

# Lights, camera, Irish action

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**FILM FOLK:**Last year was one of the busiest ever for the Irish film industry.**SINEAD GLEESON**talks to the movers and shakers behind the cameras and on the sets about their work, and why now is a fantastic time to be involved in Irish film.

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## **Kate McCullough, cinematographer**

“There is only a small pool of cinematographers in Ireland, who are mostly working at the lower end of the budget. In one sense, the smallness is a positive thing, because people get to know you very quickly. However, you don’t get to work on the same mix of stuff that you would if you worked in the UK or US, but you get to be a bigger fish in a small Irish pool.

“Irish cinematographers are quite well known, they’re getting on the map now. Our generation is very visually aware and it’s quite a young industry. I met Ken Wardrop and Michael Lavelle (the makers of His and Hers) at Dún Laoghaire College of Art and Design. We were blown away by the success of His and Hers. We all knew we had a nice little film on our hands, but you never know what’s going to take hold. It generated a great reaction and morphed into a longer release. I guess people got it because it’s such a universal theme, but at Sundance we were up against so many heavyweight documentaries.

“Last year I also worked on RTE’s Voices from the Grave,my first full feature for television, various short documentaries and Carmel Winters’s Snap. Currently, I’m working on a feature documentary about Nuala O’Faolain, presented by Marian Finucane, who makes a personal journey to explore O’Faolain’s life. I’ll also be reuniting with Michael Lavelle on a short film called Cluck and am working with poet Alice Lyons on an “experimental documentary” about ghost estates.

“Since His and Hers, people definitely inquire more about what I do, and work is coming up regularly. But I’m a bit uneasy about the future. It has crossed my mind that I might not be getting the opportunities I could by being based here and a move is at the back of my mind. Doing well depends on how much exposure you get in a word-of- mouth industry, it’s a mixture of luck, talent and profile. There is definitely less money around because of the economic climate, but luckily I haven’t felt it directly yet. People will have to think outside the box and there will be more co-productions, and several big American ones have already provided a lot work for Irish crews in the past year.

“Some industries took the boom for granted and some got complacent, but in film, you can’t sit back and wait for things to happen. We’re all very passionate about what we do in this industry so hopefully we’ll adapt quicker than others.”

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