

**EMBARGOED until 4:45 p.m. today, Monday, 26 October**

**PRESS RELEASE  
26 October 2020**

## The 63rd edition of DOK Leipzig has begun

Development Prize for the Best Female Director awarded, programme's variety maintained in hybrid version of the festival



DOK Leipzig 2020 | Festival Opening (photo: Susann Jehnichen)

Today, on Monday, 26 October 2020, the 63rd edition of DOK Leipzig began at 4 pm. The opening event, held without an audience, can be viewed on the festival website.

Alongside festival director Christoph Terhechte and the head of DOK Industry, Brigid O'Shea, speakers at the opening ceremony included Barbara Klepsch, the Saxon State Minister for Culture and Tourism, and Dr Skadi Jennicke, the mayor and cultural alderman of the City of Leipzig. The event was moderated by Knut Elstermann.

During the virtual opening ceremony, State Minister Barbara Klepsch presented the 5,000-euro Development Prize for the Best Female Director of the Saxon State Minister for the Arts. Director Fan Wu received the award for the film project "XiXi" (Taiwan, Philippines). A jury had decided in advance which film would receive the award. Projects selected for the DOK Co-Pro Market were eligible.

Addressing the audience by video, Barbara Klepsch emphasised the festival's importance: "Now in its 63rd edition, DOK Leipzig is continuing a tradition that has contributed significantly to the festival's worldwide renown. A considerable number and variety of programmes are among the aspects that distinguish this festival from other events." Referring to the change in the way the festival is being staged, the State Minister said: "Even though the festival will not be conducted in the usual way, it is still catering to the need of many people to partake in cultural activities. Our ministry supports the preservation of the local cultural scene, particularly in this exceptional situation. Institutions like DOK Leipzig breathe life into this scene, which sends an important signal. For this, I offer you my

63rd International Leipzig  
Festival for Documentary and  
Animated Film

26 October to 1 November

Head of Press  
Maria Preußner  
Tel. +49 (0)341 30864 1070  
presse@dok-leipzig.de

Leipziger Dok- Filmwochen GmbH  
Katharinenstraße 17  
04109 Leipzig

Chairwoman of  
the Supervisory Board  
Dr. Skadi Jennicke

Managing and Artistic Director  
Christoph Terhechte

Place of Performance  
Leipzig

Handelsregister  
Commercial Register, HRB 35 89

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DE141498242

most sincere thanks.”

In a video statement, Dr Skadi Jennicke, the City of Leipzig’s cultural alderman, honoured the commitment shown by the city’s cultural professionals during the pandemic: “Last year, when the Leipzig City Council chose you, Christoph Terhechte, to be the new director of DOK Leipzig, who could have imagined how 2020 would turn out and what loss we’d have to accept? I am deeply impressed when I see how cultural institutions are looking for ways to counteract this and keep cultural programmes afloat. I would like to thank all those who have gone down this path from the bottom of my heart. I salute the inventiveness, the perseverance, the manifest solidarity and the responsibility you have taken on.”

Christoph Terhechte announced at the start of the festival that the proceeds from ticket sales for online screenings would be passed on to the rights holders of the films in competition: “We wish to help films gain visibility, especially this year, when lots of filmmakers are facing a situation that threatens their very existence — even if this means that we cannot conduct a festival in the usual way. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the filmmakers for the impressive works they’ve entrusted to us. Engaging with what we have seen and immersing ourselves in different perspectives will create bonds between us across the distance.” The festival director concluded: “Of course, we hope that everything will run as smoothly as possible and that everything will work out according to plan. I wish all of us an inspiring festival.”

Commenting on the deployment of this year’s industry offerings, DOK Industry director Brigid O’Shea said: “It has been an enormous challenge for us to put our bespoke international meeting place online in a way that is fair and accessible to all accredited guests. The learning curve has been enormous. We wish our guests productive and joyful days in our digital infrastructure, and feel like we’ve broken ground on an entirely new era of networking and business-making for animated and documentary filmmakers around the globe.”

All of the films can be seen in Leipzig cinemas until 1 November and will be available online for 14 days after their respective premieres. Free screenings at the main railway station are also part of the festival, as is the XR exhibition DOK Neuland. This year, DOK Leipzig is screening a total of 150 films and XR projects.

This year, all of the festival’s offerings for the film industry will be moved online.

As usual, there will be numerous talks and discussions relating to the programme of films and the documentary film industry. In the International Competition Long Documentary and Animated Film, live talks with the filmmakers will be held in the cinema auditorium following the respective premieres. Webcast technology will allow the directors to talk directly to both the cinema audience and viewers at home.

Pre-recorded film talks will also be available online. To get you in the mood for the festival programme, dok-leipzig.de also features introductions to the different programmes by the selection committee along with Director’s Short Cuts, short video greetings from the filmmakers.

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Access to the opening event of the 63rd edition of DOK Leipzig will be available here from 4 pm: <https://www.dok-leipzig.de/en>

You will find pictures of our opening here from 5 pm: <https://www.dok-leipzig.de/en/press-download>

You find information on our film programme here: <https://www.dok-leipzig.de/en/programme>

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