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**PRESS RELEASE**

***dlr First Frames Scheme - Short Film Awards Announced***

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council is pleased to announce the short films which have recently been awarded funding under the dlr First Frames Scheme 2023/24 – **The Invitation**, **Snámh** and **Departure Time**. The films are due for completion in Autumn 2024.

In **The Invitation**, when a socially challenged teen gets an invite to his first party, his over-protective parents go to huge lengths to prepare him for what might happen next. Written by Niamh O'Connor, a crime journalist turned screenwriter, it will be directed by Sinéad O'Brien and produced by Sharon Lawless. **Snámh** [Float] is a short film about an old woman who is abandoned on a seashore by the men of her village; it is a symbolic story about the apparent disposability of older and disabled people. The film is written by Maura Campbell, directed and co-produced by Anna Czarska, and produced by Gemma Stack. It will be the first Irish language short commissioned under the dlr First Frames Scheme. **Departure Time** is set against the backdrop of modern Dublin and follows two despondent characters as they discover friendship and hope on the worst day of their lives. It is written and directed by Nicholl semi-finalist Neil Saul and produced by Fiona Kinsella and Megan Kelly for Tile Media. It is a dark comedy about coffee, connections and death.

Cathaoirleach of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Cllr. Denis O'Callaghan: "DLR First Frames supports the emerging talent in filmmaking in the County – several of the previously funded shorts have gone on to win awards and screen in international festivals. We're really pleased to include an Irish language short for the first time too."

Chief Executive of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Frank Curran added: "This Scheme is fully funded by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's Arts Office and Economic Development Unit and managed by IADT. Mentoring support and additional equipment and facilities is provided by the National Film School, IADT; this is a great example of ongoing successful collaboration between the two institutions to support emerging filmmakers at this crucial stage of their careers."

dlr First Frames is fully funded by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's Arts Office and Economic Development Unit and managed by IADT. Mentoring support as well as additional equipment and facilities will be provided by the National Film School, IADT.

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## **Note to editors:**

### **The Invitation**

Writer Niamh O'Connor is a crime journalist turned screenwriter who has had TV series optioned by some of Ireland's leading production companies in recent years. Sinéad O'Brien is an award-winning director, producer and non-fiction author with a career that has spanned over twenty years. During this time, she has collaborated with Screen Ireland, BBC, Sky Arts, Northern Ireland Screen, RTE, TG4, the BAI and NRK on a range of documentary films. Sharon Lawless is an award-winning producer, director and writer who has captivated audiences with hit series like *The Killing Of Fr Niall Molloy*, *Inside the Hospice*, *Adoption Stories*, and projects with RTÉ, Virgin Media, Screen Ireland and Coimisiún na Meán. Her books on the subjects of adoption, and the Fr. Molloy case, are bestsellers.

Actors Clare Monnelly and Aaron Monaghan will both be involved. Clare Monnelly (*Moone Boy*, *Departure*, *The Gone*) said: 'I am so excited to get to work with an all-female team with Producer Sharon Lawless and Director Sinéad O'Brien.' Aaron Monaghan (*The Banshees of Inisherin*, *Redemption of A Rogue*, *Assassin's Creed*) said: 'Niamh's script exemplifies the highest qualities of a film artist. It is poignant, hilarious and utterly relevant, it has a clear visual aesthetic, and it is beautifully nuanced. It has all the performative elements that an actor could wish for.'

### **Snámh**

Snámh [Float] is a short film about an old woman who is abandoned on a seashore by the men of her village. This is a symbolic story about the apparent disposability of older people and people with disabilities, made by a neurodiverse team. The film is written by Maura Campbell, a published author and screenwriter who is one of the participants in The Writers Lab UK and Europe 2023. It will be directed and co-produced by award-winning, autistic filmmaker, Anna Czarska, of Sticky Tape Productions who was recently awarded "Best Emerging Director" from IndieCork International Film Festival in 2022. Producing the film is Gemma Stack, an award-winning Creative Producer from County Roscommon whose work has appeared online, in cinemas, on streaming sites and on TV. The film will be captured by cinematographer James Van De Waal of Sticky Tape Productions.

"We do this in our free time because we have a genuine Grá for a story and want to see it brought to life. Tá sceitimíní an domhain orm sin a dhéanamh. [I am very excited to do exactly that]." says Gemma Stack, Producer of Snámh

### **Departure Time**

Departure Time is set against the backdrop of modern Dublin and follows two despondent characters as they discover friendship and hope on the worst day of their lives. It is a dark comedy about coffee, connections and death. The film is

written and directed by Neil Saul, who was a semi-finalist in the *Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting*, the preeminent American screenwriting competition, highlighting the very best international screenplays from emerging new talents. Neil is currently developing several television and feature projects for both American and European audiences.

The short will be produced by Fiona Kinsella and Megan Kelly for TILE Media. Fiona is a graduate of UCC, UCD and TU Dublin with over twenty-five years' experience in the Irish and International Film and Television Industry producing commercials for brands like Carlsberg, O2 and Jameson as well as working on large international productions like *Saving Private Ryan*. She has been working as Head of Production for Tile Media since 2021. Megan Kelly is a former advertising director who has created award-winning commercials and content for many of the world's largest brands. Recently returned from a decade in London, Megan currently works for one of the world's largest tech companies and is an expert in social media, advertising and content creation. The film will be shot by the award winning Irish-American cinematographer Joseph Ingersoll.