

DOK Industry Programme to open with a panel on the current state of Belarusian documentary cinema

Press Release
14 September 2023

DOK Leipzig reveals its full DOK Industry Programme and schedule



BIFA founding group: Andrei Kutsila, Volia Chajkouskaya, Darya Zhuk, Irena Kaciałovič, Ihar Sukmanau, Aliaksei Paluyan (ftr) | photo: BIFA/ Maksim Shved

DOK Leipzig's freshly announced DOK Industry programme features a panel that brings renewed attention to exiled Belarusian documentary filmmakers amid the country's escalating political climate and curbs on (artistic) freedom. The dedicated panel "Displaced by Dictatorship and War: Belarusian Independent Filmmakers in Europe" will be held on Monday, 9 October, at 13:00 at Propsteikirche St. Trinitatis.

The discussion will take place with the participation of the recently launched [Belarusian Independent Film Academy \(BIFA\)](#) and will shed light on the current state of Belarusian independent documentary cinema, address challenges faced by exiled Belarusian documentary filmmakers and those still living and working in the country, and discuss how to support fellow Belarusian colleagues through funding, festivals, and partnerships with European film institutes.

Among the panellists are film producer, director, and programme director of the Belarusian independent film festival Northern Lights Volia Chajkouskaya (who is currently based in Estonia) and German director Juliane Tutein. Chajkouskaya and Tutein will discuss how to film in and about Belarus since the country has been plunged into turmoil in the wake of 2020. Louis Beaudemont (Les Steppes Productions) will further join Chajkouskaya in addressing how to support Belarusian documentary filmmakers in exile. Beaudemont and Alice Syrakvash have co-launched a series of events in a bid to support Belarusian cinema in France and Europe. Chajkouskaya, film director Andrei Kutsila ("When Flowers Are Not Silent") and film critic, cultural observer, and journalist Irena Kaciałovič will also present the work of BIFA during the panel.

BIFA was launched in February 2022, when filmmakers and other members of the Belarusian film community decided to form an organisation that

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Publicist
Nina Kühne
Melanie Rohde
Sevara Pan
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

VAT Tax ID
DE141498242

advocates for independent Belarusian filmmakers, promotes their interests and gives them a platform to speak in a unified voice. Among the founding members of BIFA are Chajkouskaya, film directors Kutsila, Darya Zhuk (“Crystal Swan”) and Aliaksei Paluyan (“Courage”), senior programmer Ihar Sukmanau and film critic Kaciałovič.

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The creation of BIFA came as Belarusian filmmakers continue to face hostility and threats to their lives and freedoms as Aliaksandr Lukashenka cracks down on opposition voices and stifles dissent. Many filmmakers and industry professionals, who have been spearheading the resistance, have been forced to flee to Europe and are now in exile. BIFA thus also serves as an alternative to Belarusian state-sponsored film organisations. The organisation was born in the wake of the war in Ukraine, when more than 130 Belarusian filmmakers and industry professionals signed a collective statement denouncing Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

This year’s Industry Programme features a wide range of events that bolster creative exchange and create a space for filmmakers to connect with other industry professionals, showcase their projects and find potential collaborators. Among the highlights of the Industry Programme is [Short n’ Sweet](#) (11 October), the festival’s short film pitch, which will see eight film professionals present their short documentary, animated documentary, animated film and series projects. Following the inaugural edition of DOK Archive Market last year, the second edition will offer opportunities for attending filmmakers to learn about the libraries of exhibiting archives and meet with archive researchers and producers. Find further events in the Industry Programme online.

Find the full programme here: [DOK Industry Programme A-Z](#)

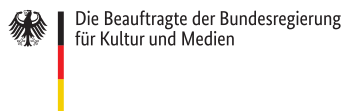
All dates and events: [DOK Industry Schedule](#)

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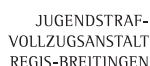
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