

Kazuhiro Soda, Aneta Ozorek, and Gerd Kroske among the Jury Members of DOK Leipzig 2025

Press Release
18 September 2025

Seven Golden Doves and two Silver Doves will be awarded to films across four competitions



f.l.t.r. Heleen Gerritsen, Ines Weizman, Annie Ohayon-Dekel, Maike Mia Höhne, Kazuhiro Soda, Jonatan Schwenk, Jim Stark, Alain Kassanda, Gerd Kroske, Aneta Ozorek and Betina Kuntzsch

At the 68th edition of DOK Leipzig, three juries of esteemed filmmakers, artists, and industry professionals, along with an audience jury, will award short and feature documentaries and animated films in competition.

The 2025 jury for the **International Competition Documentary Film** comprises Heleen Gerritsen, Alain Kassanda, Annie Ohayon-Dekel, Kazuhiro Soda, and Jim Stark. The jury will present a Golden Dove for best feature documentary and best short documentary, selected from the 9 nominated features and the 11 nominated short films. A Silver Dove will also be awarded to the best feature documentary and the best short documentary by an up-and-coming director.

Heleen Gerritsen brings a wealth of experience in European film and festival management and an enduring commitment to Central and Eastern European cinema. This commitment has also left a mark on the institutions she has led over the years. From 2014 to 2016, she headed dokumentART in Neubrandenburg. She then went on to lead goEast, held by the Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum (DFF) in Wiesbaden. Under her helm between 2017 and 2025, the festival transformed into one of Europe's most important platforms for Central and Eastern European cinema. In June 2025, Gerritsen took on the role of artistic director of Deutsche Kinemathek. In this capacity, she is also responsible for the Retrospective and Berlinale Classics sections of the Berlin International Film Festival.

Her fellow jury member is **Alain Kassanda**, a Congolese French filmmaker. His acclaimed documentaries include "Trouble Sleep", lensed from the perspectives of a taxi driver and a tax collector in the Nigerian city of Ibadan, which scooped the Golden Dove Short Documentary at DOK Leipzig 2020, along with the IDFA-premiered "Colette and Justin", his feature debut that intertwines his family history with the broader narrative of Congo's decolonisation. Kassanda returned to Ibadan for his film

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“Coconut Head Generation”, which nabbed the Grand Prix at Cinéma du Réel in 2023.

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Also serving on the jury is independent French producer **Annie Ohayon-Dekel**, working mostly with Les Films du Poisson and 24images productions. Her repertoire includes such notable films as Paul B. Preciado’s “Behind Orlando, My Political Biography” and Avi Mograbi’s “The First 54 Years: An Abbreviated Manual for Military Occupation,” which both screened at the Berlinale. Most recently, she produced “Put Your Soul in Your Hand and Walk” by Sepideh Farsi, a searingly urgent portrait of a Palestinian woman in Gaza, Fatma Hassona, which premiered in the ACID parallel showcase during Cannes 2025.

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Known for his patient, observational approach, Japanese documentary director **Kazuhiro Soda** often examines the intricacies of human life and the institutions that shape it. From his earlier works (“Campaign”, “Mental”) through to the more recent ones (“Inland Sea”, “Zero”, for which he earned the Ecumenical Jury Prize in Berlinale’s Forum section, and “The Cats of Gokogu Shrine”), his feature documentaries have been showcased at various international festivals, including the Berlinale and Visions du Reel. His accolades include the Peabody Award, the Marek Nowicki Award from the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, and the top prizes at such festivals as the Festival des 3 Continents.

Working across the United States and Mexico, **Jim Stark** is an independent film producer and scriptwriter, whose career of over thirty years has been marked by singular voices and lasting collaborations, including with Jim Jarmusch (“Stranger Than Paradise”, “Down by Law”, “Mystery Train”), Gregg Araki (“The Living End”), and Adrienne Shelly (“I’ll Take You There”). On the documentary front, he helped bring to life three notable films: Tatiana Huezo’s “Tempestad” (in tandem with Nicolás Celis, he also produced Huezo’s first foray into fiction “Noche de Fuego” / “Prayers for the Stolen”), Rati Oneli’s “City of the Sun”, and Weronika Mliczewska’s “Child of Dust”. He was on the producer ensemble of Ruben Ostland’s award-winning “Triangle of Sadness” and, alongside Celis, produced Szabolcs Hajdu’s three critically acclaimed fiction features, “Treasure City”, “Kalman’s Day”, and “Vulture’s Wake”.

This year’s jury for the **International Competition Animated Film** includes Betina Kuntzsch, Aneta Ozorek, and Jonatan Schwenk. During the festival, the jury will select the recipients of a Golden Dove for best animated feature and best animated short film, from the 5 nominated features and the 23 nominated short films.

In her work in animated documentary, Berlin-based filmmaker and artist **Betina Kuntzsch** has continually probed the GDR past and chronicled stories of outsiders. As part of an ongoing media archaeology project, she reanimates historical animated film loops, known as Laterna Magica films from around 1900, which she transforms into her own short films. Among them is “wegzaubern”, a Golden Dove winner at DOK Leipzig 2015. Several of her other films have also been presented at DOK Leipzig, including “Himmel wie Seide. Voller Orangen” (German Competition Documentary Film 2024) and “Kopf Faust Fahne” (German Competition 2021).

The jury is reinforced by **Aneta Ozorek**, the artistic director of Kaboom Animation Festival, which is held annually in Utrecht and Amsterdam, showcasing daring and innovative animation through competitions, themed programmes, and its Expanded Animation section. Ozorek has

extensive industry experience as a curator and organiser of film events, workshops, exhibitions, and festivals across Europe. She heads the Short section of the CEE Animation Pitching Forum and serves as a member of the board of REX Animation Festival, AniMela, and Emile European Animation Awards.

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Also on the jury is **Jonatan Schwenk**, a German director, known for his animated short films that utilise hybrid animation techniques. Screened at major international festivals, his short works have garnered recognition and numerous awards. Premiering at Sundance, his off-beat, surreal tale “Zoon” went on to play at over 150 festivals, picking up the Lotte Reiniger Promotion Award at the ITFS in Stuttgart. His short film “Sog” won the coveted Cristal for Best Graduation Film at Annecy, alongside some 40 awards and mentions.

Titles winning a Golden Dove for best animated short film and those receiving a Golden Dove in the International Competition Documentary Film qualify for nomination at the annual Academy Awards, provided they meet the Academy’s requirements.

The jury for the **German Competition Documentary Film** will present a Golden Dove for best feature documentary and best short documentary. The jury comprises Maïke Mia Höhne, Gerd Kroske, and Ines Weizman, who will pick the winner from the 8 nominated features and the 12 nominated short films from Germany.

In her work, **Maïke Mia Höhne** straddles curation, filmmaking, and teaching, with a focus on short form. Together with Lilli Thalgott, she produces the weekly TV magazine “Kurzschluss” (“Court Circuit”) for ARTE through their joint company PINKMOVIES. During her tenure from 2007 to 2019, she ran the Berlinale Shorts section, enhancing and elevating its profile. Since 2019, she has led the Hamburg Short Film Festival as its artistic director. She is currently working on a film that unfolds the story of the Bonn Republic “shortly before the German Autumn,” as she herself notes.

The filmic work of renowned director **Gerd Kroske**, whose formal and narrative approaches were shaped in East Germany, explores themes of social change through nuanced portrayals of personal histories set against shifting political and social landscapes in post-GDR Germany. Marked by a commitment to long-term observational filmmaking, his oeuvre spans over three decades (Kroske started making films in the autumn of 1989), encompassing such notable titles as “Stolz & Eigensinn” (“Pride & Attitude”), “SPK Komplex” (“SPK Complex”), “Striche Ziehen” (“Drawing a Line”), and the Kehraus trilogy, among others. The Austrian Film Museum and the Zeughauskino of the German Historical Museum (DHM) have held retrospectives honouring his work: ‘Deutschlandbilder–Filme Gerd Kroske’ in 2020 and ‘Dokumentarische Positionen’ in 2024, respectively.

Ines Weizman rounds off the jury. Born in Leipzig, she is the founding director of the Centre for Documentary Architecture (CDA), a research collective comprising architectural historians, filmmakers, and digital technologists, through which she explores the history of modern architecture, particularly in the context of migration and colonial modernism, among other questions. She is also a Professor of History and Theory of Architecture at the School of Architecture in London’s Royal College of Art, where she directs the Architecture PhD programme. Her publications include “Dust & Data. Traces of the Bauhaus across 100 Years”, “Documentary Architecture/ Dissidence through Architecture”, and “100+: Neue Perspektiven auf die

Bauhaus-Rezeption”.

Film enthusiasts and festival goers once again have the opportunity to serve on the jury for the Audience Competition. This year, the jury features **Henry Engelberg, Fine Fritzke, Lara Goldberg, Višnja Jurić-Krappmann, and Moritz Mahltig**. They will present a Golden Dove to one of the 10 nominated feature documentaries.

The Golden and Silver Doves will be awarded to the winning films on Saturday, 1 November, at the Schaubühne Lindenfels in Leipzig.

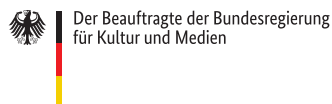
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