

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: NI032251 (Northern Ireland)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: NIC 102004

Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

for

Belfast **Film** Festival Limited
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Lynn Drake & Co Ltd
Chartered Accountants
1st Floor
34 B-D Main Street
Moirá
Co. Annagh
BT67 OLE

Belfast Film Festival Limited

Reference and Administrative Details
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

TRUSTEES

Dr Laurence McKeown Treasurer
Kevin Jackson (resigned 5/4/2024)
Louise O'Meara (resigned 12/1/2024)
Mark Cousins
Lisa Barros D'sa
Lucy Baxter
Nisha Tandon
Marie-Therese McGivern
Maeve McAdam (appointed 5/4/2024)

COMPANY SECRETARY

Michele Devlin

REGISTERED OFFICE

23 Donegall Street
Belfast
Co. Antrim
BT1 2FF

**REGISTERED COMPANY
NUMBER**

NI032251 (Northern Ireland)

**REGISTERED CHARITY
NUMBER**

NIC I02004

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Lynn Drake & Co Ltd
Chartered Accountants
1st Floor
34 B-D Main Street
Moirá
Co. Annagh
BT67 OLE

CHIEF EXEC OFFICER

Ms Michele Devlin

FINANCIAL ADVISERS

CRN Financial Group
I Forestgrove Business Park
Newtownbreda Road
Belfast
BT86AW

Belfast Film Festival Limited

Report of the Trustees **for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Mission Statement/ Aims/ Objectives

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to promote a diverse and dynamic programme of film events, and outreach activity, which is entertaining, provocative and provides a platform for cultural expression and debate.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aim 1: Deliver the annual Belfast Film Festival and Docs Ireland, which will exhibit local and international films

Related Objectives

- (i) Organise a citywide film festival each year in November and a documentary festival in June involving film exhibition, seminars, workshops and master classes.
- (ii) Bring national and international film premieres to Belfast.
- (iii) Showcase the work of local film-makers
- (iv) Provide an industry marketplace as part of Docs Ireland.

Aim 2: Enhance the profile & status of the Belfast Film Festival within the cultural life of Belfast

Related Objectives

- (i) Actively contribute to the establishment of a Belfast Film Centre
- (ii) Develop a year-long programme of film events.
- (iii) Develop and implement an effective PR strategy.
- (iv) Contribute towards making Belfast a more attractive destination for visitors.

Aim 3: Promote access to film and the film making process

Related Objectives

- (i) Build relationships between local communities and the film industry
- (ii) Facilitate opportunities for volunteers to gain experience in film related events.
- (iii) Consult communities in order to enhance their involvement in the Festival programme.
- (iv) Contribute to enhancing the profile of the local film industry.

Aim 4: Maintain a sustainable structure and funding base for the Belfast Film Festival

Related Objectives

- (i) Obtain funding for BFF activities
- (ii) Employ staff to carry out BFF's programme of work
- (iii) Undertake regular planning, monitoring and evaluation of BFF strategy and activities
- (iv) Develop and implement a training plan.
- (v) Build partnerships as required with relevant stakeholders

Report of the Trustees

for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Public benefit

The purpose of Belfast Film Festival Ltd is to present, promote, organise, provide, manage and produce such specialized (cultural, lesser seen, archive) film screenings and events, community based film activities, film related outreach work in marginalized communities, broadcasts, concerts, musical pieces, entertainment and exhibitions, whether on any premises of the Company or elsewhere, as are conducive to the promotion, maintenance, improvement and advancement of education or to the encouragement of the art of film, or the arts.

The direct benefits flowing from this purpose include; the promotion and enjoyment, better understanding and general advancement of the arts and film, for the benefit of the general public in Northern Ireland through exposure to, as an audience member or participant through outreach work in marginalized communities and schools, the arts and film.

These benefits can be demonstrated by regular internal and external qualitative assessment; audiences and participation; photo and video documentation; regular reporting of charitable activities and financial performance in annual reports, audited annual accounts, and reports to grant funders.

The purposes of our charity will not lead to any harm, although there are policies and procedures in place to address certain risks, for example

- safeguarding and child protection policies
- health and safety policy
- code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- equal opportunities policy
- disability policy and safeguarding policy.

The charity's beneficiaries are the general public in Northern Ireland. Specific projects may address the needs of specific sections of society (e.g. access to film and the arts project targeting social needs in particular electoral wards).

The only private benefit flowing from the purpose is artists and filmmakers benefit from exposure to a wider audience, which may result in their gaining a higher profile. This is incidental to the achievement of the purpose and, while a private benefit, is necessary to help the charity achieve our charitable purpose.

Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE
DOCS IRELAND 5

Docs Ireland 5, which ran for 6 days 20th - 25th June 2023, was packed with over 87 films and events.

The festival opened with the Irish Premiere of Belfast production company Fine Point's portrait of the legendary Cyndi Lauper Let the Canaiy Sing, and closed with a knockout conversation between the newly crowned host of the Late Late Show, Patrick Kielty, and former champion boxer and mental health advocate, Carl Frampton, on Northern Irish politics, education and identity.

Docs Ireland celebrated a bumper year for Irish documentaries with 12 Irish features screening in its Pull Focus Competition. Stories included a wide range of subject matter, from music, art, nature, and identity to investigative journalism which provide insights into this island's complicated past and present.

Special Irish Screenings included a one-off screening of extraordinary found footage of a 1970s IRA training video thought to be lost and discovered by BBC journalist Darragh MacIntyre in New York, and a retrospective of films from the director of the extraordinary Lyra, and one of Northern Ireland's most exciting filmmakers, Alison Millar.

The Pull Focus Irish Documentary Competition included three world premieres, one European premiere and seven Northern Irish premieres.

The New International Documentary strand brought documentaries from all over the world to Belfast. Penny Lane returned with her exploration of altruism with Confessions of a Good Samaritan, Paul Sng's Tish questioned why working-class photographer Tish Murtha never got her dues for exposing the reality of poverty and inequality and in Much Ado About Dying Simon Chambers captured the final years of his eccentric uncle's life.

Shellshock Music burst onto the scene with a host of exciting events. In the Computer Accent a pop group faced the challenge of bringing AI into their music and Back to the Archive presented an evening of live music in collaboration with Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive. And for the first time, Docs Ireland hosted outdoor screenings at the Belfast Stories site next to the Sunflower pub, with a programme of music documentaries, Amazing Grace, The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years and Monterey Pop.

Alongside an extensive features programme Docs Ireland was proud to present four diverse and wide-ranging Irish Shorts Programmes, with 52% of short films directed by women and including some of Ireland's most exciting emerging documentary talent.

In 2018, when the first documentary festival launched, there was great excitement about the continued growth of the Irish documentary scene, and the talent of our filmmakers. This year, audiences are up, box office is up and a record 11 Irish feature documentaries - many of them premieres - were screened.

At this year's market, 27 Irish, UK and international projects took part with 35 international decision makers participating in project meetings. Feedback from international delegates was extremely positive, with all citing their desire to return. A hub for funding, sales and distribution of documentaries in Ireland and globally, the market is an incubator for nurturing both domestic and international talent so that our industry can continue to thrive in the future.

Belfast Film Festival Limited

Report of the Trustees **for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

BELFAST FILM FESTIVAL

Belfast Film Festival launched its 2023 programme on 12th October with a prodigious line-up including the biggest films from the Cannes and Venice film festivals and seven Best International Feature Oscar selections.

The festival opened with Andrew Haigh's *All of Us Strangers*, starring Irish actors Andrew Scott and Paul Mescal, while Yorgos Lanthimos' Golden Lion-winning *Poor Things*, jointly produced by Ireland's Element Pictures and starring Emma Stone, Willem Dafoe and Mark Ruffalo closed the programme. These 2 films went on to be Golden Globe, BAFTA and Oscar winners.

In its second year, the International Competition sponsored by Yellowmoon, reached new heights with six audacious debut features and two accomplished second features: the winner of Cannes' coveted Un Certain Regard Award, Molly Manning Walker's *How To Have Sex* and the winner of the Camera D'Or, Pham Thien An's *Inside The Yellow Cocoon Shell*.

Showcasing the best of new cinema both in Ireland and internationally, the New Cinema strand had some of the most anticipated films on the circuit - William Oldroyd's scabrous *Eileen* starring Anne Hathaway and Thomasin McKenzie and Christos Nikou's dystopian romance *Fingernails* starring Jessie Buckley and Riz Ahmed. Continuing the theme of Cannes award winners, this programme included Justine Triet's Palme D'Or awardee *Anatomy of a Fall* and Jonathan Glazer's Grand Prix champion *The Zone of Interest*. The strand also included the Northern Ireland Screen funded thriller *Lie of The Land* and Scottish feature *Silent Roar* with a sterling debut feature performance from Belfast actor Louis McCartney.

The festival was delighted to host world-renowned writer-director John Sayles and producer Maggie Renzi in Belfast for a stimulating chat about their lives and work, hosted by Donald Clarke from *The Irish Times*. They were jointly presented with the festival's prestigious Realta award for Outstanding Contribution to Film.

Belfast Film Festival is known for thinking outside of the box and this year was no different with a host of unique special events. They included a look back at the history of 16mm featuring a live DJ afterparty plus two work-in-progress screenings: Aislinn Clarke's newest Irish language horror *Freamhacha* and the eagerly awaited Belfast-set movie, *Kneecap*.

This year BFF pioneered the Long Short Weekend which brought together shorts, filmmakers, and audiences for a weekend of short film screenings including the Shorts Competition sponsored by Screenskills, and the Northern Ireland Screen Showcase.

For the Werk! event in the imposingly atmospheric industrial setting of Riddel's Warehouse, built heritage and on-screen social history were brought together, with a live soundtrack from Marion Hawkes (Ponyhawke/Sound Advice).

The Festival announced the competition winners at a packed house for the closing night ceremony on Saturday 11th November. The award for Best International Film went to Mohamed Kordofani's *Goodbye Julia*. The Breakthrough Performance was awarded to Eka Chavleishvili as Etero in *Blackbird Blackbird Blackberry* and the Outstanding Craft Award for Direction was presented to Thien An Pham for *Inside the Yellow Cocoon Shell*.

Belfast Film Festival Limited

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for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

The company had net outgoing resources for the year of £95,741 (2023: net outgoing resources of £32,066), which reflected the completion of a number of projects during the year. At 31 March 2024 Unrestricted funds decreased by £69,969, while restricted funds decreased by £25,772.

Reserves policy

The charity's policy is to retain a level of free reserves, which matches the needs of the organisation both at the current time and in the foreseeable future. The reserves required should be sufficient to meet committed grant expenditure and the running costs for a period equivalent to six months annual expenditure. The charity has developed a plan to establish and maintain this agreed level of free reserves. The charity will continue to monitor compliance with this policy on a regular basis and the Committee will review the appropriateness of the policy annually.

FUTURE PLANS

We have an aim to double our audience figures annually over the next 5 years. Future planning is hampered by the fact that the organisation works on an annual funding basis, it would benefit greatly from a longer-term funding agreement from core funders.

With the recruitment of a new, dynamic team it is intended to raise the festival to a whole new level, with innovative and exciting initiatives including an international competition.

Over the coming 4 years we plan to continue to build audiences for all our activity, in particular we will focus on audience building for the new Belfast Stories site.

We continue to seek and apply for new funding revenues.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Bdfast Film Festival Limited

Report of the Trustees

for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Organisational structure

LIST OF BOARD MEMBERS

Marie- Therese McGivern (Co-chair)

Marie-Therese recently served as Principal and Chief Executive of Belfast Metropolitan College. Prior to that, she was Director of Development at Belfast City Council where she was responsible for economic development, arts, tourism, events and community services. She is Chair of Maritime Belfast and also Chair for the Employability and Skills Advisory Board for the £10b Belfast Region City Deal. She is a Non-Executive Director of the Strategic Investment Board for Northern Ireland.

Lisa Barros D'Sa (Co-chair)

Film director, writer and producer; studied English at University of Oxford; MA in Screenwriting from London University of the Arts. Born in Belfast, she is best known for co-directing and producing the 2019 feature film Ordinary Love; co-directed the films Good Vibrations and Cherrybomb with husband Glenn Leyburn; Based on these three 'strikingly different' feature films, the Irish Times described Barros D'Sa and Leyburn as "the most important contemporary filmmakers working from Northern Ireland".

Dr. Laurence McKeown (Treasurer)

Author, playwright, screen writer 2001 - present; Writer of the Les Blair directed feature film H3 about the 1981 hunger strike which premiered in 2001, co-written with long-time collaborator Brian Campbell (d.2005); The pair wrote two plays together, The Laughter of Our Children (2001), and A Cold House (2003); first solo play, The Official Version, (2006); Two Roads West with Kabosh Theatre company, a site-specific play set in a Belfast black cab, where the audience enters the cab with the two actors. Performed Belfast and Derry; Writer of the Green and Blue premiered as part of the Belfast International Festival (2016). Produced by Kabosh, Green and Blue dramatises the realities faced by, and unlikely relationship between, a Garda officer and an RUC officer; Publications Nor Meekly Serve My Time: The H-Block Struggle 1976-1981 (1994, co-written with Brian Campbell and Felim O'Hagan); Out Of Time: Irish Republican Prisoners, Long Kesh, 1972-2000 (2001); Threads (2019); Time Shadows : A Prison Memoir (2021); Founding member of Belfast Film Festival.

Mark Cousins

Northern Irish director and writer based in Edinburgh; he is a prolific documentarian, best known for his 15-hour 2011 documentary The Story of Film: An Odyssey; interviewed many famous filmmakers and actors including Jane Russell, David Lynch, Martin Scorsese and Roman Polanski in the TV series Scene by Scene; presented the BBC cult film series Moviedrome from June 1997 to July 2000; He introduced 66 films for the show; has made over 50 documentaries; was director of Edinburgh Film Festival; Cousins joined the jury of the BFI London Film Festival 2021; Co-Artistic Director of 'Cinema China', 'The Ballerina Ballroom Cinema of Dreams' and 'A Pilgrimage' with Tilda Swinton; with Antonia Bird, Robert Carlyle and Irvine Welsh, Cousins is a director of the production company 4Way Pictures; Between 2001 and 2011 wrote for Prospect; now writes for Sight & Sound and Filmkrant.

Nisha Tandon

Belfast Film Festival Limited

Report of the Trustees

for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Nisha is a social entrepreneur, founder & director of ArtsEkta - one of the few organisations on the island of Ireland promoting ethnic arts, culture and heritage. She founded AlisEkta in 2006 after pinpointing a gap for quality ethnic arts engagement in the sector. Studied and obtained a degree from the National School of Drama in New Delhi. Former member of the executive board of the Alis Council of Northern Ireland; Member of the Intercultural Arts Steering Group which oversees the implementation of the Intercultural Arts Strategy developed by ACNI; Member of Belfast City Council's Festival Forum strategy sub group; NI representative for Voluntary Arts BAME Advisory UK Panel; Former trustee of Cahoots NI Theatre Company; Community Arts Forum; European Mela Network; Member of UTV's Regional Advisory Board; Founding member of 'Stronger Together', a collaboration of organisations in the field of racial equality, supporting an integrated community development approach to tackling racism, and promoting good relations.

Lucy Baxter

Lecturer, Centre for Documentary Research, QUB

18 years' experience in TV, film and digital content; ran a production company in London; producer and director of documentary, drama, independent film and digital content for TV/digital broadcast and theatrical release; Research currently is across creative enterprise, creative producing in documentary and fiction, Irish cross border co-production and the applications of digital content and XR/ virtual reality film in health and social care, particularly emotional trauma; produced and directed an animated film; PI on a Future Screens NI funded YR project as part of her interdisciplinary research project Mental Abuse Matters, which is the subject of her **PhD**.

Maeve McAdam

Maeve McAdam has worked in the film and TV industries for nearly 30 years and has successfully developed, financed and produced award-winning projects for the international market. Most recently, Maeve has been working in production finance, lastly as location accountant for Skydance for Apple TV's Foundation Season 1 & 2. She is currently production accountant on Wednesday Season 2 for Netflix.

Michele Devlin (Company Secretary) - CEO

PROGRAMMING SUB COMMITTEE - Laurence McKeown, Michele Devlin

STAFFING SUB COMMITTEE - Laurence McKeown, Michele Devlin

PATRONS

Teny George - Film-maker

Hotel Rwanda, In The Name of the Father, Some Mother's Son, Reservation Road, The Shore

David Holmes - Composer, Producer

Good Vibes, I Am Belfast, Oceans 11, Five Minutes of Heaven, Chenybomb, Ordinary Love

William Crawley - Presenter BBCNI

Presented also on various documentaries

Stephen Rea - Actor

Multiple titles including V for Vendetta, Michael Collins, The Crying Game; Founding member Field Day Theatre.

B lfast Film Festival Limited

Report of the Trustees **fo r the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Wider network

LIST OF STAFF MEMBERS

Michele Devlin (CEO); Maiy Lindsay (Head of Marketing); Sara MoITis011 (Inclusion/Audience Development); Moyra Lock (provides Finance/Admin Services (Freelance)).

Temp Staff2023-24

Jessica Kiang (Programmer); Rose Baker (Programmer); Stuart Sloan (Programmer); Roisin Geraghty (Marketplace and Industry Co-ordinator); Simeon Costello (Box Office Manager); Benen Dillon (Events Manager); James Hall (Programming Assistant); Tresca Mallon (Marketing Assistant); Richard Davis (Guest Liaison); Mitchell Harper (Guest Coordinator); Lizzie Howard (Box Office Manager); Aine Grogan (Volunteer Coordinator); Dara McWade (Box Office Assistant).

Risk management

The principles of good governance are embedded within all aspects of Belfast Film Festival Limited, operations with management and staff being keenly aware of the Boards responsibility of ensuring that the organisation protects itself from financial exposure and reputational damage, A close working relationship is maintained between the Board and management to ensure that operationally staff are aware of the standards required of them by the Board and the Board are always in a position to provide guidance and supp01t to management in the discharge of their duties. This two way relationship is the key feature of Belfast Film Festival Limited governance anangements and is a key strength **in** the company.

A conscientious approach to ensuring that contractual project requirements are achieved has been maintained at all times both in the accounting period being reported on and since Belfast Film Festival Limited establishment. Very tight financial controls on expenditure and all financial commitments are maintained at all times and project staff have been trained and have become experienced **in** budgetary controls. In both these areas ie Project delivery and financial controls management all staff have established close working relationships with funding organisations to ensure all mandatory standards are consistently achieved. Board representatives also actively engage with funding bodies.

The Board, management and staff are fully aware that the nature of the work in which Belfast Film Festival Limited is involved can bring with it a high level of scrutiny to ensure that all activities are fully compliant with funding requirements and, therefore, beyond reproach. The Board of Belfast Film Festival Limited is, therefore, greatly reassured of the company's compliance with the highest of standards of governance on the basis that all monitoring and evaluation of project delivery demonstrates achievement of all funders objectives and that funders' audits and vouching of financial expenditure and the independent examiners report confinn compliance with both probity and regularity in the use of monies received.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Pait 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 4 September 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

✎



Michele

Devlin

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Secretary

