

DOK Leipzig announces its first new section under Ola Staszel

Further updates | This year's festival motif

Press Release
27.8.2026



DOK Leipzig 2026 festival motif (Design: Stefan Ibrahim)

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With its 69th edition just two months away, DOK Leipzig has announced the first details of this year's programme.

Festival director Ola Staszel, who has overseen the artistic direction and management of the Leipzig festival since January 2026, is launching a new section, **“Positions”**, that creates more space for exchange and debate. This section explores the world in detail, in all its depth, complexity and ambiguity. The selection of films is intended as a starting point and catalyst for dialogue and exchange – listening to one another, having conversations, accommodating differing views and contradictions, and questioning our own convictions.

The films variously follow family members searching for traces of those who were disappeared during the Spanish Civil War (**“Atlas of Disappearance”**), counter oil extraction in Nigeria with poetry (**“Hope is a Word”**) and observe doubts giving way to obedience and routine at a French training facility for prison guards (**“Detention”**). The other films are every bit as rich and complex. **“Tricontinental, Letter to Open in Case Of”**, for example, sheds light on a socialist movement during the Cold War and **“Fracture”**, Israeli activist Keren Kraizer's video diary, documents her ambivalence at returning to her home country, where everything is about to explode. Director **Barbara Kopple**, a two-time Oscar winner for Best Documentary Feature, completes her trilogy exploring workers' rights with **“Union Town”**. Finally, the lineup also includes the world premiere of **“The Masturbator – The Adventures of Edgar Hilsenrath”**, the story of Leipzig-born writer and Holocaust survivor Edgar Hilsenrath, who was born 100 years ago, told through a powerful blend of animation and archival footage.

The “Positions” section will also feature **two debate formats**, developed in cooperation with Critics' Week, that break with established forms of discussion between audiences, filmmakers and critics. These debates will

69th International Leipzig
Festival for Documentary and
Animated Film

26 October to 1 November 2026

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follow two different film screenings. Organised by the German Film Critics Association and running parallel to the Berlin International Film Festival, Critics' Week has been trying out different ways of talking about film since 2015. The festival has since developed a wide range of playful and experimental discussion formats, now compiled in a [glossary](#) established in 2025. In addition to these jointly developed discussion events, further screenings in this series will be followed by **Extended Q&As** with filmmakers and invited experts.

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The sections **"Camera Lucida"** and **"Panorama: Central and Eastern Europe"** will not be continued. Films with unconventional artistic styles as well as those with a focus on Central and Eastern Europe will no longer be grouped into separate programmes but will instead be included in the festival's competitions.

Also new at DOK Leipzig 2026: the **Audience Award**, a Golden Dove for a feature-length documentary, will no longer be decided by a jury but by the audience in an online vote.

The **festival motif**, once again designed by Leipzig-based graphic designer and illustrator Stefan Ibrahim, will be visible throughout the city in the weeks leading up to the festival.

"Our poster this year is deliberately open to multiple interpretations," says festival director Ola Staszek. "In its references to the labour movement, politics, feminism and pop culture, the strength of the motif lies in its layers of meaning. That also ties in with the many voices within a community, which we want to place firmly at the heart of this year's festival."

Designer Stefan Ibrahim emphasises the unifying dimension of his motif: "The motif depicts bodies in motion and people interacting. Its association with work and production is, of course, intentional. Whether it be art, crafts, services or care work, everyone is included, everyone is seen. At DOK Leipzig and far beyond the festival, artists and cultural practitioners make an almost daily choice to engage in a creative process, with all its highs and lows, and to lay that process bare in all its many facets – whether to tell a story or to make it accessible to a wider audience. This poster pays tribute to that essential artistic labour and invites audience members to become active participants in an idea, a dialogue and a shared exploration."

A second new section, which also includes the opening film, will be announced in mid-September.

Further film series for this year's festival will be presented in the coming weeks.

The full programme, including all screening times, will be available on the DOK Leipzig website from 8 October. Ticket sales will open online on the same day.

The films of „Positions“ can be found in the following film list.

Positions



Atlas of Disappearance

Documentary Film

Manuel Correa
Spain, Norway 2026 | 84 min
German premiere

Über 33.000 Leichen ließ das Franco-Regime heimlich ins Valle de los Caídos überführen. Drei Familien suchen nach Angehörigen. Archive, Karten und Forensik zeichnen eine Topografie des Terrors. – *The Franco Regime had over 33,000 bodies secretly transferred to Valle de los Caídos. Three families are looking for relatives. Archives, maps and forensics trace a topography of terror.*

Language Spanish
Subtitles English



Detention

Documentary Film

Guillaume Massart
France 2026 | 132 min
German premiere

Angehende Gefängniswärter*innen drücken die Schulbank. Kann es eine gute Ausbildung für ein fragwürdiges System geben? Wie formt eine Uniform? Ein beklemmender Sprung in die Grauzone. – *Aspiring prison guards in the classroom. Can there be such a thing as good training for a questionable system? How does a uniform form you? A disturbing dive into a grey area.*

Language French
Subtitles English



Fracture

Documentary Film

KEREN KREIZER
Belgium 2026 | 83 min
German premiere

Das brandaktuelle, intuitiv fließende Videotagebuch der israelischen Aktivistin Keren Kraizer dokumentiert ihre Ambivalenz bei der Rückkehr in ihre Heimat, wo bald alles zu explodieren droht. – *Bracingly topical and beautifully fluid, Israeli activist Keren Kraizer's video diary documents her ambivalence at returning to her home country, where everything is about to explode.*

Language Hebrew, English
Subtitles English



Hope Is a Word

Documentary Film

Maria Galliani Dyrvik
Norway, Nigeria, Italy 2026 | 82 min
German premiere

Westliche Ölkonzerne haben im Nigerdelta in Nigeria seit Jahrzehnten Umweltschäden mit fatalen Folgen verursacht. Die lokale Bevölkerung kämpft für Gerechtigkeit – mit Protest und Poetry! – *For decades, western oil corporations have been causing devastating environmental damages in Nigeria's Niger Delta. The local population is fighting for justice – with protests and poetry!*

Language English
Subtitles English

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