

# Why so Serious?



Teaching Comedy in Film Schools  
April 24th to 26th 2023

## Programme Highlights



### Putting the Writers' Room in the Classroom: Keynote

Jill Condon's keynote will bring us from entering her first writers room as a novice scriptwriter to teaching in the classroom and all the awards, fame, challenges, trepidation and good times in between. A twenty-year veteran of television comedy, Jill Condon started her career as an intern on the original Cosby Show while attending New York University. Her Writing and Producing credits include Ned & Stacey, Friends, Grounded For Life and Raising Hope. Her Friends episode "The One With The Embryos" is ranked number 21 in TV Guide's top 100 TV episodes of all time. Pilots include The Glamorous Life, the scripted spin off of America's Next Top Model, for Tyra Banks. Feature Film credits include Malcolm In The Middle, The Movie.

Her keynote will discuss how she successfully turned her classroom into the only professional setting she truly understood: a Writers Room. She will explore the key skills that she acquired in the industry and how to apply them in a teaching environment; how to encourage your students and create writing teams. This keynote will showcase how Jill transitioned from Showrunner to Teacher and how similar these roles really are.



### Paddy Breathnach: Case Study – The Dry

Paddy Breathnach started his directing career making natural history documentaries. His first feature, AILSA, won the Award for Best First / Second Film at the San Sebastian Film Festival. His second feature I WENT DOWN starring Brendan Gleeson, won the New Directors prize at the San Sebastian Film Festival 1997. I WENT DOWN screened at Sundance in 1998 and won the Best Director award at both Thessaloniki and Bogota Film Festivals. He produced SOUTHPAW, a



feature documentary that was selected for Sundance in 1999 and got a US and UK theatrical release.

Breathnach went on to direct BLOW DRY, MAN ABOUT DOG, SHROOMS and RED MIST. In 2012 he completed the documentary AN OICHE A GINEADH M'ATHAIR. In 2016 his Spanish language film VIVA was short listed for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. His latest film, ROSIE, premiered at the 2018 Toronto International Film Festival and was released in the UK in March 2019. Breathnach's newest venture is the comedic series 'The Dry' 2023 which is currently airing on RTE



### Emma Norton: Producer

Emma Norton is a Producer at Element Pictures, working across Film and Television. Recent projects include Normal People (2020) for BBC and Hulu and The Souvenir Part Two (2021), by Joanna Hogg for BBC Films, BFI. Emma previously produced Rosie (2018), written by Roddy Doyle and directed by Paddy Breathnach and A Date for Mad Mary (2016) directed by Darren Thornton. Prior to producing, Emma worked as Head of Development for Element, developing Oscar nominated Room (2015), Oscar nominated The Lobster (2015), Frank (2014), Glassland (2014) and What Richard Did (2012).



### Ted Wilkes: Writer & Lecturer

Ted Wilkes is a genre fiction writer and lecturer from London in the UK. His latest screenplay FULFILMENT is under option at the BAFTA nominated production company ArdimagesUK (GOD'S OWN COUNTRY). His textbook on narrative design Character is Structure: The Insider's Guide to Screenwriting is available now where all good books are sold. He currently lectures at UAL: London College of Communication and Regent's University, London. A selection of his video essay research is available on his YouTube channel Sight Unsound. He also contributes articles on craft and industry intelligence to the Screencraft blog and Arc Studio Pro blog.



### Fergal Costello: Director

Fergal Costello is a graduate from the National Film School, IADT and has gone on to direct feature films, TV series, and ads. He has worked with BBC on his feature film 'We Are Not Alone' (2022) and the children's tv series 'Nova Jones' with ITV on the series 'The Family Pile' and Channel Four on the series 'Comedy Blaps'. His short film 'Brain in Gear' won a BAFTA in 2020.



### Ben Mallaby: Director

Ben Mallaby is a twice BAFTA nominated Comedy Director and Associate Professor in Film at London South Bank University. He is currently mid-way through his PHD which examines comedy performance and audience participation in online platforms.



### Róbert Šveda: Writer & Director

Robert Šveda graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava as a film and television director. During his study at university, he directed some short films which were presented at international festivals in Berlin, Oberhausen, Potsdam and Cottbus. His debut feature film “Demons” (2007) received a very positive response at festivals in Czech Republic and was awarded at festivals in Slovakia, by film industry professionals and critics. In 2012 he released his second feature film “Angels”. Róbert is well known for his work in fiction television including the prize-winning crime series “The City of Shadows” – TV Markiza, the drama series, “Convicted”, “Dr. Perfect”, “Behind a glass”, “How I Survived”, “Chlap”, “Crime Angel”, “Specialist” and “Mordparta”. He has adapted classics from Austen and Rostand for the tv series “Immortal” and directed comedy series such as “Radio fresh”, “Sekerovci family”, and the new comedy crime series “Ghost”.



### Dr. Suzanne Regan

Dr. Suzanne Regan is currently a Professor of Television, Film, and Media Studies at California State University, Los Angeles. She serves as a member of the US Library of Congress Film Preservation Board, which recommends to the Librarian the preservation of films considered aesthetically and culturally important. She also serves as Academic Vice- President and Trustee of the University Film and Video Foundation. Dr. Regan is honoured to be a corresponding member of CILECT and Life Member of the University Film and Video Association.

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