

The DOK Leipzig Retrospective to Show Revolutionary Films from Latin America

Press Release
3.9.2026

The Arsenal Filminstitut, the German Federal Archives, the DEFA Foundation and DOK Leipzig examine the reception and preservation of these films in East and West Germany



Chile lebt (Directors: Juan Forch, Michael Börner) | DOK Leipzig 2026 | © DEFA-Stiftung/ Michael Börner

Entitled “**Kino und Kampf. Latin America between East and West**”, this year’s **Retrospective** is dedicated to the radical political cinema of Latin America of the 1960s and 70s. The struggle for liberation in countries like Argentina, Brazil and Chile was a recurring theme at politically committed film festivals on both sides of the Wall; numerous analogue prints of films from this era can be found in German archives today. The surprising story of how these films moved back and forth between Leipzig, East Berlin and West Berlin and were thus preserved also forms a focus of the Retrospective.

The seven programmes include five feature-length and 16 short films from 1958 to 1985. The centrepiece of the Retrospective is formed by films from the so-called “Third Cinema” of Latin America – a radical cinema movement that sprang from the anti-colonial struggles of the Global South and rebelled against social injustice, state repression and cultural heteronomy. These films are supplemented by individual East German productions thematically linked to them. Each of the seven programmes will be followed by film discussions.

“It was important to me not to just show the obvious titles,” says curator Florian Wüst about the selection of films, “but also to continually create new connections and build in some surprises. To perhaps show audiences things entirely unknown to them – and at the same time allow some people to reconnect with films they’ve already seen”.

The first programme, “Call for Liberation”, shows two Third Cinema classics that received great international acclaim. In “**Now!**” (1965), Cuban filmmaker Santiago Álvarez edits together images of racist violence to the rhythm of Lena Horne’s civil rights hymn of the same name. An agit-prop

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pamphlet for the national liberation of Argentina, **“La hora de los hornos”** (1968) moved the generation of 1968 like few other films.

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With a total of three programmes, the Retrospective places a particular focus on Chile and thus reflects the considerable attention given to Chilean current events and filmmaking at the time. The programme “All Hands United” shows a touching document of the era in the form of Patricio Guzmán’s **“El primer año”** (1972), which captures the mood of awakening linked to Salvador Allende and Unidad Popular’s first year in power. The military putsch of 11 September 1973 destroyed the hopes linked to the Allende government, but also brought international support to the Chileans fighting for a return to democracy and against the human rights violations of the Pinochet regime. This solidarity and the experiences of Chileans living in exile in East Germany are at the heart of the programmes “Chile Lives” and “Victory and Defeat”. The latter of these will be showing the newly digitised and restored version of **“Eine Minute Dunkel macht uns nicht blind”** (1976) for the very first time, part of the famous “Chile Cycle” by Walter Heynowski, Gerhard Scheumann and Peter Hellmich and a snapshot of Chile following two years of military dictatorship.

The close collaboration with Indigenous communities as a documentary practice forms the focus of the programmes “Mother Earth” and “Death of Exploitation”. The programme “Courage of Imperfection” brings together short films from different countries in Latin America and shows how the filmmakers of the Third Cinema knew exactly how to mobilise their audiences despite their restricted material means.

What’s so special about the films showing as part of the Retrospective is that a large number of them are available in different analogue formats in the archive of the Arsenal Filminstitut and the German Federal Archives. This film material bears witness to the lively, interconnected festival, distribution and archival work being carried out during the 1970s above all. The International Leipzig Documentary and Short Film Week (today’s DOK Leipzig) became a port of call above all for filmmakers subjected to censorship and persecution in the countries ruled by military dictatorships. Whether in the competition or in comprehensive retrospectives, the militant cinema of Latin America became a recurring part of the festival. In West Berlin, the Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek (today’s Arsenal Filminstitut) and the International Forum of New Cinema they founded at the Berlinale in 1971 offered filmmakers a similar platform.

Yet this commitment to the radical cinema of Latin America in Leipzig, East Berlin, West Berlin or in the context of the West German Short Film Festival Oberhausen didn’t unfold in parallel, but was rather a shared concern. The Retrospective explores how those working in the field in both East and West collaborated without paying heed to the complications of official inner-German relations. Both the State Film Archive of the GDR in East Berlin, which organised the Leipzig retrospectives, and the Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek in West Berlin made copies of analogue film materials, exchanged them with each other through personal networks and archived them. Together, they thus played a role in making sure that these politically endangered films could be preserved and circulated outside of their countries of origin. The Latin American films archived in the State Film Archive of the GDR back then were transferred to the German Federal Archives following 1990.

Taking place in collaboration with the Arsenal Filminstitut, the German Federal Archives and the DEFA Foundation for the first time, the DOK

Leipzig Retrospective shines a light on the special connection between Latin America, Leipzig, East Berlin and West Berlin. At a **DOK Talk**, representatives of the four institutions will be discussing these historical connections as well as their significance for questions of digitisation and archiving today. The DOK Talk takes place on 28 October 2026 from 15:00 to 16:30 at the Zeitgeschichtliches Forum Leipzig.

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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.

This Retrospective is supported by funding from the Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Germany.

The films of the Retrospective can be found in the following film list.

Retrospective



Abastecimiento

Documentary Film

Raúl Ruiz
Chile 1973 | 15 min
No Premiere

Eine Frau aus bürgerlichem Milieu und der sozialistische Wirtschaftsminister sprechen per Tonband zueinander und aneinander vorbei: ein Bild der tief gespaltenen chilenischen Gesellschaft. – *A woman from a bourgeois background and the socialist Minister for Economic Affairs talk to each other and at cross-purposes via tape: a snapshot of the deeply divided Chilean society.*

Language Spanish
Subtitles English



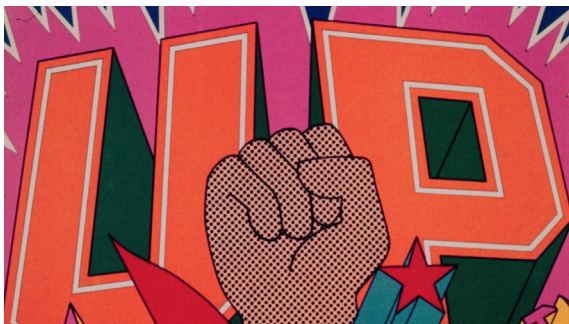
Caracas: dos o tres cosas

Documentary Film

Ugo Ulive
Venezuela 1969 | 16 min
No Premiere

Radio, Werbung, Caracas. Die Wege kreuzen sich, doch die Menschen begegnen sich nicht. Eine experimentelle Collage der sozialen Realitäten im Venezuela der späten 1960er Jahre. – *Radio, advertising, Caracas. Their paths cross, yet the people never meet. An experimental collage of social realities in Venezuela in the late 1960s.*

Language Spanish
Subtitles English



Chile lebt

Animated Film

Juan Forch, Michael Börner
GDR 1976 | 1 min
No Premiere

Kunstschaffende im Exil machen die Solidarität mit Chile nach dem 11. September 1973 sichtbar: Ein Fest der Farben und Formen gegen die Diktatur. Alles in nur einer Minute. – *Artists in exile make visible the solidarity with Chile in the wake of 11 September 1973: a celebration of colours and shapes in opposition to the dictatorship. All in just one minute.*

Language without dialogue
Subtitles None



Eine chilenische Hochzeit

Documentary Film

Rainer Ackermann, Valentin Milanow
GDR 1977 | 8 min
No Premiere

Ein junges chilenisches Paar heiratet im DDR-Exil. Es wird fröhlich gefeiert, doch auf den Gesichtern der Gäste liegt Traurigkeit: die Erinnerung an Inhaftierung und Folter. – *A young Chilean couple gets married in exile in East Germany. There is joyful celebration, but sadness lingers on the guests' faces: memories of imprisonment and torture.*

Language German
Subtitles English

Retrospective



Eine Minute Dunkel macht uns nicht blind

Documentary Film

Walter Heynowski, Gerhard Scheumann, Peter Hellmich
GDR 1976 | 66 min
No Premiere

Zwei Jahre nach dem Militärputsch. Menschen auf Santiagos Straßen versammeln sich um die Kamera: Man könne hier nicht sprechen. Alle hätten Angst. Und doch beginnt Chile zu sprechen. – *Two years after the military coup. People gather around the camera in the streets of Santiago. They say they can't speak here. Everyone is afraid. And yet, Chile begins to speak.*

Language Spanish, German
Subtitles English



El primer año

Documentary Film

Patricio Guzmán
Chile, France 1972 | 100 min
No Premiere

Das erste Jahr unter Allendes Volksregierung: Die Arbeiterklasse Chiles feiert den Sieg und packt an. Doch die Rechte sabotiert den Umbau zu einer gerechteren Gesellschaft mit allen Kräften. – *The first year under Allende's popular government: Chile's working class celebrates the victory and pitches in. But the right does everything in their power to sabotage the transition to a fairer society.*

Language Spanish, French
Subtitles English



El tigre saltó y mató, pero morirá... morirá...

Documentary Film

Santiago Álvarez
Cuba 1973 | 16 min
No Premiere

Fünf Tage nach dem Putsch wird Chiles berühmtester Liedermacher Víctor Jara von der Pinochet-Junta brutal ermordet. Die Würdigung seines Werks und Lebens als filmischer Bericht in vier Liedern. – *Five days after the coup, Chile's most famous singer-songwriter Víctor Jara is brutally murdered by Pinochet's junta. A tribute to his life and work, recounted through four songs.*

Language Spanish
Subtitles English



Hermina de la Victoria

Documentary Film

Douglas Hübner
Chile 1969 | 16 min
No Premiere

Die Polizei räumt von obdachlosen Familien besetztes Land am Rand von Santiago. Ein Mädchen stirbt. Die Siedlung bleibt. Bis heute trägt sie ihren Namen: Hermina de la Victoria. – *The police clear land on the outskirts of Santiago that is occupied by homeless families. A girl dies. The settlement stays. It bears her name to this day: Hermina de la Victoria.*

Language Spanish
Subtitles English

Retrospective



Illapu – Lied von Freiheit und Liebe

Documentary Film

Carlos Puccio
GDR 1984 | 23 min
No Premiere

Die chilenische Folkloreband Illapu kommt nach Ost-Berlin. Zwischen den Gigs geht es um eine heikle Frage: Einzelnen zurückkehren, wenn sich die Chance bietet, oder gemeinsam im Exil bleiben? – *The Chilean folk band Illapu arrives in East Berlin. Between gigs, they face a difficult question: Should they return home individually if the opportunity arises, or remain in exile together?*

Language Spanish, German
Subtitles English



La hora de los hornos. Neocolonialismo y violencia

Documentary Film

Fernando E. Solanas
Argentina 1968 | 88 min
No Premiere

Ein Film wie ein Brandsatz, ein radikales Pamphlet. Wie kaum ein anderer Film bewegte dieser Ruf nach der Befreiung Argentiniens von Unterdrückung und Gewalt die 68er-Generation weltweit. – *A film like an incendiary device, a radical pamphlet. Like few other films, this call for the liberation of Argentina from oppression and violence moved the 1968 generation across the world.*

Language Spanish
Subtitles English



La infancia de Marisol

Documentary Film

Bernabé Hernández
Cuba 1979 | 14 min
No Premiere

Ein 14-jähriges nicaraguanisches Mädchen erzählt Unglaubliches: von ihrer Beteiligung am Kampf gegen die Diktatur, von Gefangennahme und Folter bis zum Aufbruch in ein neues Leben. – *A 14-year-old Nicaraguan girl recounts an incredible story: from her involvement in the fight against the dictatorship via imprisonment and torture to her departure into a new life.*

Language Spanish
Subtitles English



Lavra Dor

Documentary Film

Paulo Rufino, Ana Carolina
Brazil 1968 | 11 min
No Premiere

Lavrador = Bauer, lavra = arbeiten, dor = Schmerz. Die experimentelle Collage über die Situation brasilianischer Landarbeiter*innen zeugt von der poetischen wie politischen Kraft des Kinos. – *Lavrador = peasant, lavra = work, dor = pain. This experimental collage about the situation of Brazilian farmworkers is testament to the equally poetic and political power of cinema.*

Language Portuguese (Brazil)
Subtitles English

Retrospective



Liber Arce, liberarse

Documentary Film

Mario Handler, Mario Jacob, Marcos Banchemo
Uruguay 1969 | 11 min
No Premiere

Liber Arce, der Name eines bei Protesten von der Polizei erschossenen Studenten, wird zum Aufruf: Liberarse, sich befreien. Ein stummer Aufschrei gegen Gewalt und Unterdrückung. – *Liber Arce, the name of a student shot dead by the police at a protest, becomes a call for action: Liberarse, to liberate oneself. A silent cry against violence and oppression.*

Language Spanish captions
Subtitles English



Now!

Documentary Film

Santiago Álvarez
Cuba 1965 | 6 min
No Premiere

"Now!" feuert ins Bild wie aus einem Maschinengewehr. Ein radikaler Aufschrei gegen Rassismus und Polizeigewalt in den USA: laut, wütend, kompromisslos und dringlich, bis heute. – *"Now!" hits the screen like a burst of machine gun fire. A radical outcry against racism and police violence in the USA: loud, furious, uncompromising and urgent, even today.*

Language without dialogue
Subtitles



Nuestra voz de tierra, memoria y futuro

Documentary Film

Marta Rodríguez, Jorge Silva
Colombia 1981 | 107 min
No Premiere

Der Kampf um Land und kulturelle Selbstbestimmung einer indigenen Gemeinde im Südwesten Kolumbiens in den 1970er Jahren: Magie und Mythen bestärken den Prozess der politischen Organisation. – *An indigenous community's struggle for land and cultural self-determination in southwestern Colombia in the 1970s: Magic and myths strengthen the process of political organisation.*

Language Spanish
Subtitles English



Ollas populares

Documentary Film

Gerardo Vallejo
Argentina 1968 | 5 min
No Premiere

Bilder aus einer staatlichen Volksküche, apathisch wird dünne Brühe gelöffelt. Dazu die argentinische Nationalhymne. "Hört den Lärm gesprengter Ketten" – Zynismus oder revolutionärer Ruf? – *Scenes of a public soup kitchen; thin broth is spooned up apathetically. The Argentine national anthem is playing. "Hear the sound of broken chains" – cynicism or revolutionary call?*

Language Spanish
Subtitles English

Retrospective



Pintando con el pueblo

Documentary Film

Leonardo Céspedes
Chile 1971 | 8 min
No Premiere

Pinsel, Farbkübel, Leinwand: Ein riesiges Gemälde entsteht vor dem Präsidentenpalast in Santiago. Salvador Allende verkündet: "Die Kultur sei nicht nur für einige Wenige da." – *Brushes, paint buckets, canvas: A huge painting is taking shape in front of the Presidential Palace in Santiago. Salvador Allende proclaims: "Culture is not just for the select few."*

Language Spanish
Subtitles English



Somos +

Documentary Film

Pedro Chaskel, Pablo Salas
Chile 1985 | 16 min
No Premiere

"Wir sind mehr" steht auf den Schildern der 'Mujeres por la vida'. 1985 trotzten Chileninnen Tränengas und Wasserwerfern. Ihr Widerstand gegen die Militärdiktatur bleibt ungebrochen. – *"We are more" is written on the placards of 'Mujeres por la vida'. In 1985, Chilean women brave tear gas and water cannons. Their resistance to the military dictatorship remains unbroken.*

Language Spanish
Subtitles English



Tire dié

Documentary Film

Fernando Birri
Argentina 1958 | 33 min
No Premiere

Ein waghalsiges Unterfangen für ein paar Münzen. Barfuß rennen Kinder neben dem fahrenden Zug Richtung Buenos Aires her, strecken ihre Hände den Reisenden entgegen. "Tire dié, tire dié!" – *A daring endeavour for a few coins. Barefoot children run along the moving train to Buenos Aires, stretching out their hands to the passengers. "Tire dié, tire dié!"*

Language Spanish
Subtitles English



Un día yo pregunté

Documentary Film

Julia de Álvarez
Colombia 1970 | 8 min
No Premiere

Dinnen predigen Priester, Gläubige leisten Fürbitten; draußen herrscht Elend. Eine polemische Collage über die Doppelmoral der katholischen Kirche im Kolumbien der 1970er Jahre. – *Inside, priests preach, the faithful intercede; outside, misery reigns. A polemic collage about the double standards of the Catholic Church in 1970s Colombia.*

Language Spanish
Subtitles English

Retrospective



Yawar Mallku

Fictional Film

Jorge Sanjinés

Bolivia 1969 | 70 min

No Premiere

Ein Verbrechen, in Rückblenden erzählt: US-Entwicklungshelfer*innen sterilisieren heimlich indigene Frauen. Kampfansage gegen den "Yankee-Imperialismus" und die Klassengesellschaft Boliviens. – *A crime narrated in flashbacks: US development aid workers secretly sterilise indigenous women. A declaration of war against "Yankee imperialism" and Bolivia's class society.*

Language Quechua, Spanish

Subtitles English

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