

DOKUDAILY

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PHOTO: FERDI LIMANI

A LIMIT TO NEGOTIATIONS

On the penultimate day of Dokufest, a back to back programming of two films grappling with the importance and the limits of multilateralism made for a discordant but nevertheless telling watch. In "The Helsinki Effect", which also incidentally opened this year's edition of the festival, Arthur Franck tries to creatively save the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe from its own tediousness, in order to reclaim for it a pivotal role in ending the Cold War. Using Artificial Intelligence to transform Henry Kissinger's transcripts into audio clips and parading pictures of Leonid Brezhnev in swim trunks, the film starts off on an ambivalent note: did the 3 year conference, with its snail-like pace, prove that slow diplomacy works?

After laughing along with the creator at Causescu's over 30 minute speech at the conference, the final chapter of the film quickly fast-forwards to the signing of the Helsinki Accords, and its snowball effect in the establishment of different Helsinki Committee chapters across eastern Europe. We are made to believe that this is how real change happens: diplomacy in high-political levels, with citizens keeping their governments accountable; demanding democracy based on values enshrined on paper.

Immediately after this, I ran to DokuKino Plato to watch "Coexistence, My Ass!", in which we follow the brilliant Noam Shuster Eliassi, a Jewish activist and comedian, trying to change the world one joke at a time. Eliassi is not a naif: raised in a cooperative/commune called "The Oasis of Peace" set up by Israelis and Palestinians who wanted to raise their children in a spirit of co-existence, she stumbles into comedy after working at the United Nations without much success. Throughout the film we watch Eliassi unapologetically fight for equality, despite the online vitriol she receives for being critical of Israel's occupation of West Bank and Gaza.

The film takes a tonal shift after the October 7 attack, during which over 1,000 Israelis were killed, and Eliassi's tries to grapple with her own role as a public figure: how does one mourn when without taking a beat the government uses the attack to flatten Gaza, and the death toll keeps increasing on a daily basis? Towards the end we see Eliassi protesting on the street against the Netanyahu government, insisting that there can be no democracy in Israel if it's just for Jewish people. We see Eliassi crying watching footage from Gaza: a scene that perhaps resonates with most of us as we watch the genocide unfold on TV, feeling powerless.

While "Coexistene, My Ass" doesn't deal with multilateralism directly, we can read Eliassi's disillusionment with the UN and the limits of international justice to bring Israel's campaign to a halt, as a clear indicator that despite it all - snail-paced diplomacy might not work for all. This perhaps becomes even more blatant when we consider that European states are considering recognizing the state of Palestine as a response to the human-made famine in Gaza: a throwback to Oslo Accords reached in mid 1990s, which hardly anyone could call successful. What would the Oslo effect be, when we see that 30 years later we are witnesses to a livestreamed genocide without recourse? Watching these two films back to back, one loses faith in the multilateral order - but thanks to Eliassi, regains it in the human spirit.

In the end perhaps, that's all that we can count on: the individual's relentless pursuit to fight for their community's soul.

Written by Lura Limani



PHOTO: GRESA NUREDINI

DAILY PICKS

FLOPHOUSE AMERICA / 78'
VIEW FROM THE WORLD



SHTËPIA E KULTURËS 16:00

KNEECAP / 105'
FICTION/NON-FICTION



DOKUKINO 17:30

PALACE OF YOUTH / 66'
SLANTED & ENCHANTED: MUSIC ON FILM



SHTËPIA E KULTURËS 20:30

PULSE OF BERAT
DOKUNIGHTS



KINO LUMI 22:30

SOUND METAPHORS DJS,
SLEEP D (BUTTER SESSION), GENÇ ELEZAJ
DOKUNIGHTS



SONAR STAGE 23:59

DOKUTALKS

When Images Echo



PHOTO: SUER CELINA

In an age where images never truly fade but are constantly reshaped, “Reassembled: Collage, Memory, and the Hybrid Image” brought together four artists whose works turn fragments of the past into textured narratives. Moderated by Dea Gjinovci and supported by the Swiss Embassy in Kosovo, this DokuTalk unfolded on August 8 at Shkolla e Muzikës Lorenc Antoni, offering an intimate exploration of how memory such as personal, collective, and political can be rebuilt through hybrid artistic practices.

The conversation opened with the understanding that collage is more than an aesthetic technique, it is a philosophy of storytelling. Found footage, digital textures, archival documents, and reconstructed images can act as bridges between past and present, between what is remembered and what has been erased. For filmmakers Ermela Teli, Sara Rajaei, Durim Klajqi, and Blerta Haziraj, the act of reassembling is as much about confronting absence as it is about preserving presence.

Ermela Teli spoke of digging through Albania’s state archives, uncovering home-shot 8mm reels filmed by her uncle in the 1980s. On the surface, the images such as weddings, family celebrations, domestic moments seemed politically untouched. But, as she explained, “every gesture, every frame, every choice of where the camera lingers” carried the invisible weight of the state’s aesthetic control. Behind the smiling faces and staged harmony lay her family’s unspoken pain: a father in prison, a mother hospitalized, the shadow of political repression. Rain became a recurring symbol for her, a melancholic constant threading through her life’s pivotal moments. For Teli, finding traces of that rain in paintings, films, and music was a way of affirming that her experiences were not solitary illusions.

Blerta Haziraj brought the audience into the forgotten pages of women’s literary activism in post-war Yugoslavia. Her research into the Antifascist Front of Women of Kosovo led her to a post second World War magazine that state archives had initially denied existed. Persistence uncovered it, along with countless other fragments from newspapers and community records. Haziraj spoke of “animating” historical language, breathing life back into the voices of women whose contributions were often buried under rigid official narratives. For her, archival work is not neutral; it is an act of resistance, questioning how history is told and who gets to tell it.

Sara Rajaei shifted the discussion to the interplay between the personal and the universal. In her film, she strips photographs of identifying text, uses English narration, and withholds location markers, deliberately slowing the audience’s discovery process. This delay, she explained, creates space for viewers to engage emotionally before categorizing the story geographically or politically. Her work connects the current women’s freedom movement in Iran to older historical struggles, using personal and family archives to evoke shared feelings of displacement, longing, and resilience.

Durim Klajqi brought in the challenges of dealing with incomplete historical materials. Using 3D reconstructions and deliberately placed black screens, he allows absence to speak as loudly as presence. The gaps in his films are intentional, viewers are invited to theorize, to fill in the missing pieces, to participate in the act of reconstruction.

Across the panel, one truth emerged: memory is not linear. It loops, skips, hides, and resurfaces. Trauma does not unfold in chronological order, nor does joy. In the hands of these artists, hybrid storytelling becomes a way to honor that complexity, to resist the flattening of lived experience into simple timelines.

As the discussion closed, it was clear that “Reassembled” was more than a talk about art; it was a meditation on how we carry the past into the present. In each fragment, whether a faded photograph, a newspaper clipping, a frame of film; there is a story waiting to be told again, differently, and perhaps more truthfully than before.

Written by Shefket Bujari

A Partnership That Brings Business and Culture Together in the Heart of Prizren



PHOTO: ELMEDINA ARAPI

For a decade and a half, Baruti AG has been a success story connecting Kosovo with international markets, offering excellent services to global companies. With a strong presence in Prizren, Baruti is not only an important employer but also an unwavering partner in the city's cultural life.

This year's collaboration with DokuFest is a testament to the company's commitment to supporting art, debate, and creativity, contributing to raising Prizren's cultural profile on the world stage.

Under this year's provocative theme, "Endless Greed Mental Void," Baruti reaffirms the values that guide it, honesty, the courage to take a stand, and social responsibility, making this partnership an excellent example of how business and culture can walk hand in hand toward long-term success and impact.

In this interview, Dren Selimi from Baruti shares his thoughts on the importance of this collaboration and its impact on the community.

DD: Your collaboration with DokuFest; can you tell us about the benefits of this partnership and how it influences the cultural climate?

DS: The collaboration with DokuFest is a sincere commitment to support a platform that brings vibrancy, debate, and creativity to the heart of Prizren, a city of special importance to us since we have one of our offices there.

DD: This year's theme, "Endless Greed Mental Void," speaks, among other things, to the courage it takes to take meaningful stands. How does this theme resonate with you?

DS: This theme touches on an important reality of our time and invites deep reflection. It reminds us how necessary it is to have the courage to defend values that are often forgotten in a dynamic society. As a company, we believe in clear principles, honesty, and social responsibility, values that fully align with the spirit DokuFest conveys through this program.

DD: Your support for art and culture is noticeable and consistent. Could you tell us more about the success of supporting events like DokuFest?

DS: We have chosen to make support for art and culture a core part of our social responsibility. Through collaborations like the one with DokuFest, we have seen sustainable impact, from increasing cultural awareness to strengthening Prizren's image as a destination for world-class events. This is a success we share with the community and all our partners.

DD: Can you tell us how you feel about this collaboration that over the years has gained significant international visibility?

DS: We feel extremely proud to be part of an event that has not only raised Kosovo's cultural profile but also placed Prizren on the map of the most renowned international documentary film festivals. As a company that also operates in this city, this collaboration holds special significance for us and reflects our commitment to the community.

Yll Limani Donates €10,000 for DokuFest's Green Cinema



Just hours before taking the stage at DokuNights to perform for a passionate audience, renowned Kosovar artist Yll Limani made a contribution that goes beyond the boundaries of music. With a donation of €10,000, he joined the “DokuFest Green Cinema” initiative, helping bring to life the organization’s vision of a fully sustainable, mobile, and environmentally friendly cinema.

This contribution marks a significant moment for the project, which for years has been synonymous with bringing the magic of film to the most unexpected places, from city squares to remote villages across Kosovo. DokuFest’s Solar Cinema, an award-winning and much-loved initiative, has evolved into a cultural platform that uses solar energy to screen free films under the open sky, for audiences of all ages.

But with the Green Cinema, DokuFest aims to take the next step toward an even greener future. The plan is to transform the Solar Cinema into a cinema on wheels, equipped with a fully electric van that emits zero pollution. This van will serve as the base for film screenings, traveling to places where traditional cinemas cannot reach, turning public spaces into gathering points for the community.

According to DokuFest, the vision is clear: to combine the power of cinematic storytelling with care for the environment, showing that culture and sustainability can go hand in hand.

“We sincerely thank Yll Limani for joining and believing in our vision for a sustainable culture, for a cinema that does not harm the planet,” states the official DokuFest announcement.

Limani’s action is not just a financial contribution but also a powerful message about the role artists can play in supporting causes with social and environmental impact.

DokuFest has announced that it welcomes further donations.

“The project remains open to donations from artists, partners, companies, and individuals who want to join this movement and share our belief that cinema not only has the power to reflect the world but also to change it,” the announcement states.

So far, the Solar Cinema has operated by using solar panels to power the projectors and equipment needed for film screenings. This model has proven that high-quality cultural content can be offered without a large environmental footprint. With Green Cinema, this concept will be expanded, providing not only clean energy but also greater mobility and advanced technology for higher-quality screenings.

The electric van that DokuFest aims to purchase will serve as the logistical and technical base of the project. It will enable the festival team to reach the most remote areas of Kosovo and the region, offering not only films but also discussions, workshops, and community activities. In this way, Green Cinema is not just a mobile cinema, it is a vibrant platform for cultural exchange and environmental awareness.

The project remains open to donations from anyone who believes in the power of film to change the world. As DokuFest emphasizes on its donation page [link](#) contributions will help purchase the electric van and keep it running, enabling stories to reach the people and places that need them most.

“No tickets, no walls, just the community gathering in a place where cinemas don’t reach”, this motto captures the spirit of the environmentally friendly cinema. This is a project where culture is not a luxury but a right; where technology is not just a convenience but a tool for positive change.

Thanks to the support of Yll Limani and all those who will join the initiative, DokuFest Green Cinema is preparing to open a new chapter, a story that will travel along roads, across squares, and most importantly, into the hearts of its audience.

DOKUNIGHTS

An Unforgettable, Historic Night

A queue spilling out of the castle gates, stretching down the hill to Kalaja. A voracious crowd packed into the fortress, completely changing its terrain, one writhing mass. Fans clambering up onto its walls, filling out every last inch of the ramparts. Last night was a night like no other, headlined by a DokuNights performance like no other, as Kosova superstar Yll Limani took to the Sonar stage in a bombastic, sold-out showing, with seemingly all of Prizren there to greet him.

As a foreigner who has only lived in the city for the last two months, it has been so wonderful to see the excitement from everyone I've met in the buildup to this performance. Announced as early as the end of June, this was earmarked as one of the biggest events in the history of DokuNights, many of my friends unable to contain themselves at the prospects of one of the country's biggest pop stars lighting up Prizren. He didn't disappoint.

I don't have access to the cultural weight behind his work, nor do I understand his lyrics, but, last night, it was easy to see why he has cultivated such a following. The atmosphere thick with anticipation, the crowd chanting his name, Yll Limani strode onto stage and immediately whipped up a storm. Aided by a talented live ensemble featuring hand drums, keyboards and backing singers, he offered up a more instrumental approach to his discography, his live singing—a voice with real emotion and authenticity behind it—proving that he's the real deal. Perched on a wall above the crowd, it was easy to see the joy on everyone's face as Limani ripped out another heartfelt ballad, each a love letter to his fans. I don't speak Albanian, but his songs still cut deep, his yearning melodies and aching songwriting, all testaments to love and hope, transcending language barriers and transmitting straight to the heart.

'Qaj'—a personal favourite of mine—proudly morphed traditional Albanian instrumentals into a catchy, galvanizing anthem while Limani even treated us to an unreleased song, his sweeping vocals managing to send shivers down the spine. The crowd itself were in ecstasy, an unblemished state of adoration, hands flailing, phone torches lit, overcome with the power of Limani as he rose to the occasion. By the end of the night, it was clear that Prizren had witnessed something historic.

Tonight, DokuNights ends as it starts: with one giant celebration. First, hot off the heels of last edition's similarly jubilant Orkestra Shkodra, producers Oda3 present another chapter in Albania's rich lineage of traditional music through the ensemble Pulse of Berat, in a concert honouring Berat's past and present, with songs that reflect the city's heritage as on the crossroads between the pre-Ottoman period and European influence. Featuring veteran singers, virtuoso instrumentalists and a free-wheeling spirit, Kino Lumi will transform into one big celebration.

Then, we take to the fortress one final time, as three brilliant acts close out the festival with something special: an all-night party, with Sound Metaphors DJs Nemo and Castro bringing their brand of bright, colourful sonic energy to proceedings, Melbourne-based Sleep D upping the tempo with a hypnotic set awash in house, ambient, acid, dubbed-out breaks and bush-doof mutations, and Kosovo's Genc Elezaj stretching into the sunrise with an eclectic mix full of giddy left-field turns.

Written by Gus Edgar-Chan



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