“Letters from the Silenced Country” by Andrei Kutsila Receives the Golden Dove in the International Competition Documentary Film at

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Feature-length animated film “The Orbit of Minor Satellites” receives Golden Dove | Feature-length film “Transition” wins the German Competition | Audience voting honours “Nicole Nicole”

Golden and Silver Doves | © Susann Bargas Gomez

The award-winning films of the 69th edition of DOK Leipzig have been announced. The seven Golden and two Silver Doves as well as various Partnership Awards were presented at the Schaubühne Lindenfels in Leipzig on Saturday.

In the **International Competition Documentary Film**, the **Golden Dove Feature-Length Film** went to Andrei Kutsila for **“Letters from the Silenced Country”** (Listy | PL, LT, DE). The film crafts a shaking portrait of the crimes committed in contemporary Belarus, transforming private prison correspondence into a cinematic testimony. “Through the gripping, alternating experiences of men and women, some who speak, some who draw, some who fight, the film turns testimony into resistance,” the jury said in its statement. The €10,000 Golden Dove is sponsored by Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk. The award was presented by Boris Lochthofen, MDR Programme Director Halle / Leipzig.

The €3,000 **Golden Dove Short Film** went to Laura Poitras and Rachel Lauren Mueller for **“They’re Here”** (US). During a dystopian winter, the residents of Minneapolis fight back against the paramilitary assaults being carried out by ICE. Poitras and Mueller expose the sheer scale of the violence in the form of a horror film. “An urgent and all-encompassing film, masterfully made as an organic part of a community coming together to face, resist, and hold accountable the state violence that targets the most vulnerable in our society,” said the jury.

The winning films of the Golden Doves in the International Competition Documentary Film will qualify for consideration for the annual ACADEMY AWARDS® provided that the films otherwise comply with the Academy’s rules.

69th International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Film

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The **Silver Dove Feature-Length Film**, sponsored by 3sat and awarded to the best feature-length documentary film by an up-and-coming director, went to Asmahan Bkerat for **"Concrete Land"** (Tiyaha | JO, PS). Born from the urgency of a moment, the film depicts the day-to-day life of a Palestinian Bedouin family in Jordan as high-end villas rise around them, threatening their home. "A film by a young talent who knows where and how to place her camera, at a respectful, intimate distance from her subjects. She lets us see past the barriers of skin colour, class and prejudice, and understand what it means to forcefully give up one's roots," said the jury. Natalie Müller-Elmau (3sat) presented the €6,000 award to the filmmaker.

The €1,500 **Silver Dove Short Film**, sponsored by the Independent Saxon State Media Agency (SLM) for the best short documentary film by an up-and-coming director, went to **"in memory of"** (BE) by Florinda Ciucio. In the film, a hand knowingly draws a version of Gaza that now exists only as a memory. "Here, drawing becomes an act of active resistance," said the jury. The award was presented by Katja Röckel from the SLM's Media Council.

The winners of the International Competition Documentary Film were selected by Diana El Jeiroudi, Ivan Ramljak and Raul Niño Zambrano.

In the **International Competition Animated Film**, the €3,000 **Golden Dove Feature-Length Film** went to Chris Sullivan for **"The Orbit of Minor Satellites"** (US, JP). The film is built around a fascinating animated story about a psychiatrist and his patient, who are whisked away to an abandoned, hallucinatory space station from the Cold War era. "Moving fluidly between reality and imagination, the film reveals a fragmented inner world where loneliness and despair coexist with extraordinary tenderness," said the jury members Waltraud Grausgruber, Edmunds Jansons and Matea Radic.

The **Golden Dove Short Film**, which includes €1,500, went to Alexandre Siqueira for **"Terminal"** (PT, FR, ES). In this film, a pirate's son who is now coughing up blood returns to his mother after years of silence. With a suitcase full of secrets and any number of tattoos, the film tells about unconditional love for an adult child. The jury praised the "extraordinary visual tenderness and poetic sensitivity."

The short film "When the Sea Was Calm" (GE) by Mamuka Tkeshelashvili received a special mention.

The winning film of the Golden Dove Short Film in the International Competition Animated Film will qualify for consideration for the annual ACADEMY AWARDS® provided that the film otherwise complies with the Academy's rules.

In the **German Competition Documentary Film**, the **Golden Dove Feature-Length Film** went to **"Transition"** (Übergang | DE) by Peter Badel and Chris Wright. The camera keeps rolling even after one's passing in the film, which brings to life Thomas Heise's unpublished archives and fragments of what was to be his "Heimatfilm", albeit never completed. "The filmmakers take up Thomas Heise's subjective perspectives and use them to compose a cinematic ode about time and transience," praised the jury. This €10,000 award is donated by Doris Apell-Kölmel and Michael Kölmel.

The **Golden Dove Short Film**, which includes €1,500, went to Rosa Gocht for **"Hello Debus"** (Hallo Debus | DE), about a father who makes requests on the answering machine of his son, who's so paralysed he's become a veritable still life. Overwhelmed and helpless, an absurd transformation begins. The film creates "a surreal, ironic visual world to convey a pain we are all familiar with," said jury members David Bernet, Stefanie Eckert and Adele Kohout.

The short film "The Core" (Der Kern | DE) by Rebecca Zehr received a special mention.

The **Golden Dove in the Audience Competition** was awarded to the documentary film **"Nicole Nicole"** (CH, FR) by Lauren Dällenbach. The protagonist (55), who is giving the film its title, still lives with her mother by Lake Geneva. Within this symbiotic family, the need for greater independence rears its head. The film is a tender tale of connection and emancipation.

The audience in Leipzig's cinemas voted online to determine the winning film. This €3,000 award is granted by the Leipzig Stiftung.

The award-winners of the Golden and Silver Doves at a glance:

International Competition Documentary Film

Golden Dove Feature-Length Film: "Letters from the Silenced Country" (dir. Andrei Kutsila | PL, LT, DE 2026)
Golden Dove Short Film: "They're Here" (dir. Laura Poitras, Rachel Lauren Mueller | US 2026)
Silver Dove Feature-Length Film: "Concrete Land" (dir. Asmahan Bkerat | JO, PS 2026)
Silver Dove Short Film: "in memory of" (dir. Florinda Ciucio | BE 2026)

International Competition Animated Film

Golden Dove Feature-Length Film: "The Orbit of Minor Satellites" (dir. Chris Sullivan | US, JP 2026)
Golden Dove Short Film: "Terminal" (dir. Alexandre Siqueira | PT, FR, ES 2026)

German Competition Documentary Film
Golden Dove Feature-Length Film: "Transition" (dir. Peter Badel, Chris Wright | DE 2026)
Golden Dove Short Film: "Hello Debus" (dir. Rosa Gocht | DE 2026)

Audience Competition
Golden Dove: "Nicole Nicole" (dir. Lauren Dällenbach | CH, FR 2026)

Partnership Awards

Earlier, on Saturday afternoon, ten Partnership Awards were presented at the Schaubühne Lindenfels.

Jasmine Alakari received the €2,000 **ver.di Prize for Solidarity, Humanity and Fairness** for **"Free Zone"** (DE).

The €4,000 **DEFA Sponsoring Prize**, granted by the DEFA Foundation, was awarded to Tete Hoffmann for **"My Brilliant Father"** (Mein genialer

Vater | DE).

The €3,000 **MDR Film Prize** for an outstanding Eastern European documentary film went to Andrei Kutsila for **"Letters from the Silenced Country"** (Listy | PL, LT, DE).

The €2,000 **Prize of the Interreligious Jury** went to Kamila Serwicka for **"Blossoming"** (A teraz wiosna | PL). This award is donated by Hotel Michaelis (VCH-Hotels) in Leipzig as well as the Interreligious Round Table and the Oratorium Leipzig. The jury also gave a special mention to Helena Třeštíková for "Bára – Diary of a Rockstar" (Bára Basiková | CZ).

The **Young Eyes Film Award** was presented to **"Moving Sisters"** (GR) by Christos Stefanou. This €2,000 award is sponsored by Rahn Dittrich Group's European Foundation for Education and Culture and awarded by the Youth Jury in cooperation with LFD – Fachstelle für Medien und Bildung.

The **Prize of the International Film Critics (FIPRESCI Prize)** went to **"Auber 89"** (FR, IT) by Giuseppe Schillaci.

The **mephisto 97.6 Award** went to the short animated film **"When the Sea Was Calm"** (GE) by Mamuka Tkeshelashvili.

The jury comprised of prisoners at the Juvenile Detention Centre Regis-Breitlingen presented the award **Gedanken-Aufschluss** to **"Last Round"** (Haus der Trinker | DE) by Janis Westphal.

The **film.land.sachsen Prize for Film Culture in Rural Areas**, presented in cooperation with Filmverband Sachsen e.V., went to Dieter Schumann for **"Garden of Hope"** (Garten der Hoffnung | DE).

The **Film Prize Leipziger Ring** honours an outstanding documentary film about human rights, democracy or civil engagement. It is granted by the Stiftung Friedliche Revolution and has a value of €2,500. This award was presented to Barbara Kopple for **"Union Town"** (US) on Saturday at noon at Passage Kinos (Filmeck).

14 awards had already been presented during the week of the festival as part of the industry platform DOK Industry (see the press release from October 29).

Altogether, 33 awards were presented at DOK Leipzig. At the 69th edition of the festival, 217 films and extended reality works from 61 countries were screened at the venues around Leipzig.

All jury statements and awards, including honourable mentions, can be found here: List of award winners at DOK Leipzig

Information about the award-winning films: Films A–Z

Photo from the press release available for download: Press Photos

Download film stills here: Film Stills DOK Leipzig 2026

You'll find further information about all the DOK Leipzig juries here: Awards & Juries

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