

More space for debate at DOK Leipzig: New “Positions” section and established talk formats to open up dialogue

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DOK Leipzig 2026 | © Susann Bargas Gomez

Films as a starting point for meaningful exchange – DOK Leipzig underscores its commitment to this vision as its new **“Positions”** section expands the festival’s existing range of talk formats.

“Positions” invites audiences to take part in **extended discussions** held after film screenings. These are films that, in all their complexity and ambiguity, are intended to encourage viewers to engage with multifaceted social and geopolitical issues, listen to one another, accommodate contradictions and question our own beliefs. Can we protest by means of art alone? How is power created within institutions, and how can we ensure that we and others don’t abuse that power? “Positions” will provide a forum for filmmakers, festival guests and audiences to explore these and other questions. Highlights include two [debate formats](#) developed by Berlin Critics’ Week in a bid to challenge the conventional dynamics of post-screening Q&As. On the Wednesday of the festival, a screening of “this, too, will be liquid” and “Atlas of Disappearance” will be followed by a discussion in the “Steilvorlage” format, a debate on films and curation. On the Thursday, the “Reaktionszeit” format will frame a screening of the film “Detention” – meaning the director is initially required simply to listen to the invited guests, before being given an opportunity to respond.

In addition, two of this year’s **DOK Talks** will once again be offered free of charge. The talk **“Eastern German Perspectives in Documentary Film”** sets the agenda for the new “Fokus Ost” section, introduced this year. What defines the East? What are its most pressing issues? And how do the realities of life in eastern Germany find their way onto the screen and into the media? In cooperation with the weekly newspaper “der Freitag”, the talk will examine themes of visibility, dominant narratives and the images that emerge of the East – and its representation within the German film landscape more broadly. Moderator Barbara Schweizerhof will be joined by some of the filmmakers showcased in the “Fokus Ost” programme: Ina Borrmann (“Guten Abend, du Schöne”), Sonja Hilberger (“Die Klasse von

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1990”), Dieter Schumann (“Garten der Hoffnung”) and curator Grit Lemke.

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The **DOK Talk “Kino und Kampf. The Talk on the Retrospective”** brings together the project partners behind this year’s retrospective, which draws on the large collection of analogue prints of the films of the revolutionary Latin American cinema of the 1960s and 70s held in the archives of the Berlin-based Arsenal Filminstitut and the Bundesarchiv (German Federal Archives). The paths these prints have taken also give an account of collaborations between film festivals, distributors and archives across the border between East and West Germany. Stefanie Schulte Strathaus (Arsenal Filminstitut), Petra Rauschenbach (Bundesarchiv), Stefanie Eckert (DEFA Foundation) and curator Florian Wüst discuss this history and the importance of cooperation between institutions today. The talk will be moderated by Vivien Buchhorn.

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This year, the DOK Leipzig Hommages will once again feature two **Masterclasses** that are open to the public free of charge. In the Masterclass presented as part of the Hommage Documentary Film and moderated by Grit Lemke, Czech filmmaker **Helena Třeščíková** will be sharing personal insights into her process and her documentary approach. During the Masterclass accompanying the Hommage Animated Film to Norwegian animation studio **Trollfilm**, founder Anita Killi will chart the studio’s evolution from its beginnings to the present day. In conversation with curator Marie Ketzscher, she will be offering a look behind the scenes, from glass plates, cameras and paper objects, to the creative process behind the studio’s first feature-length film.

The DOK Industry programme also promises a wide range of compelling talks for accredited festival guests. Among the highlights are the **DOK Industry Talk “Doc Together: When Freedom of Expression is at Risk”**, which will ask how documentary filmmakers, journalists and institutions can respond to escalating threats to press and media freedom across Europe. In light of mounting political and social pressure on queer filmmaking worldwide, the **DOK Industry Talk “Making Space for Queer Cinema – The Curators’ Role”** will focus on the contribution film festivals can make to promoting intersectional storytelling and the different forms that queer curation can take. Additional DOK Industry Talks and panel discussions will address the role of cinemas as spaces of encounter, social discourse, and community, the visibility of European animated films, the ethical stakes involved in working with archival footage in the context of AI, and the development of ARD’s documentary programming in the streaming era.

The second episode of the current season of the **DOK Industry Podcast**, titled **“I Is Another: Relational Documentary Practices with Ollie Launspach”**, will also be released on 13 October. In this episode, host Savina Petkova, an editor at “Talking Shorts”, talks to Dutch film director Ollie Launspach about what it means to become the protagonist of your own film – and whether filmmaking can ever become too personal. Reflecting on his film “kiss kiss bang bang”, which will be screened at this year’s festival, the filmmaker will discuss the vulnerability that comes with documenting your own relationship and the unexpected outcomes of personal storytelling.

The complete DOK Leipzig programme, including screening dates and tickets: [Programme](#)

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

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