

Ola Staszel to become new festival director of DOK Leipzig

Press Release
20 October 2025



Ola Staszel | Photo: Alena Flemming

Aleksandra (Ola) Staszel is set to become the new festival director of DOK Leipzig and managing director of Leipziger Dok-Filmwochen GmbH on 1 January 2026. A selection committee led by Dr Skadi Jennicke, the city's mayor for arts and culture, made this recommendation after a period of intense consultation. The company's supervisory board has discussed the appointment, and Leipzig's mayor, Burkhard Jung, has now confirmed the resulting decision. The city council is expected to vote on the appointment at its meeting on 29 October.

Ola Staszel is set to succeed Christoph Terhechte, whose tenure as general manager will end on 31 January 2026, two years earlier than planned, for personal reasons. The two are expected to work together in January 2026 in order to ensure a smooth transition.

"In Ola Staszel, the city of Leipzig will gain a general manager for DOK who brings with her a broad artistic vision as well as considerable experience in the documentary film industry and a thoughtful approach to it. Additionally, Ms Staszel is known for focusing on Eastern European topics in her work to date. This will prominently carry forward an emphasis that the DOK Leipzig Film Festival has traditionally had with a view to current social challenges," says Dr Skadi Jennicke, the deputy mayor for arts and culture and chair of the supervisory board.

As is customary for management positions in the city of Leipzig, the job is initially limited to five years. The selection committee was comprised of the members of the supervisory board, who are also city councillors from each elected faction, the chair of the supervisory board, Dr Skadi Jennicke, and an external panel of experts from the film and documentary industry. Christoph Terhechte was also a member of this committee.

Ola Staszel is currently the director of the German-Polish-Czech Neisse Film Festival in the border triangle, where she is responsible for documentaries, feature films and management. She studied film and literature as well as European studies at the Universities of Wrocław and Aachen. She has been a resident of Berlin since 1999. Ola Staszel founded and directed The Rolling Movies, a festival of mobile cinema, and was on the jury of

68th International Leipzig
Festival for Documentary and
Animated Film

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Dr. Skadi Jennicke

Managing and Artistic Director
Christoph Terhechte

Place of Performance
Leipzig

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Commercial Register, HRB 35 89

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DE141498242

Deutsche Film- und Medienbewertung (FBW) in Wiesbaden from 2014 to 2025.

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On 30 October, festival director Christoph Terhechte will join Ola Staszal in discussing the past and future of DOK Leipzig at the “Festival Visions” DOK Talk. This event will begin at 11:30 a.m. at the Zeitgeschichtliches Forum Leipzig and is open to the public. Admission is free of charge.

page 2 of 2

DOK Leipzig is the world's oldest festival for documentary and animated films and is unique in this regard. At its core are the values of peace, human dignity, representation and diversity. Each year, the festival screens some 200 artistic, socially relevant films and extended reality works and provides a space for discussion. At the same time, DOK Industry is the leading meeting place and source of inspiration in Germany for the international film industry.

Profile of Ola Staszal

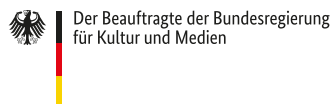
Ola Staszal has played a major part in the German-Polish-Czech film festival scene for more than 25 years. Since 2011, she has been with the Neisse Film Festival in the border triangle of Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic, and part of its management since 2014. Under her leadership, that festival has grown into an internationally renowned platform for the art of film as well as a popular festival for the public. She also regularly serves on the jury at other film festivals and was on the jury of Deutsche Film- und Medienbewertung (FBW) in Wiesbaden from 2014 to 2025. Staszal, who was born in Poland, has also guided cultural policy as a member of the Film Advisory Board of the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony and as a co-founder of and spokesperson for Łużycafilm, a Sorbian-German film network. Ola Staszal studied literature, film and political science.

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