# Karis Kelly’s Consumed to premiere at Belgrade Theatre after five years exploring Northern Irish trauma



Bangor-based playwright Karis Kelly is set to see their award-winning play *Consumed* make its much-anticipated stage debut at The Belgrade Theatre in Coventry from July 25, 2025. The production marks a significant milestone for Kelly, whose work has been five years in development. Describing the moment as both gratifying and nerve-wracking, Kelly’s play is a collaboration between Paines Plough, Belgrade Theatre, Sheffield Theatres, and the Women’s Prize for Playwriting, which *Consumed* won in 2022.

The play unfolds in a fictional Bangor home, described by Kelly as “full of hungry ghosts, with more than one skeleton in the closet.” Set around a 90th birthday party, the drama brings together four generations of women from the same family, exploring the complex and often fraught dynamics beneath the surface. The story skilfully blends kitchen sink drama with elements of magical realism, featuring twists that challenge audience expectations. Kelly notes the pressure for the party to be perfect, which triggers ruptures that expose decades of tension. The cast includes notable Northern Irish talents such as Julia Dearden (known from *Derry Girls*), Andrea Irvine (*Blue Lights*), and Caoimhe Farren (*The Woman in The Wall*), alongside newcomer Muireann Ní Fhaogáin.

At its core, *Consumed* grapples with themes of transgenerational trauma, particularly through compulsions related to food, alcohol, and shopping, representing what Kelly calls the “big black hole” of addiction—a void where love should be. The portrayal captures how this trauma passes through generations, shaping the characters' behaviours in subtle and overt ways. This exploration is woven together with reflections on sectarianism, Irish national identity, and the post-Troubles and Brexit context that informs contemporary Northern Irish society. The youngest character, Muireann, mirrors Kelly’s own experience of being raised in London but yearning to understand her Northern Irish heritage.

Kelly’s creative journey with *Consumed* began in early 2020 during a writing retreat, just before the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns halted theatre productions worldwide. Despite the challenges, including a personal diagnosis of OCD that led Kelly to investigate the nature of inherited trauma, the play’s themes took shape with the support of academic research from Queen’s University Belfast on transgenerational trauma. Kelly also credits persistence through years of rejection before winning the Women’s Prize for Playwriting as crucial to their ongoing commitment to writing.

Since winning the prize, *Consumed* has gained momentum with planned performances beyond Coventry, including a 20-performance run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe starting July 31, followed by a UK tour. Kelly acknowledges the difficulty in securing programming for Northern Ireland, highlighting the hope that the play can eventually open in Belfast or even their hometown of Bangor.

The play’s ending was recently revised to offer more hope, a conscious decision by Kelly and director Katie Posner to counterbalance the world’s prevailing bleakness—a sentiment reflecting theatre’s evolving responsibility in challenging times.

In addition to *Consumed*, Kelly is developing other projects, including a TV series with Two Cities (known for *Blue Lights*) and a new musical play titled *Black Magic Ops*. This latter work, a Celtic metal musical set during the 1970s Northern Irish 'Satanic panics,' explores the cultural and societal impacts of the Troubles through the lens of a teenage band, continuing Kelly’s thematic focus on trauma and conflict.

With *Consumed* poised to reach wider audiences, Karis Kelly is firmly establishing their distinctive voice in contemporary theatre, shining a light on Northern Irish women’s stories with sensitivity, depth, and a touch of magical realism.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/theres-lots-of-omg-moments-playwright-karis-kelly-on-tapping-norths-transgenerational-trauma-for-award-winning-consumed-DUITS76IT5AX7LFZAFTJUOP5SM/), [[2]](https://www.belgrade.co.uk/events/consumed/), [[4]](https://www.theatreweekly.com/consumed-by-karis-kelly-announced-as-this-years-winner-of-the-womens-prize-for-playwriting/), [[5]](https://www.theatre-news.com/news/UK/92430/Consumed-by-Karis-Kelly-wins-The-Women-s-Prize-For-Playwriting)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/theres-lots-of-omg-moments-playwright-karis-kelly-on-tapping-norths-transgenerational-trauma-for-award-winning-consumed-DUITS76IT5AX7LFZAFTJUOP5SM/), [[3]](https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002318/20230724/001/0001), [[6]](https://www.whatsonstage.com/news/womens-prize-for-playwriting-won-by-karis-kelly-for-consumed_56094/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/theres-lots-of-omg-moments-playwright-karis-kelly-on-tapping-norths-transgenerational-trauma-for-award-winning-consumed-DUITS76IT5AX7LFZAFTJUOP5SM/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/theres-lots-of-omg-moments-playwright-karis-kelly-on-tapping-norths-transgenerational-trauma-for-award-winning-consumed-DUITS76IT5AX7LFZAFTJUOP5SM/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/theres-lots-of-omg-moments-playwright-karis-kelly-on-tapping-norths-transgenerational-trauma-for-award-winning-consumed-DUITS76IT5AX7LFZAFTJUOP5SM/), [[2]](https://www.belgrade.co.uk/events/consumed/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/theres-lots-of-omg-moments-playwright-karis-kelly-on-tapping-norths-transgenerational-trauma-for-award-winning-consumed-DUITS76IT5AX7LFZAFTJUOP5SM/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/theres-lots-of-omg-moments-playwright-karis-kelly-on-tapping-norths-transgenerational-trauma-for-award-winning-consumed-DUITS76IT5AX7LFZAFTJUOP5SM/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/theres-lots-of-omg-moments-playwright-karis-kelly-on-tapping-norths-transgenerational-trauma-for-award-winning-consumed-DUITS76IT5AX7LFZAFTJUOP5SM/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.belgrade.co.uk/events/consumed/> - The Belgrade Theatre in Coventry is set to stage 'Consumed', a play by Karis Kelly, from July 25, 2025. The production is a collaboration between Paines Plough, Belgrade Theatre, Sheffield Theatres, and the Women's Prize for Playwriting. The play delves into the dynamics of four generations of Northern Irish women reuniting under one roof, exploring themes of generational trauma and national boundaries. Following its Coventry debut, 'Consumed' will move to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe for a 20-performance stint from July 31 before embarking on a UK tour.
3. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002318/20230724/001/0001> - An article from the British Newspaper Archive discusses the upcoming production of 'Consumed' by Karis Kelly. The piece highlights the play's exploration of transgenerational trauma and its setting in a fictional Bangor abode. It also mentions the involvement of Belfast-born actors Julia Dearden and Andrea Irvine, as well as Derry talent Caoimhe Farren. The article provides insights into the play's themes and the creative team behind the production.
4. <https://www.theatreweekly.com/consumed-by-karis-kelly-announced-as-this-years-winner-of-the-womens-prize-for-playwriting/> - In March 2022, 'Consumed' by Karis Kelly was announced as the winner of the Women's Prize for Playwriting. The competition received over 850 entries and was judged by a panel including Arifa Akbar, Mel Kenyon, and Jodie Whittaker. The prize, produced by Ellie Keel and Paines Plough, aims to highlight female and female-identifying voices in theatre. Following the award, 'Consumed' was set to be programmed in 2023, with Kelly expressing her pride in being part of the prize's legacy.
5. <https://www.theatre-news.com/news/UK/92430/Consumed-by-Karis-Kelly-wins-The-Women-s-Prize-For-Playwriting> - An announcement from Theatre News details the victory of Karis Kelly's 'Consumed' in the Women's Prize for Playwriting. The article notes that the competition received over 850 entries and was judged by a panel including Arifa Akbar and Jodie Whittaker. The prize, produced by Ellie Keel and Paines Plough, aims to highlight female and female-identifying voices in theatre. The article also mentions that 'Consumed' is set to be programmed in 2023, with Kelly expressing her pride in being part of the prize's legacy.
6. <https://www.whatsonstage.com/news/womens-prize-for-playwriting-won-by-karis-kelly-for-consumed_56094/> - WhatsOnStage reports on Karis Kelly's 'Consumed' winning the Women's Prize for Playwriting. The article highlights that the play is set in Bangor, Northern Ireland, and focuses on four generations of Northern Irish women reuniting under one roof. Kelly discusses the inspiration behind the play, emphasizing the rarity of seeing Northern Irish women on stage and the desire to depict their stories. The article also mentions the involvement of Paines Plough and the Lyric Theatre, Belfast, in bringing the play to the stage.
7. <https://womensprizeforplaywriting.co.uk/2021-winner/> - The official website of the Women's Prize for Playwriting announces Karis Kelly's 'Consumed' as the 2021 winner. The page provides a brief synopsis of the play, describing it as a story about four generations of Northern Irish women reuniting under one roof. It also includes a quote from Kelly expressing her pride in being part of the prize's legacy and her surprise at the recognition, given her previous crisis of faith during the pandemic.