



CINÉIREANN

IRELAND'S FILM MONTHLY

FACING THE LAND AND YOURSELF

With *Song of Granite* set for release next month Cin É takes a look at the recent output of Irish director Pat Collins.

MYTHS, MASCULINITY, MORALITY

Just what is it that Yorgos Lanthimos is saying with *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*?

CORK FILM FESTIVAL MAKES A CONNECTION

The Cork Film Festival celebrates its 63rd year with an impressive and expansive program of films and events.



Feature: The Killing of a Sacred Deer

Myths, masculinity, and morality in Yorgos Lanthimos' latest Irish collaboration.

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FÁILTE GO CINÉIREANN

Welcome to Ireland's Film Monthly

In February 2013, Ireland's last dedicated Irish film publication, Film Ireland, published its last printed edition. It was just one of a string of closures of printed media that came about due to a combination of the move to digital, the decrease in funding, and the increased cost of print.

Its loss was keenly felt in the industry, as for over 25 years it was the Irish film industry bible, a place for critical appraisal of and on all aspects of Irish film and Irish screen culture. Its legacy is felt in the continued work of Film Ireland online, in IFTN, and in my own website Scannain.

While all three, with the assistance of many other fine news outlets, provide a great service to the industry, there remains a gap for long-form writing, critical appraisal, and cultural appreciation or dissent. This is something that I hope to address with Cin É.

The definition of an Irish film, of an Irish TV show, of Irish animation, or even of a what is a TV show in general has changed fundamentally in the last few years. More and more people are consuming screen media via mobile devices, via streaming, via time-shifted television and Video on Demand. That's changing the nature of the industry too, and this change is something that should be recorded, examined, and interrogated.

I won't start with a mission statement, but rather a statement of intent. Cin É will attempt to document the changes to our screen industry and provide insight and explanation on this from the those involved and those keen observers on the sidelines. It will attempt to provide views from as wide a spectrum as possible, and from established industry names and newcomers alike.

The advent of the smartphone has democratised the creation of digital content, the rise of social media and streaming platforms has democratised the distribution of that content. Even still the place of organised funding bodies and of media schools and guilds is paramount to honing raw talent and offering a mechanism through which wider exposure can be achieved.

Organisations like the Irish Film Board, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, or the Arts Council offer so much by the way of encouragement and structure to content creators, but they are not the only ways by which Irish creatives are making themselves heard.

Ireland has never before had the level of international success with film that we've achieved in the last few years, and at the same time we've never had as many independent feature films and short films being made telling stories of home

and abroad. Irish television is now eying international distribution, while Irish animation is respected and admired the world over. We have established some of the finest VFX houses in the world and we are eagerly eying VR and other new technologies.

All of this change and creativity needs to be embraced, admired, and thrust forth from this island with all of the strength that we can muster. We are a nation capable of extraordinary artistic endeavour, as we have been for generations, and now is our time.

A place for all

Fundamentally Cin É will exist as a platform for reflecting on all of these things, being a conduit for reasoned and rational opinion, for discourse, and for recording this point in time for future generations. It will be an inclusive environment, open to any and all who wish to share in Ireland's favourite national pastime.

See you at the movies....

Niall Murphy
Managing Editor

INDUSTRY NEWS



One hundred seventy features have been submitted for consideration in the Documentary Feature category for the 90th Academy Awards®, including five Irish entries: *Elián*, *The Farthest*, *No Stone Unturned*, *Rocky Ros Muc*, and *School Life*.

Elián is the remarkable story of Elián Gonzalez, a five-year-old Cuban boy plucked from the Florida Straits, and how the fight for his future changed the course of U.S.-Cuba relations. Elián is co-directed by US journalist Tim Golden and Dublin filmmaker Ross McDonnell. Trevor Birney (*Bobby Sands: 66 Days*) produced the film through his Fine Point Films banner.

An entirely Irish production, Emer Reynolds' *The Farthest* includes interviews with 30 of the original scientists and engineers who built and flew the ground-breaking Voyager mission, never-seen-before archive footage from inside NASA along with spectacular CGI, designed and created by Irish talent.

On 18 June 1994 in the small village of Loughinisland, County Down, three gunmen burst into a pub with assault rifles and fired on the customers, killing six civilians and wounding five. No one has ever spent a day in prison for this, one of the more awful crimes of the Irish "Troubles." In *No Stone Unturned*, writer/director Alex Gibney ignites a fire under this cold case that has frustrated the victims' families for more than 20 years.

Rocky Ros Muc charts boxer Sean Mannion's rise from humble beginnings to challenging for a world title crown. From the quiet Gaeltacht village of Ros Muc, Galway, to the criminal underworld of James "Whitey" Bulger and the mean streets of Boston, *Rocky Ros Muc* examines spirit inside the ring and troubles outside; the reality of emigration and its impact on identity.

School Life tells the story of Headfort, the last remaining boarding school for primary age children in Ireland. Directed by Neasa Ní Chianáin with co-direction for

Several of the films have not yet had their required Los Angeles and New York qualifying releases. Submitted features must fulfill the theatrical release requirements and comply with all of the category's other qualifying rules in order to advance in the voting process. A shortlist of 15 films will be announced in December.

Films submitted in the Documentary Feature category may also qualify for Academy Awards in other categories, including Best Picture, provided they meet the requirements for those categories.

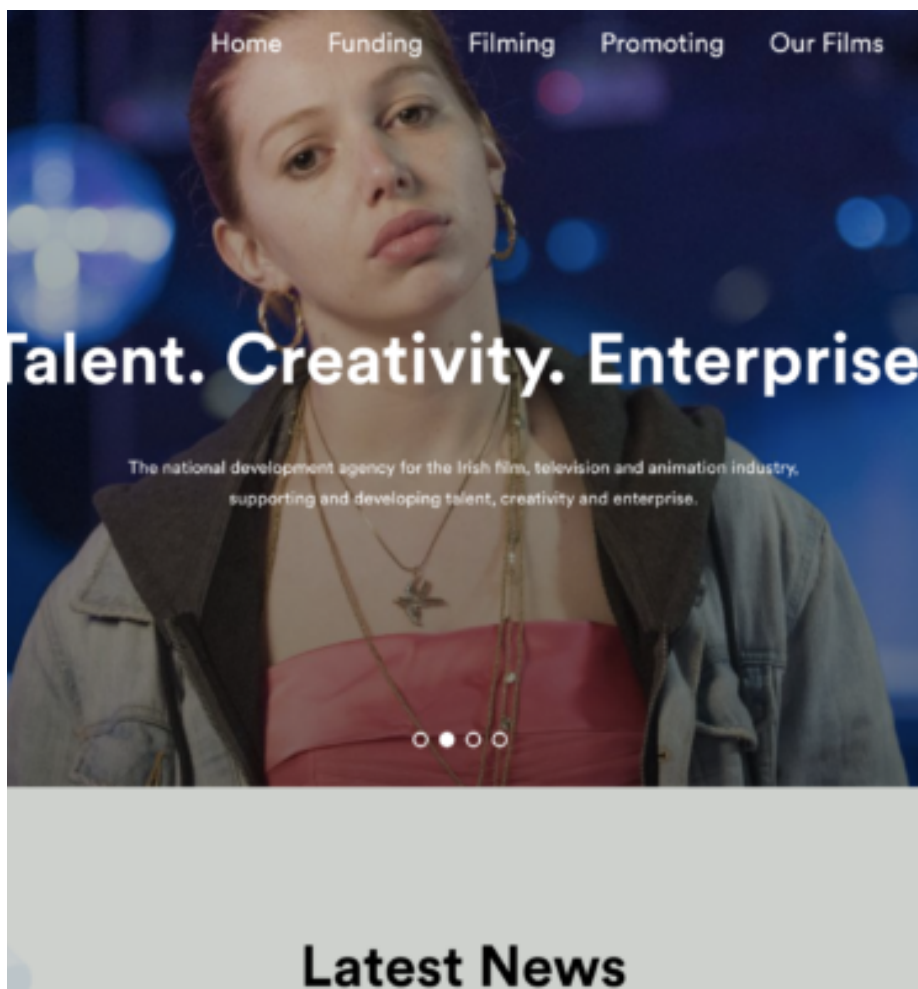
Nominations for the 90th Academy Awards will be announced on Tuesday, January 23, 2018.

The 90th Oscars® will be held on Sunday, March 4, 2018.

Bord Scannán na hÉireann/the Irish Film Board (IFB) has unveiled a revamped website which updates the development agency's online presence to reflect a more modern design, flow, and feel. The site is fully responsive across devices with content adapting to screen size. (Read More)

WRAP, a new €2 million fund to encourage the film, television, animation and game industry has been launched in Galway, the UNESCO City of Film.

It is estimated that this investment will create 90 direct additional jobs within the industry in the Western Region. (Read More)

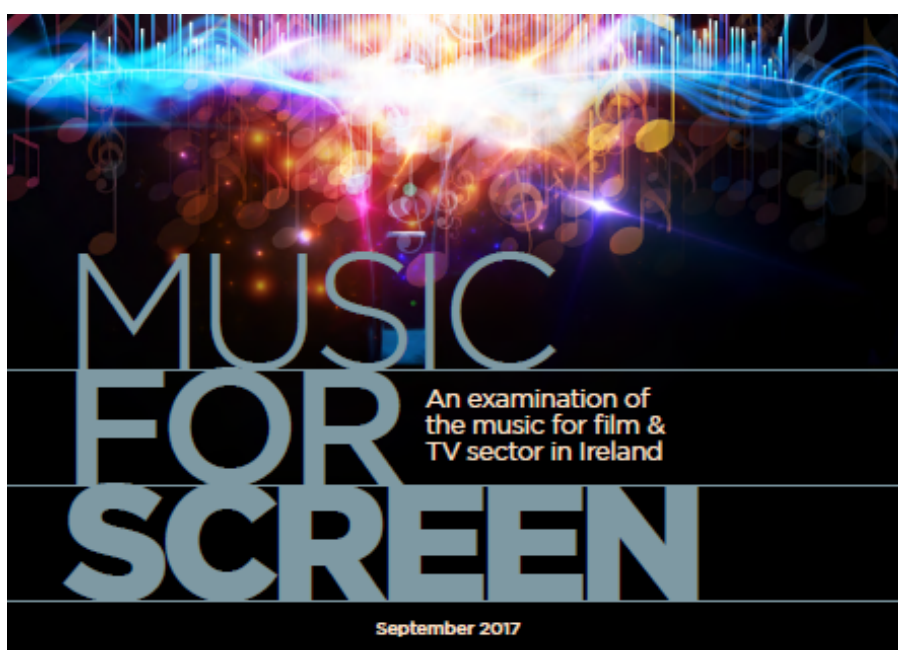


The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) has announced details of the latest funding awards under The Sound & Vision 3 Broadcasting Funding Scheme.

Following a comprehensive assessment process, funding amounting to €5.774m has been allocated to 120 projects. Of this, just over €5.149m has been allocated to 32 TV projects, while 88 radio projects will benefit to the value of €625,000. (Read More)
Vivamus gravida turpis sit erat, non

The Irish Music Rights Organisation (IMRO) has published a report which examines the contribution of Irish music to the success of the film and television sectors in Ireland.

Authored by Sarah Glennane, an independent music supervisor and music professional with more than a decade of experience, Music for Screen – an Examination of the music for film & TV sector in Ireland, aims to spark a national dialogue in relation to future growth of the music for screen sector in Ireland. (Read More)



SHORTS IN SHORT



The 8th Underground Cinema Short Film Awards announced its winners at a star-studded event in Dun Laoghaire on November 5th.

Big winner on the night was Cashell Horgan's fantasy *The Clockmakers Dream*, which picked up 4 awards including Best Editor. Brian Deane's horror *Blight* picked up three awards including Best Director, with Ian Hunt Duffy's tense thriller *Gridlock* also taking home three awards and being named Best Film. Graham Cantwell's Fleadh-winning LGBT drama *Lily* won two awards, picking up Best Actress and Supporting Actress.

The Underground Cinema Short Film Awards are Ireland's longest-established and most prestigious independent film awards. Each year the honour the best in independent Irish short filmmaking, recognising almost every aspect of the art of short film making.

Best Film – *Gridlock*
Best Director – Brian Deane for *Blight*
Best Actor – Moe Dunford for *Gridlock*
Best Actress – Clara Harte for *Lily*
Best Student Film – *Scum*
Rising Star Award – Nicolas Courdouan for *Radha*
Best Screenplay – Darach McGarrigle for *Gridlock*
Best Cinematography – Russell Gleeson for *Blight*

Best Editor – Cashell Horgan for *The Clockmakers Dream*
Best Sound – Paul Roland for *Foxglove*
Best Score – George Kallis for *Blight*
Best Supporting Actor – Peter O'Byrne for *Caper*
Best Supporting Actress – Amy Joyce Hastings for *Lily*
Best Production Design – Ger Wallace for *The Clockmakers Dream*
Best Costume Design – Tatsiana Coquerel for *The Clockmakers Dream*
Best Make Up – Marina Granville for *The Clockmakers Dream*
Best Comedy – *Caper*
Best Music Video – Henry McCullough directed by Alan Leonard
Best International Music Video – *Vampire Love*
Best Online Video – Angelo



Rip to the Rescue!, a dark sci-fi comedy written by Cian McGarrigle (Burning Wishes, Red Rock, Nowhere Fast) and directed by Paudie Baggott, has just wrapped shooting in County Kildare.

The film is set in post-apocalyptic Ireland where a suave American jet pilot tries to rescue a beautiful young woman from her domineering mother. But he soon finds out that in the midlands, family can be deadly.



Principal photography wrapped on a new short film directed by and starring Brendan Gleeson.

Psychic which was written by Rory Gleeson, tells the story of a charismatic psychic (Brendan Gleeson) who is forced out of retirement by his two manipulative sons (Domhnall and Brian Gleeson) and taken on the road. The last obstacle to gaining a large cult following is a TV show host determined to bring them down.



Graham Cantwell's IFTA-nominated LGBT drama ***LILY*** won the Youth Jury award at the Iris Prize Festival, a six-day celebration of LGBT film in Cardiff, Wales.

Lily (Clara Harte) is a girl with a secret, on the cusp of becoming a young woman. When a misunderstanding with the beautiful and popular Violet leads to a vicious attack, Lily is faced with the greatest challenge of her young life.

Supernatural, stirring and the very sweetest seasonal scenes are coming to screens in the skies soon as the Aer Lingus TakeOff Foundation announces the winners of the inaugural Irish Filmmakers Competition.

The winning entrants, upcoming Irish filmmakers Jonathan Farrelly (***Leap of Faith***), Maria Elena Doyle (***Goodbye Darling***) and Brian Willis (***The Lost Letter***), will now have their short films shown on Aer Lingus in-flight entertainment on all transatlantic flights for the next 12 months. The incredible prize means that the winners will have an estimated 2.5million sets of eyes on their winning entries over the next 12 months, as their films clock-up 192,000 kilometres every day, crossing the Atlantic 32 times.



FÉILTE/FESTIVAL NEWS



The Breadwinner

Cartoon Saloon's **The Breadwinner** took both of the top honours: The Grand Prize, selected by the festival jury, and the Audience Award, selected by festival attendees at the inaugural Animation is Film festival.

The Breadwinner is directed by Nora Twomey with screen story by Ellis and screenplay by Anita Doron. The Breadwinner is the story of Parvana, a young girl living under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, who must disguise herself as a boy to become the breadwinner of the family when her father is unfairly imprisoned. A story of self-empowerment and imagination in the face of oppression.

The Breadwinner features the voice talents of Saara Chaudry (Max & Shred) in the role of Parvana, Soma Bhatia (Degrassi: Next Class) as Shauzia, Laara Sadiq (Remedy) as Parvana's mother Fattema, Ali Badshah (The Cat In The Hat) as Parvana's father Nurullah, Shaista Latif (This is the Life) as Parvana's sister Soraya, and Kawa Ada (Jihad Gigilo) as Razaq.

The film is a collaborative effort of Canada's Aircraft Pictures, Ireland's Cartoon Saloon and Luxembourg's Melusine Productions in association with Jolie Pas Productions.

The inaugural edition of Animation is Film took place Oct. 20-22 at the TCL Chinese 6 Theater in Hollywood. The festival presented a selection of twelve new animated feature films in competition, with selections from Asia, Europe, South America and North America, and filmmakers attending for most screenings. Additionally, the festival presented studio events, special screenings, short film programs, and a VR lounge, with the majority of screenings selling out.

The festival was presented by GKIDS, Annecy Int'l Animation Film Festival, Variety and ASIFA-Hollywood.

Back for their 7th year, the Irish Film Festival London presents Ireland's latest mainstream and independent films over 5 days across London with exclusive previews, panel discussions and director's Q&As.

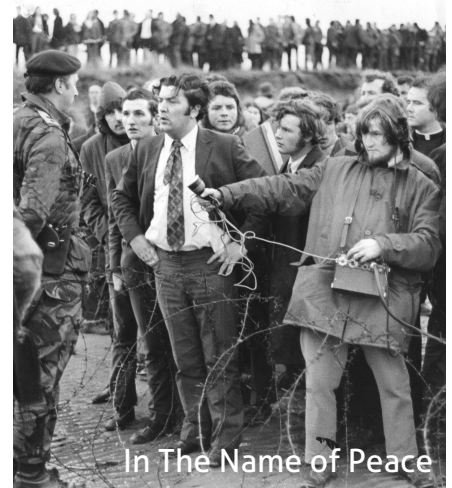
IFFL 2017 opens with *The Drummer and the Keeper*, directed by Nick Kelly, telling the touching story of an unlikely friendship that develops between the bipolar drummer of a rock band and an institutionalised teen suffering from Asperger's syndrome.

The closing film is *The Farthest*, a stunning, award-winning documentary from Emer Reynolds, about the men and women who built the Voyager spaceships – one of humankind's greatest achievements.

IFFL 2017 celebrates women filmmakers, with four of Ireland's finest female directors engaged in screenings and discussions. *The Breadwinner* (directed by Nora Twomey and executive produced by Angelina Jolie) and *The Farthest* (directed by Emer Reynolds) are both being screened at the festival with Q&As (Sunday 3rd December). Regent Street's private screening on Friday 1st December of a stunning upcoming feature is directed by one of Ireland's rising female directors. Aisling Walsh (*Maudie*) joins the line-up of the festival's Female Focus Forum along with Celine Haddad (Irish Film Board), Roisin Geraghty (GAZE), Aoife McCardle (*Kissing Candice*) and Anne Marie Naughton (Women in Film and Television Ireland / WFT.i) (Thursday 30th November).

There will also be a panel discussion on Irish Screen Industries, the UK and Brexit, featuring speakers from the Irish Film Board, the BFI, Ateliers du Cinéma Européen (ACE), and Northern Ireland Screen discussing how Brexit could affect the Irish Film and TV industries (Thursday 30th November).

Further feature film screenings include *Maze* by Stephen Burke, inspired by the true events of the infamous 1983 prison breakout of 38 IRA prisoners from HMP, which was to become the biggest prison escape in Europe since World War II (Friday 1st December); *Song of Granite* from acclaimed director Pat Collins, who brings the dramatic life story of legendary sean-nós singer Joe Heaney to the screen with in audacious exploration of the man and his music (Saturday 2nd December); *The Secret Scripture*, Jim Sheridan's heart-wrenching tale of a woman who resides in a psychiatric hospital recounting her youth of romance, obsession and chaos, starring Rooney Mara, Jack Reynor, Aidan Turner, Vanessa Redgrave and Pauline McLynn (Saturday 2nd December); and *In The Name Of Peace: John Hume in America*, Maurice Fitzpatrick's documentary about John Hume who won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1998 as well as the Martin Luther King Award and the Gandhi Peace Prize, the only person to have been awarded all three.



PRODUCTION NEWS



Float Like A Butterfly

WestEnd Films has released the first look at Carmel Winters' new feature drama *Float Like a Butterfly*, which they are attempting to sell to international territories at the American Film Market.

Set in 1960's/70's Ireland, the film stars Hazel Doupe (*Into the Badlands, Michael Inside*) and Dara Devaney (*Grace Harte, An Klondike*) in the leads of Francis and Michael respectively. The story sees Francis, a young Irish Traveller, fighting for the right to pursue her passion...boxing. She is determined to make her idol Muhammad Ali proud, as well as her father who has recently been released from prison. But when she wants to show him just how tough she is, she soon comes to realise he's got other plans for her.

The cast also includes a host of talented new and established Irish screen actors, including Lalor Roddy (*Maze, Michael Inside*), Hilda Fay (*Fair City, Kisses*), Aidan O'Hare (*Resistance, Maze*), Lisa Lambe (*Olive, Bachelor's Walk*), Aaron Monaghan (*Striking Out, Maze*), and introducing Johnny Collins.

Float Like a Butterfly has been long gestating for writer/director Winters. Her debut feature, *Snap*, was released in 2011 and won awards both home and abroad, including Best Film and Best Director from the Dublin Critic's Circle at the Dublin International Film Festival. In the interim, she has worked in theatre and was Film Artist in Residence (Screenwriter) from 2014 to 2015 at University College Cork.

Commenting on the news Winters said: "Even more so since his death, Muhammad Ali remains a powerful and timeless symbol of the Champion of the Underdog. It feels timely that now on our screens we will see a young Irish Traveller girl, Francis, take on the mantle of his legacy with her own gut-wrenching and ultimately jubilant story."

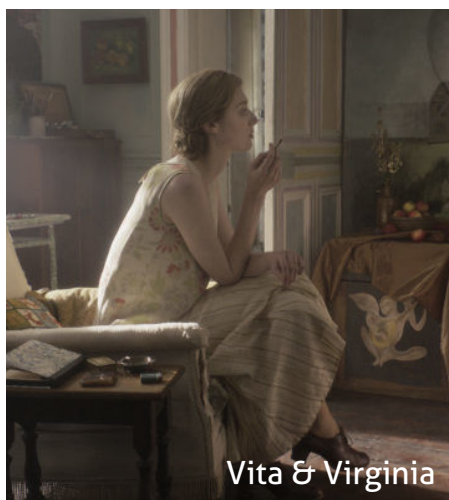
The film is produced by Martina Niland and David Collins for Port Pictures and Samson Films and co-produced by Cathleen Dore. It has received financial support from the Irish Film Board and The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. Post-production is currently taking place at Egg Post Production with editor Julian Ulrichs (*Sing Street*). DoP on the film is Michael Lavelle (*Patrick's Day*).

Principal photography has commenced on the Pembridge Pictures and Umedia production ***A Girl from Mogadishu*** – a true story based on the testimony of Ifrah Ahmed, who – having escaped war-torn Somalia – emerged as one of the world’s foremost international activists against Gender Based Violence. Filming in Belgium commenced October 18th, 2017 and will complete in February in Ireland and Morocco.

A Girl from Mogadishu stars Aja Naomi King (*How to Get Away with Murder*, *Birth of a Nation*) as Ifrah, Martha Canga Antonio (*Black*) and Barkhad Abdi (*Blade Runner 2049*, *Eye of the Storm*, *Captain Phillips*) as well as Somali icon, Maryam Mursals. The film is directed by Mary McGuckian.



A Girl from Mogadishu



Vita & Virginia

Protagonist Pictures has released the first image from Chanya Button’s ***Vita & Virginia***, which recently completed filming in Dublin with producers Blinder Films. Button directs the film, from a script by Dame Eileen Atkins based on her play of the same name.

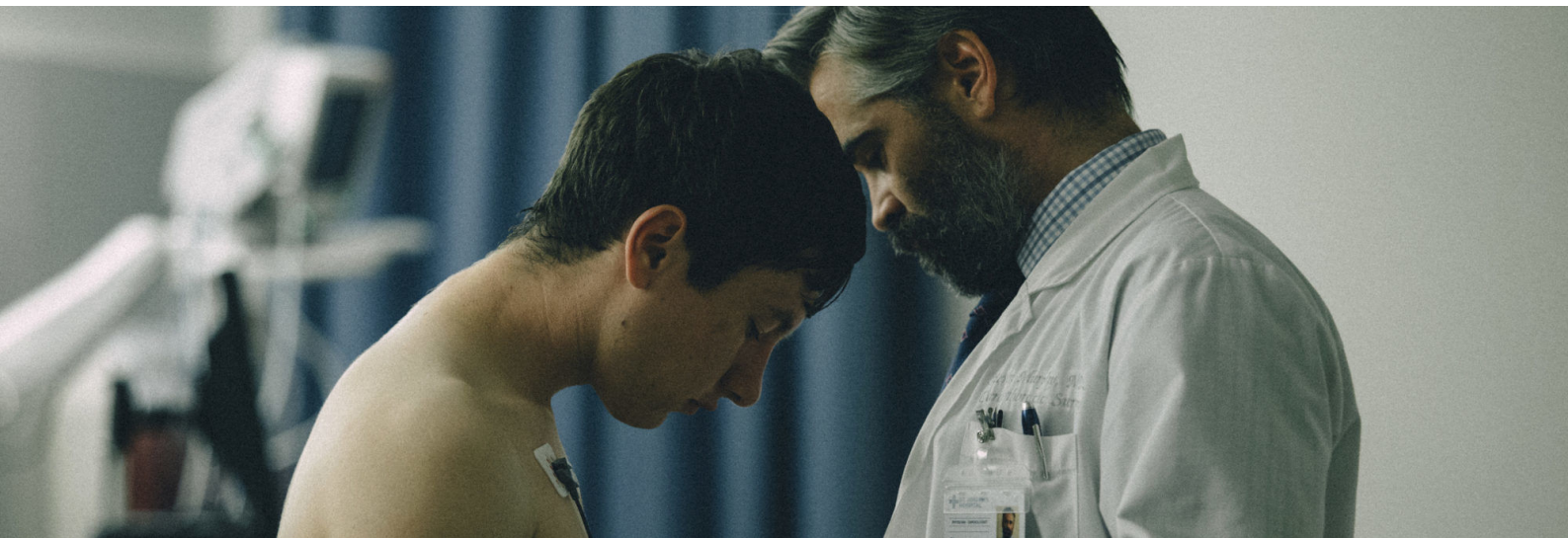
The film follows the romance and friendship between authors Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West. Elizabeth Debicki stars as Virginia Woolf, with Gemma Arterton playing Vita Sackville-West. It is produced by Katie Holly for Blinder Films and Evangelo Kioussis of Mirror Productions.

Ian FitzGibbon’s recently wrapped Irish feature ***Dark Lies the Island*** has secured an international sales deal with Independent, who will present the film to potential buyers.

The film has a script from Kevin Barry, based on characters from his short story collection of the same name. It is described as dark comedy that rips with violent tension. Set in a small Irish town and unfolding over the course of one week, a long-standing family feud comes to a head and forces the men to face the



Dark Lies the Island



MYTH, MASCULINITY, MORALITY: THE KILLING OF A SACRED DEER

By Darren Mooney

The Killing of a Sacred Deer opens on the shot of an open chest, and the beating heart within it. Slowly and surely, the camera pulls back. The real focus of the opening shot comes into frame; the hands of the surgeon working on that heart. Those hands move quickly, adjusting and tweaking. They move with confidence and decisiveness; this life is quite literally in the surgeon's hands.

The next few shots are just as revealing. The operation complete, cardiologist Steven Murphy strips out of his surgical attire. The mask is removed, the goggles lifted. The surgical gown is thrown in a bin at the corner of the room. The gloves are thrown on top, the camera taking a moment to slowly push on the medical waste. This is the end of Steven's assumed responsibility. His hands are clean.

Co-written by director Yorgos Lanthimos and his frequent collaborator Efthymis Filippou, *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* is a modern-day morality play. *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* inherits some of its thematic occupations from the earlier work of both Lanthimos and Filippou; in particular, the film shares Lanthimos' fixation on the tension between an individual and the demands of familial relationships (most obvious in *Dogtooth*, but also present in *The Lobster*) and Filippou's fascination with masculine identity (as demonstrated by his work on *Chevalier*).

However, *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* plays upon a more overtly mythic framework. The title of the film alludes to the last extant work of classical Greek playwright Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis*. The tragedy of *Iphigenia* focuses on the general Agamemnon, who is set to lead his army to Troy. However, in his arrogance, Agamemnon finds himself beholden to a vengeful god. The goddess Artemis

demands that Agamemnon sacrifice his eldest daughter, the eponymous Iphigenia.



The "sacred deer" of the title is an allusion to the end of the play. Agamemnon commits himself to the sacrifice of his eldest daughter to appease an angry god, and Iphigenia eventually yields. However, at the end of the play, Agamemnon receives word of the sacrificial ritual. Iphigenia was reportedly replaced on the altar by a deer, and that deer was sacrificed in her place. This soothed the vengeful god and allowed Agamemnon to lead his fleet to Troy.

Interestingly enough, this ending is broadly accepted by historians to have been a rewrite of Euripides' original conclusion. It has been speculated that the ending was revised as late as the seventh century, a millennium after the play was originally ended. As such, the deer becomes a last-minute save, one that offers the audience a happy ending to a brutal tragedy. There is something wry in Lanthimos and Filippou referencing this element in the title of their own riff on the myth.

The Killing of a Sacred Deer explicitly acknowledges its influence only fleetingly. Towards the end of the film, facing a horrific choice from a vengeful god, Steven Murphy visits the school attended by his children. He asks for a report on their work, their strengths and their weaknesses. The principal acknowledges that Bob Murphy has an aptitude for maths and science, while Kim Murphy's strengths lie in the arts and history. In particular, she impressed the school staff with a presentation on Iphigenia in Aulis. "She received an A-plus," the principle helpfully explains.

Nevertheless, this familiar Greek tragedy hangs over ***The Killing of a Sacred Deer***. In the film, a professional patriarch finds himself confronted with an impossible choice from a vengeful figure. Offended by Steven, the mysterious Martin Lang issues an ultimatum. Steven must choose to sacrifice one of his family members to save the other two. Three lives hang in the balance: his wife, his son, his daughter. Steven must choose to kill one to save the other two. If he fails to act, all three will die.

This is a slight twist on the original myth, to be sure. However, it brings the same dynamics into play; paternal authority, familial responsibility, moral compromise. ***The Killing of a Sacred Deer*** takes those central dynamics of the classic tragedy and filters them through the prism of Lanthimos and Filippou. As Steven weighs his impossible choice, the film becomes an abstract meditation upon questions of masculinity, impotence and responsibility.



"Have you got hair under your arms yet?"

Young Bob asks this question of Martin early in the film, as the two Murphy children sit upstairs with their enigmatic visitor. Martin concedes that he has, and Bob asks to see it. Still smoking his cigarette, Martin obliges. Lifting his shirt, he confirms that he does indeed have hair under his arms. Bob insists that his father Steven has more body hair. "Three times" as much, in fact.

This observation stays with Martin. When Martin visits with Steven a few scenes later, he asks Steven to remove his shirt so that he might verify this account first hand. Steven compromises, opening his shirt for the boy to see. "You do have more hair than me," Martin reflects. "But not three times as much."



In the world of *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, masculinity is something that can be measured and quantified. Its characters suggest that there are objective criteria by which an individual might be found to be a man. Steven suggests another such objective measurement later in the film, in conversation with his son Bob about the strange paralysis that has taken hold of the young child.

Steven relates an intimate story from his own childhood. The cardiologist apparently grew up in a household of men; he makes reference to his "brothers" and his "father", but no acknowledgement of any sisters or his mother. Indeed, he recalls visiting his father in bed, suggesting the complete absence of a maternal figure.

Steven relates his early memories of masturbation, and his disappointment with the low quantities of ejaculate. "Only a little," he reflects. "Barely a drop." He acknowledges surprise at his father's potency, suggesting a Freudian insecurity about his own masculinity. This plays out over the arc of the film, in which Steven repeatedly struggles to fulfil the archetypal role of the proud and decisive patriarch.

The Killing of a Sacred Deer fixates upon this idea of the traditional male authority figure within a family dynamic. Martin lost his father on the operating table, and clearly blames Steven for this loss. Steven takes the young boy under his wing, and Martin hatches upon a cunning plan to replace what was lost. Although this desire for "balance" escalates to the point where Martin imposes the moral dilemma that eventually drives the film, Martin's initial plan is for Steven to assume the role of father figure in his own broken family.

Indeed, early in the film, there seems to be a struggle for dominance between Steven and Martin, a fight to determine which will absorb the other into their family unit. Steven invites Martin to dinner with his own family. Steven even suggests that Martin could stay, if he wants. He could sleep in Bob's room and hang out with Kim in the morning. Steven seems to be fantasising about incorporating Martin into his own family, absorbing Martin as a surrogate son figure under his patriarchal authority.

Martin refuses the invitation to stay the night, to make himself at home at the Murphy residence. Instead, he responds with something of a counter-offer. Martin invites Steven for dinner with his widowed mother. He creates a family dynamic, even forcing Steven to stay to watch *Groundhog Day* with mother and son. When Martin retires, his mother makes a romantic move on Steven. Steven refuses her sexual advances. Martin attempts to sooth the situation, suggesting that Steven could move in with them, that Steven could be absorbed into the Lang family.

Later in the film, Martin elaborates upon his plan. Talking to Steven's wife, Anna, Martin explains that he will be leaving home soon. Martin seems to have imagined that Steven could become the patriarch of the Lang family in his absence. In his own warped way, Martin believes himself to be providing for his emotionally fragile mother. "She helps me with lots of things," Martin confesses to Steven early in the film. More ambiguously, he adds, "I help her too." The film is structured in such a way that Steven's refusal to assume that role within the Lang family is treated as the insult that spurs Martin's vengeance.



This theme of masculine authority within the traditional familial unit runs through the length and breadth of the film. Addressing Bob in Steven's absence, Martin reflects that the youngest member of the Murphy family is "a man. Man of the house now that [his] father isn't home."

The Killing of a Sacred Deer goes even further than this. The movie repeatedly ties this notion of patriarchal power back to ideas of religion. The film implies on several occasions that Martin might actually be a god, at least in the classical sense. After all, the film is decidedly ambiguous on the particulars

of his power over the Murphy clan. The script makes a point to account for any pseudo-scientific explanation for the strange affliction that strikes down Bob and Kim, suggesting that Martin is supernatural in nature.

Indeed, the film cheekily suggests this notion in an early scene within the Lang home. Steven and Martin are watching *Groundhog Day*, which is Martin's favourite movie. As the scene plays out, audio from that film can be heard on the soundtrack. "You're not a god," protests Rita during one of her dates with Phil. Phil responds, "How you know I'm not a god?"



religious imagery. Yorgos Lanthimos largely films the movie on location at the Christ Hospital in Cincinnati. For a film so rooted in abstract morality, *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* has a very strong sense of place. Signage and branding frequently appears in shot, as if to affirm that this story is unfolding within the real world. Given how the camera zooms very slowly through these corridors, lingers on its glass surfaces and pans down the escalators, the Christ Hospital is arguably as much a co-star as Colin Farrell or Barry Keoghan. Similarly, Kim and Bob attend an explicitly Christian school.

At the same time, the female characters frequently interact with these patriarchal authorities as if addressing divinity. This makes sense. Over the course of *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, Anna and Kim discover that their lives are resting in the hands and the decisions of Steven and Martin. However, their submission is coded in explicitly religious terms. Anna venerates herself before Martin and kisses his feet, evoking the Sinful Woman from Luke 7:37-38. At various points in the film, Kim boldly professes her unquestioning devotion and love to both Martin and Steven, with a mania bordering on religious. "You gave me life and only you have the right to take that life away," Kim pleads to her father. "I love you more than anything in the world." In neither case is Kim's devotion even acknowledged; it is largely met with silence.

After all, if these male authority figures in *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* are gods, then they are silent and indecisive deities.



"What else do you want me to do?" - Steven

Something to put an end to this situation," - Anna

However, those last seven words seem redundant. The men (and gods) in *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* are impotent, in both a literal and a figurative sense. Early in the film, Lanthimos teases a glimpse of the sex life between Steven and Anna. Getting ready for bed, they discuss their plans for the days ahead. Reaching the edge of the bed, Anna inquires, "General anaesthetic?"

Anna strips down, and drapes herself across the bed. She lies perfectly still, immobile. She might as well be dead. She becomes a passive object for Steven's pleasure. He touches himself, caresses her body, adjusts her form on the bed as if she were a prop. It seems that Steven can only have sex with his wife when she is limp. (Later in the film, Martin awkwardly rejects Kim's overt advances.)

Early in the film, the dynamic between Steven and Anna is quite clear. They are both professionals; Steven is a cardiologist, and Anna is an ophthalmist. However, Anna is also tasked with the maintenance of the family home. Until the tasks were assigned out to Bob and Kim, Anna was responsible for watering the plants and walking the dogs. Indeed, over the course of the film, Bob and Kim both prove quite ineffective at completing even those simple tasks.

However, Anna is very much responsible for the cohesion of the family unit, for making sure that it operates efficiently. At dinner parties, it is Anna who explains that Steven does not drink. When Bob is taken to the hospital, it is Anna who takes him home. When the child stays overnight, it is Anna who brings in donuts. When Steven falls asleep at his desk, it is Anna who suggests breakfast. There is every indication that both Steven and Anna have accepted this dynamic unquestioningly.

The assumption seems to be that Steven is the leader of the family, the one responsible for providing and setting a direction. In contrast, Anna is responsible for the maintenance of that family unit without questioning or undermining Steven's authority. Indeed, Steven seems offended when Anna attempts to offer a medical opinion on the mysterious affliction that has taken hold of their children. Steven rather brutally points out that her area of medical expertise is confined to the eyes.

Over the course of *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, this very conservative and traditionalist family dynamic begins to break down. Most obviously, Steven is revealed to be completely powerless to protect his family. He is as impotent as he feared he was all those years ago, using those various measurements of masculinity. When Kim falls sick, Steven drives out to the Lang household and bangs furiously on the door. "Open the door!" he demands. "Or I will smash it down!" Martin does not open the door. Needless to say, Steven does not smash it down. His rage is hollow.

It is telling that the mysterious ailment affecting the Murphy family is rooted in paralysis. The first symptom is loss of motor function, with Bob and Kim confined to beds and wheelchairs. The second symptom is "refusal of food to the point of starvation." In effect, this affliction reduces the children to purely passive objects. They become inert, trapped in place. This paralysis reflects Steven's indecisiveness. Steven is largely passive over the course of the film. His most dynamic decision is to abduct Martin later in the story, an act of aggression that accomplishes exactly nothing, while at least paying lip service to the idea of masculine authority.

Steven asserts his power in kidnapping and brutalising Martin, but refuses to make a decision. As it becomes clear that he has to choose, Steven is unable to make that choice. The three members of his family are each forced to petition him, to reason with him, to barter with him. Steven tries repeatedly to take the decision out of his own hands. He even visits children's school, to awkwardly ask their principal to choose between them. "If you had to pick one." Steven abhors having to make a choice, and so instead allows the situation to escalate further.

The Killing of a Sacred Deer makes it clear that Steven's impotence is not situational. It is not a response to this horrific set of circumstances. There is some sense that the family have grown to expect this powerless indecisiveness from Steven. While Anna tends to her children in the hospital, Kim cusses at her. Anna responds by confiscating Kim's phone, which is a decisive gesture. "I'm not like your father," Anna warns Kim. She is correct. Anna is much more decisive than Steven, even though she doesn't hold any power in this particular situation.

Steven plays out a pantomime of violent male aggression to soothe his sense of inadequacy, but consciously avoids wrestling with any of the real issues underlying this situation. As Steven ruminates and meditates, Anna tries to find an answer to this crisis. Anna asks questions, digs up secrets, petitions Martin. Although it is immediately clear that torturing Martin will accomplish nothing, it is Anna who eventually decides to release him.

As the situation reaches a critical phase, Martin acknowledges the dynamic at play. He understands that Steven is unlikely to reach a decision on his own terms, and so speaks directly to the more proactive Anna. "Anna, if you're going to do something, better do it fast. The boy is about to die."

Martin is a similarly indecisive masculine figure. He clearly holds a great deal of power in his hands. He seems to grant Kim the power to walk at one point in the film. However, he also refuses to use that power. Like Steven, Martin declines to make choices and decisions. This whole situation is part of Martin's desire to avenge himself upon Steven, but he defers his decision to Steven. Martin cannot choose which member of Steven's family to kill, Steven must choose that himself.

Martin excuses his violence against the Murphy family in broad philosophical terms. When discussing the situation with Steven, Martin explains that his grand plan is "to balance things out." He reiterates his position in a later conversation with Anna, "I don't know if what is happening is fair, but it's the only thing I can think of that is close to justice." In keeping with the film's wedding of religious themes to masculine authority, Martin tries to

paint his own indecisiveness in terms of a universal justice. To Martin, there is no choice involved; there is only balance.

Of course, *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* understands that this impotence is by choice. Steven and Martin are consciously choosing to disengage from the consequences of their actions. These notions of "justice" and "balance" are simply excuses. They are a mechanism by which Steven and Martin might avoid having to confront the consequences of their decisions. If there is no choice, there is no blame.

Impotence becomes a mechanism by which these men



"A surgeon never kills a patient. An anaesthesiologist can kill a patient, but a surgeon never can."

And so *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* returns to the image of the surgeon's hands, particularly as divorced from the consequences of their actions. The movie opens with those shots emphasising the importance of those hands, the role that they play in surgery. However, Steven tries to stand apart from all of that.

Repeatedly over the course of *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, characters make reference to Steven's hands. "You have lovely hands," observes Martin's mother. "So white and soft and clean." Later, Martin remarks upon Steven's "clean, nice, beautiful hands." Anna turns this into an accusation over dinner. "People keep telling me what nice hands you have." Steven works very hard to ensure that those hands remain unstained.

Walking out of surgery with his anaesthesiologist colleague Matthew, Steven's first line (and the first line of the film) serves to illustrate the cognitive dissonance between the work that Steven does with his hands and how he thinks of those hands. "Nice watch," Steven reflects, in that deadpan matter-of-fact manner that defines so many of the casual interactions over the course of *The Killing of a Sacred*

The opening conversation about watches suggests that Steven's hands are quite separate from the work that they do. Indeed, his preoccupation on "water resistance" even goes so far as to suggest that Steven believes in insulation and compartmentalisation. To Steven, everything is self-contained. There are no real obligations and connections beyond the self, no causal links that create a tether of responsibility to another human life.

To be fair, *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* suggests on some level that Steven understands the absurdity of this argument. He develops a relationship with Martin, knowing that the boy's father died on his operating table. Steven showers Martin with gifts, buying him watches and offering to pay for lunch. Steven even tries to fold Martin into his own family. There is a sense of guilt in that dynamic, even if Steven would never explicitly acknowledge it as such.

Steven repeatedly denies the details of his relationship to Martin. He instructs Martin not to visit the hospital, and lies about Martin's identity to both Matthew and Anna. Steven does not acknowledge the truth about the death of Martin's father until forced. Even then, Steven refuses to explicitly take responsibility for the death of a man on his operating table.

"Had you been drinking that day?" Anna demands. Steven shrugs it off, "Only a little bit. But it didn't make a difference." However, despite the fact that he claims it didn't make a difference, Steven has still been sober for three years and has still fostered a familial relationship with Martin. For his part, Martin clearly believes that Steven was responsible for the death of his father. "He should have come out of that surgery alive."

The Killing of a Sacred Deer repeatedly emphasises the hypocrisy of Steven's attempts to avoid taking responsibility for his failures. Steven's protestations about the innocence of surgeons are reflected back when Matthew discusses the Lang case with Anna. Matthew similarly refuses to acknowledge any responsibility for any loss of life on his watch. "You know that an anaesthesiologist is never to blame for the outcome of an operation," he defensively asserts, a nice reflection on Steven's insistence that Matthew has been responsible for the death of patients.

In the world of *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, responsibility and blame are to be apportioned to other people. When the hospital proves unable to help Bob and Kim, Steven very vocally dresses them down. "I would feel like a total loser," he complains to the experts drafted in to work on the case, making it clear that he holds them responsible.

As much as they might deflect responsibility for their failures, Steven and Matthew certainly seem willing to take the credit for his successes. Steven speaks at fancy dinners to an awed audience. When contemplating buying a watch, Matthew suggests that that they might get a good deal from a former patient. "Both the owner and the son have been patients of mine," Matthew states.

When it comes to the moral dilemma at the heart of the

story, Steven is just as paralysed as Bob and Kim. The choice that Steven faces over the course of *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* could be seen as a variation on the classic "trolley problem", the archetypal ethical dilemma that has been explored in pop culture like *The Good Place* or *The Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* or *Orange is the New Black*. The trolley problem is a fixture of fiction, because it is so potent and emotive.



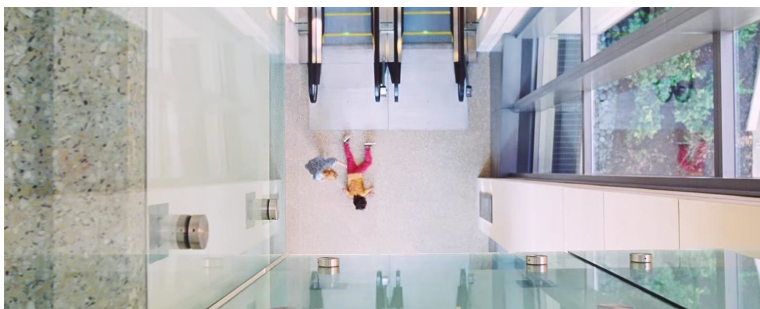
The trolley dilemma asks the audience to imagine a train car careening towards a group of innocent people. The audience have access to a switch that will change the train car unto another line. However, in doing so, they will be directing the train towards one specific individual. As such, the audience is put in the situation of having to choose between passively allowing the death of several innocent people or making a conscious choice to kill one specific individual. It serves as an interesting prism, both into a variety of moral philosophies and into individual decision-making.

Steven faces a variant of the trolley problem over the course of *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*. Does Steven kill one member of his family in order to save the other two? Is it more morally justifiable to take one life, or to simply let three innocent people die? Of course, *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* is not particularly invested in the ethics of this choice, tethering this sadistic dilemma to moral decisions outside of this particular framework. However, the film uses the basic outline of the dilemma to explore notions of personal responsibility and choice.

For most of the film, Steven refuses to make a choice. In fact, *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* even goes so far as to suggest that Steven refuses to make a choice at all. Steven only takes action towards the climax of the film, when Bob starts bleeding from the eyes. This is the penultimate stage of the mysterious affliction. It marks the point of no return. So Steven gathers the family into the sitting room, takes up his gun and decides to take action.



Of course Steven's attempt to take control of the situation is blackly comical, attempting to assert some authority over the situation without taking any responsibility. He pulls down a woolly hat over his face, picks up a shotgun and spins around. He then randomly fires, hoping to hit and kill somebody. On his third try, he manages to hit Bob in the chest, killing him. Even when fulfilling his obligations at the last possible moment, Steven tries to keep his hands clean.



There is a cruel irony in all of this. Early in the film, Martin had explained that the affliction became terminal once the infected started bleeding from the eyes. It was irreversible. As a result, Bob was already dead from the moment blood started seeping from his eyes. This reading is reinforced by Kim's response to that blood. "Mom! Dad! Bob's dying!" As such, it would seem like Steven's decision has already been made at this point in the narrative. Bob is going to die, no matter what.

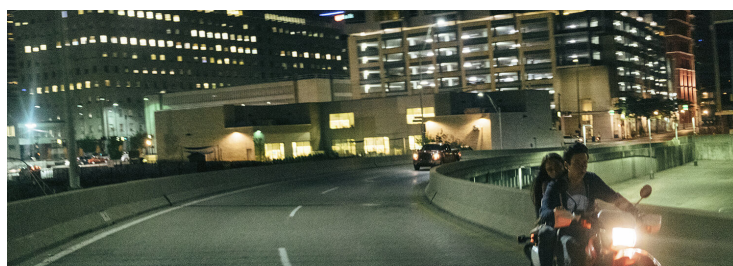
As a result, the game of shotgun roulette in the living room seems like an even blacker comedy. Bob is dying no matter what; even if Steven had shot and killed either Anna or Kim, Bob would still die. As a result, Steven's attempt to avoid taking responsibility for Bob's death introduces an even greater risk to the situation. It is entirely possible that Steven's gambit could have resulted in the death of two members of his family. Steven's eagerness to avoid making a conscious choice only increases the risk of catastrophic disaster.

The Killing of a Sacred Deer does not limit this masculine evasion of responsibility to Steven and Matthew. Martin is just as guilty. In his early visit to the Murphy household, Martin repeatedly expresses anxiety about having to take responsibility. He treats his addiction to cigarettes as something fatalistic, a choice made in the moment that he took the first puff. "That was a mistake," he concedes. "I regret it. But it's too late now." Martin seems incapable of fathoming that he could decide to quit. Similarly, he expresses anxiety about the simple task of walking the dogs. He conjures up images of awkward and unlikely situations. "The thought of separating fighting dogs frightens me."

More than that, *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* suggests that this masculine evasion of responsibility is something that is passed down from parent to child, something that self-perpetuates. Repeatedly over the course of the film, characters imitate and echo their parents. Bob wants to be an ophthalmist like his mother. Trying to seduce Martin, Kim lies down limp on the bed like her mother did. Even Martin eats spaghetti like his deceased father.

There is a sense that Steven's moral weakness, that his reluctance to acknowledge his own shortcomings and to take responsibility, is something that his children have already learned. Over the course of the film, Kim loses three different mp3 players. Bob refuses to get his haircut, even when it is almost dipping into his food. Both children prove unreliable when it comes to their household chores.

The Killing of a Sacred Deer is a modern day fable about responsibility, particularly filtered through the lens of masculine authority. It is a familial tragedy about the breakdown of this moral order, about the horrors that unfold when people refuse to be held to account for their failings. *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* explores this moral failing in an intimate setting, but invites bigger questions about accountability and authority in contemporary society.



This is especially true when it comes to men who hold positions of power, whether culturally or politically or economically. How many of these men have avoided any repercussions for truly horrific deeds? There are almost too many examples to choose from in contemporary culture, too many men willing to excuse their mistakes as part of a broader culture or to attribute their conduct to something other than their own decisions. *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* wonders whether it is too easy for such individuals to avoid responsibility for the consequences of their actions, reframing these provocative social questions as a small-scale familial tragedy.

These are big questions, channelled through abstract storytelling. At one point, Steven tries to determine what exactly Martin is trying to accomplish. Martin responds with a grotesque gesture. "Do you understand?" he inquires, seemingly sincerely.

"It's metaphorical. My example, it's a metaphor."



FACING THE LAND AND YOURSELF

By Jason Coyle

2017 feels like a defining year for Irish filmmaker Pat Collins. His latest film, the critically acclaimed *Song of Granite* has been submitted as the Irish entry for the best foreign language feature for next year's Academy Awards. There is the not so small matter of shortlisting but even still this feels like a potential breakthrough for Collins.



Not that he seems particularly interested in acclaim or awards (although recognition should in theory make it easier to get films made). Written by Collins, Eoghan Mac Giolla Bhride and Sharon Whooley *Song of Granite* tells the story about the life of folk singer Joe Heaney and is shot in beautiful black and white by Richard Kendrick. This being a Pat Collins film there is both narrative and documentary elements to it.

But for anyone who has followed Collins over the last few years (and you really should have been) none of this acclaim or recognition should be a surprise. Collins is not some overnight success. He has been toiling away on superb films for quite some time. On the eve of the release of *Song of Granite* it is worth taking a look at his three previous features to see what we can learn about the preoccupations and themes of one of Ireland's great filmmakers.

Tim Robinson: Connemara

T: THE FILMS OF PAT COLLINS



Tim Robinson: Connemara

In *Tim Robinson: Connemara* the titular writer sets out to walk and map the ruggedly beautiful Connemara area. The soundscape here is as important as the landscape. Sue Stenger's music co-exists with Robinson reading extracts from his books overlaid on extraordinary shots of Connemara's somewhat alien landscape. Taken together this is a hypnotic delight. The place feels vast, the visitors (Robinson, Collins himself and his camera) feel comparably tiny in it.

TIM ROBINSON: CONNEMARA

There are some wonderful archival close-ups of faces, when faces were faces that seem as impenetrable as the land they inhabit. And it is the land that is the star here, broken down into black and white contours by Robinson who has walked it for over 30 years and is still in awe of it. Robinson is one of the many writers drawn to this part of the world. He has written three books about the area and some graceful passages are recited over breath taking shots of the land. *Tim Robinson: Connemara* is by its definition a film more narrow in scope than the two films that would follow. But its power is enhanced by its connection to those films. That feeling of self-containment ebbs away when the three films are approached together.



When looking at *Silence* in the context of *Song of Granite* there is the essence of the familiar. Both are narrative features with clearly shared documentary DNA. *Silence* is not just defined as another Irish film, it is an arthouse film. This is a strong compliment. As a country we sometimes seem embarrassed to call our films arthouse films. It is like the art is a dirty word; it is only a film for God's sake! But art is what it is.

Silence is about Eoghan (Eoghan Mac Giolla Bhride, as mentioned a co-writer on *Song of Granite*) a sound recordist living in Berlin who receives a job offer to record sound in rural landscapes away from urban areas of Ireland. Interestingly for a film titled *Silence* the film begins with Eoghan recording loud and bustling sounds in the busy city of Berlin and ends with him in a quiet house in the northwest of Ireland.

Importantly it is punctuated by snatches of conversations and songs, historical links to the past in danger of slipping away. The Ireland that Eoghan calls home is internal and personal, found in the stillness, not merely confined to the four walls he eventually finds himself in. When compared to *Tim Robinson: Connemara*, *Silence* is a step up. What elevates the latter is the dynamic, graceful and rhythmic editing by Tadhg O'Sullivan.

O'Sullivan is also the editor on *Living in a Coded Land* and the forthcoming *Song of Granite*. They are a formidable partnership (O'Sullivan is a gifted filmmaker in his own right; his documentary *The Great Wall* is one of the essential Irish documentaries of the last few years).

SILENCE





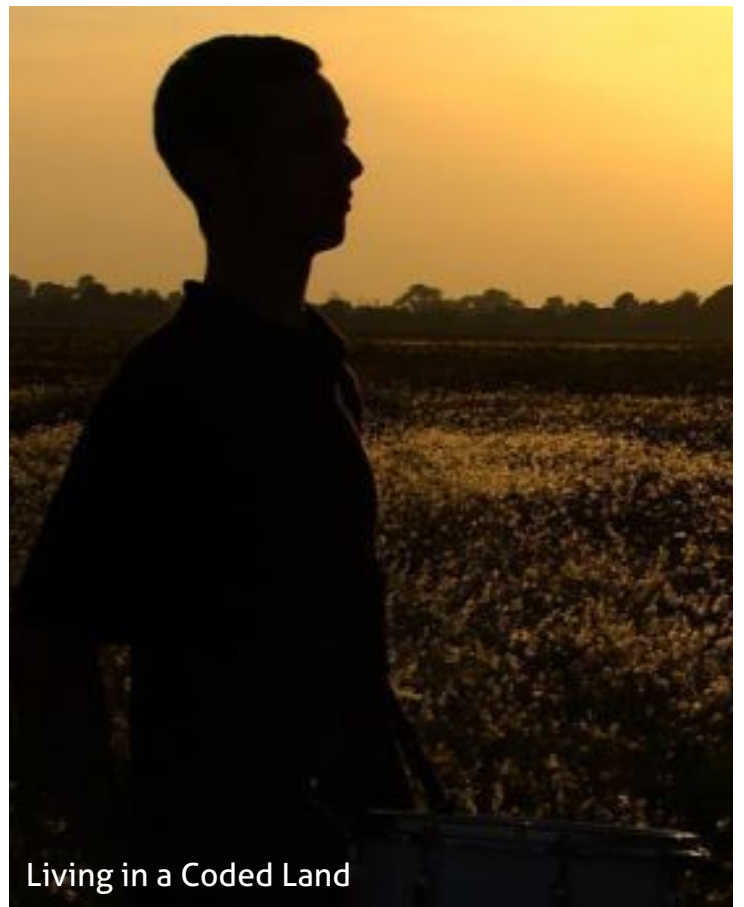
In *Living in a Coded Land*, Collins gets political. An ambitious documentary that at 80 minutes is economic in time but not in scale and ambition. No less than a measure of how our psyche was formed around historical trauma which is oft repeated thereafter. We hear talk of 18th century landowners over shots of a county fair adorned with AIB mortgage advertisements. There is mention of battles that took place in our distant past, alongside the battle to try and keep our young people from emigrating.

This is occasionally grim stuff, but Collins is not trying to make us suffer. He is deeply humane, whether talking about us as a people or the land that we are tied to. Again, like *Tim Robinson: Connemara* there is some stunning archival footage with urban streets an addition to compliment the raw expanse of the Midlands.

Never mind talk of slow cinema, this is just great cinema. Again his burgeoning partnership with O'Sullivan as editor is brought to the fore. They create a wonderful tapestry.

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Living in a Coded Land



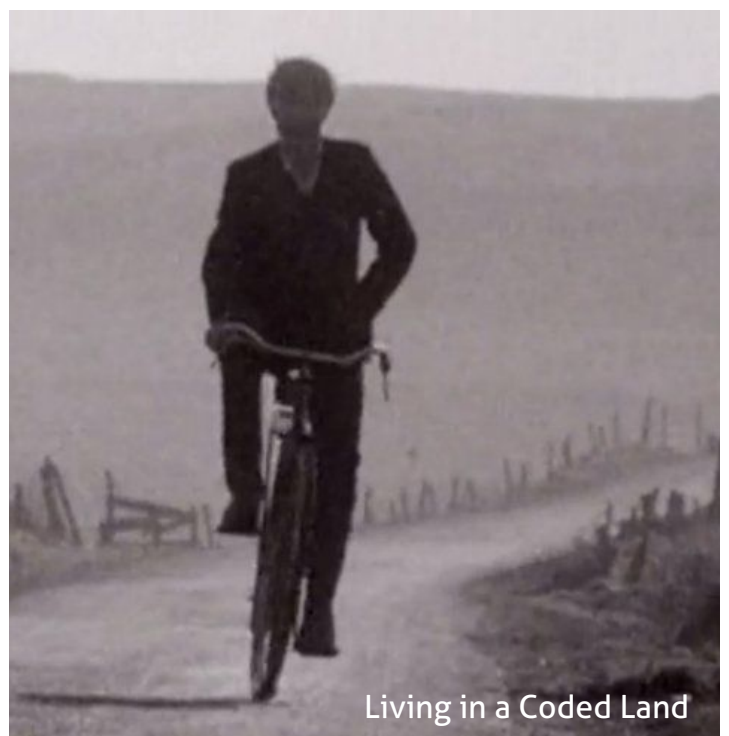
Silence

Music, words, the movement of people and the topography of the earth all seem to preoccupy Collins. What do we know about our land, our history if we are not forced to leave it? What can a stranger tell us about our geography that we cannot or will not see? Collins constantly asks us to look both inward and outward at where and who we are.

In *Tim Robinson: Connemara* the feet, constantly walking over every tiny part of the Connemara landscape seems to suggest that you can only document such immense beauty a step at a time lest you become overwhelmed. In *Silence*, Eoghan gets even more tactile with the land, finding himself and his story in it. In *Living in a Coded Land* there seems to be less hope with the historical and physical shackling of ourselves to the land contrasting with ever greater numbers leaving it.

Ireland is a complex country and indeed a sense of what is Irishness a difficult question. But what it means to be Irish is not what is being specifically attempted with these three films. Rather, Collins is measuring our relationship to the physical island and our ability to try and

separate that from the political, religious or psychological. There is real trauma in our collective souls that may yet be healed by a reconnection to what it means to be on terra firma. But what about the people who have left and the immigrants that have arrived? Both emigration and immigration feature in all three films (indeed, in *Song of Granite* Joe Heaney also goes to work abroad).



Living in a Coded Land

”Collins is measuring our relationship to the physical island and our ability to try and separate that from the political, religious or psychological.”

Collins is doing onscreen what Tim Robinson is doing in Connemara: mapping this land to try and understand the terrible beauty and contradictions that are here. It is a lonely toil and one that we as cinema lovers should be very grateful that he has undertaken. Pat Collins is one of our greatest living filmmakers and an inquisitive one. We can be sure that whatever comes after *Song of Granite* it will be another necessary and wonderful grand question. He surely knows that yet again it will be one we will answer as the beauty more than makes up for the pain.

Song of Granite will be released in Ireland on the 8th December 2017.



THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE STREAMING AND ITS IMPACT ON STORYTELLING

By Dan

“The medium is the message,” argued Herbert Marshall McLuhan in *Understanding Media*.

It may be more accurate to argue that the message is in many ways shaped and defined by the medium through which it will be conveyed. Storytelling has always been filtered through its means of transmission and translation. It is been argued, for example, that the use of rhyme and repetition in oral storytelling traditions is a design feature, designed to make these stories easier to learn and to pass down from one generation to the next. It makes sense that as technology and media evolves, the default mechanisms of storytelling would change as well. This is particularly true of televisual storytelling.

A lot of the conventions of twentieth-century television were anchored in the realities of television production during the period. Television performances and set design owed a debt to theatre, in large part because television screens were originally rather small and because television reception quality was not universally high quality. Whereas cinema offered breathtaking vistas and epic scale, television had to be designed to accommodate viewers watching grainy images on black-and-white sets.

The conventions of twentieth-century television dictate other aspects of the form. The rise of the writer and producer as the auteur of television is in large part due to their roles overseeing entire seasons and series. Whereas a director oversaw every aspect of production (including pre- and post-) on a feature film, directors were frequently treated as hired hands on television series. They were intended to get a given episode produced on-time and on-budget, with little eye to continuity or long-term vision.

Recent years have seen significant shifts in how television is produced and broadcast. There are multiple reasons for these changes.

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True Detective

Some of these changes have trickled down from the world of cinema. As the mid-budget thriller and drama has found itself squeezed out of the multiplex, actors and directors have come to embrace the freedom afforded by prestige television. By this model, HBO was able to attract Woody Harrelson and Matthew McConaughey to work with director Cary Fukunaga on the first season of **True Detective**. HBO enjoyed considerable success at this year's Emmys with **Big Little Lies**, starring Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman and Shailene Woodley.

Similarly, the revolution in computer-generated imagery towards the end of the twentieth century made it easier (and more affordable) for television to compete with cinema in terms of scale and spectacle. This coincided with a home media revolution that found more and more viewers watching television on expensive media centres that could be accurately described as "home cinema systems." These factors combined to narrow the gap between what had traditionally been seen as the cinematic experience and television production. Modern television series like **Game of Thrones** and **Black Sails** can legitimately compete with blockbusters in terms of scale and spectacle.

However, while technological innovations have changed the scope and texture of televisual storytelling, they have also affected the manner in which writers and producers construct television storytelling.

Perhaps the most significant change in television storytelling over the past two decades has been the embrace of serialisation in prestigious prime time television. For most of the twentieth century, television storytelling was episodic in nature; a regular cast in a familiar setting dealing with one major event a week. At the end of the episode, everything was reset to factory settings. As a result, most episodes of classic series like **M*A*S*H**, **The Simpsons**, **Miami Vice** or **Star Trek** could be watched in just about any order without confusing the audience. Nothing major carried over from one episode to the next, and there was no expectation that the viewer should have seen the previous episode before watching the next episode.

This episodic storytelling was driven by a number of factors. During the twentieth century, most television aspired to a long life in syndicated reruns. After broadcast on a major network, most shows could be bundled up and sold to local affiliates. Those smaller networks would broadcast those old television series to fill up dead air during large chunks of the day. Many television series like **The Brady Bunch** or **Star Trek** attracted an entirely new audience of fans through afternoon broadcasts. In fact, syndication was so good to **Star Trek**, that the spin-off **Star Trek: The Next Generation** was designed to air in first-run syndication.



However, producers quickly discovered that serialised storytelling did not work in the context of syndication. Although eighties soap operas like **Dynasty** and **Dallas** performed phenomenally well in prime-time, affiliates found that they attracted very few viewers in syndication. As a result, television producers came to believe that syndication depended on a more accessible form of storytelling, that television series should be designed so that audiences could miss one or two episodes without feeling "locked out" of the story

Prime-time television adopted a more serialised format towards the turn of the millennium. During the nineties, television series like **E.R.**, **Babylon 5**, **Buffy: The Vampire Slayer** and **The X-Files** embraced long-form storytelling. However, the shift away from episodic towards serialised storytelling largely coincided with a number of technical innovations that made it easier for audiences and viewers to control their own access to television series independent of syndicated reruns.

As a cable channel, HBO was able to experiment with shorter seasons and tighter plotting in television series like **Sex and the City**, **Oz** and **The Sopranos**. However, serialised storytelling only really broke out into the prime-time slots of the major networks in the early twenty-first century. **24** was a television series that unfolded in real time over the course of a single day, premiering in late 2001. This narrative experiment would have been unthinkable a few years earlier, but the release of the show coincided with a radical shift in media technology.

DVD made it possible (and affordable) to buy entire seasons of a television show in packaging that could fit neatly on a shelf. Although shows like **Star Trek** released episodes on VHS, the format was too clunky and too expensive to be viable for most series. VHS favoured shorter self-contained narratives like film. In contrast, a viewer could buy an entire season of a series like **The X-Files** or **The Sopranos** on DVD and watch it at their leisure. In 2001, DVD sales eclipsed those of VHS for the first time. Similarly, TiVo allowed viewers to pause, record and rewatch live television at their leisure. In August 2002, Nielsen announced plans to factor TiVo into their ratings data.

These innovations very quickly and very dramatically changed the sort of content being produced by the major networks. Although **24** succeeded in growing its audience across its eight-season run, perhaps the biggest success serialised success story of twenty-first century broadcast television was **Lost**. The series structured itself as a mystery box that revealed new details every week, developing a complex mythology and an intriguing structure that encouraged viewers to rewatch and to dissect in a way that would have been very difficult only five years earlier. **Lost** paved the way for a string of copies; **The Event**, **Flash Forward**, **Terra Nova**. Serialisation became a feature of the television landscape.

However, the arrival of DVD and TiVo at the start of the twenty-first century was only a taste of what was

to come. These innovations laid out a blueprint for a model of media consumption that would come to be known accepted as “binge-viewing” in the era of streaming. These developments laid a foundation upon which future media providers would build. Netflix began life in 1997 as a service allowing subscribers to rent movies through the mail over the internet. Interestingly, the early service developed in parallel with the growth of DVDs; the company found that VHS cassettes were too tough to mail. However, ten years later, the company realised that the DVD market was in decline. The company sought to expand into new areas. In particular, Netflix was interested in supplying media directly to consumers over the internet.

“Serialised storytelling only really broke out into the prime-time slots of the major networks in the early twenty-first century”

Naturally, this transition was driven by technological factors. Between 2000 and 2007, the percentage of Americans connected to the internet grew from 43% to 75%. More than that, the percentage of Americans using broadband connections grew from 2.5% to 23.2%. There was clearly an audience for streaming digital content direct over the internet to a personal computer. In the years that followed, technology only made the streaming model easier; it became easier to broadcast downloaded content from a computer to a television, and faster internet speeds made it easier to stream high-quality content. All of this combined to create a perfect storm, allowing audiences to guzzle film and television through Netflix.

As Netflix grew, content providers began to take notice. In recent years, various studios have made efforts to establish their own equivalent service, motivated by the frustration of watching their content drive Netflix subscriptions. Increasingly, it seemed like the future of streaming would find studios pitching their own content directly at consumers. In October 2014, CBS announced plans for CBS All-Access and HBO announced HBO Now. In October 2015, NBC announced plans for their own service called Seeso. In April 2017, Disney announced plans to pull all of its content from Netflix and launch its own streaming service.

Against this backdrop, it was not enough for Netflix and other streaming services to provide access to film and television produced by established studios and networks. To fill the potential gap created by these emerging competitors, and understanding that any remaining licensed content could easily be pulled to provide a foundation for some other studio-owned streaming service, streaming services like Netflix, Hulu and Amazon Prime began to develop their own content. These streaming services established production divisions, and began purchasing and financing their own media.



Fuller House

Naturally, this original content was shaped by the unique nature of the medium in which it would be broadcast. This is obvious in a number of different ways. Companies like Netflix and Amazon attempted to make themselves attractive to discerning consumers by recruiting known brands. Sometimes these brands were particular creators: Netflix has worked with directors like Bong Joon-ho, Martin Scorsese and Duncan Jones; Amazon has financed a television series written and directed by Woody Allen. Sometimes these brands were familiar concepts and premises: Netflix resurrected Full House as **Fuller House**, give or take the Olsen twins; Amazon delivered **The Grand Tour** as *Top-Gear-in-all-but-name*. Similarly, streaming services like Netflix and Amazon invested heavily in prestige programming, investing heavily in content designed to draw attention and to win awards; Amazon financed the Oscar-winning *Manchester by the Sea*, while Netflix screened **Okja** at Cannes.

However, this television-but-off-television also

changed the way in which stories were told. Streaming services distributed content that was free from many of the limitations of network television; the season order was not dictated by the shape of the gap to be filled in the schedule, the runtime was not fixed by the number of advertisements to be aired within an hour of television. Netflix and Amazon frequently release entire seasons of television all at once, allowing viewers to digest those series at their leisure, rather than spacing them out across half-a-year of broadcast time. This fundamentally alters the relationship between the audience and the media that they are consuming.

Some of this change is social in nature. The fact that streaming enables audiences to control the pace at which they consume media makes it harder to imagine a shared “watercooler” moment. It is difficult for viewers to engage with one another about a given event or episode, because there is no way to be sure that both people watching the series have reached the same point. Some viewers will blaze through a thirteen-hour season in an afternoon, others will digest it over a month. However, because of that dissonance, big narrative events are no longer universal. J.R. Ewing was shot in his office shortly before 11pm on March 21st, 1980. It is impossible to pinpoint any event on a streaming television series with that level of specificity.



Okja

However, some of this change is more mechanical. Streaming has challenged the very concept of an episode of television. Traditionally, television episodes have served as units of story. Even in the context of heavily serialised series like **The Wire** or **The Sopranos**, individual episodes are structured in such a way as to serve as self-contained narrative. Even **Game of Thrones**, which tends to construct narrative across seasons, makes a point to structure individual episodes around core themes and events. On broadcast television, even for heavily serialised shows on cable channels, individual episodes need to be satisfying enough to sustain audience interest across the entire week between episodes. On streaming services, this is less of a concern.

On streaming services, where entire seasons are realised at once, the goal is always to keep the audience watching in the moment. Most streaming services blur the line between instalments by automatically playing the next episode as soon as the previous episode ends; it takes more effort to stop watching a Netflix series than it does to binge the entire thing. The boundaries between individual episodes are elastic, often constructed as minor cliffhangers more akin to the act breaks in nineties television.

This comparison is flippant, but no less accurate for that. Streaming has arguably shifted the narrative focus away from the individual episode towards the entire season. "The first season of **Bloodline** is the pilot," explained Netflix's Chief Content Officer Ted Sarandos to Vox of the streaming service's prestige drama. "It's not like the first episode of **Bloodline** is the pilot." Streaming is a model of television production that arguably constructs a thirteen-hour pilot for a television series and then chops up that pilot into arbitrarily constructed episodes.

This model of television production shifts away from the traditional process of television production as an organic and responsive process. Historically, television shows were produced in something close to real time. This allowed the production team to respond and react to real events in a spontaneous manner, to adapt to criticism in the moment and rework their mistakes on the fly. Because the entire first season of a streaming television series has been produced before a single critic or audience member is allowed to see the first episode, streaming television series lack that sense of dynamism; the soonest that the production team can respond to any audience criticism or engagement will be in the following season.

As a result, it can often feel like individual episodes of serialised dramas blur into one another. Because these series are all produced at once, and because there are no real runtime constraints, it is entirely possible for writers to shift entire scenes across episodes as if editing a gigantic thirteen-hour movie. This is something unprecedented in television production. "We're asking these questions of the

DGA and the Writer's Guild in terms of how to name and brand and pay people for their work on particular episodes when the truth is, we really do want to see it as a five-hour movie," conceded **Transparent** creator Jill Soloway in an interview with Uproxx.

With all of that in mind, it is tempting to wonder whether an episode of a given streaming drama is really still an episode? Is an episode of a show like this anything more than a collection of scenes sutured together to fill an arbitrary runtime? Are the opening and closing credits anything more than a chapter break in an unfolding epic? These are legitimately tough questions, and there is a sense that the companies like Netflix and Amazon are wrestling with them on their own terms. There will be no easy answers.

Interestingly, streaming comedy seems to have a much stronger sense of identity and purpose, with many successful streaming comedies striking a delicate balance between the demands of a season-long narrative and the structural opportunities presented by individual episodes. **Master of None** not only builds its individual episodes around clever premises, but then positions those episodes in such a way that they add up to more than just the sum of their parts. **Bojack Horseman** manages longer character arcs with strikingly beautiful individual episodes; **Fish Out of Water** is a fantastic demonstration of the fact that a streaming television series can still produce a must-see standalone episode.

There's a credible argument to be made that streaming is not really television, that it is an art form with its own unique characteristics and attributes. Trying to categorise what Netflix and Amazon are doing as television might be seen as a clumsy mislabelling, a desperate attempt to make something new and radical conform to a more familiar template. After all, how much of this content is actually watched on television? How much of this material is filtered through phones and iPads, laptops and desktops? Is this some new strange-shaped peg being desperately beaten into a square hole?

This feels like something new and compelling, something that does not conform to expectations. In many ways, it recalls the awkward early years of television, when the medium seemed defined as a weird hybrid of cinema and theatre before finding its own voice. Whatever challenges might face the emerging streaming medium, there is something compelling and vibrant in watching talented creators grapple with these opportunities and these mysteries. These writers and producers often seem to be trying to solve complex equations in real time, with no idea what the answer looks like.

Watch this space.



MAKING A SOUTHERN CONNECTION: CORK FILM FESTIVAL CELEBRATES 62ND YEAR

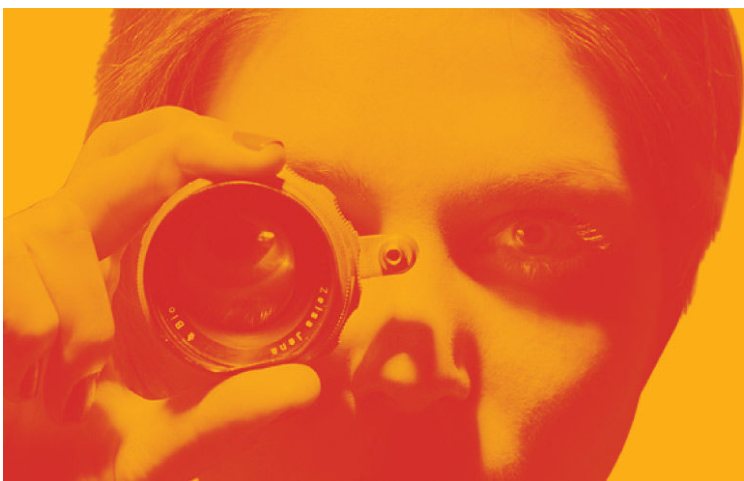
By Niall Murphy

Ireland's oldest film festival, the Cork Film Festival, celebrates its 62nd year in the "real capital" this year. Taking place across 10 days from November 10-19, this year's Festival will screen more than 200 films, with the majority being Irish premieres. These will include 9 Irish features and feature documentary, a collection of historical short films for Cork called Local Films for **Local People: Cork on Camera**, and 8 programmes of Irish short films, including the world premieres of those funded under the Irish Film Board's Focus Shorts and Real Shorts programmes.

Over 16,000 people are expected to attend screenings at The Everyman, Gate Cinema and

Triskel Christchurch. The festival will open with the Irish premiere of Irish/Canadian co-production **The Man Who Invented Christmas** at The Everyman on Friday, November 10th. *Downton Abbey*'s Dan Stevens assumes the role of Charles Dickens in Bharat Nalluri's film, a festive romp that recounts how Dickens' iconic *A Christmas Carol* was created.

It will close with the Irish premiere of Alexander Payne's science-fiction road movie **Downsizing** at the Everyman on Sunday, November 19th. **Downsizing** stars Matt Damon and Kristen Wiig as a husband and wife who decide to shrink themselves to simplify their lives, though things don't go to plan.



62

Cork Film
Festival
10-19 Nov 2017

Other Irish features include Frank Berry's Galway Film Fleadh-winning **Michael Inside**, the story of an 18-year-old living in Dublin who is sentenced to three months in prison after he is caught hiding drugs for somebody in his neighbourhood; Maurice Fitzpatrick's **In the Name of Peace: John Hume in America**, which documents to life and career of Northern Irish politician, and Nobel Prize winner, John Hume; Gerry Gregg's **Condemned to Remember**, which sees Irish Holocaust survivor Tomi Reichental celebrate his 80th birthday in a Dublin Mosque and embark on an epic journey across a Europe in turmoil; Pat Collins' Oscar-longlisted **Song of Granite**, a dramatisation of the life of legendary sean nós singer Joe Heaney; Brian O'Malley's gothic horror **The Lodgers**, the story of twins Rachel and Edward who are imprisoned in their crumbling family estate by a sinister presence, forbidden from leaving or allowing outsiders within the grounds; Padraig Conaty's independently-funded **No Party for Billy Burns**, an odd tale about a young man from Co Cavan who really loves Cowboy films; Nagham Abboud, Alekson L. Dall'Armellina, and Miriam Velasco's **Writing Home**, the 2017 Filmbase Masters students' feature film, which sees a privileged young man return home to a rural Irish village when his estranged father falls ill;

and John Murphy and Traolach Ó Murchú absorbing documentary **Photo City**, a portrait of photography itself as told through the lens of the citizens of a place defined by the art form, the city of Rochester, home of Kodak.

Other highlights include Ruben Östlund's **The Square**, which won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival this year, and Documentary Gala, **Promised Land**, directed by Eugene Jurecki. The film looks at how America has changed since Elvis Presley died 40 years ago.

The Festival will present the world premiere screening of short films produced under the Bord Scannán na hÉireann/the Irish Film Board's Focus Shorts and Real Shorts schemes. Over 50 Irish short films feature in the programme, and for the first time, a selection will be invited to feature on the RTÉ Player post-Festival, as part of RTÉ's principal media partnership. The Cork Film Festival has two awards with Academy Awards® accreditation. The winner of the Grand Prix Irish Short, presented by RTÉ Supporting the Arts, and the winner of the Grand Prix International Short, will automatically qualify for the Academy Awards® longlist.



INDUSTRY DAY **DOC DAY**

FRIDAY 17th NOVEMBER 2017, 11am | €30

The Metropole Hotel, MacCurtain Street, Cork

Presented in partnership with
Bord Scannán na hÉireann/the Irish Film Board
Supported by Broadcasting Authority of Ireland
and Screen Training Ireland

Cork Film Festival continues to develop its focus on high quality Irish and international documentary cinema. In partnership with Bord Scannán na hÉireann/the Irish Film Board, Doc Day seeks to inform, inspire and connect established and emerging directors, producers and writers, with international producers, directors, programmers, sales agents, distributors, and industry leaders, to further understand and develop opportunities in the documentary landscape.



KEYNOTE GUEST Simon Chinn

Double Academy Award-winner Simon Chinn, producer of hugely successful feature documentaries *Man on Wire* and *Searching for Sugar Man*, will present an illustrated keynote address covering his career and craft, including highlights from his key collaborators and projects, including Louis Theroux and Kevin McDonald.

SESSION 1

CREATIVE DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING TODAY

This round-table will explore the state of play of non-fiction filmmaking in 2017, with a panel of established Irish and international documentary filmmakers, discussing their individual career trajectories, how to sustain a career as a filmmaker, and identifying the current and future challenges for documentary filmmaking.

MODERATOR:

Simon Chinn | Producer, Lightbox Entertainment

PANELISTS:

Pascale Lamche | Director, *Winnie*

Neasa Ní Chianáin | Director, *School Life*

Alexandru Solomon | Director, *Tarzan's Testicles*

SESSION 2

CURATING DOCUMENTARY – THE IMPORTANCE OF FESTIVALS TO THE LIFE OF NON-FICTION FILM

In documentary filmmaking and exhibition, who serves who and what part do festivals play in the success of a film? This panel will dissect the importance of festivals in developing projects, nurturing and mentoring talent, and providing a platform for launching non-fiction film.

MODERATOR:

Sarah Dillon | Production and Development Executive, Bord Scannán na hÉireann/the Irish Film Board

PANELISTS:

Sharon Badal | Vice President of Filmmaker Relations & Shorts Programmer, Tribeca Film Festival

Gabor Pertic | International Programmer, Hot Docs

Michael Hayden | Guest Programme Director, Cork Film Festival

Marta Miquel Iriarte | AVA Programme Coordinator, La Guarimba Short Film Festival



Tarzan's Testicles



School Life



Winnie

SESSION 3

UNREST CASE STUDY – CREATING AN EFFECTIVE DOCUMENTARY IMPACT STRATEGY

Impact distribution consultants Together Films support the work of directors, producers, film funds and film festivals, and work to strategically identify a film's potential market and target audience. This case study will focus on the hybrid distribution model of the documentary film Unrest, screening at Cork Film Festival, and explore how to maximize custom non-theatrical screening campaigns and reach the target audience using the right platform.

SPEAKER:

Rebecca Ashdown | Impact Producer, Together Film

SESSION 5

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

+ Q&A with Simon Chinn

Double Academy Award-winner Simon Chinn, producer of hugely successful feature documentaries Man on Wire and Searching for Sugar Man, will present an illustrated keynote address covering his career and craft, including highlights from his key collaborators and projects, including Louis Theroux and Kevin McDonald.

SPEAKER:

Simon Chinn | Producer, Lightbox Entertainment

SESSION 4

FINANCING, SALES AND DISTRIBUTION – INSIDE THE US MARKET

A discussion on documentary filmmaking in the US market, looking at the role that US media companies Cinetic Media and Impact Media Partners play in financing, developing, marketing, selling and distributing non-fiction projects.

MODERATOR:

Patrick O'Neill | Managing Director, Wildcard Distribution

PANELISTS:

Simon Chinn | Producer, Lightbox Entertainment

Jason Ishikawa | Head of International Sales, Cinetic Media

Kelsey Koenig | Director of Development, Impact Media

DOCUMENTARY GALA

PROMISED LAND

Friday 17 November | Everyman Theatre | 18:30 | €10

In the run-up to the 2016 presidential election, as Donald Trump headed for the White House, Eugene Jarecki (The House I Live In (2014), Why We Fight (2005)) drove Elvis Presley's Rolls Royce across America in an attempt to get to discover heart and soul of the country 40 years after the death of the King of Rock n Roll. Elvis' life story is held up as the embodiment of the American Dream and his myth, legend, impact and influence are dissected here through interviews with curious passing folk as well as the famous and the informed. A long and diverse list of contributors includes David Simon, Emmylou Harris, Alec Baldwin and Chuck D, and there are some glorious musical moments in the back of the car.

10% discount code = industryday

Doc Day tickets can be purchased online at corkfilmfest.org
Tickets are €30. Early booking advised.

corkfilmfest.org | 021 4271711

INDUSTRY DAY **FIRST TAKE**

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 16th, 11am | €20
The Metropole Hotel, MacCurtain Street, Cork

Supported by **Broadcasting Authority of Ireland**
and **Screen Training Ireland**

First Take at Cork Film Festival aims to prompt fresh thinking about the Irish filmmaking landscape and engender in participants the motivation necessary to be successful as an independent filmmaker. The event will present a mixture of panel discussions, in conversations and networking events for participants.



SPECIAL GUEST MARK O'HALLORAN

SESSION 1

A CAREER IN DIRECTING

We speak to two distinctive Irish directors on their experiences and career journeys – what motivates them, how they make it work and why they have dedicated their lives to the discipline.

PANELISTS:

Frank Berry

Director | Michael Inside

Oonagh Kearney

Director | Oíche Nollaig na mBán

In Association with Film in Cork



SESSION 2

WHAT DOES A PRODUCER DO?

This session will provide an introduction to building a career as a producer, incorporating the roles of a producer, innovative approaches to financing, promotion and distribution, and audience engagement. The panel will give specific focus to gender diversity in film, and the challenges for women in the film industry.

PANELISTS:

Farah Abushwasha

Producer | The Last Photograph

Julianne Forde

Producer | The Lodgers

Sharon Cronin

Producer | Acorns

In Association with
Women in Film and Television Ireland





Pin Cushion



The Lodgers



The Last Photograph



Michael Inside



Oíche Nollaig na mBan



Acorn

SESSION 3

TRANSITIONING FROM SHORTS TO FEATURES – IN CONVERSATION WITH DEBORAH HAYWOOD

Writer-Director Deborah Haywood's critically acclaimed directorial debut, *Pin Cushion*, opened Critic's Week at this year's Venice International Film Festival. Haywood will discuss her trajectory in filmmaking, specifically focusing on her transition from shorts to feature film director. *Pin Cushion* receives its Irish premiere at CFF on the 17th November.

SPEAKER:

Deborah Haywood
Director | *Pin Cushion*

SESSION 4

MARK O'HALLORAN – A CAREER IN IRISH FILM

First Take is delighted to welcome Award-Winning Irish Screenwriter and Actor, Mark O'Halloran. O'Halloran's writing credits include thought-provoking films *Viva*, *Garage* and *Adam and Paul*. He joins us to discuss his diverse career to date and share insights into the Irish film industry.

SPEAKER:

Mark O'Halloran
Writer | UCC Screenwriter in Residence

TICKET OFFER

10% discount code = industryday

PHOTO CITY

John Murphy, Traolach Ó Murchú | 2017 | Ireland

Rochester, NY is synonymous with the iconic Kodak Tower, which proudly watches over the city. But in a world now dominated by digital technology and imaging, where does that leave, not just photography as we knew it, but also the city that is referred to as the image capital of the world? *Photo City* meets a variety of people from analogue devotees to hard-nosed picture editors and explores their relationship to photography and image making. In a place marked by economic decline, it finds stories of hope and resilience.

Thursday 16 November | Gate | 16:45 | €7.50

OUAGA GIRLS

Theresa Traore Dahlberg | 2017 | France, Sweden

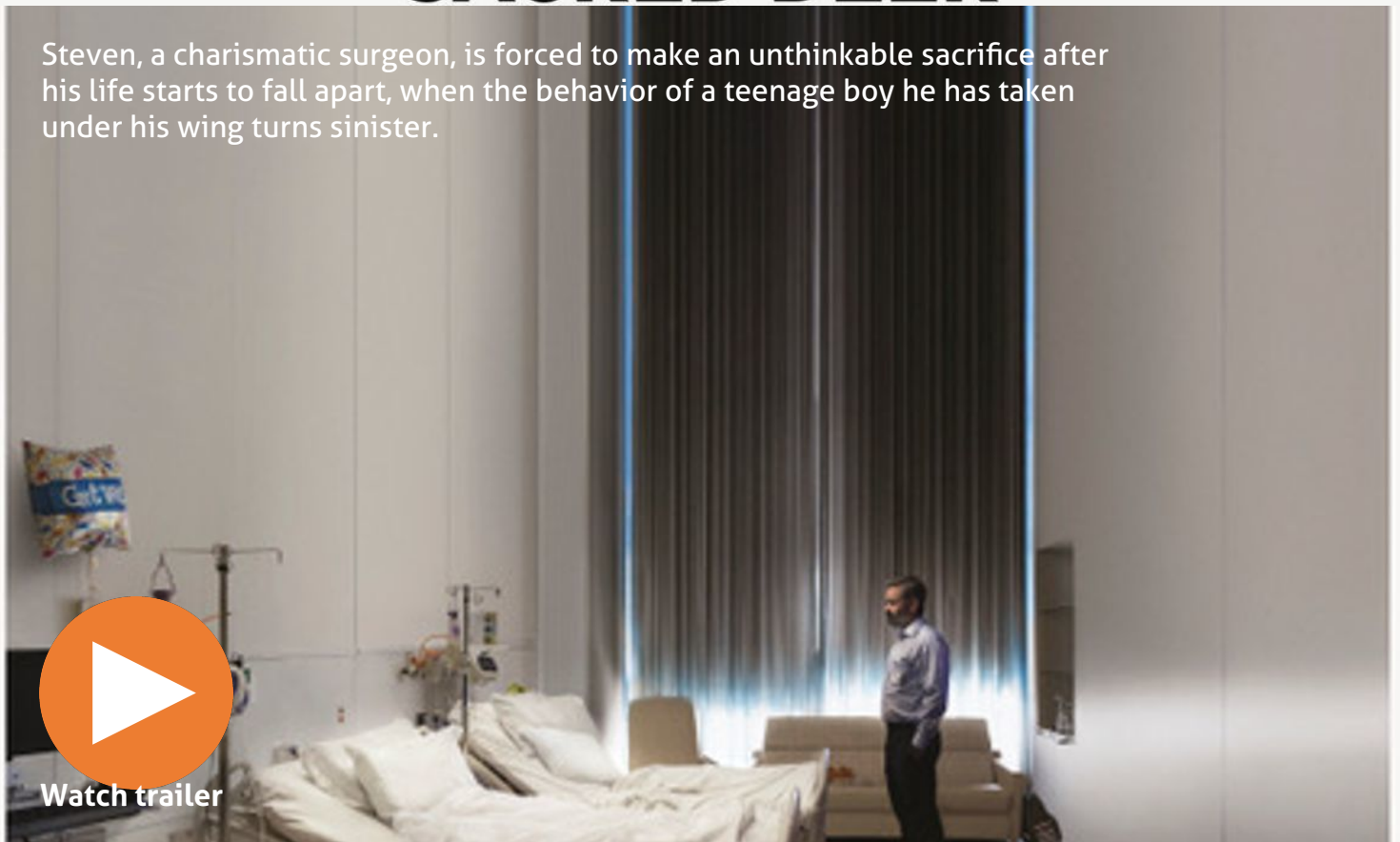
This revealing documentary follows a group of young women from Burkina Faso's capital city Ouagadougou, who are studying to become car mechanics. In a country where job opportunities are scarce and their futures uncertain, the school become a haven for this diverse group. They are at a crucial point in lives when their dreams, hopes and admirable courage are undermined with opinions, fears and society's expectations of what a woman should be. They clearly delight in tweaking and hammering machines, and, as they strive for independence, filmmaker Theresa Traore Dahlberg celebrates their conviction and sisterhood with poetic vision.

Thursday 16 November | Gate | 16:15 | €7.50

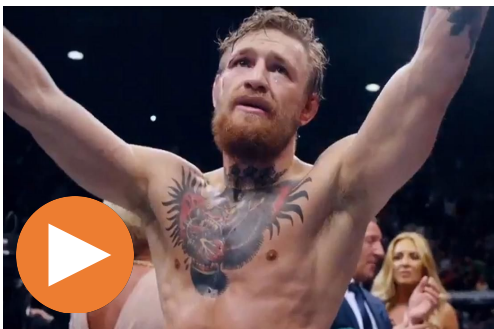
THIS MONTH

the **KILLING of a SACRED DEER**

Steven, a charismatic surgeon, is forced to make an unthinkable sacrifice after his life starts to fall apart, when the behavior of a teenage boy he has taken under his wing turns sinister.

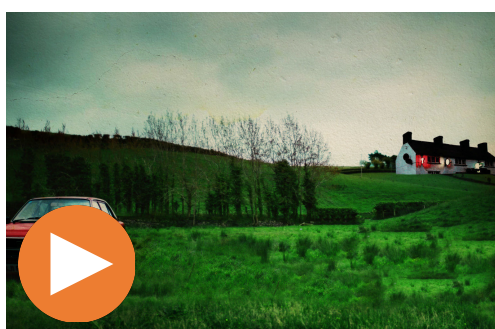


Watch trailer



Conor McGregor: Notorious

Filmed over the course of four years and highlighting the fighter's rise from claiming benefits and living in his parents' spare room in Dublin to claiming multiple championship UFC belts and seven figure pay-packets in Las Vegas.



No Stone Unturned

Documentary director Alex Gibney explores the 1994 Loughinisland Massacre in which six Catholic men were shot in a bar as they watched Ireland play in the World Cup. A crime for which no one has ever been charged.



MAZE

Inspired by the true events of the infamous 1983 prison breakout of 38 IRA prisoners from HMP, which was to become the biggest prison escape in Europe since World War II.

COMING SOON



Watch trailer



The Man Who Invented Christmas

The festive and light-hearted feature about the most iconic Christmas story ever written and the genius behind it, *The Man Who Invented Christmas* starring Dan Stevens (*Downton Abbey*, *Beauty and the Beast*), will be released in Irish cinemas on Friday 1st December. The film tells the story of how Dickens wrote his classic book *A Christmas Carol* and how he dreamed up the character of Scrooge.

In 1843, Dickens was a literary rock star, but struggling financially after the slow sales of his previous novel, *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Seized with the vision of a story that would fire the hearts of humanity, Dickens pitched his publishers *A Christmas Carol*, but they passed. Desperate, Dickens declared he would publish it himself. Slipping into the world of his novel, he spent the next six weeks laughing and arguing with his characters, acting out scenes like a madman on the streets of London for hours on end. His family and friends worried he was going insane, but Dickens prevailed and finished just before Christmas, creating a masterpiece which gave birth to the Christmas we know and love today.



Watch trailer



Song of Granite

Pat Collins' *Song of Granite*, Ireland's submission for the Foreign Language category at next year's Academy Awards, will be released in Irish cinemas on December 8th.

The Irish-language biopic charts the rise of traditional Irish folk singer Joe Heaney, and how the songs of his west of Ireland childhood helped shape his complex character. Co-written by Collins, Eoghan Mac Giolla Bhríde, and Sharon Whooley, the film had its world premiere at this year's SXSW Film Festival. Enigmatic and complex, Joe Heaney was one of the greats of traditional Irish singing (sean nós). Shaped by the myths, fables, and songs of his upbringing in the west of Ireland, his emergence as a gifted artist came at a personal cost.

Macdara Ó Fátharta, Michael O'Chonfhlaola, and Colm Seoighe portray Heaney at various stages in his life in this beautiful and stirring Irish feature.



the **KILLING** *of a*
SACRED DEER

 CINÉIREANN