

DOK Industry Podcast: Season 6 Kicks Off With a Look at the Role of Cultural Workers in Today's Global Political Climate

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f.l.t.r. Curators Toni Bell, Lucy Mukerjee, Sanne Jehoul, Qila Gill, Weronika Lewandowska, Niels Putman | DOK Leipzig 2025

DOK Leipzig is launching a new season of the DOK Industry Podcast, exploring topics that concern the film world today. The podcast is produced in a long-standing partnership with the Programmers of Colour Collective (POC2) and the “What’s Up With Docs” podcast. This season an new partner joins: Talking Shorts, an online platform which publishes reviews and essays on short films and organizes comprehensive talks at industry events and workshops on curation and film criticism.

The curators of the episodes are once again renowned professionals from the documentary film and XR industry: Toni Bell (What’s Up With Docs), Qila Gill (Festival Programmer), Sanne Jehoul (Talking Shorts), Weronika Lewandowska (DOK Exchange XR), Lucy Mukerjee (Firelight Media and POC2) and Niels Putman (Talking Shorts).

In the newly released first episode of Season 6, Qila Gill, Nihan Sivridag (Selection Committee Berlinale Shorts) and Puiyee Leong (Programme Director of Objectifs Centre for Photography and Film Singapore) discuss the self-understanding of cultural institutions and their own roles as cultural workers in the face of today’s global political climate. How can they offer filmmakers an environment that is both appreciative and respectful? What does community building look like within cultural spaces such as festivals? How can institutions practice hospitality when filmmakers from different cultural backgrounds participate? Gill, Sivridag, and Leong talk about solidarity, art as a political moment, and the need to see one’s own role as an enabler of open spaces for art and discourse, rather than a gatekeeper. They also reflect on the creative freedom that lies in the short film format—especially in light of the fact that it meets with little commercial interest.

Four more podcast episodes will be released leading up to the festival in the autumn. Episode 2 introduces the “Disability Media Alliance”, which will be launched in the summer. The US organisation aims to support both disability-led media organizations and mainstream media institutions by helping them build the capacity to work with and support artists

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with disabilities. This includes strengthening internal infrastructure and developing inclusive production models that reflect disability justice values.

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Episode 3 returns to the short film format. It presents politically motivated films that can be read as direct responses to global crises and whose production process is sometimes associated with risks. The discussion explores the political impact of cinematic storytelling and the specific characteristics and production conditions of short film that allow filmmakers to respond particularly fast and courageously to socio-political developments.

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Episode 4 questions the responsibility of XR art towards young people. How can producers, creators, educators, curators, and cultural institutions accompany the shift in how younger generations engage with and perceive media? What role can they play in shaping the future of XR art in terms of ethics, values, and storytelling—for instance, by creating content today that fosters imagination, care, and media literacy?

Episode 5 discusses unconventional distribution models that filmmakers are using to reach their audiences. The episode spotlights UNITED SCREENS, a long-term research and networking project by the Berlin-based art space SAVVY Contemporary. Through exhibitions, symposia, interviews, and other formats, the project initiators explore diverse film cultures and investigate the potential for a decentralised, technology-driven ecosystem for film distribution and cinema.

All episodes will be published on the DOK Leipzig website, as well as on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Podigee.

The DOK Industry Podcast aims to inspire discussions about equality, solidarity and participation in documentary and animated film. Contributions are intended to question existing power structures and initiate change. In doing so, DOK Leipzig must also take a critical look at its own role as part of a system that requires fundamental transformation in order to become fully inclusive.

The production is supported by Creative Europe, BKM, MDM, and the City of Leipzig.

More information about the podcast: [DOK Industry Podcasts](#)
Photos and logos available for download: [Press download](#)

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