



Executive Summary

Film. Media. Young people.

The connection seems obvious. Yet it still comes as something of a surprise that in Ireland, where we have an established film industry, a huge youth population and growing creative industries, there is no clearly defined national policy which would ensure that young people can access, experience and critically engage with film and media. Alongside this, the connection between how young people view, what they like to view and how they might portray themselves in this mediated age poses challenges for all involved in media and in education.

As organisations working in the field of production, exhibition and education, our collaboration on Film Focus was a unique opportunity to explore some of these concerns. At the Irish Film Institute, it was an opportunity for us to carry out research in film education, an area which we have been leading for over fifteen years. It would enable us to explore new possibilities but also to build on the strengths of our existing education programme through consolidating networks and forging new relationships with policy makers. At the Irish Film Board/Bord Scannán na hÉireann, we were interested in finding out exactly how young people were, if at all, being educated in the art and craft of filmmaking, or even getting the opportunity to see new Irish films. The publication of the Film Focus project report marks the end of this two-year endeavour.

At IFI, we constantly seek new ways of engaging audiences and developing our existing programmes. The projects and ways of working which Film Focus has revealed have confirmed a huge excitement among teachers and young people for learning through film and moving image. Through commentaries and surveys, it is apparent that film provides an access point to all manner of learning and literacies, across education, social, cultural and aesthetic arenas, where Irish film has a vital role to play.

The Irish Film Board/Bord Scannán na hÉireann is committed to supporting filmmakers and artists to tell stories and create images that reflect an Ireland we can recognise. We are conscious that the visually and media literate young people of today offer us the best possibility of sustaining and developing such an industry. The changing Ireland which they have directly experienced needs creative voices and a visual aesthetic which will communicate that story to the world. Our belief is that these voices can be developed through education and training both in and out of school.

It is our hope that the publication of the Film Focus report will stimulate discussions and progress a case for film and media literacy across the spectrum of young peoples' learning. Film. Media. Young people. Film Focus has made the connection. Now we need to ensure that it stays obvious.

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