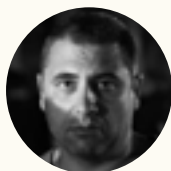
Look out for the 8 specially commissioned essays from leading film critics, programmers and commentators — one for each movie — scattered throughout this booklet for your reading pleasure once the lights go back up...



# INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION JURY

## RADU JUDE

---



Romanian director, Radu Jude, who has excited audiences with his nonconformist and unconventional style, won the Golden Bear at the Berlinale in 2021 for his feature film *Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn*.

His most recent experimental film (alongside philosopher Christian Ferencz-Flatz), *Eight Postcards from Utopia*, a found footage documentary of post socialist Romanian advertisements is currently on the festival circuit. Other notable feature films include the highly lauded *Aferim!*, *Scarred Hearts* and *Uppercase Print*. Jude is currently shooting two feature films: *Dracula* and *Continental '25*.

## DOROTA LECH

---



Dorota Lech has worked for Toronto International Film Festival for over ten years and currently leads the Discovery Programme (which highlights the first and second features of directors from around the globe) and selects films from Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe, Turkey and Iran.

Lech has curated programmes for Museo Reina Sofia, Filmoteca Española, Museum of the Moving Image in New York, and DokuFest in Kosovo. As a writer, Lech has contributed to *Vanity Fair*, *MUBI Notebook*, and *Film Quarterly* and is a guest lecturer in Harvard's Department of Art, Film, and Visual Studies and the University of Toronto. Lech was named a Future Leader in Film Programming Curation by *Screen International* in 2024.

## DEAN KAVANAGH

---



Dean Kavanagh is an award-winning experimental Irish filmmaker whose first narrative feature, *Hole in the Head*, received acclaim at international festivals and was named one of the best films of 2022 by The Irish Times.

A cinematographer, editor, and film archivist, Kavanagh's work utilises both contemporary and retrograde motion picture technologies. Kavanagh is a recipient of the Next Generation Artists' Award, a member of the European Film Academy, and Berlinale Talent alumnus.



## WINDLESS

DIR. PAVEL G. VESNAKOV  
BULGARIA, ITALY | BULGARIAN | 93 MINS | 2024

**Tattooed, brooding Bulgarian rap superstar Fyre (here going by his real name Ognyan Pavlov) turns in a remarkably powerful, and paradoxically taciturn, performance as a son returning to his hometown following the death of his estranged father — a man who, to his friends and neighbors at least, was something of a local legend.**

In exquisitely composed, richly evocative images that are haunted by the secrets of the character's troubled history, Pavel G. Vesnakov's second narrative feature after *German Lessons* practically smolders with the resentments and misunderstandings that can drive a father and son apart, except for when, occasionally, all that mood burns away to reveal grace and vulnerability underneath. Just ask the lonely, hurting but hopeful little boy that lurks within many a tough-guy exterior: You might think you're done with the past — but buddy, the past ain't done with you.

SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER | 8.30PM  
QFT 2 | PWYC



## FAMILIAR TOUCH

DIR. SARAH FRIEDLAND  
USA | ENGLISH | 90 MINS | 2024

**Sarah Friedland's desperately moving debut feature film won multiple awards at the recent Venice Film Festival and it isn't hard to see why — except insofar as it can be hard to see anything through such wet eyes.**

Starring a stunning Kathleen Chalfant in an award winning performance as Ruth, a bright, capable eightysomething suddenly having to navigate her failing faculties, the film defies the cliches of the dementia drama genre with its extraordinarily even-handed compassion and the light and humor that seem to emanate from Ruth herself, even in dark times. Her son (H. Jon Benjamin) is swallowing his heartbreak at the loss of a wonderful mother, her carers are trying to maintain boundaries in a profession that makes that almost impossible. And Ruth herself must come to terms with assisted living when she has proudly and beautifully and for so long lived without anyone's assistance at all.

WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER | 8.50PM  
QFT 2 | PWYC



## TO KILL A MONGOLIAN HORSE

**DIR. XIAOXUAN JIANG**  
MALAYSIA, HONG KONG, USA, KOREA, JAPAN |  
MONGOLIAN, MANDARIN | 100 MINS | 2024

From Riverdance to restaurant flamenco performances, the phenomenon of cultures both protecting and exploiting their heritage by commercialising it into spectacles and sideshows is hardly unfamiliar.

But it's unlikely you've seen this practice depicted against the stunning backdrop of the steppes of Mongolia, where the proud ancient tradition of warrior horsemanship is repackaged into rodeo-like exhibitions in rural areas where the talents they celebrate are rapidly dying out. In her elegiac and strikingly beautiful debut, director Xiaoxuan Jiang follows one of these riders, Saina (a real-life rider playing a version of himself) as he tries to reconcile the pageantry and masculine competitiveness of his evening job at the fair with his hardscrabble daily life as a herdsman. Juggling an alcoholic father and a broken marriage, Saina must navigate a world where modernity threatens to separate him from everything he knows and loves. Like, for example, his ageing but still agile white stallion.

**TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER | 8.30PM**  
QFT 2 | PWYC



## SECOND CHANCE

**DIR. SUBHADRA MAHAJAN**  
INDIA | HINDI, HIMACHALI, ENGLISH | 104 MINS | 2024

Indian writer-director Subhadra Mahajan makes a soothing balm of a debut feature with the pensive, intimately observed story of 25-year-old Nia (Dheera Johnson) who retreats to her family's Himalayan holiday home in the dead of winter, to recuperate following a traumatic breakup and a termination.

In lovely black-and-white, the stark backdrop of the mountains seems forbiddingly icy at first, but the spark of friendship that flares between Nia and de facto housekeeper Bhemi (outstanding non-professional Thakra Devi) — not to mention Bhemi's rambunctious 8-year-old grandson Sunny (a Kanav Thakur) and a ridiculously cute kitten — soon flares into a circle affection so bright you could warm your hands against it. Mahajan imbues this simple story with a grace and a serenity that turns it into a heartfelt act of gratitude, for the places and the people that heal us.

**SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER | 8.30PM**  
QFT 2 | PWYC



## UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

DIR. MATTHEW RANKIN  
CANADA | PERSIAN, FRENCH | 89 MINS | 2024

**Matthew Rankin's delightfully offbeat comedy manages to say something profound and moving about culture and community with one simple but radical idea: what if Persian were the first language of a stylized but still drollly recognisable Winnipeg?**

A sclerotic schoolteacher despairs at the stupidity of his students. A forlorn ex-bureaucrat (Rankin himself) travels to see his mother. A guide brings bedraggled groups of tourists around the gray and beige "sights" of the city. These and other stories of the friends, enemies, strangers, shopkeepers and neighbors of this Wes Anderson-style ensemble are loosely arranged around the mission of two young girls to find a way to claim an unexpected windfall: a banknote just visible beneath the frozen surface of a slippery expanse of rock-hard, Canadian-winter lake ice. The hidden gem that is *Universal Language* feels like just such a wonderful discovery.

Canada's International Oscar submission

THURSDAY 31 OCTOBER | 8.30PM  
QFT 2 | PWYC



## PAUL & PAULETTE TAKE A BATH

DIR. JETHRO MASSEY  
UK | ENGLISH, FRENCH | 110 MINS | 2024

**Paul (Jeremie Galiana) is young American photographer in Paris. Paulette (Marie Benati) is a young Parisian with an obsessive hobby: visiting the sites of gruesome historical events and reenacting them.**

On her knees as she wills herself into the mindset of Marie Antoinette before the guillotine blade fell, Paulette catches Paul's eye and a love story of sorts ensues, albeit one constantly shadowed with history's horrors and a sense that future cataclysms are simply waiting to occur. Brimming with both romantic optimism and dark-tinged disillusion, with an offbeat tone of voice carried brilliantly by the two leads, UK-French director Jethro Massey's witty but provocative debut has a defiantly frank gaze — a little like the unnervingly steady stare of actress Benati — that yields a highly original and insightful glimpse into a generation trying desperately to connect in an age of dissociation.

THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER | 6.00PM  
ODEON | PWYC



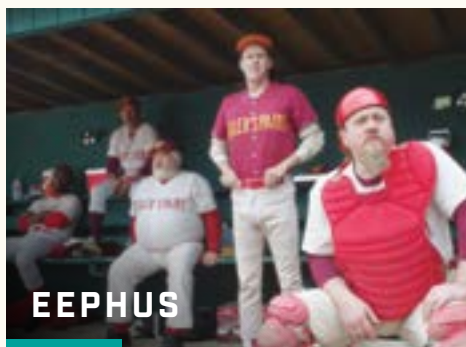
## THE BALLAD OF SUZANNE CÉSAIRE

DIR. MADELEINE HUNT EHRLICH  
USA | ENGLISH, FRENCH | 75 MINS | 2024

Director Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich's background in visual art is evident throughout her feature debut, not only in the rich evocation of lush and verdant mid-century Martinique, but in the Brechtian playfulness with which she approaches the story of Suzanne Césaire, whose own work as a key anti-colonialist thinker and pioneer of the Afro-surrealism movement was overshadowed by that of her poet-politician husband, Aimé Césaire.

Reclaiming Suzanne (Zita Hanrot) from history's neglect is a project complicated by Césaire's own desire to evade the limelight even while she interacted with some of the most famous intellectuals of her time. Hunt-Ehrlich turns this to her film's advantage, allowing her actors to play both their characters and themselves as they reflect on and connect with those characters. This *Ballad* quickly becomes a lovely trick of the light that honors Césaire's legacy without robbing it of any of its mystery.

MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 8.50PM  
QFT 2 | PWYC



## EEPHUS

DIR. CARSON LUND  
USA | ENGLISH | 98 MINS | 2024

Baseball is a mainstay of American culture and cinema alike, yet its charms can elude many of us on the other side of the Atlantic, despite the best efforts of crowdpleasers like *Field of Dreams* and *A League of Their Own*.

Yet Carson Lund's gorgeously wistful, edge-of-autumn baseball movie comes closer than just about any other to articulating the sport's hold on the population. It does so by narrowing its focus to one small, shabby league of mostly middle-aged amateur players in a sleepy New England suburb, bantering and beer-canning their way through the last game of the season — and possibly ever, as their pitch is slated for demolition. Chronicling these final hours of play with a warm, wry sense of humour, *Eephus* is a funny-sad-sweet tribute to the unifying power of community activity, the vicarious pleasures of spectatorship and the graceful choreography of the Great American Pastime.

SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER | 12.45PM  
QFT 1 | PWYC

## *Eephus: That's The Whole Ballgame*

WRITTEN BY  
TIM GRIERSON

Independent film lovers and baseball fans aren't that different. Both can get fairly obsessive about their particular pastimes, devouring the minutiae to a feverish degree, happily residing in cloistered worlds that speak their own language. In each case, the diehards have a tendency toward the rhapsodic and the longwinded, unafraid of how they sound to laypeople who don't share their passionate devotion. If I wasn't firmly indoctrinated in both camps, I'd probably find such true believers insufferable. Thank god I know better.

Baseball has been the subject of myriad Hollywood films, the sport frequently presented in the form of the inspirational biopic, the raucous comedy or the tearjerk male melodrama. This uniquely American game is often the backdrop — the colorful workplace — but these movies rarely possess the right texture, the proper feel, the ineffable pleasures of the sport. They're shiny entertainments that reduce the complexity of baseball to pat morality tales and strained uplift — phoniness on top of phoniness.

Among the many things that's remarkable about director Carson Lund's feature debut is how it serves as a remedy to those more polished films. Arthouse crowds and baseball lifers alike will find much to savour in *Eephus*, which communicates directly to those in its strike zone. (The title comes from an obscure type of pitch, while defiantly non-mainstream documentarian Frederick Wiseman lends the project a bit of cool cachet by delivering a brief voice cameo.) This elegiac, low-budget drama effortlessly conjures up the sport's elemental qualities, the ones the casual fan fails to notice. Locating the crucial, invisible moments in between at-bats or before the start of an inning — the pointless chitchat in the dugout or the daydreaming that goes on in the outfield — Lund focuses on what never makes the highlight reel but animates every game. In true indie-film fashion, nothing much happens in *Eephus* — except, of course, so much profoundly does.

The story is simple. Two adult-league men's teams — most of the players out of shape, over the hill — face off on a diamond in mid-October sometime in the 1990s. It will be the last game played there before a construction project turns the field into a school. Baseball seems to be one of the few hobbies available to these undistinguished athletes — unsentimental grumps one and all — so they decide to go through with this final hurrah. And you needn't worry about main characters or which team is the underdog. There's nothing as grandiose as a "protagonist" or "dramatic stakes" going on. These men are here to play a game they love even if they're, frankly, not very good at it, and then that will be that. They'll have to find something else to do.

For many of us, independent cinema has meant the promise of risk-taking auteurs crafting personal stories without worry of commercial considerations — distinctive directors trusting that, to paraphrase a rather more famous baseball movie, if they build it, an audience will come. As *Eephus'* middle-aged weekend warriors grunt and groan while hitting the ball and running the bases, complaining about bad knees and flagging vitality, we witness another kind of faith — a resilient belief that the joys of a game we grew up enraptured by will endure long after we're gone. *Eephus* takes place over one day that extends deep into the night, with the encroaching darkness becoming almost unspeakably moving. As much as we wish otherwise, no baseball game goes on forever. Neither does a great movie.

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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IN ITALY WE SAY  
'SAH-LAY  
DEE  
MAH-RAY'



## Windless: The Sins of the Father

WRITTEN  
BY GUY  
LODGE

The first thing that strikes you in *Windless* is the frame: 1:1, perfectly square, in the way that the eye somehow tricks into seeing as taller than it is wide. It's a rarity in filmmaking, though it shouldn't be — who decreed that the horizontal rectangle should be the default shape of all cinema? In painting and photography, portraits hold as much gallery space as landscapes; in our daily lives, many of us spend more time scrutinising our vertical phone screens than our old-school TV sets. The wide-focus panorama is not even the basic standard in the mechanism of our own eyes. In his tightly shot, exquisitely claustrophobic second feature, Bulgarian director Pavel G. Vesnakov channels the self-imposed tunnel vision of a man with little time for lateral detail, intent only on what lies ahead.

Played with stonily imposing intensity by Bulgarian rapper FYRE (aka Ognyan Pavlov), the protagonist is Kaloyan, a taciturn roughneck whose ornate tattoos snake all the way up his shaven scalp, to where an inked etching of Julius Caesar adds an accusatory glare to the back of his head. Perhaps the guarded, brooding Kaloyan, newly returned to his shabby Bulgarian hometown after years working in Spain, identifies with the emperor as a figure of persecuted strength. He certainly cares little for history, or even the recent past.

The latter, in fact, he views with active contempt. His homecoming is a reluctant one, prompted by the recent death of a father he despised. The effects of the old man's loveless life must be packed and discarded, and with them, the unresolved emotional debris of Kaloyan's unhappy childhood. "Throw it away," his mother repeatedly advises him over Zoom — having long since fled this desolate town herself — as he sorts through his father's belongings, junking everything from furniture to photographs to childhood toys. They have the memories, after all, and even they aren't worth keeping.

This absence of sentimentality is echoed at a national level by authorities bent on erasing past lives to materially enrich present ones. The dead man's apartment will be one of many razed to make way for a luxury golf course and casino development. And, more controversially, the town cemetery where Kaloyan's father and various ancestors are buried is also slated for demolition. Tasked with choosing a new location for his family's remains, Kaloyan is indifferent. Generational ties cut no ice with this hardened exile; he has determined his own narrative and inscribed it on his skin, to wither and rot once he passes too.

*Windless* mourns a country's carelessly decomposing sense of its own history, but doesn't damn Kaloyan for leaving it all behind — for refusing to shoulder his parents' pain and poverty, as they shouldered the anguish of theirs. Or rather, Kaloyan attempts this refusal: Vesnakov's haunted, echoing film shows the reach and grip of the past even on those most resistant to looking back with anything but sightless, tattooed eyes. That square frame, so frequently filled by Kaloyan's heavy, illustrated head, may block out peripheral diversions, but it's the shape, too, of narrowly selective memories, of Polaroid pictures, of moving boxes filled with the inconvenient paraphernalia of life itself.

Guy Lodge is a London-based film critic for *Variety*, *The Observer* and *The Guardian*.

**NEW**  
INTERNATIONAL  
CINEMA





## NICKEL BOYS

DIR. RAMELL ROSS  
USA | ENGLISH | 140 MINS | 2024

Tracing the tragedy and trauma surrounding a corrupt Florida reform school for young Black men in the last years of the Jim Crow era, Colson Whitehead's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Nickel Boys* had scorching power on the page, though it seemed a tall order to film.

Yet in the year's boldest, most inventive literary adaptation, former documentary director RaMell Ross finds a radically subjective cinematic language. Conveying Whitehead's investigation of individual and collective Black identity, the film often places us directly in the headspace of Elwood Curtis

(Ethan Herisse), a falsely convicted teen fighting for his survival and self-worth in the face of shocking institutional abuse.

Viewers familiar with Ross's Oscar-nominated documentary *Hale County This Morning, This Evening* may recognise some of his lyrical, impressionistic technique here — but the stark immediacy of his vision is stunning either way, and powers one of the defining arthouse movies of 2024.

THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER | 8.15PM  
ODEON | PWYC



## GRAND TOUR

**DIR. MIGUEL GOMES**

PORTUGAL, ITALY, FRANCE, GERMANY, JAPAN, CHINA |  
PORTUGUESE | 128 MINS | 2024

**In such films as *Tabu* and his *Arabian Nights* trilogy, Portuguese auteur Miguel Gomes has proven himself one of the great armchair-travel merchants of modern cinema.**

But his films don't trade in empty, postcard-pretty spectacle, instead probing our collective, itchy yen for escape, romance, discovery and storytelling, even when it comes at a personal or political cost. His latest time-bending wonder is his most transportive yet, following restless civil servant Edward (Gonçalo Waddington) on a woozy odyssey through Southeast

Asia that begins in 1918 and is gradually released from all rules of direction and chronology — with his long-suffering fiancée Molly (Crista Alfiate) in hot pursuit all the while. Funny, mysterious and often rapturously beautiful, it's a joyful ode to the verdant jungle landscapes, slow-cruising riverboats and unfamiliar urban karaoke bars where you can lose yourself and, just as often, find yourself too.

Portugal's International Oscar submission

**SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER | 3.00PM**  
QFT 1 | PWYC





## A REAL PAIN

**DIR. JESSE EISENBERG**  
USA, POLAND | ENGLISH | 90 MINS | 2024

Jesse Eisenberg directs and stars in this funny yet deeply soulful story of cousins David (Eisenberg) and Benji (Kieran Culkin) embarking on a Holocaust tour of Poland in honour of their grandmother.

The legacy of atrocity is sensitively handled, but this is really a tale of friendship between polar opposites, between the watchful, neurotic types and the ones who change the weather in the room simply by walking in. Both actors (as well as a charming Will Sharpe as their tour guide) are superb, but Culkin's portrayal of the mercurial, brilliant and infuriating Benji (coming on the heels of his career-making turn in TV's *Succession*) is a live-wire wonder, that makes us understand David's dazzled but pained affection for him in terms of the quick, fierce love that a moth feels for a flame, even as its wings are getting singed.

**MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 8.30PM**  
ODEON | PWYC



## LA COCINA

**DIR. ALONSO RUIZPALACIOS**  
MEXICO, USA | ENGLISH, SPANISH | 139 MINS | 2024

Rooney Mara and Raul Briones Carmona star in this dynamic and beautifully photographed film based on Arnold Wesker's 1957 play, *The Kitchen*. It follows the inner-workings of a large and busy restaurant kitchen off Times Square in New York City.

As the film introduces us one by one to the characters who make up the restaurant staff, we see both the hierarchical boundaries of class, gender, ethnicity, language and culture, and the camaraderie of teamwork in a pressurised environment. At times operatic and stylistically bold, the film's modulating rhythm follows the changing focus on grand themes of the human condition, labour systems and class struggle, and an intimate portrayal of a nuanced interpersonal relationship. Rooney Mara gives an even-handed and determined performance as Julia, a waitress dealing with a crisis pregnancy. The film is written and directed by Mexican filmmaker, Alonso Ruizpalacios whose previous film, *Museo* (Museum), won Best Script at the Berlin International Film Festival.

**TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER | 6.00PM**  
ODEON | PWYC



## HARD TRUTHS

DIR. MIKE LEIGH

UK, SPAIN | ENGLISH | 97 MINS | 2024

It's been 14 years since Mike Leigh, more recently preoccupied with the 19th-century histories of J.M.W. Turner (*Mr Turner*) and the Peterloo Massacre (*Peterloo*), last probed the vagaries of contemporary British life — but you wouldn't know it from this short, sharp, blistering domestic portrait, which finds him on vigorous, biting-back form.

It's a welcome reunion, too, with Marianne Jean-Baptiste, the Oscar-nominated star of *Secrets and Lies*, here given a rare, unforgettable leading role as Pansy, a North London wife and mother consumed with vituperative anger at the world and everyone in it. Like the diametric opposite of Sally Hawkins' perma-sunny heroine in Leigh's *Happy-Go-Lucky*, Pansy confronts her loved ones and strangers alike with the same bruising, often hilarious hostility, only for the film to turn sneakily, tenderly poignant as the pain behind her rage is laid bare.

SATURDAY 9 NOVEMBER | 1.00PM  
QFT 2 | PWYC



## KING BABY

DIRS. KIT REDSTONE & ARRAN SHEARING

UK, FRANCE, CANADA | ENGLISH | 88 MINS | 2024

A wooden queen comes between a king and a servant in this surreal, dark comedy from English filmmaking duo Kit and Arran. Set in a fictitious kingdom where the sun always shines and the characters live in the open air of a ruined castle, the film imaginatively explores themes of class, hierarchy, gender and power.

The only two people in the kingdom, the king and the servant live happily in their respective roles. One day, a dream prompts the king to order the servant to carve a queen. The presence of the mannequin queen leads to a shift in the seemingly delicate balance, resulting in an unravelling of everything that went before.

Hilariously performed by Graham Dickson and Neil Chinneck and with an edge that defies its bucolic scenery, the film takes you on an absurdist journey through a dark fairytale and leaves it up to you to decide what exactly it all means.

SATURDAY 9 NOVEMBER | 1.15PM  
QFT 2 | PWYC



## NIGHTBITCH

DIR. MARIELLE HELLER  
USA | ENGLISH | 98 MINS | 2024

Recently, there's been a lot of talk of "childless cat ladies" and the dangers they (we) pose to the future of humankind, so it's pretty timely that along comes Marielle Heller's *Nightbitch* to prove that dog-loving women with kids can also have their issues.

Amy Adams hurtles out of a career dry spell and tears into the story of this particular child-ful dog lady – based on the bestselling novel by Rachel Yoder – like a rottweiler pouncing on a flank steak. Juggling her love for child, her frustration with her absent husband (Scoot McNairy) and her resentment at them both for the way her prior identity as an artist has been subsumed into that of a stay-at-home mom, Adams turns in a darkly humorous performance that should nip at the heels of any woman – mother or not – who has ever been bitten by society's underestimation.

THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER | 8.30PM  
QFT 1 | PWYC



## RUMOURS

DIRS. EVAN JOHNSON / GALEN JOHNSON / GUY MADDIN  
CANADA, GERMANY, HUNGARY, USA | ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SWEDISH | 103 MINS | 2024

We're used to describing modern politics as a farce, though it's never a particularly entertaining one. Not so this gleefully absurd collaboration between veteran Canadian experimentalist Guy Maddin and fraternal directing duo Evan and Galen Johnson.

This is a genuinely, openly, raucously hilarious skewering of the well-meaning ineffectiveness and gestural rhetoric of the G7 forum – imagined here as an international confederacy of dunces, headed by a stiff-backed German chancellor wickedly played by Cate Blanchett. As she and six other world leaders gather in a custom-built gazebo to discuss sundials, the Olympic Games and an unspecified "global crisis" that none of them knows how to solve, a heavy fog sets in, zombie-like beings rise from the earth, and the fun really begins. A corrective to so much political satire that is more clever than amusing, this is one of the year's loopyest, funniest films.

TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER | 8.45PM  
ODEON | PWYC



## ARMAND

DIR. HALFDAN ULLMANN TØNDEL  
NORWAY | NORWEGIAN, ENGLISH | 117 MINS | 2024

**One six-year-old boy accuses another of unthinkable abuse in this unnerving, shape-shifting debut by Norwegian writer-director Halfdan Ullmann Tøndel — but the children are never seen on screen.**

Instead, the incident cues some grown-up bad behaviour from the boys' parents and teachers, gathered for a classroom conference that spirals swiftly out of control. The setup recalls such hothouse dramas as Fran Kranz's *Mass* and Roman Polanski's *Carnage*, but the execution is consistently, even surreally surprising, weaving various conflicting realities as the truth slips further away. Renate Reinsve, the breakout star of *The Worst Person in the World*, gives an astonishing last-nerve performance as the accused child's defensive mother, while Ullmann Tøndel — grandson of Ingmar Bergman and Liv Ullmann — asserts an original, intense storytelling voice that won him the Camera d'Or for best first film at Cannes.

Norway's International Oscar submission

**MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 6.00PM**  
ODEON | PWYC



## THE OTHER WAY AROUND

DIR. JONÁS TRUEBA  
SPAIN, FRANCE | SPANISH, ENGLISH | 114 MINS | 2024

**Breaking up, the songs tell us, is so very hard to do. But Ale (Itsaso Arana) and Alex (Vito Sanz) wonder — as an attractive Madrileño couple who've decided to call it quits on their 14-year relationship — what if it doesn't have to be?**

Spanish director Jonás Trueba (whose equally delightful *You Have to Come and See It* played in BFF'22) spins a loopy tale of two people who've fallen out of love but not out of like, determined to harpoon the ultimate relationship white whale: the pleasant break-up.

New lovers have a million movies celebrating them; this one is for the new exes, and for all the poor deluded fools who believe that they can go from being great together to being great apart without any hurt. Just because it's a doomed endeavor, doesn't mean it isn't noble, and in Trueba's lithe, airy style, also very funny.

**SATURDAY 9 NOVEMBER | 8.30PM**  
QFT 2 | PWYC



## FLOW

DIR. GINTS ZILBALODIS  
LATVIA, BELGIUM, FRANCE | 84 MINS | 2024

**After his home is devastated by an enormous flood, a cat and a little ark of travelling companions embark on an incredible journey to find dry land in Latvian director Gints Zilbalodis' magical, breathtaking animation.**

Suitable for children of all ages (plus cat-lovers, dog-lovers, copybara-lovers, lemur-lovers, bird-lovers and basically anyone who could use a quick dose of splendour and beauty and wonder) the oddly subversive trick that Zilbalodis pulls off is to use infinitesimally detailed computer-generated

backdrops (which can often feel cold and lifeless) to mount a gloriously vivid, impassioned manifesto for environmentalism and appreciation for the natural world. The Disney version would undoubtedly have the animals talk and maybe sing, but *Flow's* visual language is a song of hope and friendship all of its own, and it's only appropriate that it's wordless, when it delivers an experience that will leave you speechless.

Latvia's International Oscar submission

SATURDAY 9 NOVEMBER | 10.45AM  
QFT 1 | PWYC

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for more information.



## Second Chance: High Healing

WRITTEN  
BY **MARYA  
E. GATES**

In the snow-covered Himalayas, a young woman named Nia (Dheera Johnson) has returned to her family's summer home, a place of childhood comfort, as she prepares to take an abortion pill. She arrives alone. Her boyfriend has not returned her calls or messages. She finds companionship with the caretaker's mother-in-law Bhemi (Thakri Devi) and her grandson Sunny (Kanav Thakur), while also reconnecting with nature, and with her body.

About halfway through the film Nia attends a party where she mostly scrolls through Instagram, looking at pictures of her errant boyfriend. She's asked if the man in the photos is "someone special?" and quickly replies, "No," before downing a shot. As a musician begins playing an acoustic guitar, director Subhadra Mahaja places Nia in the center of the frame, with fireworks barely visible behind the back of her head. Her face is downcast, a deep sadness pulling her mouth into a frown.

But she looks up as the musician starts singing a pop-folk song. She takes several heavy breaths, pulling her arms across her chest, her eyes tightly closed. The song then shifts from playing softly in the background to a volume that envelops her and us and as Mahaja cuts to a tighter shot of Nia's face, it seems to float against the black sky. Nia sways to the music, the fireworks bursting flashes of light, illuminating her skin, bathing her body. The fireworks now fill the entire frame, transforming Nia into a small, black silhouette as she continues to move to the beat, losing herself and finding herself in the music.

"There's a certain joy to madness only a madman knows," the singer croons as we come back to a close-up of Nia's head, thrown backwards with carefree abandon as ribbons of light stream out from the fireworks. Her dancing body has now become one with the kaleidoscopic illumination, and as the song's tempo speeds up, Nia imagines the figure of her feckless lover on the dance floor. His rigid body and stoic face contrast with her flowing movements. A flash; he's gone. She's alone again in the darkness, with the bursts of firework-light now revealing the heartbreak in her expression.

Nia reaches out for the fireworks, grasping at their luminance, but before she can touch it, sound and image cut out abruptly. Nia awakens on a couch in her home, surrounded by the airy light of day. Confused, she looks around her, the transcendence of the night before still echoing in her mind. Soon, the pills will do their job and Nia will know her body more intimately than she ever has before. Was the night before a moment of catharsis for her? Was it a purging? Was it one last fragment of fantasy before the awakening of true knowledge? Whatever it was, she will have to move forward with her life from now on, no longer clinging to the past, but boldly facing into the future, finally in sync with her own body, with her own mind, and with the natural world that cradles us all.

Marya E. Gates is a freelance film and culture writer and film historian based in Chicago.

**LONG  
SHORT  
WEEKEND**  
COMPETITION  
SHORTS





# COMPETITION SHORTS JURY

## TAMRYN REINECKE



Tamryn is an accomplished film and TV producer based in Ireland. In 2018, she co-founded Pale Rebel Productions, a female-led company.

Her debut feature, *Redemption of a Rogue*, won Best Film and Best Debut Feature at the Galway Film Fleadh. Her second feature, *It Is In Us All* starring Cosmo Jarvis (*Shogun*, *Macbeth*) premiered at SXSW, earning a Special Jury Award and three IFTA nominations, including one win. A board member of Screen Producers Ireland and an EAVE alum, she is currently completing her Executive MBA at the prestigious Smurfit Business School.

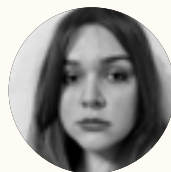
## FRANCIS JONES



Head of Heritage & Archive at Northern Ireland Screen, Francis has over two decades' experience in screen archive and culture roles.

He is a Director of Film Archives UK, a member of the Royal Television Society Archive Group and Northern Ireland representative on the British Film Institute's Nations and Regions Archive working group. Previously, he worked as a freelance writer and commentator for a variety of print, online and broadcast publications, specialising in music and the arts.

## DORA LEU



Dora Leu is a Romanian film critic, curator and filmmaker based in Dublin.

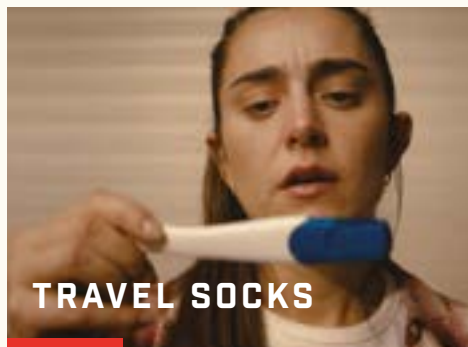
She works as a programmer for the Bucharest International Experimental Film Festival and as an assistant curator for F-Sides Cineclub. Her writing has been published in MUBI Notebook, The Metrograph Journal, photogénie, Talking Shorts, among others. She often focuses on East Asian cinemas and is currently researching the use, reuse, and emulation of video cassettes in recent media.

In addition to the BFF Shorts Competition, and 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.

# LUMI

# COMPETITION SHORTS

## PROGRAMME ONE



**DIRS. TESS ANNAN, JOSEPH MADDEN | 19 MINS**

Orla discovers she is pregnant. It is March 2020. With restrictions and lockdowns looming, and a family Zoom quiz imminent, Orla makes the difficult journey across the Irish Sea to access a safe abortion. Featuring a wonderful performance from Alice Mann, *Travel Socks* is a deeply funny and moving film, highlighting the lack of support and resources that NI still suffers from.



**DIR. KALIA FIRESTER | 11 MINS**

Young man Bog is keen to escape his small hometown of Liscommon, its only noteworthy feature being an ancient stone circle protected by fairies (if you believe in that sort of thing). Down on his luck and at a loose end, he takes on a job constructing a new motorway which would run straight through the stones. This beautifully animated short captures a distinct essence of the listlessness and folkloric paranoia of small-town Ireland.



**DIRS. NATHAN / NICK LACEY | 16 MINS**

Max goes to dinner with Adam, someone who used to bully him in school for his queer identity, but has since come out himself. Underneath the niceties and the small talk, Max's repressed traumas and grudges bubble to the surface in unexpected ways. A darkly funny but sensitive short about the difficult intricacies of shame and repression, identity and pride.

**SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER | PROG 1 | 10.30AM**  
QFT 1 | PWYC

**\* Due to the nature and content of these programmes, no one under 18 may be permitted.**

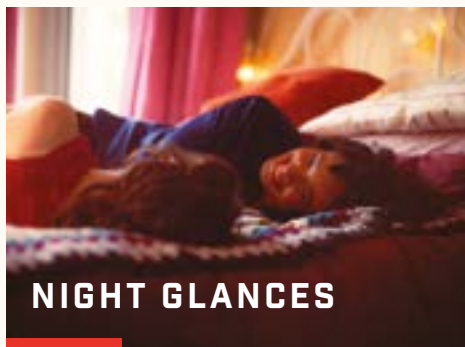
# COMPETITION SHORTS

## PROGRAMME TWO



DIR. PORTIA A. BUCKLEY | 16 MINS

A priest's housekeeper in rural Ireland finds herself caught in a malaise, her life dedicated only to the church and its interests. When running an Irish dance class she encounters a young girl with exceptional talent which shakes the boundaries of her quiet cloistered life. A measured and subtle exploration of the integral, thankless and confining roles that women play in Irish society.



DIR. SAM AHERN | 19 MINS

The end of leaving certs, the end of school, the end of an era for friends Nicole and Erika. This depiction of a drug-infused night out becomes a sensitive portrait of a queer relationship in chrysalis. Funny, awkward, tender and uplifting; the gamut of human emotion is covered in this warm embrace of a film.



DIR. DALLAN SHOVLIN | 14 MINS

It's 2AD and Ulster is at threat from the advancing hordes of Queen Meabh's army. When brother and sister Con and Rían discover the body of legendary Irish warrior Cú Chulainn, distraught at the notion of an alternative Ulster, they come up with a daring scheme to ward the army off. Ancient history is brought to life with a real sense of excitement and energy in this entertaining short.

SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER | PROG 2 | 12.00PM  
QFT 1 | PWYC

\* Due to the nature and content of these programmes, no one under 18 may be permitted.

# COMPETITION SHORTS

## PROGRAMME THREE



DIR. DAN COLLEY | 12 MINS

In a grey and lifeless suburb, The Painted Man appears. A street performer who never looks the same twice; his larger-than-life costumes and his entrancing performances capture the attention of quiet young George. The unexpected kinship that blossoms between them is strikingly depicted in this touching ode to outsiders.



DIR. RORY FLECK BYRNE | 20 MINS

A recovering sex addict on the verge of relapse is pulled into a surreal odyssey of his subconscious. With a stunning central performance from Ben Whishaw, In Heat renders the canyons of the mind through a beachy psychosis, using dance and movement to convey the protagonist's deteriorating mind.



DIR. JAMES DOHERTY | 12 MINS

A Syrian father and daughter find themselves in rural Ireland. Haunted by memories of the past the father descends into a paranoid spiral, sealing himself and his daughter off from the outside world. Prickly, anxious and heartbreaking, Yara is a nightmarish look into the refugee experience.

**SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER | PROG 3 | 1.30PM**  
QFT 1 | PWYC

**\* Due to the nature and content of these programmes, no one under 18 may be permitted.**

# COMPETITION SHORTS

## PROGRAMME FOUR



DIR. IAN FALLON | 16 MINS

A splintered tale about Levi, a young queer man who has recently survived a brain parasite, and Roan, Levi's crush who may or may not have kissed him last night. Compelling, provocative and pulsing with energy, this short is a kaleidoscopic and self-destructive paean to unrequited love.



DIR. FREDDIE LEYDEN | 15 MINS

The death of a farmer brings about unexpected catharses in the Irish countryside. The collective harmony of repressed emotions explodes into a beautiful mass of heaving bodies, ceremonial dance and primal screams. This film is a hilariously surreal but richly observed glance into the inner life of culchies.



DIR. SYDNEY A.M. | 11 MINS

There's a ghost in the house. Or is it just a creeping feeling? 'Elise' tries to come to terms with a lingering malevolent vibe they can't escape. *Mildew* captures a sense of dysphoria rendered through aches in the bones and cracks in the wall. Haunting and unsettling, this is a sensory experience that you can't put your finger on.

SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER | PROG 4 | 3.00PM  
QFT 1 | PWYC

**\* Due to the nature and content of these programmes, no one under 18 may be permitted.**

**LONG SHORT  
WEEKEND**  
NEW IRISH  
SHORTS



# NEW IRISH SHORTS PROGRAMME ONE

## GRANDO

DIR. RACHEL WALSHÉ | 13 mins

Under the intoxicating influence of Marlon Brando, Anna is auditioning to play Stanley in 'A Streetcar Named Desire.' Guiding her along the way is her loving grandfather, whose unconventional acting lessons might be hindering more than helping her.

## THE HEAD ON HIM

DIR. SEÁN GALLEN | 15 mins

When Jamie moves to Ireland in the 90s, he shaves off his afro to try and fit in. What he doesn't count on is the afro coming back with a vengeance, taking over his life in unexpected ways. A bright and witty tale of coming-of-age as a young BIPOC.

## LIV

DIR. JOHN MARK FITZPATRICK | 13 mins

A delicate portrait of a homelife in disarray as seen through the eyes of a child. After her mother leaves unexpectedly, Liv tries to make sense of the world herself. Instead, she escapes into a world of her own using the power of magical thinking.

## HOME SAFE

DIR. ALISON WINTER | 8 mins

After a night out in town, a woman makes her journey home, alone. Threat lingers around every corner in this deeply unnerving short, evoked through jeers on the bus, shadows down alleyways and keys between fingers.

## NAY DAY

DIR. DEREK UGOCHUKWU | 12 mins

Teenage TikTok Naomi talks us through her life, loves and desires. Her energy and lust for life bounce off the screen in a fantastic central performance from Florence Adebambo. But then things take a turn; nothing is as it seems and Naomi has other plans in mind.

## BEATHA

DIRS. MACY-JAYNE MONIQUE STEWART,  
HANNAH WINIFRED MCCALLUM | 3 mins

'Beatha' means the sanctity of being, of all living things. In capturing the highs and lows of what it means to be young, to be creative, to be struggling to find your place, this loving snapshot of Belfast today finds that spiritual connection between us all.



SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER | PROG 1 | 10.30AM  
BLACK BOX | PWYC

\* Due to the nature and content of these programmes, no one under 18 may be permitted.

# NEW IRISH SHORTS PROGRAMME TWO

## GREAT TREES

DIR. JOE BOR | 9 mins

A TV personality finds the making of his new documentary on trees grating and deflating. When his long-time producer/best friend announces he is leaving London to return to Ireland, he wonders what exactly will be left of that personality.

## ROUNABOUT

DIR. PATRICK SHEARD | 18 mins

David and Stella wake up together after a night out then part ways - their lives, friends and artistic endeavours intertwine until they meet again at a film screening months later. The frustrations of the creative process and the stifling complexities of relationships clash in this self-reflexive and visually inventive piece.

## WHAT DO YOU WANT?

PENNY MCGOVERN | 16 mins

Two women try to understand what the other wants. Behind the scenes, their actresses try to understand what the director wants. Their director tries to understand what the actresses want. A playful and thought-provoking exercise in meta-filmmaking, exploring how an intonation, angle or glance can alter intention.

## C'EST MOI DANS LA POUBELLE

MICHAEL O'NEILL | 10 mins

The writer Samuel Beckett visits the poet Ezra Pound in his Venice apartment in the 1970s. They don't speak a word, but the silence they share says enough. The brooding writers are brought to life by Vincent Higgins and Lalor Roddy, effortlessly conveying the weight of the world through the flicker of an eye.

## KARAVIDHE

DIR. EOIN DORAN | 16 mins

Dee, an immigrant worker, gets a job painting a house with newcomer Adrian, but it doesn't go as planned. They slowly open up and reveal more about their pasts, bonding whilst being forced to think outside the box for dinner. An intimate and touching portrait of two men trying to make ends meet.

## ELDRITCH KARAOKE

DIR. JOE LOFTUS | 5 mins

Death, shame and karaoke all collide in this animated short about the performative trend of exploiting trauma, triggered by a young woman trying to escape her past. This absurdist odyssey into the afterlife is strikingly animated and features an unnervingly rousing score.



SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER | PROG 2 | 12.00PM  
BLACK BOX | PWYC

\* Due to the nature and content of these programmes, no one under 18 may be permitted.



# NEW IRISH SHORTS PROGRAMME THREE

## BEST BEFORE

DIR. LISA SERVICE | 14 mins

Helena and Lainie brace themselves for the final round of IVF treatment. The weight of the future begins to pressure their idyllic farm life, and they question if they're ready for such a big leap. A sweet and funny take on the anxieties of preparing to be a mother.

## PUSH

DIR. ELLY CONDRON | 10 mins

Being nine months pregnant can trigger an existential crisis, and that's exactly what happens to Mags who struggles to come to terms with who she will be after her baby is born. Witty, emotional and featuring a brilliant central performance from writer/director Elly Condron.

## PEAT

DIR. PAUDIE BAGGOTT | 19 mins

There's magic in the air down at the bog - not just because recently widowed Anne has built a golem to lend a hand, but there's a spark of something when she looks into its eyes... Peat is a heartwarming story of a mother reclaiming her identity despite the expectations placed upon her.

## POPPER

DIR. BONNIE SANDERSON | 14 mins

Thanks to a new drug, the miracle of childbirth has finally been improved! Popper is a bizarre, candy-coloured trip into the nightmare of beauty standards, beginning as a 1950s fever dream and ending in uterine body horror.



SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER | PROG 3 | 2.00PM  
BLACK BOX | PWYC

\* Due to the nature and content of these programmes, no one under 18 may be permitted.

# NEW IRISH SHORTS

## PROGRAMME FOUR

### IN WAKE OF JOHN DOYLE

**DIRS. NIALL MCCLOSKEY, THOMAS BENNETT** | 15 mins

A priest, excommunicated for rising from the grave, returns to the island that was formerly his parish. Strikingly captured on Hi-8 video tape, an uncanny feeling is rendered through murky textures and drained colours, creating an unnerving artefact that sticks in your head.

### PUB HOUSE

**DIR. PETER YOUNG** | 14 mins

After separating from her husband, Emily and her young son move into a new place above a pub. While helpful at first, their new landlord becomes increasingly more invasive. An intense exploration of power dynamics and relationships.

### SWEDISH DEATH

**DIR. KRISTINA YEE** | 12 mins

In this unique take on the survival thriller, Caroline becomes a minimalist to maintain control over a chaotic life, but fate and irony combine when a severe winter storm strikes and she is snowed in. With no power and no options, she must decide which of her most meaningful belongings to feed the fire with if she wants to live.

### DRAGON'S TEETH

**DIR. LENNART SOBERON** | 20 mins

A hauntological exploration of Northern Ireland's landscapes and the remnants of its occupied past, blending together eerie archive footage and voyeuristic location shooting as a ghostly figure lingers through the shadows of a long-abandoned military fort.

### THE STONE CLAIMS

**DIR. MERVYN MARSHALL** | 11 mins

The oral tradition of the ghost story is brilliantly deconstructed in this atmospheric short. A woman, unnervingly portrayed by Luna Kalo, recounts a spectral encounter from her past and considers how it has shaped the rest of her life.



**SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER | PROG 4 | 4.00PM**  
BLACK BOX | PWYC

\* Due to the nature and content of these programmes, no one under 18 may be permitted.

# NORTHERN IRELAND SCREEN SHOWCASE



Hosted by Northern Ireland Screen, this mixer will feature a selection of short films, talks from locally based filmmakers, and the chance to mingle with people from across the industry.

This event will act as the starter pistol for the Long Short Weekend, the perfect opportunity to actually say hello to the people you will bump into over the next couple of days.

*Networkshops, a series of workshops tailored for entry-level and emerging filmmakers, is here to help you take the next step in your filmmaking journey. This exciting initiative designed to provide hands-on learning experiences led by experienced local industry professionals who are committed to nurturing the next generation of filmmakers.*

**FRIDAY 1 NOVEMBER | 6.30PM**  
BLACK BOX | £4

## AWARDS RECEPTION

We invite all filmmakers to our closing event of the weekend: our awards ceremony where we will announce the winner for Best Short and the recipient of the LUMI Award. 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! This event is free but you can register for your place online.

**SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER | 6.00PM**  
BLACK BOX | FREE

## Familiar Touch: The Age of Innocence

WRITTEN  
BY ALISON  
WILLMORE

There's a poster on the wall of the medical centre in the retirement home in *Familiar Touch* that reads "Sex never gets old." It's a warning about STIs, but for Ruth, the new resident played with exquisite delicacy by Kathleen Chalfant, the line has another resonance. Ruth is in her 80s, and reluctantly settling into the memory care unit she picked out for herself in more lucid times. Ruth also refuses to act her age, thanks to the dementia that's made her no longer able to live by herself, but that has also untethered her from the linear relationship with time most of us have no choice about experiencing.

Adrift in the pool during a water therapy session, she's brought back to being a child again, while on another morning, she wakes convinced she's late for a shift, and heads briskly into the facility's kitchen to work. Most interestingly, her cognitive decline has allowed her to re-enter the previously closed-off realm of expressing desire and assuming herself to be desirable. In that office with the poster where she has regular checkups, she flirts with the handsome wellness director, telling him, to his mild embarrassment, that she'll play patient to his doctor if that's what they have to do, as though they're secret lovers arranging a tryst.

*Act your age.* It's a refrain most of us start hearing while still in childhood, as though the years are supposed to give you natural guidance, as though how we're expected to behave isn't dictated by outside forces. For a lot of women, it's not unlikely that the moment in which you're first regarded as a sexual prospect predates your thinking about yourself in that light. And waiting on the other side are a bookending set of experiences — getting *ma'amed*, having eyes land on you and then slide right past — that indicate your time in that light is coming to a close, regardless of how you might feel about that.

Writer-director Sarah Friedland begins her film by closing in on the silvered thinness of Ruth's hair, and the texture of the skin on her neck. Chalfant is beautiful, but this isn't the kind of beauty that's associated with sensuality, something consigned to youthfulness. When H. Jon Benjamin, playing Ruth's son, Steve, comes to collect her from the airy house in which she's living and to move her into the home, she doesn't recognise him. Instead, she receives him as a possible suitor, making a tasteful pass at him over lunch while chuckling about how they're both married.

It's uncomfortable, of course, because Ruth is his parent, even if she doesn't know it, but also because she's letting her son see a side of herself that was expected to be locked away — this whole grown-up part of her life in which she was pursued and did some pursuing, and not always in ways that were according to the dictates of respectability. There's a certain point, especially if you're a mother, when you're supposed to accept an assigned fate of sexual invisibility, but Ruth can no longer be expected to abide by those rules. Sex never gets old, even if we do.

Alison Willmore is a film critic at *New York* magazine and *Vulture*.

ART OF  
ACTION

# WILLIAM FRIEDKIN IN FOCUS

To consider 'the art of action', we're looking to the white-knuckle work of wildcard auteur William Friedkin. With roots in documentary, Friedkin easily translated his political anger across to fiction film, blending a verite style with heightened stunt sequences. His use of action complements his pessimistic worldview and emboldens his status as Hollywood's agitator/rebel.





**DIR. WILLIAM FRIEDKIN**  
USA | ENGLISH, FRENCH | 104 MINS | 1971

**Gene Hackman, the definitive 70s star, plays Popeye Doyle, who stumbles upon a large heroin-smuggling operation and begins pursuing a French dealer with little care for safety or rules.**

Best Picture winner and all-time action classic, *The French Connection* features Friedkin's most notorious stunt work, particularly in the film's climactic car chase - shot without permits and without blocking off streets. Taking inspiration from his documentary roots, the handheld shooting style accentuates the frantically chaotic chase. As Doyle becomes more desperate, and his actions more haywire, Friedkin makes the viewer complicit in feeling the same thrill and excitement he does.

**SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER | 7.00PM**  
BEANBAG CINEMA | PWYC



**DIR. WILLIAM FRIEDKIN**  
USA | ENGLISH, SERBO-CROATIAN | 94 MINS | 2003

**One of Friedkin's last studio films, *The Hunted*, delivered a leaner and even more jaded cautionary tale about the American imperialist machine, and the killers it produces.**



**DIR. WILLIAM FRIEDKIN**  
USA | ENGLISH, ARABIC, SPANISH | 116 MINS | 1985

**Friedkin left the grit and grime of the 1970s behind and moved into the neons and pastels of the 1980s with *To Live and Die in L.A.***

When Secret Service agent Richard Chance's partner is killed investigating a counterfeiting operation, he embarks on a bloody and reckless campaign to take down Eric Masters, played by a menacing Willem Dafoe. Beautifully shot by legendary cinematographer Robby Müller, they perfectly capture the moral murkiness hiding beneath the picture-perfect sunbaked exteriors. Friedkin's jaded view of institutions filters through every set-piece in this action thriller, with Chance's increasingly corrupt actions sparking more and more violence, culminating in another legendary car chase (which Müller himself was too afraid to shoot).

**MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 7.00PM**  
BEANBAG CINEMA | PWYC

Benicio Del Toro is a highly-trained soldier traumatised by the horrors he has witnessed and inflicted. He 'goes rogue' and viciously kills two hunters in the British Columbian wilderness. Tommy Lee Jones plays the man who trained him and brought in to track him down. The pulsing rage of Friedkin's earlier films has become a defeated cynical voice. The action is grittier and more relentless, the chase scenes more dogged and tiring. Tommy Lee Jones' performance of a man racked with guilt at what he has created lends a fatalistic tone to the proceedings.

**TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER | 7.00PM**  
BEANBAG CINEMA | PWYC

## Universal Language: A Masterpiece of Iranian Cinema

WRITTEN  
BY RORY  
O'CONNOR

Earlier this year at the Oscars, German audiences were treated to an International Feature category in which the German entry, İlker Çatak's *The Teacher's Lounge*, competed against the German-language *The Zone of Interest* (the UK's submission) and German director Wim Wenders' *Perfect Days*, which was nominated for Japan. Come next year, Iranians could enjoy an even more unlikely flush of familiarity, with Germany (them again) selecting the exiled Iranian filmmaker Mohammad Rasoulof's *The Seed of the Sacred Fig* and, more bizarrely, with a contender from Canada.

Matthew Rankin's aptly titled *Universal Language* is an inspired example of how to blur national lines. It's set in an alternate universe where the director's native Winnipeg has claimed independence and the local tongue is now Farsi. And the Persian influence is not merely linguistic; the entire world of the film moves to the rhythms of a different kind of cinema — as if filmmaking itself had syntax that can be learned, recited and eventually mastered, as the ultimate act of homage. Layered into its gorgeous, Adam Stockhausen-like dioramas — fans of both Wes Anderson and Roy Andersson (no relation, except spiritual) will feel perfectly at home — and into its batshit good humour, is a cinematic love letter to Iran. And especially, to the generation of filmmakers that gave us Abbas Kiarostami and Jafar Panahi, and their morality-play movies about inquisitive children and melancholy men, with dialogue spoken in a steady lilt, tuned to trouble and then calm the soul.

Rankin's tale follows three interweaving stories through varying hues of deadpan surrealism. The first involves a stolen pair of glasses and two schoolgirls' attempts to pay for their replacement by retrieving a large banknote they spot frozen into the icy lake. The second follows a man (played by Rankin) who returns home from Quebec — a foreign place in this world, following the successful secession of Manitoba County. In the third, which affectionately skewers the Canadian reputation for stoicism, a local tour guide shepherds a group around his favorite landmarks, including a cinema that no longer shows 3D films (they were too exciting). French is taught to children as their second language. The local Tim Horton's is a tea house. And at one point, "These Eyes" by The Guess Who — a Winnipeg anthem that later plays in full over the closing credits — is recited on a late-night bus ride with the solemn intonation of an Arabic poem.

Factor Rankin's absurdist streak (even the great Mohsen Makhmalbaf never wrote a scene with a talking Christmas tree) into that pleasing cocktail of ideas and you end up with a film unlike any other this year: an inventive, delightful argument for the borderless possibilities of the artform itself. At one point, the tour guide brings his group to a bench where a suitcase was left in 1978. It has never been opened. It's now a UNESCO World Heritage site, the guide explains, a monument to human solidarity. "We're all connected, agha," he will later say, and the line could not be truer to the spirit of *Universal Language*, where, to quote Marshall McLuhan (one of the most famous Canadians) the medium is message.

Rory O'Connor is a Berlin-based Irish film critic, writing for *The Film Stage*, *Frieze*, *Interview Magazine* and *The Playlist*.

WORLD PREMIERE



BELFAST  
FILM  
FESTIVAL

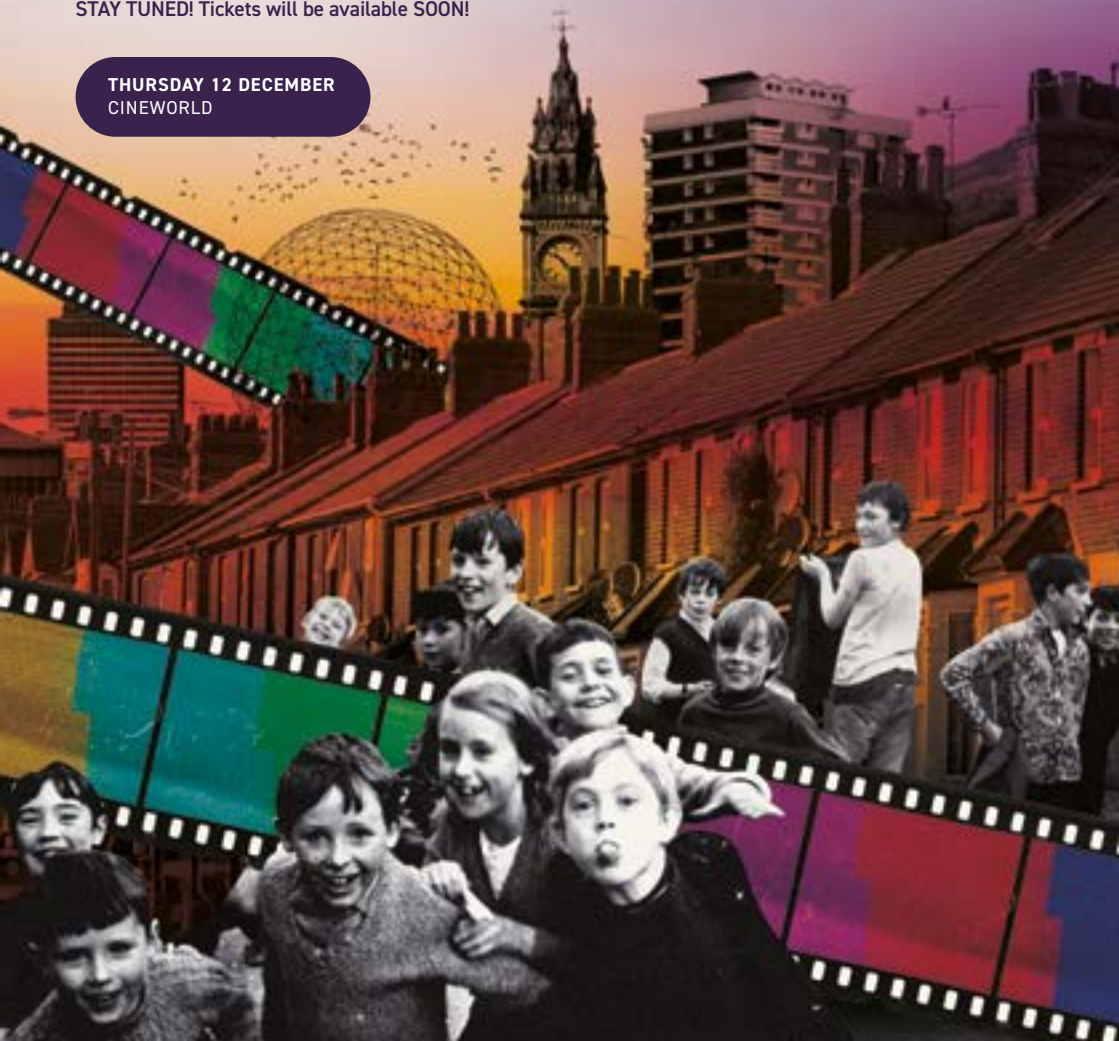
# THE HEARTH

A FILM BY THE PEOPLE OF BELFAST.

The exciting world premiere of our new documentary film 'The Hearth' featuring a selection of stories submitted by the citizens of Belfast, will be shown on the evening of **Thursday 12th December at Cineworld**. Get your glad rags on and enjoy some live entertainment and get papped on our red carpet. We can't wait to see you there!

**STAY TUNED!** Tickets will be available **SOON!**

**THURSDAY 12 DECEMBER**  
CINEWORLD



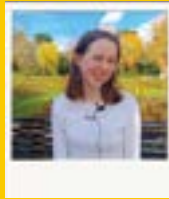


## FILM SYNOPSIS

Commissioned by BELFAST 2024, Belfast City Council's year of cultural celebration, with the guidance of filmmaker, Mark Cousins, we have been creating a self-portrait of the city, a film made by and with the people of Belfast. Earlier in the year we asked you, the citizens, to get involved in helping us make this film. We collected submissions from over 300 people. The resulting documentary is a bold self portrait of this city.

Belfast is known for its craic, the humour and energy with which it talks. The Hearth is a mosaic of Belfast talkers, old and young, telling tall tales or sad ones. Filmed across the city in pubs, community centres, playgrounds and homes, using many types of cameras and smartphones, the film is spirited, touching and haunting. We meet everything from a donkey in the east to a stuffed parrot in the west.

**Creative Lead: Mark Cousins**





William Crawley



Stacey Gregg



Valene Kane



Jonathan Harden



Martin McCann



Ryan Tohill



Andrew Tohill

## POV: GETTING INTO FILM

A Panel Discussion for 'The Hearth Project' with Belfast Film Festival and Belfast 2024.

Moderated by Journalist and Broadcaster, William Crawley this panel will offer valuable insights on how to get started in the film industry from experienced professionals including Stacey Gregg, Valene Kane, Jonathan Harden, Martin McCann and Ryan and Andrew Tohill. Attendees will gain valuable knowledge on how to navigate the industry, build a network, and succeed in the competitive world of film.

**SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER | 4.30PM - 6PM**  
THE BRIAN FRIEL THEATRE | £4

## EXHIBITION AND INSTALLATION

The 'Faces of Belfast' exhibition, featuring pictures of every single one of our participants in 'The Hearth' film process, will be shown in Belfast Exposed Gallery October through November 2024. The exhibition will also be popping up in different places and spaces across the city - so if you spot us out and about, be sure to come and say hello!



## BELFAST DOCS

As part of this Belfast 2024 commission, we are delighted to present a community training series on documentary filmmaking. A number of talented local directors such as Alison Millar, Sean Murray and Gillian Callan will pair up with community organisations including The Anaka Women's Collective, The Polish Sisterhood and Ardoyne Youth Club to make a series of short documentaries. The themes and ideas for the documentaries will come entirely from the groups and their interests. The filmmakers will work alongside their group, guiding them step by step through the process of documentary filmmaking, from the initial inspiration to post production, edit and final moments. This is a fantastic training opportunity for beginner groups and we cannot wait to share what they have created at the Docs Ireland festival in June 2025.

## To Kill A Mongolian Horse: Riders on the Storm

WRITTEN  
BY SHELLY  
KRAICER

Films about ethnic minority peoples in China are complex and fascinating things. There's a lot at stake, not least the representation of lesser-seen cultures using the widely known vernacular of cinematic spectacle. So Chinese filmmaker Jiang Xiaoxuan is confronting — or, to put it more gently, negotiating with — the difficult legacy of *shaoshu minzu pian* (the official Chinese term for “minority film”) in her remarkable first feature *To Kill a Mongolian Horse*. Her story is set in the grasslands of Inner Mongolia, the northern Chinese province that shares customs and histories with the country of Mongolia to its immediate north. Strictly speaking, it's called the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, which says (and avoids saying) a lot. Jiang grew up here, and casts her friend Saina as her protagonist, also named Saina.

“Mainstream” Chinese-minority films have to be well-behaved, ideologically speaking: their point is both to entertain and educate along acceptable political lines. The entertainment comes from typical “ethnic” elements: singing, dancing, pretty costumes, beautiful scenery. And happy people. Very happy, contented, well-settled, well-integrated people, whose life practices remain distinct from those of Han-majority China, while staying comfortably “harmonized with” it (i.e. subservient to it). That's the educational role of these films: to create a consumable narrative of China as a national space where all the “official minorities” coexist in productive sync, under the watchful guidance of the Party. Spectacle is the reason behind these productions. Ethnic difference is subsumed by performative identity — the idea that these people *are* what they wear, what they eat, how they sing, how they dance, and it's all been tamed for our pleasure, for us to admire and enjoy.

Jiang's film operates in a different register, always aware of the template, while complicating it in provocative ways. It takes a savvy, subtle filmmaker to simply navigate the layers of censorship in Chinese film policy but Jiang goes one better, not merely avoiding the traps, but maneuvering through them by inflecting and deepening her characterizations in profoundly moving ways. Saina's struggles are manifold: he has to sell first his sheep, then his horses, and finally his land. More essentially, he has to market his skills and rent out his soul: he participates as a performer and guide in public performances of Mongolian culture re-imagined as pageantry for the entertainment of visiting Han Chinese tourists. Personal crises are layered on social ones. Saina's relationship with his father is fraught with painful generational blockages and changing socio-economic realities. Most critically, Saina's own masculinity (and traditional Mongolian masculinity more generally) is being challenged as never before, within this post-capitalist netherworld, where the Mongolian grasslands are being ground up for open-pit mining and skilled labourers are reduced to driving trucks that crush rocks.

But what cannot be totally crushed is a sense of what might still be possible. Jiang finds an astonishingly incandescent beauty in the play of horses against the night that hints at a potential alternative to this ground-up life, just as Saina's fluid, urgent performance, on horseback and off, allows us to glimpse something more eternal than his current predicaments: a refusal to be defined by the stunted imagination of the prevailing order, a desperately inextinguishable will.

Shelly Kraicer is a curator and translator specialising in the cinemas of China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

# SPECIAL EVENTS





## ANNE DEVLIN 40TH ANNIVERSARY

DIR. PAT MURPHY  
IRELAND | ENGLISH | 121 MINS | 1984

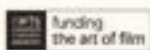
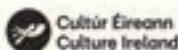
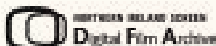
To celebrate the 40th anniversary of Pat Murphy's *Anne Devlin*, the Belfast Film Festival is presenting a rare opportunity to see this seminal film on the big screen. It will be followed by a Q&A with its creative team: writer/director Pat Murphy, lead actor Brid Brennan and cinematographer, Thaddeus O'Sullivan. The conversation will be led by filmmaker, Margo Harkin.

Widely regarded as one of the greatest Irish films of all time, this period biopic tells the story of revolutionary *Anne Devlin* from her beginnings as a young woman politicised by the oppression around her, to her planning with Robert Emmet of the renewed United Irish insurrection against British rule in Ireland. Described by the *Irish Times* as a "painterly film", cinematographer Thaddeus O'Sullivan uses stark natural light, adding a palpable

coldness and rigid texture to the film's spaces: uninhabited country houses and stone prisons. Within this setting stands Brid Brennan in the title role - extraordinary as the sensible, determined and gutsy young woman. In her second feature after the feminist *Troubles* drama, *Maeve*, Pat Murphy brings a historical figure to life with admiration, directness and a masterly use of understatement.

This screening is presented in association with the Irish Film Institute's IFI International Programme supported by Culture Ireland.

This event also celebrates the launch of *After/Image: NI Film and Television Histories*, an interview project that aims to document the history of the screen and television industries in Northern Ireland. All interviews are available to view online at [digitalfilmarchive.net](http://digitalfilmarchive.net). *After/Image* is a project by Docs Ireland and Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive, supported and inspired by the British Entertainment History Project ([historyproject.org.uk](http://historyproject.org.uk)).



FRIDAY 8 NOVEMBER | 6.00PM  
QFT 1 | PWYC



To celebrate 100 years since BBC Northern Ireland started broadcasting over the radiowaves, we're putting together a special archive television event around a programme that was once a household name, *Ulster Mirror*.

*Ulster Mirror* ran from 1953 and was broadcast every fortnight. It depicted the goings on of life in Northern Ireland, potato picking, new roads and Portavogie Harbour. It even showed the first television transmitter in its opening episode. Broadcast "across the water", it was a point of pride for the government of the day. But was *Ulster Mirror* really a mirror on Ulster?

WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER | 8.00PM  
BBC BLACKSTAFF HOUSE | FREE



In true Belfast Film Festival style we're putting together this audio-visual event as a reevaluation of *Ulster Mirror*. Completely live-edited on site within the programme-making surrounds of BBC Blackstaff House, it will be part documentary, part experimental exploration.

With commentary from Prof. John Hill, who has written extensively on the history of Northern Irish television, this will be a documentary like no other, as it will be entirely live and never seen again!

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



DIR. PHILIP KING  
UK | ENGLISH | 35 MINS | 2024

**One of the defining bands of the shoegaze wave that washed over the indie-rock world in the 1990s, Lush mesmerised with their otherworldly vocals set against a swirling wall of sound.**

Assembled by former bassist Phil King from Super 8 footage he shot during the group's time on the road, *Lush: A Far From Home Movie* offers an appropriately ethereal behind-the-scenes record

of the Britpop stars at their impossibly cool peak. Featuring Miki Berenyi, Emma Anderson, Chris Acland.

Both of the group's former bass players, Phil King (who is also the filmmaker) and Steve Rippon will be in conversation with music journalist Stuart Bailie after the film.

**SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER | 7.30PM**  
BLACK BOX | PWYC





## FRIDAY NIGHT QUIZ W/ BEST BOY MAGAZINE & NORMAL CINEMA CLUB

How many frames in a second? How do they make people so big on the screen? Where do nepo babies come from?

Best Boy Magazine & Normal Cinema Club are ready to put the world to rights and ask the hard-hitting questions that really matter. It's just that you have to answer them.

BBxNCCxBFF promise to deliver an intense quizzing of general film knowledge, not-so-general film knowledge and maybe even obscure film knowledge. You will be questioning every one of your senses as you compete for top-secret prizes.

Teams are capped at a maximum of 5.

**FRIDAY 8 NOVEMBER | 9.00PM**  
£4PP

Check [belfastfilmfestival.org](http://belfastfilmfestival.org) for venue.



## NORMAL CINEMA CLUB: RAP WORLD & COREYS

**DIRS. CONNER O'MALLEY, DANNY SCHARAR, DAN STREIT**  
US | 120 MINS | 2024

On the eve of the US Election, Normal Cinema Club is proud to present the latest work from one of the defining cultural voices in American cinema right now: **Conner O'Malley**.

O'Malley has had a number of scene-stealing parts in film and TV comedies over the past ten years but online has been building a body of singular work that has unnervingly tapped into the deterioration of the American psyche.

Rap World is the first feature-length work from his creative cohort, a camcorder odyssey into the creative process. It follows four friends in deepest Pennsylvania circa 2009, documenting their attempts to record a rap album during one eventful night. In addition to being the funniest film of the year, Rap World is also a bracing portrait of chasing the American dream and the unadulterated power of male friendship.

Preceding the feature will be their latest short Coreys, a Lynchian body-horror piece about midwestern monotony and the alienation brought about by our consumerist culture of oversaturation. Join us in the Green Room for a night of exploring the American Zeitgeist and American brain rot.

**MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 7.00PM**  
BLACK BOX GREEN ROOM | PWYC





WORK IN PROGRESS

## GERRY ADAMS: A BALLYMURPHY MAN

DIR. TRISHA ZIFF  
95 MINS | 2025

**Gerry Adams: A Ballymurphy Man**, a unique portrait as Adams tells his personal story from conflict to peace.

Accompanying his voice is a wealth of imagery from what is undoubtedly one of the most visually documented conflicts of our time. Layers of still and moving images interweave with the narrative giving a unique insight into Adams's world, informal and uncensored. Filmed over 5 years, interrupted by the pandemic. We meet Gerry Adams while still a TD in the Irish parliament and President of Sinn Fein, and follow the transition to his life today, still an activist after sixty years.

FRIDAY 8 NOVEMBER | 7.00PM  
OMNIPLEX KENNEDY CENTRE | PWYC



SPECIAL PREVIEW SCREENING

## CRÁ

DIR. PHILIP DOHERTY  
45 MINS | 2024

**Crá** is a six-part drama series by Fíabín Media and Zoogon for BBC Gaeilge & TG4 with funding from Northern Ireland Screen's Irish Language Broadcast Fund, Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland and Coimisiún na Meáin.

Episode 1 will be screened followed by a Q & A with key cast and crew.

In an isolated village, a murder investigation begins when police officer Conall Ó Súilleabháin's missing mother Sabine is discovered buried in the bog. Forbidden from working the case he has no choice but to join forces with young journalist, Ciara-Kate who is producing a podcast about the case. Their investigation leads them on a dark path and begs the question: can justice really be blind?

Cuirtear tús le fiosrúchán dúnmharaithe nuair a aimsítear corp curtha sa phortach. Máthair an Gharda áitiúil, Conall Ó Súilleabháin atá marbh agus tá cosc iomlán ar Chonall páirt a ghlacadh san fhiosrúchán. Socraíonn sé dul i bpáirt leis an iriseoir saoránaigh Ciara-Kate leis an fhírinne a nochtadh. An bhfillfidh an feall ar an bhfeallaire?

WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER | 6.30PM  
ULSTER MUSEUM | FREE



NORTHERN IRELAND SCREEN  
Irish Language Broadcast Fund  
An Clár Craoláiníochta Gaeilge

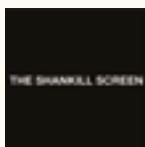


## SHANKILL SCREEN BFF24: SHORTS PROGRAMME

The Shankill Screen proudly brings back the cinema tradition that once thrived in this part of the city.

Set within the historic Shankill Mission building, our screenings celebrate a diverse range of storytelling. For this evening, we will present a selection of four short films, blending the work of local filmmakers with international voices. After the films, we invite you to connect with the rich film community that our events bring together.

**THURSDAY 24 OCTOBER | 7.30PM**  
SHANKILL SCREEN | £4



**GHOULS ON FILM PRESENTS:**

## THE DEVIL'S DOORWAY

**DIR. AISLINN CLARKE**  
IRELAND, UK | 76 MINS | 2018

**Aislinn Clarke is one of the most exciting filmmakers working in Ireland today. As her new feature Fréwaka is opening this edition of the film festival, Ghouls on Film is presenting a special edition focusing on her previous feature, The Devil's Doorway.**

Set in 1960, The Devil's Doorway centres on a pair of priests dispatched to a Magdalene laundry, sent to authenticate a series of potentially miraculous occurrences. Taking the aesthetic-driven sub-genre of found footage to an entirely new level, Aislinn Clarke's first feature explores the haunting ramifications of the real trauma that a generation of women still carry with them.

This screening is presented by Ghouls On Film, and will be followed by a Q&A between Aislinn Clarke and Ghouls on Film curator, Isabella Koban.

**SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER | 7.00PM**  
BLACK BOX GREEN ROOM | PWYC





ULTRA DOGME PRESENTS:

## NOW SERVING: EXPERIMENTAL SHORTS BY TRANS FILMMAKERS

Following an online program curated by Ultra Dogme in collaboration with Mariales Diaz Batista, Ultra Dogme presents *Now Serving*, a programme of five radical works of cinema by trans filmmakers. Each of these films express deeply personal and expansive notions of intimacy, history, family, identity, gender and the film form itself.

EW — Claire Maske & Tati Chavitage  
Gut Feelings: Fragments of Truth — Kasra Jalilipour  
Suya Dokun (Touch the Water) — Yusuf Demirors  
Typhoon Diary 风球日记 — Grace Zhang  
Your Daughter Was Here — Sadhini Weerasekera

Ultra Dogme is a film journal + virtual cinematheque run by Malkah Manouel, Ruairí McCann and Maximilien Luc Proctor.

SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER | 3.00PM  
BLACK BOX | PWYC

## A TALE OF TWO HOUSES



DIR. MARTA DYCZKOWSKA

**A Tale of Two Houses is a film installation that documents the recent demolition of Havelock House, which previously housed Dyczkowska's artist studio.**

The narrative unfolds through her perspective from the kitchen window, where the two spaces once shared a view. She then transitions outside to capture the demolition process, blending footage from her former neighbourhood with UTV archival material and a performance on the now vacant site. Dyczkowska's work is deeply personal while also providing a critical reflection on the erosion of cultural spaces in Belfast, a theme she has explored over the past decade.

This work has been made with the support of Arts Council NI and Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive. Late Night Vault is part funded by Belfast City Council and Esmé Mitchell Trust. The former factory Havelock House was home to Ulster Television from 1959-2018 and Flax Artist Studios from 2018-2022.

EXHIBITION PREVIEW  
THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER | 6 - 9PM

FRIDAY 8 - WEDNESDAY 13 NOV | 12 - 6PM  
VAULT ARTIST STUDIOS GALLERY &  
PROJECT SPACE | FREE ADMISSION



## RITZ DAY - LIVE PODCAST WITH BRIAN HENRY MARTIN

Join filmmaker Brian Henry Martin and cinema historian Dr. Sam Manning, hosts of *The Wonder Cinema* podcast, to celebrate the anniversary of the Ritz, Belfast's long-lost picture palace.

Located at Fisherwick Place, the Ritz (later the ABC and the Cannon) opened on 9 November 1936 with a performance from Gracie Fields, one of the biggest box office stars of the decade. After hosting some of the world's biggest stars, including Cary Grant and The Beatles, the cinema faced more turbulent times in the 1970s. Following a firebomb, the cinema reopened and reimagined itself but eventually closed its doors in 1993.

If you have memories of the Ritz, come along and let us know. Enjoy a slice of birthday cake and join us for a discussion of the cinema's history, where we will also unveil Stuart Marshall's new model of the Ritz. Be there for the chance to win exclusive Ritz memorabilia and to see never-before-seen images from its storied past.

**SATURDAY 9 NOVEMBER | 2.00PM**  
BLACK BOX | PWYC



## ANAKA IN THE ARCHIVES: NORTHERN IRELAND NOW

Join the Northern Ireland Now team and members of the Anaka Collective for a celebration of diversity in the film archives.

This 'work in progress' screening and discussion will showcase a portion of the video content which Anaka Women's Collective participants have brought together, as well as thoughts on the importance of their recent work being archived.

After the screening and discussion there will be the chance to talk further and share food together.

Anaka is a women's collective based in North Belfast that seeks to empower and provide support to migrant women in Belfast. Through community-building activities and educational programmes they foster an inclusive environment where women from diverse backgrounds can share experiences, build skills, and advocate for their rights.

Northern Ireland Now is a contemporary collecting project in partnership with Northern Ireland Screen which addresses underrepresentation in the Digital Film Archive and champions equality, diversity and inclusion.

**FRIDAY 8 NOVEMBER | 10.30AM - 12.30PM**  
BLACK BOX | FUNDRAISER / PWYC





**In 2022, Docs Ireland programmer Stuart Sloan was invited to attend the film festival Cinema Days in Ramallah, Palestine, and to be on the jury for the Sunbird Award for Best Palestinian Documentary. In 2023, our friends at Film Lab Palestine had to postpone that festival due to the ongoing Israeli bombardment.**

Instead of celebrating cinema in Palestine, they brought Palestine to the world. Belfast Film Festival, along with many other organisations across the globe, hosted a solidarity screening to keep their festival alive. One year on, they are still unable to operate, so we are hosting another screening in support of our Palestinian colleagues.

The proceeds from this screening will be donated to the Ghassan Abu Sitta Fund, providing medical attention to the children who need it the most and helping to relieve the medical sector in Gaza. [www.gascf.org](http://www.gascf.org)

## **NAILA AND THE UPRISING**

Naila and the Uprising is a 2017 documentary by filmmaker, Julia Bacha. Chronicling the remarkable journey of Naila Ayesh and a fierce community of women at the frontlines, whose stories weave through the most vibrant, nonviolent mobilization in Palestinian history – the First Intifada in the late 1980s.

**SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER | 8.15PM**  
**BLACK BOX | FUNDRAISER / PWYC**

NI

INDEPENDENTS





## THE UNHOLYLANDS

DIR. PADDY DUFFY  
UK | ENGLISH | 102 MINS | 2024

**Michael and Scott, students living in the Holylands area of Belfast, plan for one last house party - one final blowout to see off graduation with a bang.**

That is until their father finds out about their irresponsible lifestyle, and forbids them from any more parties. If they risk the family's reputation one more time, they'll be cut off for good. With their father's assistant sent to watch over them, Michael and Scott must try to stop their party from running off the rails and save their futures.

This world-premier homegrown comedy features an ensemble cast, with all-star cameos from big names such as Nathan Carter, Tyrone McKenna and, of course, James Nesbitt.

**WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER | 6.00PM**  
ODEON | PWYC



## THE SPIN

DIR. MICHAEL HEAD  
UK | ENGLISH | 92 MINS | 2024

**The Spin written by Colin Broderick and directed by Michael Head is set in Omagh, Northern Ireland. Two down on their luck record store owners, Elvis and Dermott, take a cross country road trip to Cork to acquire a priceless record that could save their failing business and save them from eviction from their evil landlord, Sadie.**

With the backdrop of Omagh town and the area's vibrant music scene and heritage, plus the in-film musical reference points such as cast member Barry Devlin (Horslips) and its clever script, the film weaves together unique aspects of its location along with the stunning surrounding landscape.

Acclaimed actors Tara Lynne O'Neill (Derry Girls), Owen Colgan (Hardy Bucks) and Brenock O'Connor (Game Of Thrones) star alongside a host of stars including Leah O'Rourke (Derry Girls), Maura Higgins (Love Island) and Kimberly Wyatt (Pussy Cat Dolls).

A firm favourite with local audiences, writer/director Colin Broderick is back with The Spin following sell out Belfast Film Festival screenings of Emerald City in 2016 and A Bend in the River in 2020.

**WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER | 8.30PM**  
ODEON | PWYC



# NI INDEPENDENTS MID-LENGTH PROGRAMME



## THE NEXT STEP

DIR. CHRIS NICHOLAS JAMES MCCANN  
35 MINS

As Irish Dancer Kevin Goble prepares for his directorial debut, he contemplates hanging up his shoes in a poignant reflection on a lifetime of dance.



## COLD HEARTED C\*\*\*\*

DIR. BENJAMIN LIAM PORTER  
40 MINS

1867, Tennessee. Two psychotic con artists race to steal lost Civil War gold before a ruthless gang of Confederate soldiers catch them.



## RIVER ON THE HILL

DIR. COLM S. HERRON  
24 MINS

The hunt for a missing girl brings with it more than just the day to day police work as two detectives navigate a drug infested street.



## ST PANCRAS SUNRISE

DIR. MAEVE MURPHY  
9 MINS

A young Northern Irish woman musician arrives in London in 1982 full of optimism, only to be confronted with unexpected horror.

MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER | 8.00PM  
BLACK BOX | PWYC



## BEAUTIFUL LOUD AND CLEAR

DIR. WILL MCCONNELL  
UK | 90 MINS | 2024

**Two friends keep their long-distance relationship alive through the medium of voice notes. We hear their one-sided conversations, deepest thoughts, and most random observations. These awkward, funny and vulnerable exchanges imply something deeper beneath, dormant feelings which come rushing back when they reunite over Christmas.**

This experimental drama considers relationships in our modern times. Where once we might have waxed lyrical over love letters, we now monologue for each other on our phones. Underneath these tender voice notes, we see the liminal spaces of Belfast. Strikingly composed, capturing our city in

the damp and dark depths of Winter, these spaces highlight the abstract void our protagonists run up against - how do you articulate what you can't even put in words?

McConnell's short *Belfast: The Movie* will also screen before the feature. A consideration of connection in a different manner, the film features 5 people from Belfast watching *Belfast* (2021). They laugh and argue and pontificate on Kenneth Branagh's version of the city, and how it holds up when you actually live here (and aren't looking for Oscars.)

WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER | 7.00PM  
BLACK BOX | PWYC

## The Ballad of Suzanne Césaire: A Pioneer in Pieces

WRITTEN  
BY HYUN  
JIN CHO

Sunset on the island of Martinique. Amid lush greenness, lead actor Zita Hanrot pauses her French-language retelling of the story of mid-century Surrealist, writer and anti-colonial activist Suzanne Césaire's destruction of her own writings. Turning her gaze to the camera, Hanrot states "We're making a film about an artist who didn't want to be remembered." So the fourth wall has already been broken when a clapper loader appears, marking Scene 5, Take 1. As they exit the frame, we are left looking at the palm trees while Hanrot's off-screen voice calls out a request in French and the subtitle translates: Alysia, can you tell caterers I left bottles in the fridge for my baby?

Shots of the dense trees. An unidentified male voice takes over the narration. "Our surrealism will enable us to finally transcend the present," he says. *The Ballad of Suzanne Césaire* proposes a daring, multifaceted experiment honouring the fragment, as opposed to the reconstituted, reconstructed, linear whole. Here, disparate moments from across different temporal and material boundaries are manifested by each actor playing dual roles: their characters and themselves. Fragments from the past offer no assurance, and those from the present bring little optimism. But what's incomplete is not less worthy, and what remains does not necessarily have more authority. No single dominant centre is apparent — be it French or English, written or spoken, dramatisation or improvisation. Contradiction is embraced, never disguised, as the premise is questioned from the outset: why make a film about someone who rejected the authority of remembrance?

Director Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich in fact doesn't make a film about Suzanne Césaire. Instead, her project tirelessly mirrors Césaire's political ethos and fully embraces surrealist methods. Césaire was committed to re-accessing forms of knowledge and artistic expressions which defy patriarchal and colonialist logics. Hunt-Ehrlich unearths forgotten and erased moments of Césaire — as a mother, a political organiser and full-time teacher — that are bigger than the pages she destroyed. In so doing, she finds a cinematic form grounded in maternal practices, anti-colonial literature and Caribbean thinking, and embarks on an immersive and sensuous journey, ignited by the presence of Césaire both on-screen and adrift in off-screen space. The daring approach allows the actors to find versions of themselves in the shadow of Césaire's elusive legacy, offering us poetry and plenitude, realising those aspects of surrealism which Césaire saw as "the tightrope of our hope".

Ina Césaire, one of Suzanne's six children, wrote about her mother's commitment to every aspect of women's liberation, and her unwillingness to accept any injustice. The three mothers of *The Ballad of Suzanne Césaire* — Hunt-Ehrlich, Hanrot and Césaire herself — are all facets of a film that makes a similar feminist commitment, with all three together representing a maternal reality that can seldom be grasped as an individual whole. As Hunt-Ehrlich attends to the supposedly incidental moment of Hanrot remembering bottles for her baby, we find hope that while entire legacies can be lost or intentionally destroyed, fragments like that will survive.

Hyun Jin Cho is a London-based film curator, currently programming for the BFI London Film Festival.

# PROVOKED NARRATIVES: BELFAST FILM FESTIVAL X PALESTINE FILM INSTITUTE

"Provoked Narratives" is an invitation, in this time of genocide and ongoing aggression, to understand the narratives created around Palestine as part of a long colonial project. To consider the ways in which the camera, since its very inception, has played a conflicted role in the project of empire. To consider how images have been co-opted, and to see how images can also resist.

The programme presents films made from 1967 to 1984 in varying contexts and using different grammars of resistance, all live and resonant to this day. From shifting gazes on the Palestinian struggle – from UNRWA's 'humanitarian' lens to cinemas in solidarity, and to the Palestinian filmmakers who devised new visual grammars in grief and in defiance. These films ponder questions of generational trauma and resistance, as well as the long history of solidarity between Palestine and Lebanon.

We are grateful to Belfast Film Festival's invitation and solidarity. We hope that these screenings will deepen learning and stimulate discussion around our shared histories and possible futures. We believe in the power of film to encourage action, to build community, to organise and to mobilise.

PFI is a non-profit organisation run by filmmakers on a voluntary basis. This programme is presented with the collaboration of Khadijeh Habashneh, the Jocelyne Saab Association, Third World Newsreels and Audiovisual Archive of the Workers' and Democratic Movement (AAMOD).

All proceeds from these screenings will be donated to the Ghassan Abu Sitta Children's Fund. This Fund is dedicated to the children of Gaza: providing medical attention to the children who need it the most and helping to relieve the medical sector in Gaza. [www.gascf.org](http://www.gascf.org)

# PROGRAMME ONE

## GENERATIONAL RESILIENCE



### BLOWN BY THE WIND

DIR. JACK MADVO

18 min | 1971 Colour | 16mm

Lebanon-raised Armenian filmmaker Jacques Madvo's 1971 film is a montage of vibrant drawings by Palestinian children, offering a window into their lives, memories and imagination following their displacement to Lebanon after the Six Day War in 1967. Resistance through a love of nature is coded into art from the youngest age.

### CHILDREN WITHOUT CHILDHOOD

DIR. KHADIJEH HABASHNEH

21 mins | 1980 Colour | 16mm

Produced by the Palestinian Cinema Institute and the General Union of Palestinian Women, Children without Childhood depicts the reality of children orphaned during the Tel al-Zaatar massacre (Beirut, 1976), underlining the contradiction between the International Declaration of Child Rights and the living conditions of Palestinian children.

### MA'LOUL CELEBRATES ITS DESTRUCTION

DIR. MICHEL KHLEIFI

32 min | 1984 Colour | 16mm

Like countless Palestinian villages since 1948, Ma'loul has been erased from the map. Every year on Israel's 'independence day' (when no permits are needed) Ma'loul's expelled indigenous Palestinian inhabitants go back to their village, to show their children where they are from, to re-conjure the houses and share their stories.

TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER | PROG 1 | 7.00PM  
THE AVENUE | FUNDRAISER / PWYC

# PROGRAMME TWO

## PALESTINE AND LEBANON - A HISTORY OF SOLIDARITY

### ZIONIST AGGRESSION

DIR. MUSTAFA ABU ALI

21 min | 1972 B&W | 16mm

In reflecting the sheer barbarism of the Zionist aggression in Palestinian refugee camps in Syria and Lebanon on September 8th, 1972, legendary Palestinian filmmaker Mustafa Abu Ali is compelled to reach for new filmic grammar to reflect on the brutality and the blueprint of violence that continues to this day.

### KUFR SHUBA

DIR. SAMIR NIMR

35 min | 1975 B&W | 16mm

An iconic work produced by the Palestine Cinema Institute in Beirut, *Kufr Shuba*, directed by Iraqi filmmaker Samir Nimr, takes its name from a village in South Lebanon, which was the site of solidarity between the Lebanese people and the Palestinian resistance following a fierce battle that devastated the village.

### SOUTH LEBANON

DIR. JOCELYNE SAAB

14 min | 1977 Colour | 16mm

In 1976, Lebanese filmmaker Jocelyne Saab travels to the South of Lebanon to document the Israeli attacks on the Lebanese villages of Kufr Shuba and Hanine for French TV. She avoids filming the Palestinian resistance, focusing instead on the military dynamics at work in the context of the Lebanese civil war.

### WHY?

DIR. MONICA MAURER

28 min | 1982 Colour | 16mm

Activist filmmaker Monica Maurer (1942, Munich) moved to Beirut in 1977 to work with the PLO's Palestine Cinema Institute. Shot in Beirut and released during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, *Why?* portrays the brutality of the siege and indiscriminate attacks in attempt to rally support for the Palestinian revolution.



WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER | PROG 2 | 7.00PM  
THE AVENUE | FUNDRAISER / PWYC

# PROGRAMME THREE

## SHIFTING GAZE: FROM THE HUMANITARIAN LENS TO A CINEMA IN SOLIDARITY



# WE ARE THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

### AFTERMATH

DIR. SAMIR HISSEN

45 min | 1967 B&W | 16mm

Established in 1949 to support Palestinian refugees, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East produced numerous films; **Aftermath** documents UNRWA's response to the Six Day War in 1967, where Palestinian people were displaced and dispossessed yet again nearly 20 years after the Nakba in 1948.

### WE ARE THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE A.K.A. REVOLUTION UNTIL VICTORY

BY NEWSREEL

45 min | 1973 B&W | 16mm

Made by a breakaway faction of the US Newsreel collective Pacific Newsreel, **We are the Palestinian People a.k.a. Revolution Until Victory** is an act of transnational solidarity cinema, collating archival footage into a detailed, historical reconstruction with great attention paid to the political genesis of Zionism and the role of colonial Britain

THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER | PROG 3 | 7.00PM  
THE AVENUE | FUNDRAISER / PWYC

## Paul & Paulette Take a Bath: Paris, Je T'aime (Moi Non Plus)

WRITTEN  
BY JESSICA  
KIANG

From Fred Astaire romancing Audrey Hepburn in *Funny Face* to Jean-Paul Belmondo scowling sexily at Jean Seberg in *Breathless* to Ethan Hawke missing his plane for Julie Delpy in *Before Sunset*, the movies have long romanticised the relationship between Paris and the Americans who fall in love in and with the city. Indeed, in 1952, the industry's highest honour — the Best Picture Oscar — went to the musical that codified the phenomenon right there in its title. *An American in Paris* sees a buoyant Gene Kelly play an ex-GI living in Paris as a struggling painter, who falls in love with a local girl, embodied with dewy ingénue charm by Leslie Caron. In the bold technicolor hues of young love itself, the characters cavort through the Left Bank, become *beaux amis* at the Cafe Bel Ami and dance beneath the sprinkling fountains of the Place de la Concorde. Except, of course, they don't. Apart from a few second-unit exteriors, *An American in Paris* was exclusively filmed on an MGM backlot in Los Angeles.

Paris, even in movies that are shot there like Jethro Massey's skittish, striking *Paul & Paulette Take a Bath*, is often more an idea — of romance, of creativity, of sophistication wreathed in Sartre and cigarette smoke — than a real place. But Massey's movie is less afraid than most to shatter the very illusion it initially embraces. Paul (Jérémy Galiana) is an almost quintessential American-in-Paris, an affable, directionless young man whose creative ambition — this time in photography — has him wandering the streets in search of elusive inspiration. Paulette (Marie Benati) the muse he encounters, is herself an archetype of the cinematic Parisienne, carelessly chic even after an impromptu amateur haircut, at ease with her own mercurial moods, innately mysterious despite her arrestingly direct, blue-eyed gaze. Their preoccupations dovetail neatly — Paulette craves a firsthand experience of tragic celebrity; Paul has a fascinated tourist's knowledge of the city's crueller geographies. They appear to be as made for one another as the guillotine blade and Marie Antoinette's neck.

But this is no twee romance, and not just because the hetero-wholesomeness of the Kelly/Caron era has been complicated by more fluid modern sexualities (Paul is stuck on Paulette; she's hung up on her ex-girlfriend). Paul's desire to impress his new lover with the depth of his commitment to her ghoulish hobby, as well as Paulette's insatiable hunger for more salacious proximity to actual suffering — both of which qualities might be manifestations of a dissociated generation's craving for genuine connection — mean the quirky-rom-com vibe of the first half is gradually subsumed by darker energies.

The tragedies they exploit for kicks become more recent and more visceral, making it harder to maintain ironic distance. By the time Paul mounts his last, disastrous assault on decency by invoking the Bataclan massacre — maybe his cohort's defining European atrocity — the joke ain't funny anymore. The fantasy dissolves. The romance evaporates. "It's not love, is it?" says Paul, and it isn't. They walk out of the movie together yet not, and no frou-frou fake fountain awaits them, just the Paris of the real.

Jessica Kiang is on the programming team of BFF and the selection committee of the 2025 Berlinale, as well as regularly writing film criticism for *Variety*, *Sight and Sound*, *The New York Times* etc.



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Marcel

# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE



# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

## THURSDAY 24 OCTOBER

7:30pm	Special Events	Shankill Screen BFF24: Shorts Programme	Shankill Screen	Page 67
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## THURSDAY 31 OCTOBER

7:00pm	Opening Night, Gala Screening	Fréwaka	Cineworld	Page 12
8:30pm	International Competition	Universal Language	QFT 2	Page 22

## FRIDAY 1 NOVEMBER

6:00pm	New Irish Cinema	Bring Them Down + Q&A	QFT 2	Page 15
6:30pm	Long Short Weekend	Northern Ireland Screen Networkshop Mixer	Black Box	Page 51

## SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER

10:30am	Long Short Weekend	Competition Shorts Programme 1	QFT 1	Page 42
12:00pm	Long Short Weekend	Competition Shorts Programme 2	QFT 1	Page 43
1:30pm	Long Short Weekend	Competition Shorts Programme 3	QFT 1	Page 44
3:00pm	Long Short Weekend	Competition Shorts Programme 4	QFT 1	Page 45
3:00pm	Special Events	Experimental Shorts by Trans Filmmakers	Black Box	Page 68
4:30pm	Special Events, Belfast 2024	POV: Getting Into Film	Brian Friel	Page 58
6:30pm	Special Events	Radu Jude in Conversation	QFT 2	Page 17
7:00pm	Focus on Palestine	Cinema Days Palestine Solidarity Screening	Black Box	Page 70
8:30pm	International Competition	Windless	QFT 2	Page 20

# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

## SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER

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12:00pm	Long Short Weekend	New Irish Shorts Programme 2	Black Box	Page 48
12:45pm	International Competition	Eephus	QFT 1	Page 23
2:00pm	Long Short Weekend	New Irish Shorts Programme 3	Black Box	Page 49
3:00pm	New International Cinema	Grand Tour	QFT 1	Page 32
4:00pm	Long Short Weekend	New Irish Shorts Programme 4	Black Box	Page 50
6:00pm	Gala Screening, New Irish Cinema	Dead Man's Money	QFT 1	Page 14
6:00pm	Long Short Weekend	Short Film Awards Reception	Black Box	Page 51
7:00pm	Art of Action	The French Connection	Beanbag Cinema	Page 54
7:00pm	Special Events	Ghoul's On Film Presents: The Devil's Doorway	Black Box Green Room	Page 67
7:30pm	Special Events	Lush: A Far From Home Movie + Q&A	Black Box	Page 64
8:30pm	International Competition	Second Chance	QFT 2	Page 21

## MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER

6:00pm	New International Cinema	Armand	Odeon	Page 36
7:00pm	Art of Action	To Live and Die in L.A.	Beanbag Cinema	Page 54
7:00pm	Special Events	Normal Cinema Club: Rap World & Coreys	Black Box Green Room	Page 65
8:00pm	NI Independants	NI Independants: Mid-Length Programme	Black Box	Page 73
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8:50pm	International Competition	The Ballad of Suzanne Césaire	QFT 2	Page 23

## TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER

6:00pm	New International Cinema	La Cocina	Odeon	Page 33
7:00pm	Focus on Palestine	Provoked Narratives Programme 1	The Avenue	Page 77
7:00pm	Art of Action	The Hunted	Beanbag Cinema	Page 54
7:20pm	Special Events	Lalor Roddy in Conversation	QFT 1	Page 16
8:30pm	International Competition	To Kill a Mongolian Horse	QFT 2	Page 21
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## WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER

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7:00pm	Focus on Palestine	Provoked Narratives Programme 2	The Avenue	Page 78
8:00pm	Special Events	Ulster Mirror	BBC Blackstaff House	Page 63
8:30pm	NI Independants	The Spin	Odeon	Page 72
8:50pm	International Competition	Familiar Touch	QFT 2	Page 20

## THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER

6:00pm	International Competition	Paul & Paulette Take a Bath	Odeon	Page 22
6:00pm	Special Events	A Tale of Two Houses by Marta Dyczkowska	Vault Artist Studios	Page 68
7:00pm	Focus on Palestine	Provoked Narratives Programme 3	The Avenue	Page 79
8:15pm	New International Cinema	Nickel Boys	Odeon	Page 31
8:30pm	New International Cinema	Nightbitch	QFT 1	Page 35

## FRIDAY 8 NOVEMBER

10:30am	Special Events	Anaka in the Archives: Northern Ireland Now	Black Box	Page 69
6:00pm	Special Events	Anne Devlin (40th Anniversary)	QFT 1	Page 62
7:00pm	Special Events	Gerry Adams: A Ballymurphy Man	The Kennedy Centre	Page 66
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## SATURDAY 9 NOVEMBER

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1:15pm	New International Cinema	King Baby	QFT 2	Page 34
2:00pm	Special Events	Ritz Day - Live Podcast With Brian Henry Martin	Black Box	Page 69
6:30pm	New Irish Cinema	Housewife Of The Year	QFT 2	Page 15
7:00pm	Closing Night, Gala Screening	The Wise Guy	Cineworld	Page 13
8:30pm	New International Cinema	The Other Way Around	QFT 2	Page 36

# VENUE INFORMATION

## THE AVENUE



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

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

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## BBC BLACKSTAFF



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t. 028 9033 8000

w. [bbc.co.uk/showsandtours/venue/bbc-blackstaff-house](http://bbc.co.uk/showsandtours/venue/bbc-blackstaff-house)

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## BEANBAG CINEMA



5 Exchange Place  
Belfast BT1 2NA

t. 028 9032 5913

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

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## BLACK BOX



18-22 Hill Street,  
Belfast, BT1 2LA

t. 028 9024 4400

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

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## 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)

## ODEON BELFAST



1 Victoria Square, Belfast BT1 4QG

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w. [odeon.co.uk/cinemas/belfast/](http://odeon.co.uk/cinemas/belfast/)

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## OMNIPLEX, KENNEDY CENTRE



564-568 Falls Road,  
The Kennedy Centre, Belfast BT11 9AB

t. 028 9033 8000

w. [omnplex.ie](http://omnplex.ie)

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## QUEENS FILM THEATRE



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

t. 028 9097 1097

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

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## ULSTER MUSEUM



Botanic Gardens,  
Belfast BT9 5AB

t. 028 9044 0000

w. [ulstermuseum.org](http://ulstermuseum.org)

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## VAULT ARTIST STUDIOS



Shankill Screen:  
116 Shankill Road, Belfast BT13 2BD

Exhibition - Marlborough House:  
30 Victoria Street, Belfast BT1 3GG

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