

JONATHAN HARDEN

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Personal Statement

Since beginning this journey, I've completed two short fiction films, two short docs, and a feature length piece of theatre on film. I've also been known to work as an Assistant Director, and have directed a number of commercials, mainly shooting fast, in natural light, with non-actors. I have trained in documentary shooting at the **NFTS**, and gained a PG Cert in Audio Visual Post Production from QUB. Most recently, I've become a script reader for NI Screen, competed a shadow directing placement, eventually directing splinter and 2nd unit on four episodes of **Hope Street - Series 4**, and been accepted as a member of the Voting Panel for **BIFA** (British Independent Film Awards).

On the way here, I've developed new writing for the stage (including commissioning and directing **Lisa McGee's** early work), produced the Irish premiere of **The 24hr Plays**, taught acting at **University of Ulster**, lectured in theatre at **Queen's University Belfast**, and was Artistic Director of Belfast's **Lyric Theatre Drama Studio**. As a jobbing actor in London, I was lucky enough to be directed by some of the best, both on screen and on stage - including **Lynsey Miller**, **Stephen Frears**, **Lewis Arnold**, **Nick Murphy**, **Ralph Fiennes**, **Rian Johnson**, **Oliver Hirschbiegel**, **Howard Davies**, **David Farr**, and **Dominic Cooke**. Between jobs, I worked as a press and event photographer, having started shooting on film as a teenager.

I'm interested in truthful stories that affect us on an emotional level and which allow the audience access to a world to which they might not otherwise gain entry. I love the dark humour that arises in unlikely circumstances - the kind I grew up around in 80s and 90s Belfast. I'm a passionate believer in diversity and in telling stories from underrepresented social and ethnic groups.

Awards

2025 Queen's University Mentorship Excellence Award

Awards: **GUARD** - European Independent Film Awards 2017: Best Short Film; Northern Ireland Short Film Awards 2018: Best Drama; Brighton Rocks Film Festival: Best Short Drama

Awards: **TROUBLES** - Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival: Best Short Drama.

Awards: **EAMON** - Clones Film Festival: Best Short Documentary

Awards: **STUMBLING** - Chichester International Film Festival: Audience Award for Best Independent Feature.

Press Response to *On McQuillan's Hill*

"directed with a sensitive ear for snatching comedy from the jaws of conflict by Jonathan Harden" **** *The Stage*

"A production that's enhanced by an exceptionally strong cast. Under Jonathan Harden's direction, they deliver a real gem." ***** *Morning Star*

"Harden... knows instinctively when to let the play breathe, and when to push it on" ***** *London Theatre 1*

"Jonathan Harden and an exemplary cast explore even greater depths to the always three dimensional roles. Behind the near mythical ambience there lie utterly credible characters. These are never less than real people with genuine lives and backgrounds" **** *The Spy in the Stalls*

"Jonathan Harden's direction gets the pacing just right and manages to unfold this complex and twisting story in a way that makes it both comprehensible and completely gripping" ***** *London Living Live*

"Harden's direction leans into the bleakness... infusing the play something of a melancholic anger" - **** *A Younger Theatre*

"the emotional truth of the performances that [Harden] encourages starts to burn through, and by the second half of the evening, we feel the full heat of each revelation" - *The Arts Desk*

"The acting is stellar, as the anger, resentment and bottled up guilt of the play's characters explodes until there's nothing left to give" - *SW Londoner*

Reels:

<https://vimeo.com/honestyinc/jhreel>

<https://vimeo.com/honestyinc/jh5min>

Recent Credits as Director: Narrative

2024: NI Screen Shadow Director - *Hope Street S4 (4 eps, Blocks 1 & 2)* - Long Story TV

Directors - Enda Hughes, Sean Glynn

- Single camera 2nd and splinter units
- Working on scripted scenes with lead cast, action sequences, drones and GVs

2022: Director / Editor - *STUMBLING* (Theatre on Film, 69 mins)

- *Completed.*
- *Winner - Audience Award: Best Independent Feature - Chichester International Film Festival*
 - Casting, including Lorcan Cranitch and Joanne Crawford.
 - Rehearsing five monologues ahead of filming
 - Collaborating with DOP, sound designer etc.
 - Co-ordinating post-production
 - Edit, credits and deliverables.
 - Festival strategy

2021: Self-shooting Producer / Director / Editor - *EAMON* (short doc)

- *Completed*
- *Winner - Best Sort Doc - 20th Clones Film Festival*
- *Shortlisted for the 2022 Performance Media Awards*
 - Developing idea, casting
 - Raising £3k budget via NI Screen/ BFI Network (70%), charity sponsorship (30%).
 - Running production budget
 - Edit, grade, sound mix, credits and deliverables

2021: Self-shooting Producer / Director / Editor - *LEAVING THE LAKE* (mini doc)

- *Completed*
- Premiered at Docs Ireland in August 2021
 - Self-shot and edited doc on one artist's process, and on one painting in particular.
 - Edit, grade, sound mix, credits and deliverables

2020: Director - *ON MCQUILLAN'S HILL* (full-length play) - Finborough Theatre

- *Cast of six, 4 week run. Total budget: £65k*
 - Casting
 - Rehearsing and teching show ready for performance
 - Collaborating with composer on original music, plus lighting designer, and scenic & costume designer.

2018: Producer / Director - *TROUBLES* (11 mins) - Honesty Inc, Belfast

- *Shot over 2 nights. Total budget: £15k. Post-production completed in 5 weeks.*
- *Selected for BFI Network / Northern Ireland Screen showcase at BAFTA (April 2018).*
 - Developing script through multiple drafts
 - Raising £15k budget via NI Screen/ BFI Network (50%), production partnerships (30%), and crowdfunding (20%)
 - Running production budget
 - Negotiating crew, equipment and location hire
 - Negotiating with production partners, insurers etc
 - Issuing contracts and managing payments
 - Collaborating with composer on original music, plus lighting designer, and scenic & costume designer.
 - Co-ordinating post-production
 - Festival strategy

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2017: Producer / Director - GUARD (13 mins) - Honesty Inc, Belfast

- Shot over 3 days. Total budget: £27k. Cast including: Ian McElhinney, Michael McElhatton.
- Selected for over 30 festivals to date, including Galway Film Fleadh and Rhode Island International Film Festival.
- European Independent Film Awards 2017 Best Short Film
 - Developing script through multiple drafts
 - Raising £27k budget via crowdfunding (60%), private investment (20%), and production partnerships (20%)
 - Establishing limited company for production purposes
 - Running production budget
 - Negotiating crew, equipment and location hire
 - Negotiating with production partners, insurers etc
 - Issuing contracts and managing payments
 - Co-ordinating post-production
 - Festival strategy

Recent Credits as Director: Commercial

2022: Director - VISIT CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS (2 x 60' online commercials) - ASG / BNL Media

- Completed

- Working with a cast of 2 non-actors.
- Shooting a mix of 8 int/ext locations over two days, including restaurants and activities
- Collaborating with cinematographer, client and production company.

2021: Director - VIRTUAL XMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON (10' online event) - LCCC / BNL Media

- Completed

- Working with a Gyasi Sheppy (CBeebies), the Lord Mayor, 'Santa Claus' and a host of community groups, choirs, and local businesses to put together an online virtual switch-on event.
- Shooting a mix of 14 int/ext locations over two days, including green screen segments.
- Collaborating with cinematographer, client and production company.

2021: Director - CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS (2 x 60' online commercials) - ASG / BNL Media

- Completed

- Working with a small cast of models/non-actors on a food-focussed domestic tourism campaign.
- Shooting a mix of 12 int/ext locations over three days, including adventure sports, aerial footage, and working at sea.
- Collaborating with cinematographer, drone operator, client and production company.

2021: Director - VISIT CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS (4 x 30' online commercials) - ASG / BNL Media

- Completed

- Working with a cast of 23, from aged 5 to mid 60s, including non-actors.
- Shooting a mix of 16 int/ext locations over three days, including landscapes, hotels, and small businesses
- Collaborating with cinematographer, client and production company.

Credits as 2nd Assistant Director

First Assistant Director - Clean (short film) - Hatch Pictures, London

May 2018

- Shooting on 35mm
- First time director

First Assistant Director - RAF Reserves (commercial) - Oath Media, London

Apr 2018

- Scheduling 2 day shoot at Brize Norton RAF base, coordinating with military supervisors and air traffic control
- Managing/directing over 100 military SAs

First Assistant Director - Spilt (short film) - London Film Studios

Apr 2017

- Scheduling 3 day shoot (across 3 locations plus exteriors)
- Supervising crew of 12, including 2 further ADs.
- First time director

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Third Assistant Director - *Here's Lookin' At You Kid* (short film) - Pesky Films, Belfast

Aug 2017

- Supporting First AD (Ciaran Colton) on the floor of 3 day shoot (c. £30k budget)
- Managing/directing over 30 SAs, including over 20 x 12-14 year olds in a classroom scene
- Supervising 2 Trainee ADs
- Directed by Michael Lennox (*Derry Girls*, *Endeavour*)

Related Employment

Script Reader - Northern Ireland Screen

Jan 2024 - Present

Artistic Director - Lyric Theatre Drama Studio

Sep 2008 - June 2009

Co-Creative Producer - *The 24hr Plays* - Lyric Theatre Belfast (with Des Kennedy)

Oct 2008

Co-Creative Producer - twentyfivebelfast (new writing theatre company with Des Kennedy)

March 2007 - Sep 2008

Lecturer in Drama - Queen's University Belfast

Oct 2006 - June 2009

Artistic Director - Sneaky Productions (new writing theatre company, with Lisa McGee, Declan Feenan & Bronagh Taggart)

Jan 2003 - Sep 2007

Lecturer in Drama - University of Ulster

Jan 2005 - Sep 2006

Reader - Hothouse New Writing Panel - Tinderbox Theatre Company

Sep 2001 - Dec 2004

Training

Queens University Belfast: PG Cert in Audio Visual Post Production (distinction)

May 2023

Ulster Screen Academy (University of Ulster): Stepping Into Virtual Production

Nov 2022

NFTS: Documentary Shooting

May 2018

Skills

Self-shooter

Photography to a professional standard (former member of The Society of International Press Photographers)

Languages: good French (written and conversational), basic Spanish

Education

Queen's University Belfast - BA (Hons) Drama Studies - 1st

Queen's University Belfast - MA European Literature & Culture - Distinction

Memberships

IFTA (Irish Film and Television Academy), Royal Television Society, Directors UK, Equity UK.

References

On request