

ASSEMBLED

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Jenny Russell
From Editor to Educator

Simon McGuire
Editors with Disabilities

Nick Emerson
Talks career moves

AN IRISH SCREEN EDITORS PUBLICATION

HELLO AND WELCOME

to Issue 6 of Assembled!

It's been a busy year — and, in some ways, a sad one. We were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Ferg McGrath, a much-loved and respected member of our community, he will be greatly missed.

Tony Kearns has stepped down as Chair of ISE, and Mairéad McIvor and I have stepped up as co-chairs (something a little like Lanigan's Ball!). A huge thanks to Tony for all the work he's done for ISE — and continues to do — as our webmaster.

A very warm welcome to all our new members — we're now at a whopping 174 members!

Our last edition of Assembled was a huge international success, thanks in part to Tempo's network of editors and the ease of sharing posts across our associations' social media.

I also believe this visibility was one of the reasons why Ireland was chosen as the guest country for the prestigious French editing festival Les Monteurs s'Affichent taking place in Paris in 2026. We're so proud and delighted that they chose us! We had a great response to our call out for members' submissions and the shortlist has been sent on to Les Monteurs Associés. As soon as we hear which film they've selected, we'll let you know.

This year we are partnering with the Cork International Film Festival, and we're excited about the two events we'll be part of — a talk with Saipan editors John Murphy and Gavin Buckley, and the First Take panel on editing short films which Jenny Russell will moderate.

Speaking of John Murphy — congratulations to him for editing Sanatorium, the film IFTA submitted for the Best International Feature Film category at next year's Oscars. The documentary was shot in Ukraine by Irish director Gar O'Rourke.

Another big congratulations to Allyn Quigley and the film he cut, Christy, which is shortlisted for the European Film Awards 2026.

We were delighted to partner with Dublin Editors for their recent In Conversation events. In March they hosted renowned American editor Michelle Tesoro ACE (The Queen's Gambit, Maestro, When They See Us, Godless) and in September it was the turn of Oscar-nominated Irish editor Nick Emerson ACE (Conclave, Eileen, Ordinary Love, Ballad of a Small Player). A great time was had by all! It's great to see Dublin Editors continue to stage such interesting events and we look forward to hearing who they'll have next.

And a hearty congratulations to Eoin McDonagh on becoming a member of ACE. Eoin also moderated the online Tempo International Panel at ACE's EditFest Global this year — Global Editing Perspectives: A Collaboration with TEMPO and ACE. <https://editfestglobal.com/2025-editfest-global-editing-perspectives/>

Another topic that continues to spark discussion is AI. Our own Shane Woods, working with Tempo, helped shape an online AI panel exploring what tools editors are currently using. It was a fascinating conversation with editors Luca Castelo (EDA, Mexico), Dávid Jancsó (ACE, USA), and Giovanni Pompetti (AMC, Italy). [AI Tools in Editing](#)

We warmly invite all members to participate actively in ISE. Please share your ideas — we'd like to hear from you. The next step, of course, is turning those great ideas into action. We're all volunteers, and we'd love to welcome some fresh energy to the committee — just as Jake Murray did when he came rocking in as our SIPTU representative. You can reach us at info@irishscreeneditors.com

One of our goals for the new year is to host a big in-person assembly — more on that soon!

Finally, a heartfelt thanks to Jayce and Shane, who do all the hard work behind the magazine, and to everyone who contributed articles or took part in interviews.

Happy reading!

Sarah McTeigue

Co-chair, Irish Screen Editors



The content in this magazine is for information purposes only.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the ISE or it's members.

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Shane Woods
Jeremy Briers
Dr. Simon McGuire**

Design & Layout Jeremy Briers

This is a magazine not just for ISE members but for anyone who visits our ISE website. If you are not a member but are eligible for membership I encourage you to apply.

You don't even need a Leaving Cert:-)

We are always looking for contributors and ideas for articles so feel free to get in touch with any of the committee members or myself.

jayce@irishscreeneditors.com

Don't be shy, I don't bite, but I have been bitten

As usual, no bribes, no synthesizers and unfortunately no swearing.
Jeremy Briers



The ISE committee:
Jeremy Briers, Eamonn Cleary, Jackie Jarvis
Eoin McGuirk, Mairéad Mclvor, Sarah McTeigue,
Malcolm Maloney, Jake Murray, Shane Woods, .

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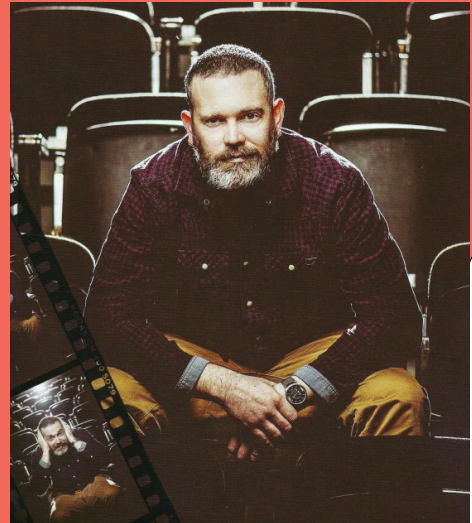


SARAH MCTEIGUE TRAVELLED TO FRANCE TO ATTEND THE FRENCH EDITORS ASSOCIATIONS BI-ANNUAL EDITORS SHOWCASE. 2024 FEATURED TURKEY AND IN 2026 WILL FEATURE FILMS FROM IRELAND.

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Nick Emerson was born and raised in Ireland and has gone on to become one of the best editors in our time. Here he chats with Shane Woods about his career.



CHRISTINE SAFI

FROM BEIRUT TO GALWAY (AND BACK?)

From the tail-end of Lebanon's civil war to an MA in Galway and a return home amid economic free fall, editor Christine Safi has built a practice by holding to three anchors only editors truly see: story, rhythm, truth. She speaks about finding safety in Ireland, cutting through instability in Beirut, why Lebanese film culture can feel like high school, and how to make meaningful work when funding leans toward conflict. Along the way: a MacBook that refuses to die, a trusty Canon DSLR, and the stubborn conviction that the right cut still heals.



A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

When Christine Safi talks about home, she isn't naming an eircode. She means safety, the psychological, creative kind that lets editors sit still long enough to hear footage breathe. *"I never felt safe at home in Lebanon... even though it's technically my home,"* she says. *"Only when I went to*

Ireland did I discover that." It's not a complaint so much as a calibration.

Safi grew up at the end of the civil war: old enough to absorb its after-images, young enough to counterweight them with elaborate imaginative worlds. In film school she was, as she puts it, *"a bit in denial,"* photographing and filming during flare-ups, turning instability into images because that's what artists do with ambient noise. The cost of that caught up later. *"I realised how hard it is,"* she says, auditing herself and not lamenting.

When the ground hums under you, silence is a luxury. *"Ireland offered that."* First as a feeling on short visits, *"I felt at home in Ireland before I lived there,"* then as a physical reality during her MA at the University of Galway, part-time editing work, and the pandemic intermission that took the job away again. *"I worked as a video editor in Galway,"* she recalls. *"I also did remote work for an NGO in Lebanon... mostly video editing."*

The visa clock eventually ran down, along with the near-term possibility of residency. *"I'm trying to go back,"* she admits. *"Ireland is my ultimate goal."* Anyone who has done an Irish winter with a MacBook and a kettle knows the spell: civic calm and creative community, the conditions that make concentration possible. In her words: prioritise safety and mental health or there's no work worth doing.

BACK HOME, A DIFFERENT COUNTRY

Returning to Lebanon after four years, Safi found both a different country and a different industry. *"There was the explosion and the devaluation; many left, including friends."* Networking in a talent-drained market is hard; belonging again, harder. *"I tried to make connections, but it was difficult."* Work existed, *"but it was usually funded by Western countries and they expected a certain story."* If you wanted support, you pitched war, crisis, trauma. If you wanted to make something else, you self-financed, or you waited. *"I felt like I had to talk about the war."* This

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is now becoming less valid and things are moving forward.

Ask Safi for a metaphor and she doesn't go auteur; *"It's like high school: there are the popular kids and the unpopular kids. I feel like I'm in the unpopular."* In a small ecosystem, relationships are multipliers. If you're shy, if you're not automatically inside favoured circuits, pipeline friction becomes career friction. *"As an introvert, that's the hard part,"* she says.

There was once a film editors' association in Lebanon. For a couple of years, it almost became the backbone any craft needs: workshops, meet-ups, shared knowledge. But it didn't last, because people left. The association evaporated with its members, and with it the structure that might have given someone like Safi a seat that wasn't the "unpopular" table.

Meanwhile, editing is still a seat, a screen, and a standard of care. She shoots the odd NGO commission herself. Hardware longevity isn't a quirk; it's a strategy. Renting isn't a preference; it's the economy. Even the awkward question of software licensing tells a story about access, to banking, and global platforms that assume global stability. The point isn't to moralise; it's to notice that infrastructure is the water we all swim in, clear in some places, brackish in others.

Then there's role-stacking. Clients want an editor who can shoot, direct, do motion graphics, sound design, social cut-downs, and maybe fix the office printer while they're at it. She laughs, but the effect is real: specialists, the people who think in structure and

coming. The balance isn't nostalgia; it's craft discipline. The future is welcome, provided it respects story.

Editors are trained to hold attention through interruption, a director's text, a notes pass, a new cut. The interruptions Safi describes are existential. *"Right now I'm trying to finish a project that was supposed to finish a month ago, and I'm unable to focus on it anymore,"* she admits. That's not procrastination; that's a nervous system telling the truth.

She talks about the bubble artists form to stay functional, a protective membrane. You dip in and out of the feed; you keep hands moving; you protect the cut from the ambient roar. But there's a limit. *"There's an ominous..."* she trails off, leaving the sentence where so many do at the moment: with a horizon left deliberately unfinished.

If the market nudges toward the spectacularly bleak, Safi's editorial instinct leans to the human-scale. The irony isn't lost on her: her [website](#), *"bright and colourful,"* looks like a mood board for joy, while much of her paid work engages migration, governance, and social strain.

"It's a contrast," she says. *"The projects I work on are a little bit dark... and I have both sides in me: a dark side and a happy."*

Her dance-film experiments, more personal than commercial, serve as pressure valve and laboratory, testing how movement and montage converse. Tools follow the job: Premiere for most work; Avid when collaboration demands it. The

LEBANON: A STATE OF THE NATION

- No sustained editors' guild/association; past attempts faded as talent emigrated.
- Festivals and sporadic events act as the de facto convening points.
- Skills pass laterally, friend to friend, more than through institutional pipelines.

Safi is cautious with statistics because accuracy matters in a fragile sector. She cites a study she worked on "about 10 years ago" and more recent figures she sought from an industry organisation: a rise from roughly 10 to 30 films per year (2010–2017), then a contraction below 10 in the hardest years, followed by a rebound to about 17 films in 2023. The trend line matches what many Lebanese filmmakers feel: resilience is real, but so is volatility.

The genre split has skewed toward documentary, faster to assemble under pressure, and often favoured by funders when framed by conflict or social urgency. Fiction hasn't vanished, but the sustainable path to it is narrow.

performance, get nudged toward content assembly and animation templates to meet *"faster, cheaper"* briefs. *"I was happier before all the technology and AI... now it's more corporate... people need fast editing and always animation, and that's not my thing."*

There's a traditionalist streak here that many of us share: value the past and how the work has always been done, while taking a clear-eyed view of what's

temptation to do everything (shoot, edit, grade, animate) is strong in a buyer's market that bundles roles, but she is clear about her core identity: editor first. She flirted with animation at film school, *"hilarious... they make no sense"* and returned to the cut with renewed conviction. *"Film editing is part of me, no matter how hard it is sometimes."*

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Safi is frank about gendered constraints. She avoids sweeping claims, *"I don't know if I'm taken less seriously because I'm a woman or because of me,"* but she is clear about safety when field-producing: *"I'm not comfortable going alone as a woman everywhere to film... there are risks in certain areas."* In a larger market, with more robust crews and clear protocols, that burden might shift. In a small market with thin budgets, personal safety becomes a line item for the editor.

Safi doesn't romanticise hardship. What she suggests, gently and practically, is connection. Censorship exists in Lebanon, but the ecosystem is small, not shut. What it needs are bridges that



outlast the news cycle: webinars, work-sharing sessions, assistant-editor exchanges, co-mentoring, and collaborations that go beyond panel talk into shared calendars and shared bins.

She speaks of a formal Ireland - Lebanon editorial bridge, but she's honest about sequencing: first, secure a way to work in Ireland; stabilise; then grow the bridge from solid ground. Collaboration is easier when at least one shore is sturdy.

Ireland isn't a cure-all; it's a context. Safi already knows the Galway rhythms, the post houses, and the difference quiet makes to productivity. If she



lands here permanently, the wins are shared. We get an editor whose documentary antennae are finely tuned, who can structure social-issue material without sermonising, and who brings regional intelligence we too often import second-hand.

To be good hosts, we should avoid the do-everything trap when hiring across borders. If you want editorial

FIVE PRACTICAL WAYS ISE MEMBERS CAN HELP

- Workflow clinics (remote): script-to-screen case studies; turnover etiquette; conform/QC pitfalls, record and archive.
- Assistant-editor pairings: match an Irish AE with a Lebanese AE on a live project for 4 - 6 weeks; share bins, notes, and dailies problems.
- Micro-grants: €500 - €1,500 finishing support for short docs to reach festivals, targeted, fast, low admin.
- Second-seat opportunities: bring a Lebanese editor into an Irish post schedule for a week at picture lock or two weeks of doc restructure.
 - Credit pathways: on co-productions, ring-fence co-editor or additional-editor credits that travel, boosting CVs on both sides.

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authorship, hire for it. Don't tuck four extra roles inside one rate because someone lives in a weaker currency. Pay fairly. Credit accurately. Co-own schedules. These aren't favours; they're good practice.

Safi is re-branding, paring back the web-video miscellaneous and aiming herself again at films and documentaries, the work that first claimed her attention. She's realistic about her plans for life away from Lebanon. It's about the conditions that let an editor do editor things: watch, weigh, try, discard, try again.

So what does she want, really? Not a slate or a programme. She wants Connection. The right project. Peers. Belonging. *"If I have to choose between safety and mental health, I choose that."* That line isn't a retreat; it's a craft decision. Editors know that without a stable room, nothing else works. You protect the room not to hide from reality, but to transform it: one cut at a time.



CUTTING IN: THE DAILY REALITIES FOR

BY DR. SIMON MCGUIRE I.S.E., LECTURER IN POST-PRODUCTION AND FILM & TV EDITOR



The Irish film editing industry has experienced significant growth and international recognition in recent years. However, challenges persist, particularly concerning the inclusion of individuals with disabilities. As editors, every frame, every transition, is infused with intention. Yet too often, the process of forging a career in postproduction is itself an obstacle course, especially for editors with disabilities. With passion and talent abundant, the real barriers lie in infrastructure, awareness, culture, and opportunity. These barriers are also experienced in the Higher Education sphere as well as our Film and television industry in Ireland and beyond. If we are to improve the opportunities for all editors we need to examine the day-to-day struggles, spotlight the current supports, and chart what needs to change.

The first step is to identify the current problems facing people with disabilities. These could be considered invisible obstacles; the physical and sensory limitations of the editing suites. Most post-production environments remain trapped in a "one-size-fits-all" design dense desk configurations, inaccessible workstations, poor acoustics, and non-visual alerts. For someone with limited mobility or sensory impairments, these spaces are a daily battle. In addition to the editing environments, the staff facilities such as canteen access or kitchenette layouts are often not suitable for wheelchair users and causes additional stress for access and usage. To note this is not the fault of the production company or the post production house, but it is their responsibility

to note these issues for visitors with and or new staff with a disability.

Non-Linear Editing Software (NLEs) are constantly being updated by the main manufacturers, which is a common expectation by editors, however there are issues that affect some users and a common one is an interface that doesn't adapt. Despite the sophistication of software like Avid Media Composer, Adobe Premiere, and Blackmagic Design's DaVinci Resolve, with functionality and speed as the main selling point for editors, accessibility for all users is an afterthought. Few programmes natively support keyboard navigation, screen-readers, colour-blind palettes, or voice control features essential for inclusion for editors who have a sight, hearing or other physical impairment. This issue has been experienced in my own Higher Educational institution, where we have some students with visual impairments. This has been a challenge for both the students and lecturers to adapt the editing equipment in order to allow them to see the screen and content correctly. In a college, where budgets are limited compared to industry, the editing lab and suites can be quite basic. Additional funding to adapt machines for individual students needs can be difficult to secure, leaving the lecturer to, more often than not, use their experience to find a temporary solution for the student.

Another challenge for new editing students and the lecturers is the cognitive load and fatigue. This is also experienced in the industry with the higher workloads and shrinking deadlines for different television productions that require a quicker turnover. Post-production involves repetitive, high-concentration tasks. For those experiencing cognitive delays or neurodivergence, extended timelines can lead to burnout and an unspoken pressure to perform "normally." Students with a learning difficulty can identify this to their lecturers where solutions can be discussed and worked out to ensure that the student doesn't fall behind the rest of the class. However, this would certainly be more difficult to achieve in a high paced post-production house or editing environment such as an ENG news room or film studio. Even when supports exist, hiring practices lag, and this maybe down to attitudinal & institutional inertia. Many studios lack a baseline understanding of "reasonable accommodations" and balk at perceived added cost. Without visible role models or editorial representation in panels and awards, the perceived assumption persists: "editing isn't for you."

EDITORS WITH DISABILITIES

With these challenges and problems, we need to also look at the supports available and how in many circumstances are 'real, but introductory'. There are a number of sector training and awareness programmes, that are ability focused. These are in collaboration with Screen Skills Ireland, National Talent Academies and Animation Skillnet. They have introduced accessible guidelines and online training to shift culture in VFX, animation, and post-production houses. This awareness-building is critical with trainers emphasising inclusive workflows, team dynamics, and compliance with legal frameworks. Screen Ireland has in the recent past created a Behind-the-Scenes Inclusivity masterclasses (2024-ongoing) engaging crewing managers in concrete inclusion practices across departments and touching on accessible post-production methods.

There are also talent development and funding routes including the Pathways DEI Pilot, backed by Screen Ireland. It invests over €300k to support below-the-line crew with a focus on explicitly including those with disabilities. Though primarily technical, it's fertile ground for disability-cantered editorial apprenticeships. <https://www.screenireland.ie/funding/distribution-loans/animation-vfx-pathways-fund>

There are some Higher Educational initiatives such as DARE (Disability Access Route to Education), that are open to disabled talent, offering points relief and supports such as assistive tech.

Unfortunately, editing-specific accommodations are still limited. To solve this would require continued work by individuals (lecturers, support staff and or visiting industry personal) in the institutions to ensure that these initiatives are not just an introduction but rather adaptive and continuous in exploring a wider inclusive pedagogy, and avoiding the issue of not explicitly addressing editing practice.

There are some on-the-ground realities for education, industry and editors with disabilities or neurodiversity.

Katie Quirke, has recently completed her BSc in Creative Broadcast & Film Production at Limerick School of Art & Design (LSAD) at the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS), and has also had a breakthrough opportunity to join the post production team on the fantasy series [The Wayfinders](#), filmed at Troy Studios and produced by Angel Studios and Darkday Pictures.

Katie's journey however has not been a easy one with several of the issues already highlighted having a challenging effect on her.

There were a number of physical challenges with the accommodation at the college around the access to the editing labs and suites. This unfortunately couldn't be rectified for various reasons, requiring alternative thinking regarding how she would access both the knowledge (lectures) as well as the practice (editing equipment). Additional

academic hours were created to give Katie one-on-one tuition in editing each week. A ground floor editing bay, adapted with disabled access, her own editing suite as well as colour correction tools and colour coded keyboard, allowing Katie to have her own space to work as well as be creative, using the same tools as her fellow students in the main lab. While this was positive for her, the issue remained with not being in attendance with her fellow students for the editing module. Despite this, Katie excelled with the one-on-one training and practice, and did collaborate with multiple students in the editing role for their final capstone projects. While these



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makeshift solutions were successful for Katie, the issues remain and further permanent resolutions need to be found to allow all future students to work naturally together.

As Katie finished her studies she also signed up to the National Talent Academies short training programmes which in turn put her name on the crewing lists for the mid-west. It is this connection that allowed her to get an opportunity on The Wayfinders series working once again with myself, but this time experiencing a professional environment as well as integrating with other professional editors and production staff.

Working as a post-production assistant and under supervision, Katie sourced additional content for the editing team, documented sound and visual FX as well as gaining additional editing assembly practice of several scenes using Avid Media Composer. She took to the professional environment and workflow with the eagerness to learn as well as strong positive attitude which impressed everyone on the production.

In addition to this, the production team noted areas within Troy Studios that needed adapting for Katie, such as creating ramps in order for her to visit the sets in studio, as well as her own table in the kitchenette so she could access the lunch making facilities. Katie got to experience a production and team that looked after all its workforce, and adapted quickly with practical solutions to ensure her experience on this production was the best it could be.



This is a positive example yet there are gaps that still linger that need to be actioned in the wider industry. These are (in no particular order and not exhaustive):

1. No editing-focused adaptive technology, from voice input to alternative key layouts and monitor magnification.
2. Patchy funding awareness. Pathways exist, but editing isn't feeder-targeted.
3. Cultural lag in hiring. Small and mid-tier houses lack formal protocols for accommodations.
4. Limited inclusive curatorial education. Editing programmes fold disability access into general frameworks, not editing pathways.

5. Lack of post-level mentorship. There are few systemic editor-to-editor mentorships exist for all talent especially disabled talent.

So what actions can be made to tackle these issues?

Well, from a space and technology perspective, Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) and editing service companies and studios must look at the editing environments and retrofit edit suites with motorised desks, visual-alert systems, voice control, and custom key mapping. Software developers should partner with industry guilds such as the ISE to embed accessibility APIs to allow users with disabilities to access and interact with digital content. There should be the provision of portable kits such as headset-microphones, external displays, and alternative controllers such as the Contour Shuttle Pro which is programmable for most non-linear editing software.

For education and culture, make disability awareness training mandatory for funding applications through Screen Ireland and Screen Producers Ireland. Embed lived-experience panels in events and film festivals to spotlight disabled editors and create a mentorship scheme tied to pathways such as the National Talent academy, specifically for editing trainees. And finally from a policy and industry position, there needs to be a post entry level post graduate apprenticeship programme that links universities, colleges and post leaving cert programmes to work experience opportunities in the field. There is a need to develop a published Code of Practice, written in conjunction with all the afore mentioned stakeholders, that stipulates physical access, technical guidelines and HR protocols, with an additional mandate for inclusive workflows in sector sustainability and funding criteria.

When accessibility lives in the fabric of our craft, the industry doesn't just comply, it evolves. Editors with disabilities bring fresh perspectives; multisensory insight, nuanced attention and emotional clarity. They expand the grammar of storytelling. The studio that builds an accessible edit suite doesn't just check a box, it owns new possibilities and real inclusion happens. By spotlighting lived challenges, supporting with targeted interventions, and holding ourselves to higher standards, we can change the editorial story in this industry from constrained access, to systemic empowerment.

Dr. Simon McGuire (ISE) is based at Technological University of the Shannon (TUS), where he combines academic leadership with hands-on industry experience, mentoring emerging editors while continuing to work on professional broadcast and independent productions. With a background spanning over three decades and channelling both editorial craft and advocacy, Simon is a key advocate for integrating new technologies and workflows into editing practice.

IN MEMORIAM

Ferg McGrath, BFE



1969 - 2025

It was a shock to all of us to hear of the passing of Ferg McGrath in June.

Ferg, who grew up in Galway who moved to London in the 90's. He was an active member of BFE and Tempo and great fun to be around and "the kind of person who would look around the room for those who were outside of the group and quietly welcome them in. He had a gentle determination".

Messages came flooding in from all over the world mourning his loss, remembering his warmth, his smile, his kindness. His family must be proud of the impact he had in our community and how deeply and widely he'll be missed.

Sarah McTeigue

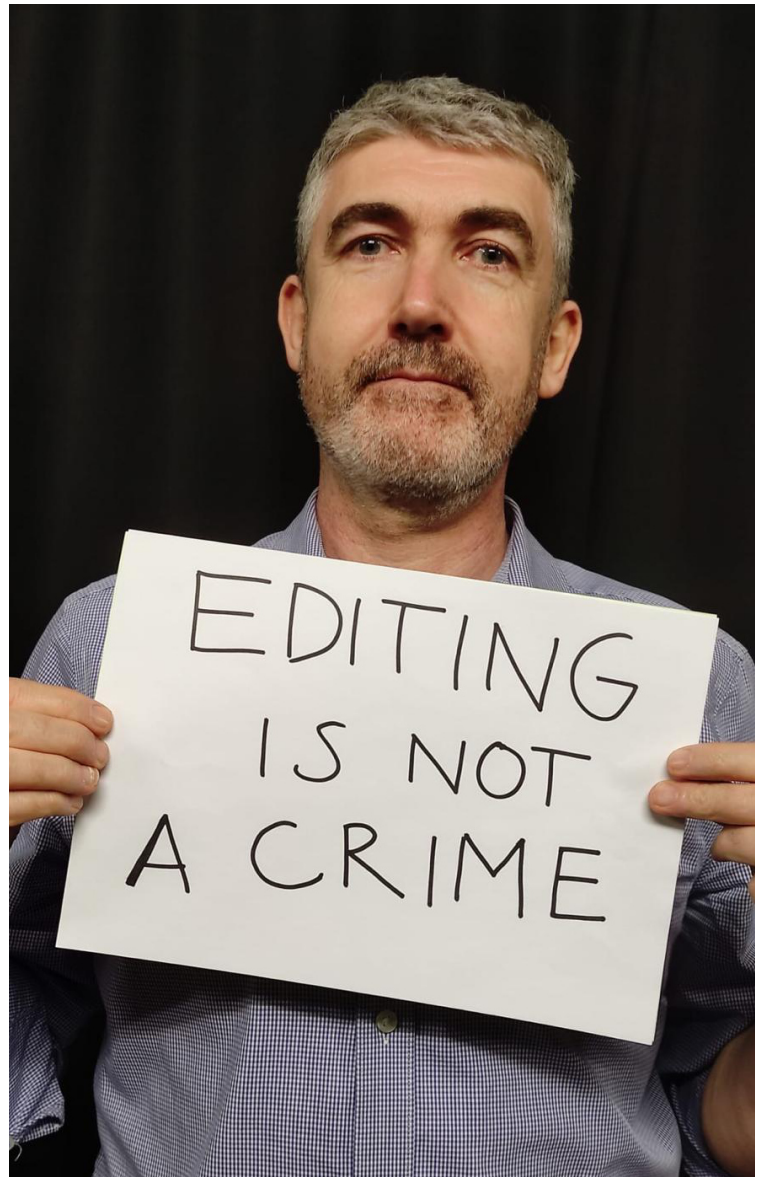
I had the absolute pleasure of working on a doc series with Fergal a few years back, crossing paths and edit suites on another thing shortly after.

Had a few nights out with him too. Such a lovely, warm and funny guy, and a gifted editor also who was

famously generous in sharing his love and knowledge of editing through his mentoring. I may have been shocked at the news of his passing, but I was in no way surprised by the outpouring of affection and appreciation that followed. Especially from the younger editors he loved to support and encourage.

I've got something for you to try. Next time you're with a group of editors, bring his name up. You'll be guaranteed a bunch of fond memories and great stories of Ferg. The best of the best in all senses. With a beautiful smile. His timeline was way too short, but we can still play it on a loop for ourselves.

Juanguis Dinsmore



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LES MONTEURS S’AFFICHENT

EDITORS’ SHOW/CASE

You’ve poured your heart into a film, refined every cut, and emerged with work you’re proud of. Yet, when it’s released, the audience isn’t as large as you hoped. What do you do? For a group of French editors, the answer was simple: create an event to share these films with others.

That impulse gave birth to [*Les Monteurs s’Affichent*](#), the festival launched by Les Monteurs Associés, the French editors’ association. Its philosophy is clear: to give overlooked films a second life and create a space where editing — often the invisible craft in filmmaking — takes centre stage.

What makes *Les Monteurs s’Affichent* stand out is the way it’s organised. Held every two years — a rhythm dictated by the sheer amount of work involved — the festival runs on a modest budget. Almost everything, from the selection process to production, is handled by volunteers from Les Monteurs Associés, with external support for graphic design and press relations.

The process begins in March, when members are invited to submit their films. This year alone, 72 features and 89 shorts were sent in. The criteria are broad but thoughtful: not only challenging, auteur-driven films, but also television dramas or documentaries that aired in obscure late-night slots, or festival-only features that never made it to theatres. Sometimes editors are hesitant to put themselves forward, so the committee takes an active role, combing through recent publications and reaching out directly to encourage submissions.

By April, the selection committee begins watching films, averaging around ten each month and gathering in person to compare notes. By October, they settle on a line-up: three drama features, three documentaries, and a selection of shorts. From December, the production team shifts into gear to prepare for the March festival. Funding comes from sponsorships — public bodies, post-production labs, editing suites, and partners like Tempo — though this year, public support has sadly dried up.



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Each edition of the festival highlights a guest country, shining a light on its editors and films. They had Canada in 2016, Germany in 2018, Argentina in 2020, Italy in 2022, Turkey in 2024, and, for the 2026 edition, Ireland — an honour the Irish editing community is delighted to embrace. The guest country submits films for consideration, both drama and documentaries, with one chosen by a smaller selection committee to represent them at the festival.

The festival itself unfolds over five days at the Luminor Cinema, a historic venue in central Paris currently fighting to resist being sold off and transformed into a hotel. Beyond the screenings, the festival cultivates community. Upstairs, a welcoming lounge hosts conversations over coffee and tea, homemade cakes, and snacks brought by LMA members.

Over the weekend, the festival is in full swing, with multiple screenings and a Saturday morning roundtable for dialogue. On Sunday, the guest country's film is screened, followed by an exchange between the international guests and French editors — a chance to share practices and challenges across borders.

It's a festival with heart. I attended the 2022 edition with the Italians, as I'm also a member of AMC, and I left with lasting friendships. There is something uniquely inspiring about meeting fellow editors in Paris — to exchange ideas, celebrate our craft, and remind ourselves why we chose this work in the first place.



We can't wait for the next edition.

Sarah McTeigue
Co-chair of ISE
Board member of Tempo
Board member of AMC Italy

jenny russell

educator — editor



There's often an old-fashioned attitude towards students – that they're 'soft these days' or so glued to their phones that they don't understand human interactions anymore – but that's just not true.

It's a whole different world coming out of college now, compared to 20 years ago. Far more varied opportunities, but also a lot of competition – and let's not even mention A.I. They'll have to be quicker to adapt and are expected to have more skills than ever before.

Coming out of college having trained in Radio Production, Jenny Russell soon learned that being able to pivot early on was the key to getting a paid job.

"I never really edited in college, even audio. I thought I wasn't technical enough, whatever that means! I thought I was destined to be a talk radio producer, which in hindsight I didn't really have a clue what that meant."

Instead, she started in a small production company and learned FCP7 on the job. From there, Jenny spent some time as an assistant editor, digitising mountains of tapes, before being hired as an Avid editor in TV3.

"It was the depths of the recession and a tough time to work in media – I took on a teaching job initially as a solution to a long-running pay freeze in TV3".

After juggling full-time editing and part-time teaching for two years, it became obvious that teaching was an attractive next step. Jenny still cuts for the RTE newsroom around the lecturing schedule.

"I'm lucky to be able to do both – I still get a buzz out of editing, and at the same time, I love teaching".

The TV & Media Production course that Jenny teaches on is based on the Carlow campus of SETU. There's the option for a L7 or L8 degree and they're equipped with a TV studio, a brand-new radio studio



and two recently updated Mac Labs.

"We work on Avid Media Composer in the college. I reckon if I teach them well on Avid, their skills will transfer pretty easily to other software."

Editing is built into each year but it's a fairly wide-ranging course. Students study Documentary Production, Research & Writing, Radio & Podcasting, Media Law, Cameras and Graphics. Everything is highly practical – there are no traditional exams on the course.

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The assignments generally involve pitching ideas, developing their projects, recording and editing. There's a lot of group work, which students often consider the trickiest element (a view shared by many in the industry).

The main objective for Jenny is to give her students the fundamentals of editing. Professional workflows and hard deadlines are non-negotiable.



"I am particular about some things – if you can't work to a deadline, and keep a neat project, you won't get far".

Not all of the students will go on to be editors, obviously – but it's important that they understand the basics. *"I want them to speak the editors' language regardless of where they end up in the industry – and to generally get an insight into the craft".*

In Year 3, all students get the opportunity to go out on work placement for a semester. *"The big issue for some is commuting to Dublin. It helps a lot if the company will cover students' expenses at least – it's expensive to work for free during a housing crisis".*

It's up to each person to source their own placement and it's great experience. *"Students come back in after placement like different people. It gives them a great confidence and a proper idea of what work is out there, and how valuable their skills are."*

It's almost ridiculous to talk about teaching, or media,

without mentioning the elephant the room – A.I.

"It's obviously bringing massive change, both for teaching and for media professionals. I feel like we're in a moment where there's huge change coming, but nobody's really sure how it'll pan out, which puts people on edge."

"The courses in SETU are updated every few years and when we review ours next year, we'll have to teach students how to harness A.I. for their future careers."



"It'll be interesting to see where it goes, what we'll use it for and how it changes the necessary skills for the job. There's always going to be room for people who are talented and creative – A.I. will become another skill in their ever-expanding toolkit."

Jenny adds: *"An editor friend once said that to get on in this industry, you have to achieve three things – be good at your job, be sound, and be on time."*

"You can get away with two, he said, but you should have all three to get on well. In fifteen years in lecturing, to be honest, I don't see those three fundamentals changing any time soon!"



NICK EN



The late 90's, when Nick Emerson started working in post production, was an interesting time for Northern Ireland on many levels. *"It was about the time, 1998, of the Good Friday Agreement and so on. There was this company called Northern Visions in Belfast*

that made sort of community based video. So I started there for a few years and then I ended up moving to a different company who were doing a lot of television news."

Nick had always had an interest in working in film but it wasn't until he took a job on a short film that he realised his passion for editing. *"I just sort of begged the producers just to let me do anything; was really interested in cinematography, but they said, well, why don't you sit in on the edit afterwards? I jumped at this opportunity and I was really just fascinated by the process of it all. And I guess there's something about being by yourself and it's almost like solving a puzzle, I suppose, this was what appealed to me."*

"So I was quite young to get started as a 20 year old, you know, and that's kind of how I started doing a lot of news; peace talks and things like that. I wanted to keep an eye on maybe trying to do some shorts in the background. Ultimately I got onto some shorts, I connected with some directors and we made a short film that did very well and that led to features. And it wasn't a quick transition over into feature films. That was just a starting point, you know. It took a long time still after that."

Emerson's early experience in news and later in documentary film gave him a strong foundation in editing, which he carried into his

later work in dramatic feature films. *"In documentary you have lots and lots of material, and this; combined with the fact that often have less money to make it; you learn not to be precious about the material and how to be ruthless when chopping stuff up. It's just learning to really interrogate it thoroughly, and I think that's something that I have carried across as well from those early years."*



Films like Cherrybomb, Good Vibrations and The Light of My Eyes established Emerson as someone who needed to be watched, all this time based in the North of Ireland. *"I have talked to people about this before but I think I was really lucky to have worked in Northern Ireland at that time. I was lucky because I did my first feature film right around the time where the money was coming in, because there had been a few years of peace and so on. So there was investment and studios were being built. And they were obviously*

MERSON

keen to have crew based there as well. So I was able to exploit that."



Nick did a number of feature films while based in the North before the move to London after 2016's *Lady Macbeth*. "I had been going back and forth a little bit to London and doing a lot of commuting to Dublin also. But I guess I maybe had five or six films, maybe more, by the time I decided to move to London permanently. I commuted back and forth on a documentary with Kevin McDonald (*Sky Ladder: The Art of Cai Guo-Qiang*) which we did in London and then I moved back to Ireland for a while. After *Lady Macbeth*, where the production was generous enough to accommodate me, I thought 'I'm just going to have

to sort of take this plunge and make the move."

While there are many advantages to working in a hub like London, there can be some disadvantages to working in a big city which he is very careful of "I am friends with some editors in LA and, you know, they get very much into 'you're a comedy editor' or 'you're an action editor' and I definitely didn't want to do that. I wanted to do lots of different things and I was hoping to have access to a bigger choice of material. It was tough at times, you know, I edit a lot of small and independent films and when those budgets are small, everybody gets paid a bit less and trying to do that in a place like London is tricky. But it was great."



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Lady Macbeth was a big success for all involved. Written by playwright Alice Birch, an adaptation of Nikolai Leskov's **Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District** and directed by first-time filmmaker William Oldroyd, the film was probably most famous for its lead performance from Florence Pugh, then just 19 years old. *"I had seen Florence in The Falling, the Carol Morely film, and obviously realised how good she was. But there was something about the way she was, you know - she was young at the time, and to have someone so young who was so brilliant and professional was amazing to watch. I was editing on set so I'd spend time with her, this young person so full of life, and then suddenly the camera would switch on and the performance was so immediate. It was incredible. But yeah, you could just cut to her at any time and there was always something happening."*



Since **Macbeth**, Emerson has established himself as a leading feature film editor, working across an impressive range of projects — from Paul McGuigan's **Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool** to the thoughtful, finely observed drama **Ordinary Love**, and Autumn de Wilde's vibrant take on Jane Austen's **Emma**. In recent years, his collaboration with Edward

Berger culminated in his first Oscar nomination for **Conclave**.

Conclave is a tense political thriller set within the papal enclave following the death of the Pope. Starring Ralph Fiennes, Stanley Tucci, John Lithgow, Sergio Castellitto, and Isabella Rossellini—along with a host of fantastic character actors—the film seems to land tonally somewhere between drama and genre piece. I'm curious whether this balance was intentional from the start, and how Nick managed these two seemingly conflicting forces during the edit. *"I think tone is the hardest thing in any film to get and there's always a temptation to flatten the tone out so that it's one thing. And I think often that's a mistake and you have to try and find that balance so that you can allow a bit of humour and a bit of tension and allow a bit of, you know, poetry, I suppose; a bit of cinema if it's available. It took a while to crack but we knew if we followed Ralph; Cardinal Lawrence's; character closely and we just tried not to waste a frame; we knew that would create our tension. It was originally scripted, and it was shot, for the film to start with some establishers of Rome and so on, and at a certain point it was better for the audience to understand that this was a thriller and that's why we came up with the idea of just coming in on the back of his head in the middle of the action. So they're just like, okay, who's this person? What's he doing? Where is he going? So there's lots of things like that that we did to sort of maintain that."*

With such a wealth of acting talent, it's easy to imagine how the abundance of strong performances could overwhelm an editor on a film like this, but Berger's plan for the film was very considered and thought out in advance. *"The way that Edward wanted to make the film was to be incredibly rigorous with our shots and the architecture and how it was all put together and we were obviously inspired by the political thrillers of the 70s and Edward was so meticulous about the storyboarding of the scenes and therefore a lot of those choices had been made already for me. Edward would always shoot enough coverage that if we needed to edit ourselves out of a problem, we could, but we really wanted not to revisit the same setup more than once. There were so many great performances in the rushes, of course, but it was great that a lot of the editing decisions were taken away with our formal approach."*

"The other interesting different approach that Berger takes is not to watch the assembly but to

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meticulously go through and perfect each scene, one at a time, before watching the film as a whole "We just went through 10 minutes at a time until we got to the end, then we'd watch it.

And then, you know, talk about it, make a lot of notes and then just go back and start again and just do 10 minutes, another 10 minutes and so on. I think you definitely learn things from watching the assembly, but it's also still not a true reflection of everything that has been shot or captured, it's just a sketch, you know, a first impression. Let's put it this way. I never felt during the editing of that film, or in fact, *Ballad*, the second film I've done with Edward, that I'd never felt that 'oh, I wish we'd watched the assembly before we started the fine cut.' And you know, what I loved about it was that it just gave me that fresh feeling when I went back to watch the film again, it was so new and I just love the detail."

Among the many things that stand out with **Conclave** is its meticulous attention to the sound design within each scene. "I mean, certainly we did a fair bit of that in the edit. Like I've said, we had very specific ideas about the rhythm of sound and the placement of these elements within the scenes. For example, when the doors for the conclave are first shut, and there are these bells that go off inside. We spent a long, long time placing those bells. Ben (Baird), who's the sound designer that we work with, he comes on early and he brings his ideas on early with him. Ben sent us stuff during the edit as well in terms of atmospheres and things that we could use so yeah, it's that sort of back and forth. Then when we're in the pre-mix and the finals, we've already tried a lot so it's just a matter of getting everything aligned. It was the same with the music, you know. We kept music away from the cut for a very long time because we sort of, we couldn't find any temp music that was really working as well. So it was great when Volcker (Bertelmann) came on board, we were able just to send things back and forth and it evolved in that way."

Conclave was nominated for eight Oscars, including Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Editing for Nick. It meant learning a new skill: promotion, as Nick was suddenly thrown into the limelight. "It all feels quite surreal at times, there's a lot of interviews and there's a lot of promotion, certainly, leading up to the awards. At the time, Edward and I were editing *Ballad* and then in the evenings we'd be going to Q&As, awards and doing interviews together. It's certainly something that I've gotten better at doing as I went along. I had done interviews and stuff like that

before but never at that level. But I mean, the thing I cherish the most about it was actually going on the road with Edward and with Volker and with Lisy Christl our costume designer and just all this being in this sort of crazy road trip."



The crazy road trip continues this month with the release of *Ballad of a Small Player*, in cinemas and then streaming on Netflix from October 29th. A high-stakes gambler hiding out in Macau sees his debts, past and addictions catching up with him, as he meets a mysterious kindred spirit who might offer redemption — in the tense, neon-lit thriller starring Colin Farrell and Tilda Swinton.

Out of Sync

Shane Woods publishes a weekly newsletter, Out of Sync, which explores all aspects of post production, editorial and techficiency in film and television.



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