

IFI INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2014



1) Introduction

IFI International works globally to present Irish cinema in cultural contexts. Irish film programmes are presented in contexts which enhance understanding of Irish cinema and which provide new routes for audiences who may be unfamiliar with Irish culture. We work with a variety of exhibitors and work to their different requirements and cater to their audiences.

We assist with a range of exhibition and festival activity – including programming, negotiating screening fees, rights clearance and print transport co-ordination. Films available to exhibitors through IFI International include a strong selection of theatrical feature films, and a wide range of films that do not have the strength of a distributor behind them, and therefore would struggle to be seen outside of Ireland. The breadth of the programming possibilities can now be explored using the IFI Irish Film Directory launched on the IFI website in July of this year.

Notable in a review of 2014 is the heightened activity around St. Patrick's Day in compliance with recommendations from Culture Ireland as set out letter of offer (December 2013), with almost 30 international events during the season including new events in Germany and the US and new partnerships in London. A welcome outcome of IFI International activity during the EU Presidency in 2013, was a greater visibility in Europe in 2014 and a wider range of exhibition partners – many now screening annually.

By the end of 2014, IFI International will have facilitated 111 events in 40 countries throughout the world.

Attendance figures, as provided by our exhibition partners, attest to the success of the service during 2014.

Audience figures (to date)

Month	Audience	Events	Figures In	Outstanding
Jan	529	2	2	0
Feb	357	3	3	0
March	15974	17	17	0
April	2755	14	12	2
May	2491	29	25	4
June	541	6	5	1
July	635	3	2	1
August	58	2	1	1
September	2337	9	6	3
October	2609	11	7	4
November	0	13	0	13
December	0	2	0	2
Total:	28286	111	80	31

2) Highlights

(a) St. Patrick's Activity Highlights (March & early April 2014)

(i) London



Barbican Cinema

IFI International returned to the Barbican Cinema and presented Irish emigrant drama *Come on Over (1920)* with accompaniment by John Sweeney (piano) and John Devine (uilleann pipes) introduced by IFI Head of Irish Film Programming, Sunniva O'Flynn. The audience of almost 80 people comprising Irish cultural enthusiasts and regular Barbican silent film goers enjoyed an unusual alternative to traditional St Patrick's Day fare.



London St. Patrick's Festival, Prince Charles Cinema

The Shorts Programme curated by Celine Curtin in association with IFI International at the Prince Charles Theatre provided a multi-faceted insight into Irish society and contemporary Irish film culture.

ii) Moscow Irish Film Festival, Russia



As one of the key territories identified out by Culture Ireland, we continue to provide significant support to the Moscow Irish Film Festival and to work closely with Johnny O'Reilly, Gerard McCarthy and the Festival team. The festival showcases Ireland's leading film-making talent with an extensive programme of recent features including *Calvary*, *Mister John* and *Run and Jump*. Festival guests included comedian David McSavage (*Savage Eye*), actor Hugh O'Connor (*The Stag*) and director Mark O'Connor (*King of the Travellers*).

iii) Irish Film Festival, Boston, United States



The Irish Film Festival, Boston, returns for its 14th year, once again providing valuable exhibition and distribution opportunities for Irish filmmakers. We continue to work closely with director Dawn Morrissey and her team and provide logistical and financial support. They now provide an additional platform for film-makers by awarding jury prizes. In 2014 these were as follows: Best Breakthrough Feature: *Run and Jump*, Director: Steph Green, Producer: Tamara Anghie, and Actress: Ruth McCabe Most Inspiring Best Short: *Volkswagen Joe*, Director: Brian Deane, Editor: Eamonn Cleary Director's Choice Feature: *Life's a Breeze*, Actress: Kelly Thornton; Director's Choice Short: *Breakfast Wine*, Director: Ian Fitzgibbon, Actor: Dylan Moran; Global Vision Best Documentary: *Skin in the Game*, Director: Donald Taylor Black, Special Jury Prize: *Noble*, Director: Stephen Bradley, Actress: Deirdre O'Kane

iv) Irish Film Festa, Rome, Italy



We continued our collaboration with Susanna Pelis and the Irish Film Festa, Rome which opened its 7th edition with *The Stag*. The festival is dedicated to screening quality Irish work and is also to creating a space for discussion about Irish cinema by academics and Irish Film-makers. Guests included, Lelia Doolan (Director of *Bernadette: Notes on a*

Political Journey), Bob Quinn (Director of *Atlantean*), Kate O'Toole (Chairperson of Galway Film Fleadh), Ciaran McMenemy (Actor, *Made in Belfast*), Graham Cantwell (Director, *The Callback Queen*), Amy Joyce Hastings (Actress *The Callback Queen*), Stuart Graham (Actor, *Volkswagen Joe*).

b) Year-Round Partners

While we continue to work with annual festivals, we have also been developing programmes with partners who programme throughout the year.

- i) **Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris**, including screenings of Irish-American Arthur McCaig's work introduced by his son, film-maker in residence Donal Foreman. We are currently in discussions with Director Nora Hickey to present monthly screenings of Irish cinema at the Les 3 Luxembourg Cinema in 2015.
- ii) **New York Irish Arts Centre**, working closely with Rachel Gilkey and Jen Browne on their film programming (IFI @IAC), showcasing new Irish film highlights included a screening of the documentary *Eliza Lynch: Queen of Paraguay* with director Alan Gilsean, and a selection of new and older Irish language shorts.
- iii) Irish Popcorn film series held by **Solus Nua in Washington** was hugely popular in 2014 with sold out screenings throughout and highlights included *The Irish Pub* with director Alex Fegan in attendance.
- iv) The annual touring programme '**Irish Itinerary**', an outcome of the 2013 EU Presidency events, utilises the extensive EFACIS (European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies) network bringing Irish cinema to academic and general audiences throughout Europe. We have worked closely with the co-ordinator Sien Deltour on the programme which is hosted primarily by public cinemas and arts centres and also on university campuses.

c) Irish Film New York (October 2014)



Now in its 4th year of operation Irish Film New York has established a firm footing in the New York cultural calendar and provides an invaluable platform for new and established Irish filmmakers to connect with their North American counterparts, with NY industry personnel and with Irish cultural enthusiasts. We work closely with festival director Niall McKay on this event. Jim Sheridan was the guest of honour at this year's festival, and we were pleased to organise the retrospective of his work at the Cantor Centre, New York.

d) Ireland at Heart/Irlanda a Cor, Barcelona, Spain (September 2014)



In collaboration with the Filmoteca du Catalunya, UCD and Dalhousie University, IFI International presented a series of films (*Mise Éire*, *Poitin*, *An Píopa*, *Kings* and *Ocras*) in the Irish language, with Catalan subtitles created by the Filmoteca. This was a welcome opportunity to collaborate with FIAF partners on specialist programming that is possible within the cultural screening network. The films promoted dialogue between the two cultures with minority languages, and sparked plans for future Irish film programming at the Filmoteca.

3) Department of Foreign Affairs

We continue to liaise with Irish embassy and consular staff to coordinate screening of Irish film titles within EU Film Festivals and also to support dedicated Irish Film events which may be coordinated by local cultural groups. At the invitation of the Department of Foreign Affairs Soracha Pelan Ó Treasaigh addressed a gathering in Dublin of cultural attaches and other consular staff prior to their departure for new posts. She outlined the service offered by IFI International and encouraged the group to find opportunities to support Irish cinema in their territories. By the end of 2014, we will have facilitated over 25 festivals in the Embassy network.

4) Irish Film Research

IFI International staff keep abreast of new Irish cinema through attendance at Irish film festivals, the Dublin International Film Festival, the Cork Film Festival and the Galway Film Fleadh and Stranger than Fiction Documentary Festival; through year-round viewing of new work in IFI and through liaison with Irish Film Board, producers, directors and distributors of Irish film.

5) IFI International Industry Panel Event at the Galway Film Fleadh



IFI International hosted a panel at the Galway Film Fleadh about the distribution of Irish cinema through international cultural channels. The session, including presentations from funders, filmmakers and festival programmers, mapped funding and other resources available to those involved in Irish film exhibition in international contexts. Chaired by Sunniva O'Flynn (IFI Curator), the panellists were (Catriona Ryan, Director of Grants, Culture Ireland); Soracha Pelan Ó Treasaigh (IFI International Co-ordinator); Niall McKay (Director, Irish Film New York), Susanna Pelis (Director of Irish Film Festa, Rome) and Gerry Shirren (Managing Director, Cartoon Saloon).

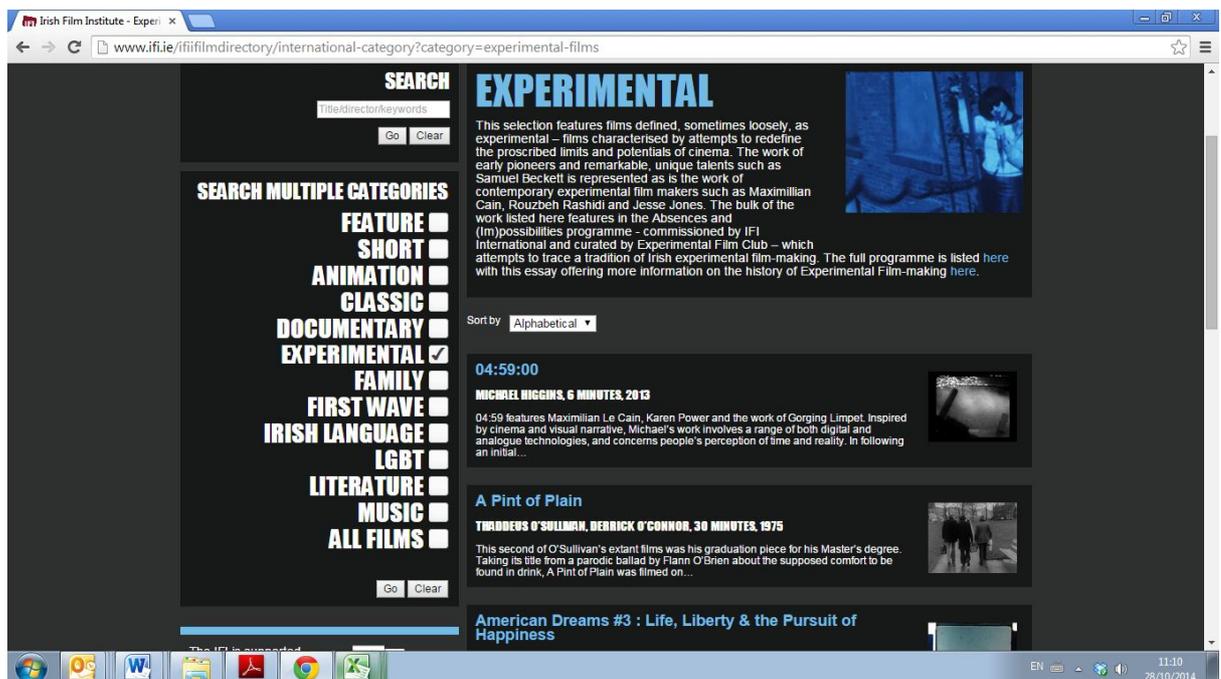
All in attendance welcomed the information sharing and networking opportunities the event afforded, bringing together producers, film-makers and programmers. Attendees included Kelly O'Connor (Irish Film Festival, London), Gaga Chkeidze (Tbilisi International Film Festival), Dawn Morrissey (Director, Irish Film Festival, Boston), Chris Martin (Producer, *Good Vibrations, One City Dreaming*) Geoff Thompson (Irish Film Festival, Luxembourg), Judith Blackburn (Chicago Irish Film Festival), Caroline Cummings (Irish Reels Festival, Seattle).

This was an invaluable opportunity to gain insight and feedback on how we work with our partners, producers, programmers, distributors and film-makers. In particular, it was of great value to new film festival organisers to gain insight into the challenges of spearheading such a project.

Of particular value was an issue raised by panellist Gerry Shirren of Cartoon Saloon. For some time now we have worked to ensure that distributors, sales agents and producers recognise the value of *cultural, non-commercial exhibition* activity and apply appropriate affordable rates for cultural exhibitors. This has proved difficult and frequently screening fees have proved beyond the reach of IFI International and exhibitor budgets. We are happy to report that Cartoon Saloon (*Secret of Kells, Song of the Sea*) have now determined to retain cultural screening rights from the sales agent – which sets an important precedent for other producers..

6) IFI Irish Film Directory <http://www.ifi.ie/ifiifilmdirectory>

We have developed the IFI Irish Film Directory which was launched at the Galway Film Fleadh. The directory is a great resource for international exhibitors of Irish film, and a platform for film-makers to promote their films. It is also useful to highlight programming strands and packages available to Irish film programmers through IFI International. It contains information on over 350 Irish features, documentaries and shorts. We will be updating and adding to this resource on a regular basis. The bulk of the content was written by Conor Dowling who spent nine months in the Irish Film Programming Department as an intern working on this project.



7. Exhibitor Feedback

In keeping with Culture Ireland policies, collecting and collating feedback on events is a high priority. Exhibitors are obligated to provide feedback, press clippings, images, marketing collateral, audience figures and to complete a feedback form after the event.

Some comments from exhibition partners:

“Certainly people were enthusiastic for more specific cultural material from the Irish film industry - before the screenings they didn't feel that exposed to it. All venues gave an open invitation to have the programme back and any other films we wished to programme in similar ways. The IFI has been

terrific in following things through and supporting the aims of the event and providing the practical backup. There has been quite some interest through the audience to follow up other material on the IFI. This is a hugely valuable Institute for film internationally."

Aanya Mary Whitehead, Music Arts Dance films and Solferino Cinemas, Australia.

"Undoubtedly the value of this homage was precious. Following the two screenings, many people approached me requesting a screening also of *Garage*. The homage added a priceless nuance to understanding Lenny Abrahamson's filmography but also gave an important occasion to discover the Contemporary Irish Cinema. The Festival also hosted a masterclass run by Abrahamson which added value to the discovery of his filmography and Irish cinema... and Abrahamson attended the screening of *Adam & Paul*. Having previously collaborated with the staff of the IFI International, I reckon their support as an invaluable and precious asset. Their professionalism and care reflects not only the profound impact and value of the Irish Film Institute in Ireland, but these features also represent the resonance and attention that Irish Cinema deserves outside the borders of Ireland itself."

Chiara Liberti Biografilm Festival | International Celebration of Lives / 10th edition / 6 - 16 June 2014

"The audience was primarily young Vietnamese people. The film was excellently received in Hanoi, and many audience members told the Embassy that they preferred films which show Ireland in a positive light, and have a fairytale element to them. The film was selected by the Embassy, with the help of the IFI, to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, and to avoid themes chosen previously which have a negative spin on Irish society. Across the country, *Ondine* was the second most popular film screened for the festival, second only to the French film, and provided an excellent means of promoting Ireland to a receptive audience. As ever, the EU Film Festival is a low cost way of reaching out to a wide Vietnamese audience, who are otherwise not exposed to Irish culture."

Chiara Popplewell, European Film Festival, Embassy of Ireland, Vietnam.

"The turnout was great on both nights with more than 80 people in the audience on the first night – the room could not accommodate all those who showed up and even the stairs were occupied"

Marianna Gula, Debrecen Centre for Irish Studies, University of Debrecen, Hungary.

"Our screening of "The Irish Pub" was the largest Irish Popcorn! screening in the series' history. Alex Fegan actually came to DC to present it himself and while he was here he drew a lot of attention because he decided to film a North American follow up to the documentary. I introduced him to two of the best pubs in the area and he filmed there, and then Caitriona Perry from RTÉ interviewed us for a piece on Morning Ireland that aired Tuesday. The screening Monday night was over 100 people in a space that usually seats 85-90, and we had to turn people away at the door. People are asking when he's coming back so they can have a chance to see it."

Kate Flannery, Popcorn Irish Film Series, Washington.

8. Programme Development

a) Experimental Film and Lux Moving Image Artist Film Distributors

IFI International now partner with Lux, distributors of Moving Image Artist Film to distribute *Absences and (Im)possibilities*, the commissioned programme of Irish experimental film. This will greatly extend the screening opportunities for Irish experimental and artist film through Lux's long-established specialist exhibition network. Screenings have been confirmed at the Irish Film Festival, London in November, and at the CCCB (Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona) in February 2015.

b) Shorts Programmes

Curation of new Irish Shorts continued in 2014 with notable programmes at the New Orleans Irish Film Festival in October, and an Irish Language programme at the New York Irish Arts Centre in November.

c) Specialist Programmes

Themed events curated in response to exhibitor demand included programmes on First World War, youth, supernatural, emigration, LGBT, experimental and the Irish language. We are uniquely placed to provide this curatorial advice and access to the Irish Film Archive.

9. All Ireland approach

IFI International continues to showcase film from Northern Ireland in addition to programming from the Republic of Ireland. *Jump* (part-funded by Northern Ireland Screen and set in Belfast), *Shadow Dancer* (part-funded by the British Film Institute and the BBC and set in Northern Ireland), *Made in Belfast* (Northern Ireland Screen funded), *Good Vibrations* and *A City Dreaming* have all screened at IFI International supported events.

11. Staff

IFI International is managed by IFI Curator Sunniva O'Flynn and co-ordinated by Soracha Pelan Ó Treasaigh. Michael Ryan is Irish Film Programming Assistant and provides technical support to IFI International. Conor Dowling was recruited as a research intern and worked on the IFI Irish Film Directory from January – September 2014.