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LITTLE ROSE FILMS



# MAGILLIGAN

A film by Ross McClean  
UK / Ireland / USA | 2026 | 73'



## PRESS NOTES

**Producer**

Here and Elsewhere Films  
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## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Imprisoned as a teenager for a violent offence, Ryan finds purpose working with sheep on the prison farm. But the order of the inside is a stark contrast to the chaos he finds upon release as his past refuses to go quietly. *Magilligan* is an intimate portrait of a man caught between two worlds, with more than just his freedom at stake.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

Between the all-too-familiar walls of prison and his mother's home, Ryan grapples with himself, finding an escape by tending sheep in a correctional programme amid the green fields of Northern Ireland. Ross McClean (*No Mean City*, VdR 2025) had met his protagonist during a previous project at Hydebank Prison, making an eponymously titled short film with him. Here, he continues his portrait, exploring the role of family and environment as frameworks from which it is difficult to escape. While the filmmaker's grandfather managed to break free from the controversial Unionist fraternity of the Orange Order, Ryan has inherited the burden of a family history marked by prison and unrest, from which he must now free himself, with all the weight of grief, addiction and the threats that such a past continues to carry. In this poignant film, Ross McLean grants him a space for freedom, a gentle and gracious embrace in which to try to escape determinism.

*Long synopsis by Émilie Bujès - Visions du Réel 2026*

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The first image I had of Ryan was of him tending to newborn lambs against the backdrop of intimidating prison walls. It was a biblical image and one I'll not forget. This small corner of an otherwise imposing environment had become a kind of oasis for him.

I made a short film about Ryan's relationship with the sheep in this space (*Hydebank*, 2019), but I always felt there was more to his story than that film could hold. I knew I wanted to follow him over a longer period and understand what would happen when the routine and containment of prison gave way to the pressures of life outside. In Northern Ireland, 46% of people released from custody reoffend within a year. I was aware from the outset how often leaving prison marks the beginning of another cycle rather than the end of one.

What unfolded was far more complex than a straightforward story of freedom. After spending some of his most formative years inside, Ryan struggled to cope with the demands and instability of life beyond the gate. Outside, the structure he had come to depend on fell away, while the weight of his past returned. The longer I followed him, the more the film became about whether Ryan's path had already been set by his upbringing and community, or whether he could imagine and sustain another life for himself.

Set in Northern Ireland, *Magilligan* is rooted in a place where questions of identity, inheritance and belonging carry particular weight. But I am less interested in explaining that context than in staying close to one man's struggle within it. In following Ryan over time, I wanted to understand what it really takes to break a cycle when the world around you has already shaped the limits of what you can imagine for yourself.



## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR - ROSS MCCLEAN

Ross McClean is a filmmaker from Belfast. He studied creative documentary in Canada, Hungary, Portugal and Belgium, graduating from the European documentary directing master's programme DocNomads. On returning home, Ross has lectured at Queen's University while creating work about his homeland.



His first short film, *Hydebank* (2019), premiered at DOK Leipzig, IDFA, Hot Docs and Clermont-Ferrand, and won Best Short Documentary at Galway, London Short FF, Docs Ireland and Leeds. His following short, *Echo* (2023), premiered at IDFA, True/False, Sheffield DocFest and Camerimage.

Ross' most recent film, *No Mean City* (2025), premiered at Visions du Réel, won a Golden Frog for Best Short Documentary at Camerimage, Best Director at Cork IFF, and Best British/Irish Short Film at Leeds and Docs Ireland. It has also been nominated for an IFTA award.

His debut feature-length documentary, *Magilligan* (2026), supported by DocSociety and Arte, will premiere in the international competition in Visions Du Réel.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCERS

### **Bronte Stahl (Producer)**

Bronte Stahl (1993) is a filmmaker from Westerly, RI, USA. He graduated from the European itinerant MFA program DocNomads and is an alumnus of the Flaherty Seminar Fellowship, IDFA Project Space, Eurodoc and Points North Fellowship. The films he directs including *Puiet* (2022), *Terril* (2019) and *Lungs* (2017) have premiered at festivals such as Venice Critics Week (Best Short Film), Rotterdam and DocLisboa, respectively. As a producer, he is compelled to elevate emerging international voices in non-fiction cinema. This work has been supported by the Sundance Documentary Fund, DocSociety US, British Film Institute, and LEF Foundation, among others. His first feature as a producer, *Rejeito* (2023) by Pedro de Filippis, premiered at Cinéma du Réel and screened at HotDocs, Camden, IDFA and many others. The second feature, *Magilligan* (2026) by Ross McClean will premiere in the international competition at Visions du Réel. From 2022-2024 he held a Fulbright scholarship to Romania in the field of filmmaking.

### **Roisín Geraghty (Co-Producer)**

Roisín Geraghty is an independent producer based in County Mayo, in the North West of Ireland, who has been working in the film industry for fifteen years.

In early 2020, she established the production company Little Rose Films. The company's first release was the multi-award-winning short film *THE PASSION*, based on the Donal Ryan short story and directed by Mia Mullarkey, which premiered in the summer of 2021, and was nominated for an IFTA award for best short film, amongst many other award nominations and wins. Roisín is the producer of *SUNLIGHT*, directed by Claire Dix, a feature film funded under the Screen Ireland POV Female Creative Talent Scheme, produced with Keeper Pictures in association with Little Rose Films. The film has screened at film festivals including Sydney Film Festival, Glasgow Film Festival and Dublin International Film Festival, and had its cinema release in the UK & Ireland in 2023.

Roisín is a producer on the feature documentary co-production *A WANT IN HER*, directed by Myrid Carten, funded by Screen Ireland, Doc Society, the New Dawn Fund and the Netherlands Film Fund. The film premiered at IDFA in late 2024, and has gone on to be nominated for Outstanding Debut at the 2026 BAFTA Awards, as well as winning numerous awards, including three major awards at the British Independent Film Awards (Best Documentary, Raindance Maverick Award, Best Debut Director - Documentary), the jury award at Docpoint Helsinki, Best Documentary and the Audience Award at Dublin International Film Festival 2025, and the Pull Focus Award at Docs Ireland. In addition to this, she is co-producing the feature documentary *MAGILLIGAN*, directed by Ross McClean, which will be released in 2026, and *AMANDA*, directed by José Miguel Jimenez, funded by the Arts Council of Ireland, which premiered at Dublin International Film Festival, which was the runner up for the festival's audience award.

She produced the Reel Art-funded feature documentary *WE ARE MOVING - MEMORIES OF MISS MORIARTY* (2016) and the Screen Ireland funded short *TAKE ME SWIMMING* (2018) with director Claire Dix, and the Irish Arts Council-funded, multi award winning short film *FIVE LETTERS TO THE STRANGER WHO WILL DISSECT MY BRAIN* (2018) with director Oonagh Kearney.

Roisín is an alumni of the Rotterdam Producers Lab (2020), and Ji:hlava IDFF's Emerging Producers Programme.

# CREDITS

A film by	Ross McClean
Produced by	Bronte Stahl (Here and Elsewhere Films, USA) Ross McClean (Nightstaff, UK)
Co-producer	Roisín Geraghty (Little Rose Films, Ireland)
Written by	Ross McClean Bronte Stahl
Director of Photography	Ross McClean
Edited by	Dragoş Apetri Ross McClean
Story Editor	Phil Harrison
Supervising Sound Editor	Tamás Varga
Sound designer	Tadhg O'Sullivan
Sound re-recording mixer	Gilles Bernardeau
Original Score	Irene Buckley

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