

76
MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2019
Official Selection

The Irish Film
& Television
AWARDS
WINNER
BEST ACTOR
BEST SCRIPT

TOM VAUGHAN-LAWLOR

TOM GLYNN-CARNEY

RIALTO

EEN FILM VAN PETER MACKIE BURNS
SCRIPT MARK O'HALLORAN

FIG EIREANN/SCREEN IRELAND and BFI Present a production from COUNTRY PICTURES and THE BUREAU. A film by PETER MACKIE BURNS. "RIALTO"
TOM VAUGHAN-LAWLOR, TOM GLYNN-CARNEY. COSTUME DESIGNER AMY RYDAN. HAIR STYLISTS CONNIE YARR. MAKEUP ARTIST JONATHAN SHERIDAN. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
TARA FLYNN, THOMAS FLYNN. PRODUCED BY ALISON BYRNE. PRODUCTION DESIGNER SARAH FINLAY. DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ADAM SCARFE. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS CELINE HARBOUR, LIZZIE FRANKIE VINCENT, GABRIELLE
PRODUCED BY ALAN MAHER, JOHN WALLACE, TRISTAN GLOUGHER, VALENTINA BRAZZINI. BASED ON THE STAGE PLAY "RIALTO" BY MARK O'HALLORAN. SCREENPLAY BY MARK O'HALLORAN. DIRECTED BY PETER MACKIE BURNS.
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ZEER KRACHTIGE CINEMA!

- Variety

**GOED SCRIPT
EN UITSTEKEND
GEACTEERD**

- Hollywood Reporter

Synopsis

De 46-jarige Colm heeft een ogenschijnlijk fijn leventje; prima baan in de haven van Dublin, twee gezonde tienerkinderen en een lieve vrouw. Maar Colm is eigenlijk homoseksueel en leeft al lang met zijn geheime gevoelens. Hij wordt er gek van en heeft dan op een dag in een toilet van een winkelcentrum seks met Jay, een 19-jarige prostituee. Een dag later komt Jay op zijn kantoor en eist geld anders licht hij zijn vrouw in. Colm is nog bevangen van zijn eerste ervaring en blijft met hem omgaan want hij raakt seksueel steeds meer in hem geïnteresseerd en voor Jay is het geld welkom. Als Colm hoort dat hij door een reorganisatie ontslag krijgt stort zijn leven in. Zijn vrouw Claire wil hem helpen maar ze kan hem niet bereiken. Hij kan zijn onrust alleen kwijt bij Jay en gaat door met zijn coming-out.

Korte synopsis

Colm heeft een fijn leventje met zijn vrouw en kinderen maar hij leeft al lang met zijn geheime homoseksuele gevoelens. Op een dag heeft hij seks met Jay, een 19-jarige prostituee. Een dag later verschijnt Jay op zijn kantoor en perst hem af. Colm is nog bevangen van zijn eerste ervaring en blijft met hem omgaan en voor Jay is het geld welkom. Als Colm door een reorganisatie ontslag krijgt stort zijn leven in. Hij kan zijn onrust alleen kwijt bij Jay en gaat door met zijn coming-out.

Oneliner

Een 46-jarige vader en echtgenoot worstelt met zijn homoseksuele gevoelens en na een ontmoeting met een jonge mannelijke prostituee verandert zijn hele leven.

Achtergrond

De speelfilm is gebaseerd op het toneelstuk "Trade" van de Ierse toneelschrijver en scenarioschrijver Mark O'Halloran, die in 2011 hiermee de Irish Times Theatre Award voor beste toneelstuk won. O'Halloran paste zijn eigen werk aan en zijn scenario is een prachtig geobserveerd verhaal over vaders en zonen, de onmogelijkheid om aan de verwachtingen van anderen te voldoen en de mogelijkheid om te veranderen. In "Rialto" worden de twee hoofdrollen gespeeld door de acteurs Tom Vaughan-Lawlor (Ebony Maw in de Avengers-films, Daphne, The Infiltrator, Becoming Jane) en Tom Glynn-Carney (Dunkirke, Tolkien) als respectievelijk de vader van middelbare leeftijd en de prostituee voor wie hij onverwachts valt.



NOTES ON THE FILM BY DIRECTOR

If we told people what was really in our heads – if we admitted it to ourselves, even – what would happen, do you think?”

Apologizing – the light, automatic kind of apologizing – comes easily to Colm, the protagonist of *Rialto*. He frequently mutters “sorry” to people before they’ve finished speaking, because he is accustomed to the assumption that he’s done something wrong, that he’s a disappointment, that things are his fault. Colm also refers to himself as “useless” a lot. These are habits, we gradually learn, born of having a father who constantly sought to make him feel ashamed of himself. We don’t see Colm’s father in the film, because he has recently died, and yet his presence is everywhere: in Colm’s grief and that of his widowed mother; in the belongings that still need to be sorted out and disposed of; in the inconvenient, wraithlike presence of the woman who was his mistress; and in the fraught relationship between Colm and his own son, Shane. As much as he might have loathed his father, Colm isn’t ready to take on the mantle of his family’s male elder. Why would he want to emulate the authority of a man who brought him so much pain? And what if he’s not up to it anyway? After all, his fear of being exposed as “useless” is borne out when he suddenly loses the steady job he’s held for thirty years... In the midst of his sorrow and confusion, Colm does something he’s never done before: solicits sex from a young man. He doesn’t know the etiquette of the situation. He doesn’t even recognize that his pick-up, Jay, expects him to pay. Out comes that word he uses a lot: Sorry. Sorry.

That Colm works for a shipping company provides *Rialto* with some of its most beautiful imagery, as when this unhappy man – perhaps contemplating suicide, perhaps just in search of extremity – suspends himself precariously on a crane, far above ground and overhanging endless mysterious ranks of machinery and containers. But the port setting also invokes the theme of escape and belonging: the arbitrary nature of where we find ourselves moored, versus the ever-present possibility of disappearing for other shores. The freedom of seafaring has long been associated with gay life, with port cities such as San Francisco and Amsterdam developing vibrant gay subcultures. Yet the idea that Colm is a long-closeted gay man who just needs to let out his inner sailor to be happy is interestingly absent from *Rialto*. The title refers to the area of Dublin where Colm grew up and where his mother still lives; his journey, implicitly, involves coming to terms with where he’s from and who he is, not jettisoning both for a new identity.

This film asks not “what does one individual need to be happy?”, so much as “what do we owe to those who need us, those who are invested in us?” Personal fulfilment – so often a preoccupation of cinema narratives – may after all come not from the unfettered expression or enactment of desires, but from the full acceptance of how our desires impact upon others. A spiel of business-speak we hear from the new boss of Colm’s company (“We don’t see this as a simple acquisition, but rather as an opportunity to merge two strong, separate entities, and by sharing best practices in both, to make something new, something stronger...”) might be cold comfort to those about to lose their jobs, but it’s not a bad way to look at human relationships.



Colm is stunned when he himself becomes a victim of the cull. But within his cry that "I've never been nothing else!" is recognition of possibility as well as a howl of pain. Colm can, now, be something else - just as he can, in the absence of his father, be more than a bullied son. Rialto is a portrait of a man grasping for comfort, for pleasure, for emotional autonomy and - ultimately - for an identity. Subtle in its storytelling and complex in the emotions it depicts, it never forces us into a position with regard to what the outcome ought to be. Mark O'Halloran, one of Ireland's most celebrated screenwriters, has crafted a script that confronts powerful emotions without recourse to manipulation or melodrama; and Peter Mackie Burns builds on the promise of his acclaimed debut feature DAPHNE with another lucid, compelling and unpredictable study of how big questions affect little lives.

BIOGRAFIEËN

Peter Mackie Burns

Peter was born in Glasgow, Scotland. He spent much of his childhood in rural England and attended boarding school in Germany. He studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and completed his MA at Goldsmiths' College, London. He later studied screenwriting at the Binger Film Lab in Amsterdam.

Peter worked in theatre directing new work before his short film MILK starring Brenda Fricker won the Golden Bear at Berlinale 2005. His second short RUN screened at Telluride 2007. Peter's debut feature film DAPHNE starring Emily Beecham premiered at Rotterdam International Film Festival 2017

Tom Vaughan-Lawlor

Born in Dublin in 1977, Tom Vaughan-Lawlor studied at London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and has since worked extensively in theatre in Dublin, London's West End and the wider UK. He became familiar to Irish television audiences through his role in the highly acclaimed television crime series LOVE/HATE. He also appeared in series 3 of the BBC period crime hit PEAKY BLINDERS, and in Tony Marchant's 2016 BBC adaptation of Joseph Conrad's THE SECRET AGENT. Vaughan-Lawlor's film work includes Jim Sheridan's THE SECRET SCRIPTURE, Stephen Burke's hit historical prison drama MAZE, Peter Mackie Burns' debut film DAPHNE, and the role of Ebony Maw in AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR. He lives in Kent, England with his wife and two children.

Tom Glynn-Carney

A native of Salford in the north of England, Tom Glynn-Carney attended London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and made his film debut Christopher Nolan's 2017 war epic DUNKIRK. He won the Evening Standard Theatre Award for Emerging Talent for his performance in Jez Butterworth's highly acclaimed play THE FERRYMAN, which was directed by Sam Mendes and transferred from the West End to Broadway. He has since appeared in the biopic TOLKIEN, directed by Tome Karukoski, and in David Michôd's Shakespeare adaptation THE KING (Official Competition - Venice 2019). He lives in London.



INTERVIEW MET MAKER PETER MACKIE BURNS

How did you become attached to the project? Were you familiar with Mark O'Halloran's writing?

I've been a great fan of Mark's writing for many years. ADAM AND PAUL and GARAGE are films I adore for their poetic language and pitch-black humour. So although I didn't know the play it was based on, I was immediately interested when producer Tristan Goligher suggested I read this script. I was gripped by Colm, and by the terrible predicament in which he finds himself. I found the story fresh, original - and quite unlike anything else I'd read. It was funny; sad; insightful; often painful, but full of a rising tension that I found really compelling. I knew immediately that I wanted to make it. I met with Mark and producer Alan Maher in Galway and we began to shape the project. I don't know if Mark would accept the compliment but I think he's up there with the very best Irish writers working today.

What, for you, is this story about?

I hope the work will speak for itself in terms of meaning. What might resonate with an individual after seeing the movie? What questions or emotions may arise? Will particular moments or images linger? I hope people empathise with Colm, the central character, who has inflicted terrible damage but finds the courage to face himself.

The film explores the relationships between fathers and sons, and the mothers and daughters who deal with the fallout of a dominant and extremely dangerous type of masculinity that destroys generations of families. It examines the cumulative destructive power of shame, and the inability of men to articulate their innermost feelings due to their conditioning and role models. RIALTO also touches on the pressure that many families face in the context of global recession. Ultimately, though, it's about a complex character who finds himself re-examining his whole life in the course of the grieving process.

To what extent do you consider this to be a film about sexuality?

The two central male characters create a deeply flawed "safe space" - an arena where they can talk openly to each other about their feelings, desires and regrets. It is the very act of defining this arena via commerce that initially frames and enables their relationship. Sex is part of the story; but it also explores questions of identity, and differing ideas and types of masculinity.

At its centre is the relationship between two damaged men, both fathers. The death of Colm's father and the birth of Jay's daughter brings them together, and their relationship allows them to perform and reverse roles - father and son, exploiter and exploited, victim and aggressor, and finally, for a brief time, friends.

This doesn't bring them any easy answers or trite endings, but I hope it rewards audiences with some resonant questions



How was the casting process?

Great fun! I was extremely fortunate to work with the renowned Irish casting director Amy Rowan. Tom Vaughan-Lawlor and I had worked together on my previous film DAPHNE, and I thought he would be wonderful for the role of Colm. I first saw Tom in the Irish TV series LOVE/ HATE and thought he was a truly great talent - his performance in RIALTO is extraordinary. Tom Glynn-Carney is a rising star who reminds me of a young Albert Finney. Monica Dolan is simply an amazing actor; Eileen Walsh is someone I've been keen to work with for a long time - it really felt like I lucked out with such an extraordinary cast. I'm thankful to all of them.

INTERVIEW MET TOM VAUGHAN-LAWLOR (COLM)

How did the part of Colm come your way?

I had worked with Peter on DAPHNE, and then I bumped into him at the Galway Film Festival. He said he was going to do the next Mark O'Halloran script, and there might be something in it for me. I think Mark is such a brilliant writer that I was like "if it's a day, if it's two scenes - I'll do whatever you want me to do." I was doing a play in the West End when I got sent the script, and I just couldn't believe it. I was breathless by the end. It was one of those un-turndownable parts! The journey he goes on, the depth of his suffering, his search for identity - it's an actor's dream, really. When the writing is that good, there's so much room for exploration. And Peter is sort of merciless in his drive to get you into certain places; so I was blessed by having the dialogue, and Peter as director, coming at me from both sides. It's just an astonishing part.

A little different from being part of the Marvel Universe...

Very different!! Some parts pay really well; other parts you feel like you really earn it...

Did you work out your own backstory for Colm?

I was lucky to have sessions with Peter and Mark where the three of us would go through the script and talk about the character's history and his reasons for the choices he makes. Essentially, the death of his father has exploded his life, and he's realised he's a man who has no idea who he really is. Then this young man comes into his life, and he steps through a door; it takes him out of himself. The hardest scenes to film were the family scenes. He says to the young man, "there's no lies between us", and those scenes were - not easy, but there was a freedom and an honesty. Whereas with the family, there's all this buried shame, and



guilt, and damage, and the legacy of addiction. It's awful. And yet - without giving anything away - I think there's a lot of hope in the film. The status quo in the house is so dysfunctional, it's so painful, but it's something they've all put up for years and years. In a way, this incident - it's an explosion that will be useful in the long term, strangely.

Mark's script is so multi-layered, it's so sharp. What was wonderful for me was that initially, I was really reading into it, trying to figure out what every metaphor was. And Peter was like,

"All that stuff is irrelevant: you just have to be in it, and not worry, because that's my job!" He's a really interesting director, in that any whiff of sentiment or earnestness he's like: "No. F*ck that." He just wouldn't let me get away with anything sentimental. And yet, at the same time, he used to text me at the end of every day to make sure I was OK. His care towards me I found incredibly moving. You just feel so looked after as an actor. You don't always get that sort of trust.

How was it for you to watch the film?

It was so strange. I've never felt more inside a part, I found it hard to be objective even watching it. I can make a thesis about what he is or who he is, but I've no idea really, and that's a relief in a way. I don't intellectualise it. The biggest relief to me in watching it was that I just think it's a wonderful film. I think it's really poetic; I think it's strange and odd and ballsy and elegant... And [cinematographer] Adam Scarth shot it so beautifully; and all the performances are so truthful and low-key. I feel very proud of it.

Did you know Tom Glynn-Carney prior to filming?

No, not at all, but he's a gorgeous man and a brilliant actor. And his accent was so brilliant! When you're shooting intimate scenes that need all that vulnerability and tenderness, you've no idea how it's going to go - but it was a great match, I think. We had so many debates about their final moment together, and the end of the film - who comes home, what it all means. What's great is the ambiguity. It leaves everything open to potential and to possibility. Who knows?



INTERVIEW MET TOM GLYNN-CARNEY (JAY)

What led you to become involved with RIALTO?

My agent got in touch with me about it, and when I saw the words 'Written by Mark O'Halloran' I knew immediately that I would be interested. ADAM AND PAUL is one of my all-time favourites. As for the script itself, I was captured by it from the first page. I found Jay to be so layered and complex - battling with poverty, major responsibility, trauma and vulnerability, but with a taste for the unknown.

Jay is such a vivid character – how did you build him?

A lot of him was created by Mark's beautiful writing. I had a friend in mind that I wanted to use as a foundation for the way he moved his body - idiosyncrasies; even the way he used his eyes. But he was definitely born from his story and his situation.

Everyone has raved about the accuracy of your accent: is this a particular skill set of yours?

I've been lucky enough to play a fair few Irish characters now, but this was my first Dubliner and a different challenge altogether. I had to retrain my mouth and brain to hear all the sounds I'd learnt in a different way and find the tune of the inner city Dubliner. I had some help from [Dublin actor and writer] Emmet Kirwan, who was brilliant; and I made the decision to remain in the accent for the length of the shoot, which drove my friends and family mental.

What is your view on the relationship between Jay and Colm?

Sexuality really wasn't a big talking point for me. For me, this is a story about a man who has experienced loss and a huge shift in his life, which has made him aware of how precious life is, and how important it is to seek fulfilment and happiness whilst we have the chance. The journey toward this can be bumpy, but finding your true self and being honest to yourself and to others can save lives. Love can form in a variety of ways, and this is a love story of sorts. Jay and Colm are from completely different worlds, but validation becomes their common ground.

Was the shoot an intense or a challenging experience?

This was definitely one of the darker projects I've been involved in, and tragically very personal to so many - so I felt the duty to really invest in what it was I was trying to portray. Society sets people like Jay up to fail: he's curious, brave, willing to explore but still a very vulnerable member of society with a huge target on his back. I worked hard to find glimpses into his world. Tom Vaughan-Lawlor was an absolute dream to play alongside. His keen eye for detail, immense focus and generosity were everything I needed to do my job. He's a remarkable actor - such nuance and subtlety. The man also has an infinite supply of anecdotes, mainly featuring older actors and tales of their weird and wonderful behaviour! Tom, Peter Mackie-Burns and Michael Smiley (who were also a pleasure to work with) were real experts in lightening the mood when it all got a bit too heavy.



How are you feeling about the film being seen by audiences?

Making RIALTO has made me aware of the lengths you have to be willing to go to if you really want to throw yourself in at the deep end. It's vital for me as an actor to believe in my situation as much as possible. I find the feelings stick around for a little while afterwards - but that's a small price to pay for the story you're telling.

I'm excited and nervous for the world to see RIALTO. It's exposing, dark, painful, funny and tragic - but the film shows real human beings who, even at their ugliest, are seeking the love and attention they need to make them feel alive.

I'm sure many will find resonances with their own lives, and I hope it will shed light on under-discussed subjects

FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

Göteborg Film Festival 2020

Nominee Dragon Award	International Competition Peter Mackie Burns
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Irish Film and Television Awards 2020

Winner IFTA Award	Best Actor in a Lead Role - Film Tom Vaughan-Lawlor
	Best Script Film Mark O'Halloran Cowtown Pictures

Istanbul International Film Festival 2020

Nominee International Competition	Best Film Peter Mackie Burns
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Thessaloniki Film Festival 2019

Nominee Golden Alexander	Peter Mackie Burns
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Venice Film Festival 2019

Nominee Queer Lion	Peter Mackie Burns (director)
Nominee Venice Horizons Award	Best Film Peter Mackie Burns



CAST

TOM VAUGHAN-LAWLOR

COLM

TOM GLYNN-CARNEY

JAY

MONICA DOLAN

CLAIRE

SOPHIE JO WASSON

KERRY

SCOTT GRAHAM

SHANE

MICHAEL SMILEY

NOEL

DEIRDRE DONNELLY

MIRIAM

EILEEN WALSH

PAUL A

DEIRDRE MOLLOY

CAROLINE



CREW

DIRECTOR

PETER MACKIE BURNS

SCREENWRITER

MARK O'HALLORAN

Based upon the stage play, TRADE, by Mark O'Halloran

CINEMATOGRAPHER

ADAM SCARTH

EDITOR

TIM FULFORD

SOUND DESIGNER

JOAKIM SUNDS TRÖM

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

SARAH FINLAY

COSTUME DESIGNER

ALLISON BYRNE

PRODUCERS

ALAN MAHER

JOHN WALLACE TRISTAN GOLIGHER

VALENTINA BRAZZINI

TECHNICAL DETAILS

DURATION: 1H30' FORMAT: HD

ASPECT RATIO: 1:85 SOUND: 5.1

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH



PRODUCTION

COW TOWN PICTURES

ALAN MAHER, JOHN WALLACE ALAN@COWTOWNPICTURES.IE
WWW.COWTOWNPICTURES.IE

THE BUREAU

TRISTAN GOLIGHER

VALENTINA BRAZZINI

HELLO@THEBUREAUFILMS.COM

WWW.THEBUREAUFILMS.COM

DISTRIBUTIE BENELUX:

ARTI FILM – HILVERSUM – NETHERLANDS

WWW.ARTIFILM.NL - INFO@ARTIFILM.NL

Tel.: +31(6)23885005

