

Wildfire

Director: Cathy Brady. Ireland, 2020. 85 min. (15)

With: Nika McGuigan, Nora-Jane Noone, Martin McCann and Kate Dickie



After writing and directing a series of short films, and then directing a season of the RTÉ series *Can't Cope, Won't Cope* (which also starred Nika McGuigan), Cathy Brady got her big-screen feature break with this story of two sisters investigating a troubled family history on the Irish border. The reference to the wider Troubles is clear enough, but this is really a film about frayed relationships and the oppressive legacy of families, which in its evocation of the borderland owes more to Patrick Kavanagh's *The Great Hunger* than Seamus Heaney.

McGuigan died of cancer shortly after the film was made, which gives her role as Kelly a tragic colouring. As Lauren, Nora-Jane Noone is the film's pivot: the sister who stayed in search of a normal life in a community that remains reluctant to grant the sisters peace.

Pre-recorded intro for WFC by director Cathy Brady

"Lauren and Kelly's tumultuous confrontations with their pasts and each other naturally has echoes in the film's nods to Ireland's fraught, and by no means settled, modern history. Yet Wildfire crucially never reduces itself to allegory, instead living through the unpredictable, jagged arcs of its characters as they work toward an understanding of themselves and each other." Jake Cole, *Slant*.

"Brady, raised in Newry, established her reputation with a series of brilliant shorts at the beginning of the last decade, and her talent for electrifying vignettes remains undiminished." Donald Clarke, *Irish Times*.

British Independent Film Awards: best debut screenwriter; Irish Film and Television Awards: best director, best actress in a lead role (McGuigan)

Please rate the film out of 5* (5 = top score) at the screening room door as you leave.

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