

the Secret of Kells



a film by **Tomm Moore**



Les Armateurs / Vivi Film / Cartoon Saloon / France 2 Cinéma
Present



the Secret of Kells

A film by **Tomm Moore**

Co-directed by **Nora Twomey**
Screenplay **Fabrice Ziolkowski**
Original music **Bruno Coulais**



World Sales

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the directors label



Ireland/France/Belgium - 2009 - 75 min - Colour - English

www.thesecretofkells.com



Synopsis

Adventure, action and danger await 12 year old Brendan who must fight Vikings and a serpent god to find a crystal and complete the legendary Book of Kells.

Brendan is hard at work with his uncle, Abbott Cellach and the other monks, helping to strengthen the abbey walls as protection against the Viking raids. But a new life of adventure begins with the arrival of Brother Aidan and his cat, a celebrated master illuminator who initiates Brendan into the art of illumination, awakening his hidden, but extraordinary talents.

In order to finish the magnificent book, Brendan has to overcome his deepest fears on a secret quest that will take him for the first time ever, beyond the abbey's walls into the enchanted forest where dangerous mythical creatures hide. It is here that he meets the fairy Aisling, a mysterious young white wolf/girl, who will become his closest friend and helper.

But with the terrifying Viking Hordes closing in, will Brendan succeed in his quest to illuminate the darkness and prove that enlightenment is the best fortification against barbarians?

Tomm Moore on The Secret of Kells

With this film the main ambition for myself and my main collaborators on the production has been to tell a story that is entertaining and captivating for a young audience while dealing with themes that will carry a resonance for all ages.

As well as telling a fantasy - adventure story set in an exciting period of Ireland's history we endeavored to bring a taste of Irish culture and design to the screen and to deal with the importance of art and enlightenment even in challenging and difficult times. The film explores some universal themes. For example, between Brendan and his guardian, Abbot Cellach there is the classic conflict between parent and child as they find their way in the world. Between Brother Aidan and Brendan there is the story of mentor and student. With Aisling we explore themes of friendship and sacrifice. Ultimately I believe it is a story of redemption, continuity and hope.

Writing the story and developing the look of the locations and characters required extensive research. For the fantasy elements such as the enchanted forest and Crom Cruach we turned to Irish legends and fairy tales. Other parts of the film are based on the actual history of the time, as far as it is known.





It was important to have a naturalness to the dialogue and the actors performances to allow a modern audience relate to the story and also to preserve a quality of the Irish accent and expressions. At certain points we used Irish language sayings and proverbs, in particular in Aisling's speech and in her song, linking her to the more ancient world of myth.

The visual style of the film is inspired by ancient Celtic Art and illuminated medieval manuscripts, including of course, the Book of Kells.

The animation is primarily staged and drawn using the limited perspective and geometry that is strongly reminiscent of medieval art. This style was quite challenging to translate to screen but we feel the final result justified the extra effort. We feel we have found a style that is unique and appropriate to the story.

Many of the locations are based on ancient Irish monuments. For example Kells Abbey itself is based partly on research but of course is exaggerated and stylised.

For the scenes in the forest we looked at the passage graves and stone carvings from the Megalithic period and incorporated their design into the background art.

We used mainly traditional hand drawn techniques supplemented by carefully crafted computer animation. The digital techniques were used for complex or difficult sequences, and were specially designed to fit the style.

In an environment where 3D computer graphics is the dominant visual look for theatrical animated features many of the most influential animation artists still insist that there are stories that are best told with traditional animation. With our influences and subject matter concerning some of the greatest craftsmen and artists who ever lived we felt strongly that this film is one of those stories.

Luckily, our producers believed in the importance of keeping a handmade feel and unique look for the film.



The Book of Kells

The Book of Kells is a stunningly beautiful manuscript containing the Four Gospels. It is Ireland's most precious medieval artifact, and is generally considered the finest surviving illuminated manuscript to have been produced in medieval Europe.

Origins and History:

The Book of Kells was probably produced in a monastery on the Isle of Iona, Scotland, to honor Saint Columba in the early 8th century. After a Viking raid the book was moved to Kells, Ireland, sometime in the 9th century. It was stolen in the 11th century, at which time its cover was torn off and it was thrown into a ditch. The cover, which most likely included gold and gems, has never been found, and the book suffered some water damage; but otherwise it is extraordinarily well-preserved. In 1541, at the height of the English Reformation, the book was taken by the Roman Catholic Church for safekeeping. It was returned to Ireland in the 17th century, and Archbishop James Ussher gave it to Trinity College, Dublin, where it resides today.

Construction:

The Book of Kells was written on vellum (calfskin), which was time-consuming to prepare properly but made for an excellent, smooth writing surface. 680 individual pages (340 folios) have survived, and of them only two lack any form of artistic ornamentation. In addition to incidental character illuminations, there are entire pages that are primarily decoration, including portrait pages, "carpet" pages and partially decorated pages with only a line or so of text. As many as ten different colors were used in the illuminations, some of them rare and expensive dyes that had to be imported from the continent. The workmanship is so fine that some of the details can only be clearly seen with a magnifying glass.



Tomm Moore

DIRECTOR

Tomm Moore is co-Founder and company director of Cartoon Saloon.

Since founding the company in 1999 with Paul Young, Tomm has worked on almost every Cartoon Saloon production in various capacities including directing and designing commercials for clients including Cadburys and the Irish Independent, illustrating graphic novels and children's books and working as animation artist on several tv series and feature film productions. Having completed his first feature film "The Secret of Kells" he is currently working on the graphic novels of the film and his new feature film "The Song of the Sea". Tomm is a lifelong comic book and animation enthusiast

Filmography as Director

The Secret of Kells - Feature Film 2009. Distributed by Buena Vista Ireland, Gebeka Films France, KFD Belgium and Celluloid Dreams for international sales.

Couch Potato - Animated Short, 3 mins - Animated poem - First Cinema release in July 2004 (Galway film festival). Funded and distributed by The Irish Film Board.

Dress Rehearsal - Animated Short, 3mins - Silent comedy where a magic wand comes to life. Released by www.Atomfilms.com October 2001.
Winner of the UIP award for best Animation director 2001 Ireland.
Funded by Irish Filmboard and Atomfilms.

Filmography as ART DIRECTOR

Cuilín Dualach - Irish language Animated Short, 10 mins - First Cinema release October 2004 (Cork Film festival). "An Oscailt" production for, Funded by The Irish Film Board and TG4 (Irish broadcaster), for release on TG4 in 2004/2005.

Winner Best short-film, Pulcinella Awards 2005



Nora Twomey

Co-DIRECTOR

Nora studied animation at Ballyfermot College in Dublin during which time she won a prestigious internship to Disney's studio in Paris. Having graduated in 1997 she worked in the industry for a year before becoming one of the founding members of the Cartoon Saloon in Kilkenny in 1999.

In 2002, she directed her first short film, 'From Darkness', an animation based on an Inuit folktale. Awards include the Silver Award, KAFI Animation festival, USA 2003 and Best Short, Boston Irish Film Festival, USA 2003.

In 2004, 'Celtic Maidens', a short comical infomercial, was selected for competition at Animafest, Zagreb's animation festival.

'CúilínDualach' (Backwards Boy) an Irish language animated short film about a boy, born with his head on backwards was completed in 2004. Awards highlights include Best short film, Cartoons on the Bay, Italy 2005, Best Animation for Children, Animadrid, 2005 and Best Animated Short, Irish Film and Television Awards, Ireland 2005.

In 2005, Nora began co-directing 'The Secret of Kells' under the direction of long time creative and business partner Tomm Moore.

As one of the directors of Cartoon Saloon, along with Paul Young, Ross Murray and Tomm Moore, Nora continues to develop new projects. She is currently developing a live-action/animation feature film loosely based on the folktale 'Bluebeard'.

Filmography as DIRECTOR/co-DIRECTOR

The Secret of Kells - co-director 2009

Cúilín Dualach/Backwards Boy - director 2004

Best Animated Short, IFTA, Ireland 2005

Best short film, Cartoons on the Bay, Italy 2005

Best Animation for Children, Animadrid, 2005

Best Animation, Celtic Film Festival, 2005

Best Animation, Kerry Film Festival, Ireland 2005

Audience Award, Irish Animation Festival, , Ireland 2005

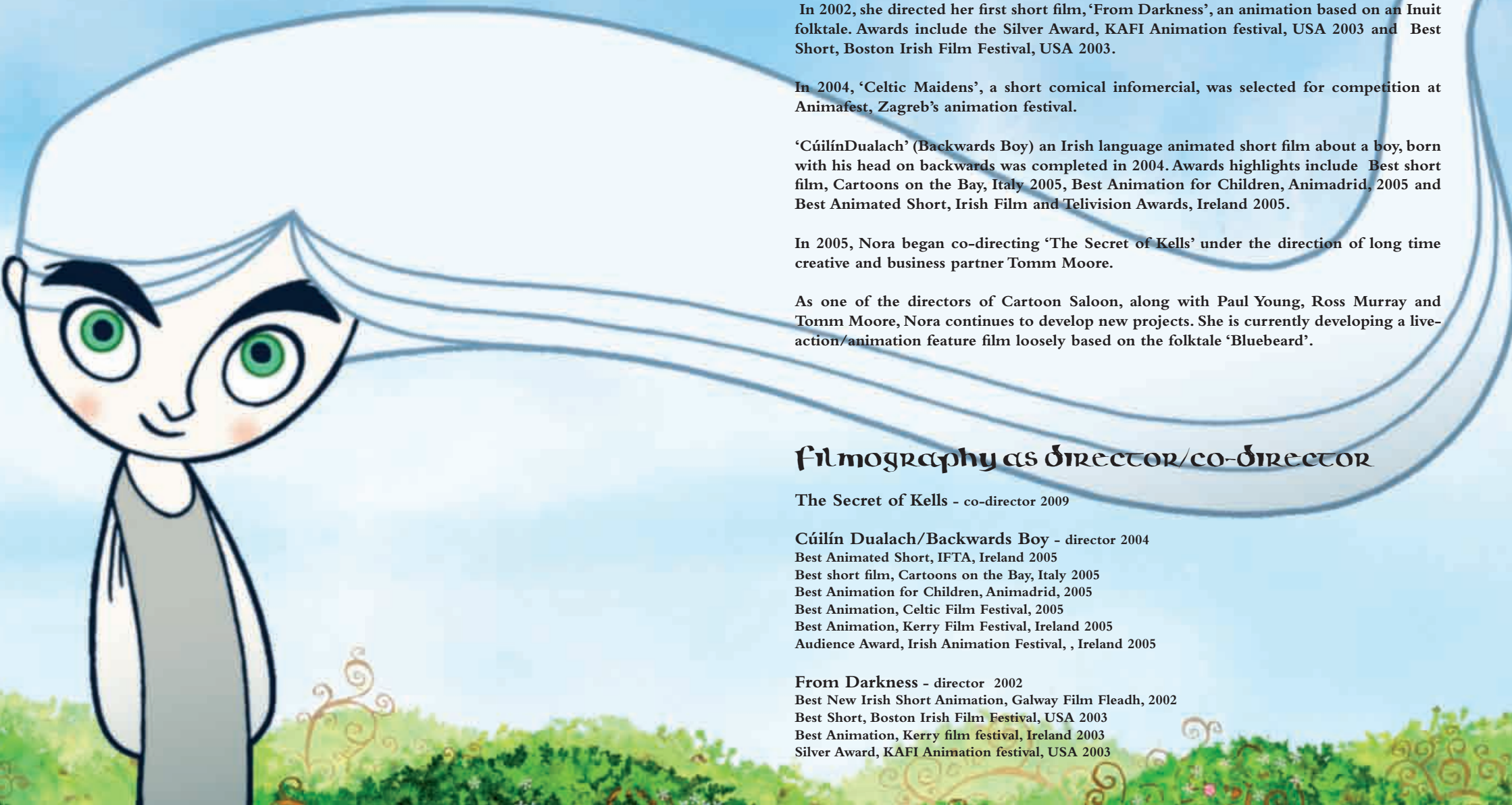
From Darkness - director 2002

Best New Irish Short Animation, Galway Film Fleadh, 2002

Best Short, Boston Irish Film Festival, USA 2003

Best Animation, Kerry film festival, Ireland 2003

Silver Award, KAFI Animation festival, USA 2003



voices

Evan Mc Guire
Mick Lally
Christen Mooney
Brendan Gleeson
Liam Hourrican
Paul Tylac
Michael Mc Grath
Paul Young

Brendan
Aidan
Aisling
Abbot Cellach
Brother Tang and Leonardo
Brother Assoua
Adult Brendan
Brother Square



Director
Co-Director
Screenplay
Art Director
First Assistant Director
Editor
Executive Producer
Head of Production
Executive in Charge of Production
Production Coordinator
Production Assistant
Storyboard
Character Design

Viking Designs
Background Design

Head of FX
Creative Supervisor
Original Music
With special contribution from
Produced by

A France-Belgium-Ireland coproduction

With the support of

Developed with the help of the MEDIA program of the European Community

With the participation of

In association with
With the participation of
With the help of
Made in association with
With the support of

With the participation of

Production Pipeline by

Tomm Moore
Nora Twomey
Fabrice Ziolkowski
Ross Stewart
Rémi Chayé
Fabienne Alvarez-Giro
Ivan Rouveure
Katia Besimensky
Camille Leganza
Audrey O'Brien
Rahma Ghili
Rémi Chayé
Tomm Moore
Barry Reynolds
Jean Baptiste Vendamme
Aurélié Bernard
Adrien Merigeau
Jeremy Purcell
Anton Roebben
Bruno Coulais
Kíla
Didier Bruner
Viviane Vanfleteren
Paul Young
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