

A new section at DOK Leipzig will bolster eastern German perspectives in documentary filmmaking

Press Release
15.9.2026

The opening film, “Good Evening, Beautiful”, updates a classic of feminist GDR literature for the present day



Good Evening, Beautiful (Director: Ina Borrmann) | DOK Leipzig 2026

Festival director Ola Staszel is introducing a **new section** called “**Fokus Ost**”, which will bolster eastern German perspectives in documentary filmmaking. This marks the addition of a further section alongside “Positions” to expand DOK Leipzig in Staszel’s first edition of the festival.

“The voices from the eastern part of our country are not always heard. Giving them greater exposure in a place like Leipzig and at a festival with such an eventful history marked by profound political upheavals is something that should be expected,” says Staszel. “The films being screened originate here, but their relevance extends further. We hope that they will reveal their discursive power, particularly through dialogue with our international audience.”

Curator Grit Lemke, a filmmaker, author and former programming director at DOK Leipzig, adds: “It’s about filling a void, about correcting perceptions and providing alternate narratives. It’s about asking why the variety of eastern Germany isn’t reflected in what’s seen or told – and who makes that decision. It’s about self-reflection – in the face of profound changes.”

The feature-length films tell, among other things, of the student protest in Rostock against the closure of the branch of the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts during the period of German reunification (“**The Class of 1990**”), the stories of two former contract workers from Vietnam who were employed in the GDR (“**Uncle Thuận**”) and a garden that becomes a bright spot within a concrete housing estate in Schwerin (“**Garden of Hope**”). While one of the short films takes us to the eponymous “**Silicon Saxony**”, “**Ten to Twenty Slog Heaps**” is a cinematic, associative exploration connecting the landscape, history, legends and identity of the Mansfeld region.

Four other films in this section will be entered in the German Documentary

69th International Leipzig
Festival for Documentary and
Animated Film

26 October to 1 November 2026

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Film Competition and will be announced on 8 October.

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Eight of the total of ten documentaries will have their world premieres at the 69th edition of the festival. These include this year's **opening film**: Ina Borrmann's **"Good Evening, Beautiful"** completes the new section.

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The film's director, who was born in Saxony, met several protagonists of a 1977 collection of interviews by Maxie Wander titled "Guten Morgen, du Schöne", and interviewed them again. Wander's book had left its mark on generations, and it remains one of the most influential works in German literature. Then as now, the women – originally anonymous, now using their real names – reflect quite openly on their lifestyles, work, relationships, the GDR era and the present day, their families, their sexuality, their age and their place in society. By speaking with radical candour about matters that are supposedly private, "Good Evening, Beautiful" once again raises important questions about living in a patriarchy, questions that have lost none of their relevance since the book was first published.

To coincide with the festival's official opening on 26 October at the Schauspiel Leipzig, there will be a **public screening of "Good evening, Beautiful"** at 20.30 in the East Hall of Leipzig Central Station. Admission is free.

The section will also include the **DOK Talk "Eastern German Perspectives in Documentary Filmmaking"** at the Volkshochschule Leipzig at 16:00 on 30 October, which is being organised in collaboration with the weekly newspaper "der Freitag". How are eastern Germany and the realities of life there represented in documentary films? What obstacles do filmmakers face? And which films make it onto the big screen, onto television and onto streaming platforms? In conversation with guests of this edition of the festival, DOK Leipzig aims to take stock of the current situation and open it up for debate. The talk will be moderated by Barbara Schweizerhof, film editor at "der Freitag". This event is also open to the public free of charge.

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.

"Good Evening, Beautiful" opens in German cinemas on 19 November.

Press images available to download: [Film stills and portraits](#)

The first films in Fokus Ost can be found in the following film list.

Fokus Ost



Guten Abend, du Schöne

Documentary Film

Ina Borrmann
Germany 2026 | 95 min
World premiere

"Eine kleine Flamme, die aufging und die Leute inspirierte, anders über die DDR zu erzählen." Fast fünfzig Jahre später blicken die Protagonistinnen erneut auf das ikonische Buch von 1977. – *"A little flame that lit up and inspired people to tell different stories about the GDR." Almost fifty years later, the female protagonists look back once more at the iconic book from 1977.*

Language German
Subtitles English



10 bis 20 Halden

Documentary Film

Emerson Culurgioni
Germany 2026 | 27 min
World premiere

Das Land ist weg, aber die Halden sind noch da. Assoziative Reflexion über Boden und Ressourcen, Arbeit und Zerstörung, Heimat und Verlust in einer ostdeutschen Bergbaulandschaft. – *The land is gone, but the slag heaps remain. A reflective exploration of soil and resources, labour and destruction, home and loss in an East German mining landscape.*

Language German
Subtitles German, English



Garten der Hoffnung

Documentary Film

Dieter Schumann
Germany 2026 | 119 min
No Premiere

In einem Schweriner Neubaugebiet finden Menschen aus fünf Nationen in einem Projekt zueinander. Gärtnern gegen Einsamkeit, Vorurteile, Armut und Heimatverlust. Ein Film wie ein kleines Wunder. – *In a pre-fab estate in Schwerin, people from five countries come together through gardening. Fighting loneliness, prejudice, poverty, and displacement. A small miracle of a film.*

Language German, Arabic, Ukrainian
Subtitles English



Die Klasse von 1990

Documentary Film

RP Kahl, Sonja Hilberger
Germany 2026 | 85 min
World premiere

Ein ostdeutscher Studierendenprotest der frühen 1990er Jahre in Erinnerungen einstiger Schauspielschüler*innen der Rostocker "Ernst Busch" Hochschule. Zeitbild und Lehrstunde in Selbstermächtigung. – *An East German student protest of the early 1990s, revisited by former acting students of Rostock's "Ernst Busch" Academy. A portrait of an era and a lesson in self-empowerment.*

Language German
Subtitles English

Fokus Ost



Onkel Thuận

Documentary Film

Minh Anh Nguyễn
Germany 2026 | 57 min
World premiere

Die Eltern kamen als Vertragsarbeitende in die DDR und führen heute ein Restaurant in Nordrhein-Westfalen. Die Töchter stellen Fragen nach Selbstbestimmung, Zugehörigkeit und dem Glück. – *The parents came to the GDR as contract workers and now run a restaurant in North Rhine-Westphalia. Their daughters ask questions about self-determination, belonging, and happiness.*

Language Vietnamese, German
Subtitles English, German



Silicon Saxony

Documentary Film

Leon Meschede
Germany 2026 | 13 min
World premiere

In Dresden entsteht Europas größte Chipfabrik – genau an der Stelle, wo einst das Herz der DDR-Mikroelektronik schlug. Spurensuche und futuristischer Nachhall einer Utopie. – *Europe's largest chip factory is rising in Dresden – precisely where the heart of the GDR's microelectronics industry once beat. Tracing the past and the afterglow of a utopia.*

Language German, English, Chinese, Chinese (Traditional)
Subtitles English

Four other films in this section will be entered in the German Documentary Film Competition and will be announced on 8 October.

Wir danken für die Unterstützung

Thank you for your support

Gefördert durch



Gefördert durch das Sächsische Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft, Kultur und Tourismus. Diese Einrichtung wird mitfinanziert durch Steuermittel auf der Grundlage des vom Sächsischen Landtag beschlossenen Haushaltes.



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