

Conor Murphy: School of Arts - 2018/2019

- Planning a Digital Archive for 'Film Ireland' (1986-2013)
- Progress Update
 1. Background
 2. Materials/Methods
 3. Initial 'Findings'
 4. Up for Discussion (Research/Practice and the Archive)
 5. Conclusions & Future Direction(s)

1. Background

- *Film Ireland* – Ireland's leading film publication
- *Samizdat* beginnings from 1986
- Regular print issues from 1987-2013
- Monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly...
- Online only from 2014 to date



2. Materials/Methods

- Recovering and collating 147 physical copies:
 - *Film Ireland* editors (Steven Galvin, Gemma Creagh)
 - Irish Film Institute Archive (MI, Special Collections...)
 - Prof. Rod Stoneman (Huston School, NUI Galway)
- Sourcing scanning hardware
 - Fujitsu Scansnap SV600 (Thanks Eddie!)
- Scanning software
 - ABBYY FineReader (optical char/recog)



3. Initial 'Findings'

- Simple Numbers:
 - 27 years of publishing activity covered
 - 147 physical issues from 1986-2013
 - 12,000+ pages of content
 - Max. circulation 4,200 (2006)
 - 12 x magazine editors
 - 35 x single-issue guest editors
 - (Directors/Producers/Writers/Actors/Craft)



3. Initial 'Findings'...

- On Repeat Viewing:
- Emergence of structural/formal concerns
 - Funding, EU, FDI, industry structures, training
- Emergence of content issues
 - Representation, genre, gender, class, language
- *Film Ireland* as unique mirror/lens/scope for film activity and **identity** in Ireland across the period



"Clash of the Ash" success at Celtic Film Festival

The Celtic Film and Television Festival, held this year in Inverness, Scotland from 6th - 10th April provided an impressive showcase for new Irish film-making. The Festival is now largely for the benefit of television. However, three independent Irish productions, "Boom Babies" by Siobhan Twomey, "Eh Joe" by Alan Gilsenan and "Clash of the Ash" directed by Fergus Tighe were shown in competition and all were very well received.

Filmbase director Fergus Tighe won the award in the "Starting Out" section and BBC Northern Ireland have agreed to screen "Clash" at some future date. It was clear to the international audience in Inverness that despite great difficulties in raising finance for productions (in stark contrast to S4C-funded Welsh film-making), young Irish filmmakers have the talent and the expertise to make high-quality films.

Mike Collins

SPOT THE BEE !



"Reefer" on schedule

On location in Gaway and the Aran Islands, Joe Comerford's Reefer is well into production and keeping to its 10-week schedule.

The film is being shot on 35mm with a budget of £300,000. It is a story which contrasts characters, on the run, their individual pasts and embarking on a collective but equally villainous future.

PARTY

THE IRISH FILM INSTITUTE

To celebrate moving into their new premises in the Friends' Meeting Hall in Eustace St., the Irish Film Institute is holding a party on Saturday 12th June. Starting at 9 pm and running into the early hours there will be a treat of music and films.

TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE PROJECT ARTS CENTRE OR AT THE DOOR - £5/£4 UNWAGED

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FILM
BASE NEWS

MAY - JUNE, 1987

CENTRE FOR FILM AND VIDEO LTD

4-8 TEEPLE BARR, DUBLIN 2, TEL. 115113

VRMMM BABIES!

ON JUNE 3RD

Boom Babies screening

There will be a screening of 'Boom Babies' in the Friends Meeting Hall, Eustace St. Dublin 1 at 8.00 p.m. on 3rd June.

Siobhan Twomey will attend with some of the principal cast and crew members and a discussion will follow the screening.

All Filmbase members are welcome to attend and are asked not to be shy about asking questions! Admission is of course free.

The Courier

Former Filmbase director Hilary McLoughlin is currently producing 'The Courier' which begins shooting on location in Dublin this month. CityVision founders Joe Lee and Frank Deasy are directing this full-length feature with a budget of £750,000. The money, from Palace Pictures and the Film Board, was raised on the strength of Deasy's script alone.

The story concerns a Dublin motor-cycle courier who realises his is being used as a front for drug-running. The courier then becomes embroiled in Dublin's criminal underworld, extracting bloody revenge for the death of a friend. The leading players are Cait O'Riordain, Padraig O'Loinsigh, Gabriel Byrne and Andrew Connolly. The film is already signed



INSIDE

WORKSHOP REPORTS AND
INFORMATION
PRODUCTION NEWS
FESTIVAL EVENTS

PEXEL

FILM BASE

CENTRE FOR FILM AND VIDEO LTD.

The third issue of "FILMBASE NEWS" coincides with the commencement of the first of the country's two major film festivals the Cork Film Festival on the 25th September which will be followed a month later by the Dublin Film Festival.

From the point of view of those involved in film and video production, festivals provide an opportunity for indigenous production, denied access to the regular sources of film exhibition in the country, to reach a critical audience and to establish contacts with foreign distributors and possible markets for Irish film abroad. With the abolition of the Irish Film Board this latter function is especially important. Any attempts by organisers of film festivals to screen Irish film must be welcomed by those attempting to develop an indigenous film industry.

With this issue we are attempting to give some reflection as to what is happening throughout the country. Being Dublin-based we are conscious of the danger of becoming Dublin-centred. Much of the information carried comes to us word-of-mouth. However, we see ourselves functioning as a source of information on what is happening throughout Ireland as well as relevant information on what is happening outside Ireland. Consequently, we would welcome contact with people either interested in contributing to the newsletter or who would like to see certain topics covered. We are fast discovering that there is much to be written about.

As of now our resources are a bit stretched to get this all together, so any offers of assistance compiling the newsletter would be welcome.

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The contents of the Newsletter do not necessarily represent the policy of the directors of Filmbase.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

If you are not a member of Filmbase and are interested in subscribing to the newsletter you can receive a bi-monthly copy for one year (six issues) at the following rates:

Corporate subscription £15 (up to three copies)
Individual £6 (unwaged £4.50)

ACTION COMMITTEE

Arising out of the general meeting in the Irish Film Institute at the end of July (see "Filmbase News" issue no. 2) to discuss a response to the closure of An Bord Scannan na hEireann the ACTION COMMITTEE For a Single State Agency was formed with Frank Deasy of City Vision as chairperson. The committee includes representatives of the following organisations: City Vision, Association of Independent Filmmakers, the film production group of unions (including the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, Irish Actors Equity), Irish Film and Television Guild, Filmbase, Federation of Irish Film Societies, Irish Film Institute, Cork Film Festival, Dublin Film Festival, Circus Films, Windmill Lane.

The committee has met regularly over the past six weeks and finalised a very detailed proposal which has been submitted to the Department of the Taoiseach and the Arts Council.

"SCREEN DIGEST" LOOKS AT IRELAND

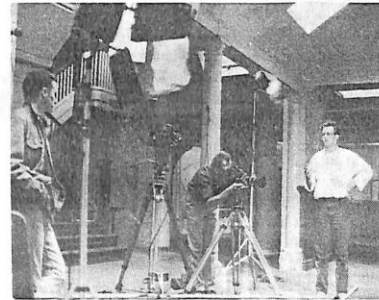
The August edition of Screen Digest, the international film magazine, carries a special on the Irish film industry in the light of the recent closure of An Bord Scannan, entitled: "The State and the Film: Ireland Changes Course". The in-depth piece opens by saying that "Ireland provides a telling example of stop-go state intervention in a small country with no tradition of making its own films. This case study is worth making for the lessons that can be learned about the balance between private enterprise and public aid which may be applied profitably in other contexts".

The article refers to the "abortive film industry planning" of successive governments and identifies two patterns in the behaviour of the two major parties:

1. Both parties tend to take action soon after being elected

"Mendel Walzman"

Leonard Abrahamson and Stephen Rennicks have just finished shooting a 15-minute "visual study" of Mendel Walzman, a Jewish immigrant who came to Ireland from Poland in the early 1930s and has lived and worked here ever since. What spurred them to do the piece was the desire to catch on film something of the diversity of Dublin life and to allow Mr Walzman recount his own. Many members of his own family who remained in Poland were killed by the Nazis. The makers have had co-operation from many



Leonard Abrahamson, cameraman John Fitzgerald and Stephen Rennick at work on Mendel Walzman

Short film festival

In Central France, the first Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival will be held from January 30 to February 6 1988. Any production made after January 1st 1985 is eligible for entry. They can be on either 16mm or 35mm. The running time should be less than forty minutes. Entry forms should be in by October 15th and they are available in Filmbase.

sides: "some stock" and free processing from RTE, editing facilities from Martin Duffy, the services of an experienced crew, location from the Irish Film Institute and equipment from the Belfast Film Workshop. However, they are still in need of completion money.

Much thought has been put into the camerawork to enhance the visual element of the piece and to avoid a static documentary format. Screenings are planned for Dublin, Belfast and the London Festival of Recent Independent Irish Film in November-December.

"When Reason Sleeps" of £1,370,619. Their chairman, Oliver Maloney, states that a "significant improvement" in the company's fortunes is expected in the future. Strongbow are now working with Green Apple Productions and are also looking at the possibility of a cable entertainment channel in Dublin.

<<ECU-VOUS?>>

The Commission of European Communities is currently organising a competition for young script writers aged between 18 and 25.

Competition entrants are required to prepare a twenty-six minute script (fiction, animation or documentary) for production on video or 16mm. Scripts must be completed by 29th December, 1987.

Winners will be officially announced at the Cannes Film Festival in May 1988. The European Commission will also make the necessary arrangements for the productions of the winning scripts and will contribute up to 20% of the production cost.

Correspondence from Niall Andrews MEP informs us that "there will be prizes of 7,000 ECU, 4,000 ECU and 2,000 ECU (one ECU is approximately IR£0.77)". In the opening to the competition outline, entitled "Tomorrow's Europe", it is pointed out that "the script must show how the European Community offers a positive future for young people" (sounds like the makings of a very short script). So all you young Europeans get writing!

For details, contact Breda Walsh at the office.



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TS "I came across a report on the Cork Film Festival in 1981 where the AIP, I think, sponsored a seminar and there was a motion passed that the Board should have as its primary long term aim the establishment and publication of a coherent policy for all aspects of film making in Ireland. This I think was a response to the decisions of the three member Board. Do you think that the Board ever actually succeeded in doing that?"

MA "Well it attempted to. But in a developing industry policy became almost shifting sands, it never became anything more than policy guidelines. There was never a rock solid policy of that kind."

TS "There seems to have been a problem of the perception of the function or whether it had a grant-aid/cultural function. Do you think there is any resolution to be found in that?"

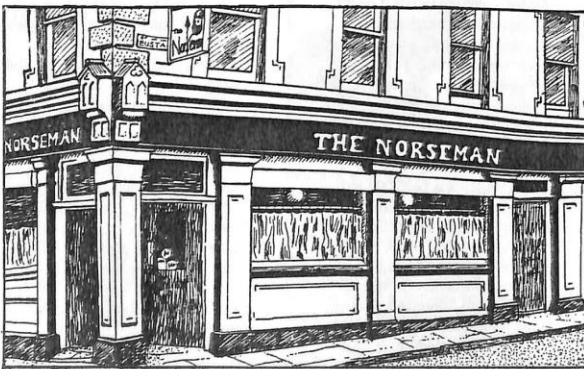
ARTS COUNCIL APPREHENSION ABOUT FUTURE OF FILM IN IRELAND

PRESS RELEASE: 14th September, 1987

At its first meeting since the summer, which was also the occasion of its annual policy meeting, the Arts Council discussed the present state of film in Ireland.

The Arts Council is deeply apprehensive about the future of film in this country following the termination of the Irish Film Board. There have been signs recently that Ireland was beginning to develop an indigenous film industry of considerable merit. Irish artists - film-makers, writers, actors, designers and technicians - are capable of making work that is artistically important and that can reap enormous benefits for many aspects of the Irish economy. Such potential can be realised only through careful planning and by means of appropriate structures for advice, support and financial assistance.

THE NORSEMAN



29, East Essex Street, Dublin 2.

Excellent lunch menu. One of Dublin's oldest pubs.

MA "No. And not just in the Irish Film Board, but internationally in the film industry. You simply accept the fact that it is an odd mix of the two and you struggle on. Attempting to arrive at a consensus view on all of this the Board decided that any endeavour that had the potential to make money should be supported by way of loan, any that wasn't going to yield a return we supported by way of grant. The only projects that stood any chance of making money, or indeed, profits, of covering their costs and making a return, were feature films. All of the others could, by and large, while they were nominally loans, not be expected to be repaid."

TS "Do you think that point was ever understood or accepted by the civil servants in Industry or the Taoiseach's Department?"

MA "Probably not. It was said to them. It was written to them. But

they neither heard nor understood. And they still don't. In many ways, because the Board operated with a staff of only three people, the Board was probably in some ways remiss in keeping the industry advised as to its own thinking. It was only after the five years that it became apparent to us that the industry at large wasn't as aware of the way the Board was thinking as it itself was."

TS "It seems to me that you can divide the industry into two parts - the likes of Windmill, Strongbow etc., as opposed to Circus Films, Amatango Productions and the other smaller companies where people are getting first-time productions off the ground. There seems to be little bridging the gap between the two. The latter sort of company was probably far more aware of what the Board was doing. The reason I refer to this is because of the article that James Morris did for Business and Finance in August of '85 which was about 2 1/2 pages long and there wasn't a single reference to the Film Board in it."

MA "I noted this. I rang him at the time."

TS "It seems extraordinary that somebody who was writing in a magazine, presumably to heighten awareness of the film industry in the minds of potential investors, would not refer to the state institution which had the authority and responsibility to support it."

MA "There is a phrase, which is 'Biting the hand that feeds you'. Windmill, Strongbow and a couple of the other larger companies were all in receipt of development funding from the Board. It perhaps didn't suit their public perception to acknowledge the fact that they had been in receipt of funding from the Board. So it was left to the smaller companies to be much more public about the fact that they had received state aid. Which the larger companies perhaps wouldn't want to be seen to have done."

Why the Film Board was abolished next issue.

PROPOSAL FOR A FILM DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

The following is the full text of Filmbase's proposal for a film development agency, the preparation of which was initiated before the abolition of the Irish film Board and had been intended as a proposal for its restructuring. The document has been completed and recently presented to the Department of the Taoiseach and the Arts Council as a proposal for a new state agency for film.

We propose that a new body be set up to cater for the emerging film industry, not as a replacement for the Board, but as an agency which will capitalise on and develop the efforts and progress made by the Board.

This body, the Film Development Agency, should be set up without delay and its responsibilities defined in consultation with a broad base of people working in the industry.

Structure of the Film Development Agency

We propose that a board be appointed to oversee the Agency, and that the majority of its members should be drawn from a panel of working filmmakers nominated by a coalition of Filmbase, The Association of Independent Filmmakers and the Film and Television Guild.

The primary commitment of the Agency's chairperson would be to the development of Irish Cinema.

The new Agency should be charged with drawing up and implementing a clearly defined policy within three months of taking office, so that its operation is not merely a fragmented response to various pressures, but a coherent and integrated focus on the overall development, production and distribution of Irish films.

This policy should be developed in consultation with Filmbase, AIFM and the Guild.

This process of consultation should be formalised and should continue on a quarterly basis with meetings to allow for the constant fine tuning of policy and to meet the demands of a changing and developing film industry.

Funding

We propose that Film Development Agency funding would come from the following areas:

1. 250,000 punts has been committed to the Film Board from the National Lottery in the current financial year. We suggest that at least this amount be committed annually in future years.

2. While we welcome RTE's increased allocation of money for television programmes, we suggest that a substantial sum (in the region of 1% of annual turnover of 86m) be made available to the industry for feature film production.

3. The distribution and exhibition of films in Ireland is a successful industry and cinema attendance has actually increased over the past few years. We believe that the continuity of Irish film production should be partly guaranteed by a small levy on cinema admissions. For example, 600,000 punts would be generated by a levy of 5p per seat on cinema admissions.

4. The use of blank video cassettes in the home to record films off air has resulted in a situation where people are viewing films without any return being made to the producers. We propose that a levy on the retail price of blank video cassettes would allow for a fair contribution to be made. On the basis of the Trades estimate of 200,000 VCRs in use and with an average of fifteen tapes per annum being bought by each owner a 25p levy per cassette would yield 750,000 punts.

Development finance

Development finance should take the form of:

1. Script development: so that there is adequate funding available to support the writing of scripts.
2. Support to individuals: so that there is adequate support for those who work in non-mainstream, documentary or abstract film, where a script is not necessarily the best criterion for judging the project.
3. Project development:
 - a) adequate funds should be made available for the producer to bridge the gap between finished screenplay and the creation of an investment package, which is a crucial part of putting production finance in place.
 - b) The Agency should be prepared to allocate the initial production funding which should be their stamp of confidence on the project and which would enable the producer to generate the remainder of the budget from pre-sales or private investment at home and abroad.
 - c) In the case of first time filmmakers whose lack of track record would make it well nigh impossible to avail of the tax scheme and who are setting up a low budget film, the Agency should recognise its fundamental role as the developer of Irish filmmaking and be prepared to finance the film entirely.

Training

At present, film training in Ireland is gained in a haphazard fashion from the Union (ITGWU branch No 7), the educational institutions (Rathmines, NIHE, Dun Laoghaire) and Filmbase.

As the lack of trained technicians is becoming a severe problem, the new Agency should co-ordinate the existing efforts to establish a standard of technical training which would allow

filmireland

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A Film Base Publication

DVolution

Special Issue: Ireland's Wave of Low Budget Film



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Inside: Matthew Macfayden on Acting and *Middletown*

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A Filmbase Publication

4. Up for Discussion:

- **Research as Practice/Practice as Research**

- Practice-led research is a conceptual framework enabling researchers to use creative practice, methods and output in research design and as an integral part of the research output.
- *Both content and processes of creative practice result in knowledge and innovations that may differ from but can add value to traditional research approaches.*
(Smith and Dean, *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*, 2009)

- **The Future of the Archive/The Archive of the Future**

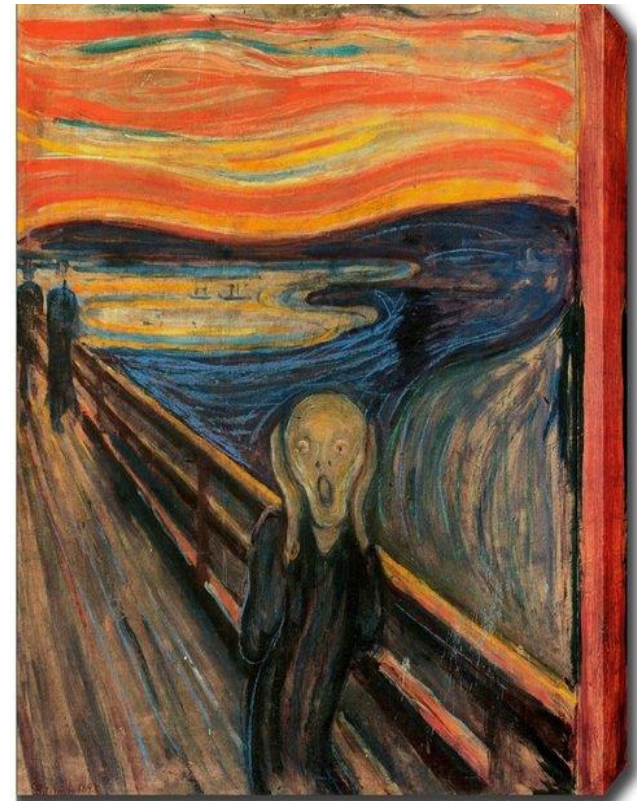
- *“For many academics, researchers, and students, archives used to be and still are contentious ground, guarded tightly by the archivist/gatekeeper whose relationship with the material is very different than that of the researcher. The archivist aims to preserve and protect; the researcher hopes to explore and experience”.*
(Anable, Dove-Viebahn, and Miller in *Journal of InVisible Culture*, 2008)


5. Early Conclusions and Future Direction(s)

- Firstly, THANK YOU! (particular s/o to CL)
- Project has multiple value points:
 - DBS faculty
 - DBS students (Film, Film/Media, Journalism, Creative Media stream)
 - DBS School of Arts
 - Film Ireland (www.filmireland.net)
 - Irish Film Studies (nationally and beyond)
- Project has particular significance in current vacuum:
 - Foucault (*The Discourse on Language*, 1972) suggests that the archive is not merely a container of objects, but a statement, a communication of power.

5. Early Conclusions and Future Direction(s)

- Secondly... my “Munch moment”.
- Enormous misjudgment of task
- 37.5 hours? (Insert emoji here)
- Currently ETA towards 2021/22
- A collective effort
 - Cross-discipline/cross-institution
- And/Or
- As a PhD proposal



FILM IRELAND: THE LAST PICTURE SHOW


This is the last print edition of *Film Ireland*. Since June 1995, when we commenced the first digital film sound post-production service in Ireland, Ardmore Sound has advertised in this *Irish*. Our back pages have all been a creative collaboration with Seán Hyland of *Berlinc*, who also created our logo, and our overriding concern has always been to support and celebrate film-making and film-makers with whom we worked. As well as, of course, film sound in all its aspects.

Our back pages have also celebrated the ongoing development of a truly talented pool of film-sound professionals, working across all areas of the film soundtrack. They now form part of a wider, and vibrant, international post-production community working with picture and VFX post-production out of Ireland. All of this was only a dream in 1995. Our various training collaborations with Screen Training Ireland since 1996 have been key in this continuous development, as have other government agencies, Enterprise Ireland, The Department of Arts & Culture and The Irish Film Board.

Film Ireland, significantly, played its role in the Irish film industry's development throughout the years, reflecting and encouraging success. It kept its readership informed, marketed the Irish film industry abroad and also recorded the developing film and television post-production sector, all of which we hope to see continue and prosper in an online edition of *Film Ireland*.

We will miss our regular print deadlines and (always!) the last minute rush to get our back page to the printer.

Ardmore Sound celebrates *Film Ireland's* last print publication and thanks all of those who have made it happen over the years. In the words of TS Eliot, "not for me, but for Ireland."



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