

ADIFF

AUDI DUBLIN INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL



**DUBLIN
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
/
5-YEAR STRATEGY**

2018 – 2022

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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

The Audi Dublin International Film Festival is a popular audience-oriented festival with serious ambition. The framing of our new five-year plan sets out our strategy to reinforce our standing as a key festival in Ireland, and enhance the reputation and reach of the festival internationally, at a time of great change in the industry. I am delighted that we have, in our title sponsor Audi, the perfect partner in taking this progressive step to secure the festival's future.

The festival has always been committed to showcasing the work of Ireland's very talented producers, directors, screenwriters, and actors. We have worked closely with many State agencies, like the Arts Council, the Irish Film Board and Screen Training Ireland, to ensure quality Irish filmmaking is strongly represented and encouraged with high-profile presentation at the festival.

Additionally, we continue to present international film of the highest standard to Irish audiences, who remain passionate and discerning in their viewing, and who loyally support the festival. Each year, the festival has a long and impressive roll-call of high-profile guests, who greatly enjoy this unique festival, and all are gracious and good-humoured in their interaction with Irish audiences. The past two years alone have seen Dame Angela Lansbury, Richard Gere, Claudia Cardinale, Eric Bana, Ben Wheatley, Cillian Murphy and Jack Reynor generously entertain our patrons, as we presented hundreds of films from eighty different countries.

As part of our commitment to developing audiences for quality cinema, we will expand our provision of young people's film, and continue to respond to new models of presentation in cinema.

The success and longevity of our festival is no accident; over the years, the organisation has benefitted from a hard-working, committed full-time executive who go to enormous lengths to deliver an exciting and considered programme. A large and dedicated seasonal staff, along with an army of willing and good-natured volunteers, also join us each year to ensure the audience experience is the best it can be.

I must finally thank all who serve with distinction and dedication on the board of the festival; our non-executive directors continue to give selflessly of their time and expertise in guiding and governing the organisation over the years.

GABY SMYTH
CHAIRPERSON

EXECUTIVE FOREWORD

When the late Michael Dwyer re-launched Dublin's film festival with David McLoughlin in 2003, their objective was to bring the best of world cinema to the capital in a showcase which would present international cinema to Irish audiences and provide a vital context for the films being made here. Over three months, a small team pulled together that inaugural event of 60 films. Since then, with continued funding from the Arts Council and sponsorship from Jameson Irish Whiskey, the festival has grown in size and stature from those humble beginnings. The present festival enjoys an international reputation and is considered a vital launch-pad for Irish titles and an important showcase of world cinema for discerning audiences, increasingly coming from abroad.

While there have been many changes, since then; sponsors, staffing, venues, offices (change is the only constant in festival world) many of our key relationships have been with us since the very start. Our funder since the first year – the Arts Council – has been a source of great support and vital encouragement, allowing us to celebrate film artists from around the world and to bring world cinema to Irish audiences. In parallel with the growth of Irish cinema, the Irish Film Board has become a vital link with the industry and partners such as the Goethe-Institut and other embassies have provided vital support for programming research and hosting international filmmakers. Dublin City Council has supported our annual celebration of cinema each year and our venues, the wonderful cinemas we invade each February, provide the perfect space for the festival audience.

The strength of the festival is also the result of the loyalty and support of both local film distributors and international sales agents. It goes without saying that the festival experience would not be the same without the unfailing support of The Merrion Hotel, which ensures that every festival guest goes home happy to return with their next film.

When I joined in 2008, there were still more 35mm festival titles than digital prints being screened, the Screen Cinema was still a venue and there was still a working fax machine in the office. The festival focused on a single event each spring. Now, due to changes in distribution patterns, along with the need to maintain audience engagement and to stay connected to our community, venues and partners, the festival is gradually expanding its activities to become a year-round cultural presence.

Our filmmakers and audiences are our two most important partners and we know how important a part the festival plays in their artistic, professional and cultural growth. This document reflects the executives' plan to chart the next five years of the organisation.

GRÁINNE HUMPHREYS
FESTIVAL DIRECTOR



MISSION

ADIFF curates and presents the best in emerging International and Irish film and moving image culture for a wide audience through its flagship annual festival, along with a range of year-round events. ADIFF aims to offer memorable experiences through audience interaction and engagement with filmmakers, actors and industry professionals, along with informed debate about the future of film as an art form.

VISION

ADIFF will further consolidate its position as Ireland's most popular film festival and one of the top ten film festivals in Europe.

VALUES

- **PASSION** / ADIFF is driven by a passionate belief in the power of film, across all its many genres and source cultures. ADIFF is a particular champion of, and advocate for, Irish cinema. It is committed to introducing Irish audiences to provocative, inspirational and thought-provoking international cinema which might not otherwise be seen here.
- **EXCELLENCE** / ADIFF is committed to the delivery of best-in-class programming as well as high-quality, diverse audience and filmmaker experiences.
- **SUPPORT** / ADIFF believes in supporting the work of filmmakers and facilitating the development of film practitioners by providing a platform which showcases talent, offers learning opportunities and creates a forum where valuable new working relationships can be formed.
- **RESPECT** / Trust and mutual respect are central to ADIFF's relationships with its audiences, filmmakers, supporters and stakeholders. The organisation strives to ensure true collaboration in all its activities.
- **REPRESENTATION** / ADIFF aims to be an inclusive and diverse organisation that promotes and delivers equality of opportunity regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation across all its activities, from programming and audience development to employment policies.
- **INNOVATION** / ADIFF will continue to explore the most innovative technologies and strategies available to curate and present the ever-changing art form of the moving image for its audiences.
- **ACCESSIBILITY** / ADIFF strives to ensure that all its audiences have access to its full programme.

CONTEXT

Cinema is rapidly evolving as an art form. New technologies have profoundly changed the way films are made and seen. Digital content is growing at an exponential rate; there are so many ways now to experience film, television and audiovisual content, whether as shortform, feature-length or serial.

Through its programming ADIFF offers a crucial intervention in the exhibition of world cinema in Dublin. It provides a counterweight to the commercial distribution sector's over-emphasis on anglophone content and delivers an informed and lovingly curated programme of the best new international films. The innovative programme recognises the increasing need for alternative ways of seeing and celebrating the richness and breadth of domestic and world cinema in Ireland. It should be noted that many films screened at ADIFF never get further Irish theatrical distribution.

'The festival is a highlight of my events calendar. It enriches me by the access it gives me to the best of world cinema – something that's sadly missing from mainstream cinema here. Through ADIFF I have discovered a love for Japanese and Korean cinema. The "film-documentary" is a format that I've come to appreciate through the festival. But that's picking out details. What I enjoy most is having a total programme curated for me by experts and that's why I am a season ticket holder.'

– BRID NOLAN, Season Ticket Holder



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

In this evolving and challenging context, ADIFF seeks to set ambitious, imaginative and achievable strategic priorities.

By setting these priorities, ADIFF is looking to balance the needs of our audiences (existing and new), and our filmmakers, including actors, directors and writers. ADIFF takes into consideration its funding, its physical and virtual infrastructure, the Irish, European and international film and entertainment environments, our expertise and collaborative capabilities, and our unique, rich legacy.

It is imperative to ensure the organisation's long-term sustainability throughout the life of this strategic plan. Therefore, ADIFF proposes to identify specific elements which can be planned on a longer timeline. These may then be leveraged to drive a broader range of financial supports.

ADIFF also recognises that, as an art form, cinema presents particular planning challenges. The market-driven release schedule, for example, inevitably impacts on festival availability. Such challenges, however, also give rise to one of ADIFF's great strengths, the flexibility and dynamism of its programming.

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The five strategic priorities for the Audi Dublin International Film Festival 2018–2022 address the following areas:

- **ARTISTIC PROGRAMME**
- **AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT**
- **SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT**
- **FESTIVAL POSITION AND PROFILE**
- **ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**



ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

ADIFF offers the very best curated film experience during the festival and at out-of-festival events. Its overarching programme objectives are to:

- Present the best of contemporary world and Irish cinema.
- Celebrate the rich history of cinema through restoration and archive screenings.
- Facilitate engagement between filmmaking talent from around the world and engaged Irish audiences.
- Celebrate the diversity of emerging cinema by promoting new work and new talent.
- Ensure the presentation of film in the highest quality format and environment.

To achieve this ADIFF will:

- Expand current programming policy to encompass more signature events, additional strands and innovative collaborative events.
- Showcase important titles from the silent era, with live musical accompaniment, to ensure silent film continues to be relevant as an art form and as a culturally valuable historical record.
- Develop our Touring Programme in collaboration with film societies and cultural cinema partners.
- Build on our profile as a screenwriting festival to create a well-publicised screenwriting competition and expand the screenwriting elements of our programme.
- Grow our young people’s programme, Fantastic Flix, into a nationally and internationally recognised programme and brand under the ADIFF umbrella, inspiring families and working collaboratively with educators.
- Expand our programme to include guest curators, staff-engagement events, and opportunities for sponsors and partners.
- Increase our outreach programme and events in partnership with DCC and communities across the city.
- Develop a New Storytelling and Technology strand, including VR, AR, gaming and TV, which explores new storytelling strategies in mobile, streaming, and interactive technology (with the support of Screen Training Ireland).
- Develop a platform for online year-round broadcast of our festival masterclasses and exclusive content.

ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC OUTCOMES BY 2022

- ADIFF Inspiration, an internationally recognised signature tribute event
- A 10-venue touring circuit
- A Filmmaker Committee to promote Artist Development
- National and international screenwriting competition
- A Network of sustainable Community Outreach partnerships
- A stand-alone Immersive Content / VR Conference
- ADIFF Public Talks, a two-day event for the national and international industry

‘The Dublin International Film Festival is full of beans and it feels quite distinctive, it’s got personality. Some festivals are pretty sort of cookie-cutter versions of themselves, but Dublin International Film Festival is it’s own thing. The market in Ireland, in the UK, and most countries in the world does not deliver the range of cinema that is being made and so it fails, and therefore the festival circuit exists to augment that failure. Some people think that film festivals just kind of happen and some of the bland ones do. But somebody like Grainne gives it an accent. She’s also brave enough to say to this city “you need this”, which it does. A city like Dublin needs a film festival like that to keep pushing at it. There’s a lot of openness now in this city, a lot of modernity, a lot of diversity, but the festival has to keep pushing that because it’s very important.’

– MARK COUSINS, Writer, Director, Broadcaster



AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

ADIFF has built and continues to develop a loyal and active audience base ranging from occasional attendees to extremely engaged season ticket holders.

ADIFF recognises that there are real opportunities to partner with key stakeholders such as the Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíon, Dublin City Council and with educators (for younger audiences). Consultation and engagement will inform the specific targets and initiatives of our audience development programme.

ADIFF intends to grow its audience base year-on-year by focusing on three key areas over the course of this plan:

- Young audiences (Fantastic Flix)
- Mature/older audiences
- New audiences who have not previously attended the festival

‘We’re going to see a lot of change in the medium term and the opportunity is there for the festival to be the leader in change or adapting to change.’

– ROSS WHITAKER, Director

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

To grow our audiences ADIFF will:

- Continue to ensure the optimum experience at screenings and events by delivering the highest standards with audience care at the fore.
- Seek in-person customer feedback at a range of events to inform programming and marketing choices.
- Develop a multi-pronged approach which includes specific marketing targeted at each audience segment, appropriate and relevant programming choices and partnerships with programme-specific sponsors.
- Build meaningful relationships with our audiences through ongoing dialogue, offering opportunities to experience ADIFF events and to give their feedback throughout the year.
- Through building our brand and through more targeted and effective marketing, grow awareness that ADIFF's events and programmes are for everyone, covering the spectrum from cultural consumers and cinephiles to red carpet fans.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC OUTCOMES BY 2022

- Audience growth of 50% across all elements of programme
- Structured audience evaluation through quantitative and qualitative research
- Completion of phone and in-person survey with all members of database through Volunteer programme
- Two satellite broadcast events in 2020 and 2021
- Engagement of international audience through livestreamed events.



SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

In responding to the organisation's changed operating environment from programming to fundraising, ADIFF recognises the need to embrace and develop new ways of working to ensure the long-term stability of the organisation.

To ensure our long-term sustainability and development ADIFF will:

- Develop and deliver a 5-year development plan for the organisation, with the aim of more closely integrating programming, marketing and fundraising, ensuring that each activity is leveraged to support and enhance the other. To support this initiative, create a Development Advisory Group, separate to the Board, to focus on income generation.
- Diversify our sources of funding in order to avoid over-dependence on a small number of sources and the associated risks of such dependence. This will mean identifying new earned income streams, engaging with philanthropic funding, finding new partnership opportunities, and exploring additional means of accessing public funding.
- Expand our new sponsorship model and grow existing and new commercial relationships which align to the core objectives and vision of the organisation and enhance our long-term sustainability.
- Develop a Friends of the Festival philanthropy programme as a new source of funding.
- Implement best practice in terms of planning and all aspects of resource management, including succession planning for key roles within the Executive and Board.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC OUTCOMES BY 2022

- Sponsorship income increased by 50%
- National and international philanthropic programme contributes 10% turnover
- Individual and Corporate Giving programme contributes 5% turnover
- New constitution published



FESTIVAL POSITION AND PROFILE

It is essential for ADIFF's identity and programme to stand out against a backdrop of commercial cinema programming and a proliferation of cultural festivals. ADIFF's brand, programme and activities must be clearly and effectively communicated both at home and, in line with our international ambitions, abroad.

To ensure the ongoing and clear communication of ADIFF's message, it will:

- Consolidate and grow awareness of the organisation's core brand, values and position amongst audiences, potential audiences and stakeholders.
- Create and deliver strong, innovative annual marketing identity and strategy that responds to the changing needs of audiences, stakeholders and programme.
- Consolidate our vital role as a springboard for Irish film talent, in partnership with the Irish Film Board.
- Annually update and refine our public relations strategy to ensure high visibility is maintained across Irish and international media.
- Continue to make a visual, social and cultural impact on Dublin city through our network of commercial partner venues, our festival club, our partnership with Dublin City Council and the development of a physical hub for the festival in the run-up to and during the flagship festival.
- Continue to develop and refine our digital presence (informed by analytics), focusing on a positive user experience across all platforms, successful social networking community management and effective email and web marketing.
- Build the reputation of ADIFF within Ireland's commercial and business landscape, with the Managing Director acting as an ambassador for ADIFF in this environment so that new income generation and partnership opportunities may be identified.

FESTIVAL POSITION AND PROFILE

Internationally ADIFF will:

- Ensure an ongoing presence and networking opportunities for the festival Director and programming staff at key international festivals and events.
- Continue to work with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland on promoting and tailoring events for international visitors.
- Host international film critics and members of the press with a view to increasing international press coverage.
- Work to achieve the goal of becoming a destination festival, listed as one of the top 10 in Europe.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC OUTCOMES BY 2022

- ADIFF brand and communications strategy reviewed
- Festival website and collateral redesigned and updated
- Festival hub in city centre
- Tour of Irish Cinema to 2 international festivals
- Inclusion in IndieWire's Top 50 Film Festivals

‘ADIFF helps Irish filmmakers launch their films, generating much needed profile. It provides a space for them to meet and mix with other industry professionals both from Ireland and abroad, and engage in robust discussions about the industry.’

– MARTINA NYLAND, TV & Film Producer



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To support longer-term planning and delivery of this strategic plan, we recognise the importance of infrastructural support within the organisation. Achieving our ambition requires the growth and development of both staff and board.

To meet this objective ADIFF will:

- Develop capacity and resources to deliver the ambitious programme outlined in this plan.
- Explore resource-sharing opportunities with peer organisations so that ADIFF can benefit from talented and experienced professionals on a freelance basis.
- Produce a Board Development plan to grow and refresh the skills complement on our board and to reflect the changed operating context of the organisation.
- Become a sector leader from the perspective of corporate governance and best practice in all aspects of the organisation’s work.
- Ensure training, professional development and growth opportunities for staff.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC OUTCOMES BY 2022

- Core staff increased from five to 10
- Succession planning for key roles
- Personal development plans for core staff
- Board development plan implemented
- Strategy Document 2022–2026

CONCLUSION

The strategic objectives set out in this plan are based on a considered appraisal of the opportunities and challenges which ADIFF, as a signature national cultural event, will confront in the five years to 2022. Film as a creative form is particularly sensitive to broader technological, social and cultural shifts. In its modes of production, collaboration, financing and distribution it is also the most transnational of all creative industries.

ADIFF seeks to embrace all these realities: bringing cinema from across the world to Dublin; providing an international launchpad for Irish film artists; exploring the medium's exciting future as well as its rich history, and encouraging truly meaningful audience interaction. Many of Ireland's leading contemporary filmmakers found early inspiration at ADIFF, and a core part of our mission is to reach out and inspire future generations of filmmakers and film lovers.

'The Audi Dublin International Film Festival is the perfect example of a film festival that achieves the rare balance of cultural success in terms of film selection; intervention with the domestic film industry and a selection of guests who relish the opportunity to be part of a smart and welcoming event. ADIFF is the best ambassador Dublin and the Irish film industry could wish for and the great thing is that it continues to get better and better.'

– MARK ADAMS, Artistic Director,
Edinburgh International Film Festival

ABOUT ADIFF

Founded in 2003, the Audi Dublin International Film Festival (ADIFF) is now 15 years old. Each year, ADIFF celebrates the best of new Irish and international cinema and plays host to high profile guests. Established as a Festival curated for audiences, rather than a competitive or industry-orientated event, the programme has always prioritised bringing the best of contemporary cinema to Ireland. ADIFF is now firmly embedded in the Irish cultural landscape and has a growing international reputation.

ADIFF's core elements include a curated programme of the most exciting international cinema currently on offer, the best new Irish cinema, a retrospective of much loved and forgotten classics, a focus on screenwriting and unique access to a plethora of international filmmaking talent including actors, writers and directors and behind the scenes talent. Attended by alumni of high profile guests such as Julie Andrews, Alan Rickman, Danny DeVito, Stanley Tucci, Stellan Skarsgard, Kim Cattrall and Russell Crowe, the festival is an all-encompassing event ranging from the weird and wonderful to the glamorous and exclusive, ADIFF turns the city into a film mecca for cinema-goers of all kinds.

Each year, the festival makes a number of awards, the most prestigious of which is the Volta Award, named after Ireland's first dedicated cinema, the Volta Picture Theatre, which was opened by James Joyce in 1909. The award is given to individuals who have made a significant contribution to the world of cinema. Recipients to date include Al Pacino, Daniel Day-Lewis, Kristen Scott Thomas, Martin Sheen, Paolo Sorrentino and Thierry Fremaux. The jury selected ADIFF Discovery Award promotes and supports new Irish talent and the festival's Audience Award celebrates the audience's favourite film of the festival.

ADIFF is a not-for-profit arts organisation, constituted as a company limited by guarantee, operating with charitable status from the Irish Revenue Commissioners. It is supported by public funding, earned income and sponsorship.

The festival's principal funder is the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and it also receives public funding support from the Irish Film Board/Bord Scannan na hEireann, Dublin City Council, Fáilte Ireland, Culture Ireland, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland and Screen Training Ireland. The remainder of its income is earned through box office, advertising revenue and screening submissions. Audi, a premium car brand, commenced a 3-year relationship with the festival in 2016 with the position of title sponsor. The festival was previously sponsored by Jameson from its inception in 2003 to 2015, which represents one of the longest-standing sponsorships of an arts organisation in Ireland. With the end of the Jameson partnership in 2015, the festival was able to embrace a new sponsorship framework, capitalising on the freedom that all-age appropriate sponsorship brings. The current sponsorship framework incorporates tiered support including Platinum and Gold level sponsorships, media and key festival partnerships as well as cultural supporters and partners.



DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

The purpose of this document is to set out the direction, goals and aspirations of ADIFF for the five year period from 2018 to 2022. This document has been developed through consultation with the executive team and board members as well as stakeholders.

KEY FUNDERS

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon
The Irish Film Board/Bord Scannan Na hEireann
Dublin City Council
Fáilte Ireland
Culture Ireland
The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland
Screen Training Ireland

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Audience members
Filmmakers
Distributors
Venues
Partners
Sales agents
Staff
Volunteers