

DOKUDAILY



PHOTO: ELMEDINA ARAPI

UNCOUNTABLE THREADS, THREE REFLECTIONS, BOUNDLESS DOKUFEST: AT A QUARTER-CENTURY

"Maybe the primary motivation is the festival itself... We gift this festival to the city and to those who come. The motivation to prepare this gift is big... It is big enough to do it all over again."
- Veton Nurkollari



PHOTO: FERDI LIMANI

A generic monument takes space. It celebrates a memory, but, often due to its stationary quality, it occupies. This festival is a monument of a different breed. It is a strange veil monumentalising even the ephemera. People (THE PEOPLE) talk about DokuFest even when it's far from being tangible. Threads of people talking about film, day, past, night, future, music, present, peace, protest, weave and lay a collective consciousness. Samir Karahoda, Eroll Bilibani, and Veton Nurkollari examine the evolution of DokuFest, offering a magnifying glass through which to view 25 years of cinematic story/realitytelling.

Meditating on this milestone, the festival's co-curators emphasize that growth has never equaled numbers, nor has it been about scaling up for the sake of numbers. Karahoda says that he, and many other colleagues of his, consider DokuFest as their "baby" that grew, from being a festival, into an organisation with a clear identity and international acclamation. Responsibility is what has kept him motivated. Bilibani goes straight to the youngsters that first joined DokuFest as volunteers, or ones that were part of the festival's applaudable training programmes. He states that the joy and motivation to keep going is found in the moment he sees their work be part of the festival, now as professionally acclaimed creators. For Nurkollari, this motivation is multilateral, but there is something about prepping and wrapping these nine festival days into an annual gift, to then watch the attendees (and beyond) open it, absorb it, hold onto it, that takes lead in the long list of motivators.

Another symbolism this edition inspires is that of comparing the festival to a balloon. "Managing growth without "bursting". While addressing the eternal dilemma of scaling up without losing soul, Nurkollari notes they deliberately kept the expansion in check, ensuring the festival expanded safely without losing its core identity and aim.

Bilibani traces a very clear way towards preserving this festival's identity: "It's simple: it's love. It's love for this place, love for a better future. While waiting for a better future, for a healthy youth, I think, not only in Kosovo, but in the region generally, people have talked about the challenges society faces with the new generations. I think the true challenge is that which the new generations face with a society that doesn't engage with them. Because what we do is offer them a safe space where they can come and express themselves freely, without prejudice, without being judged. For whatever they want to discuss. We don't treat them like children; even if we have a 40-year age gap, but we treat them as creators, as someone who wants to use the art of film to confront themes of growing up, even simply the teenage problems they face. And I think there has been love in this work we do. And then, all those who prepared the program, who made DokuFest a festival and watched DokuFest become a movement... This has happened purely through love. Because in fact, it's been 25 years, with thousands of young people who have passed through and contributed."

The three unanimously agree on the uncompromising quality that has preserved the festival's identity. DokuFest is a playground for thought, and at times these thoughts come in the shape of opinions and requests from outsiders. Not willing to obey... Willing to take in suggestions and use them as a mirror for their work, Karahoda reflects on how they have maintained consistency: "As a selection team, we have never left room for outside influences. Regardless of the themes or content of the films, we have always chosen to screen the works we believed the audience needed to see. At the same time, we have believed that DokuFest must remain an independent, free space that always stands in solidarity with individuals and societies facing injustice."

Let's try and break down the anatomy of a 25 year old "Persistent Defiance". This year's edition arrives against a backdrop of global turbulence. Turbulence? The backdrop is worse than any imaginable hell-painting word. With protests shifting from solely international solidarity to fierce reckonings against the system, the anti-establishment seems to have become a personal matter. Punk is very much alive, and Doku is answering the call again.

When asked what "Persistent Defiance" means today compared to twenty-five years ago, the co-architects point to the continuous friction of staying true to their vision despite external pressures. Nurkollari recalls facing persistent voices suggesting that "professionals" should step in to run things, a pushback that only fueled their inner punk, defiance, and stubborn commitment to remain of the people: "We refuse to be conformist in various situations, and we protest, raise our voices, point the finger, and things move forward. And it is no surprise that even after 25 years we must remain in opposition to, let's call them, negative things, to a society that is not developing the way it should, to the tendencies... I THINK THIS SOCIETY DESERVES MORE. And a small burden has fallen on us, who do this work, to be vocal where others are not so vocal. And I think that is also why 15 years ago or so we had protests in slogans, punk, and many other things, why we pointed the finger with a slogan or a theme called 'Corruption' in a society where corruption was flourishing and, unfortunately, still flourishes. And that's it."

"Twenty-five years ago, the challenges were different—society was dealing with transition and a lack of cultural spaces. Today we live in a completely different era, overwhelmed with information, exposure, polarization, and collective fatigue. Persistent Defiance isn't necessarily a grand act of rebellion. It is the determination to continue on the path we started, not to submit, and not to abandon the values we believe in." - says Samir Karahoda.

"Show up or it doesn't count!" The 25th edition is now unfolding, and the core message to the audience remains deeply tied to presence and community.

"Presence is what counts... If you break down 'show up' in the local Albanian, its root has four letters that say 'DOKU' (you show up/ be seen). It doesn't count if you don't show up!" - Veton Nurkollari

Let's show up, (sit right down, waiting for the gift of sound and vision), defy digital isolation, mute superficial noise, and have DokuFest 25 reveal that gathering in the dark to watch a story unfold, change becomes possible.



PHOTO: ELMEDINA ARAPI

RETRO-WHAT?

Blerina Kanxha's take on the importance of collecting stories about DokuFest's past

The first time I had the opportunity to delve into the oral histories of Prizren was through Kino Lumbardhi and DokuFest. These are two immensely important institutions in shaping a healthy cultural awareness, one that does not seek to judge or place anyone on a pedestal, but rather seeks to untangle, through the past, how we arrived at this fragmented present that is nevertheless smoothed over soulfully and patiently.

The fact is that working and making culture is not simple in our lands. There are no well-structured funding systems or logistical frameworks that could ease this difficulty. This was confirmed to me by the series of interviews I conducted with a good amount of people that have been right at the core of DokuFest in Prizren.

It doesn't matter who listens, but how one listens. To many, the actions of a festival organizer who stops a film midway, or someone who continues to believe that people should keep working for yet another edition, or the belief that someone, after a period of time, should halt this activity, this uninterrupted adrenaline, might have seemed eclectic.

Much happens in our countries. In Albania and Kosovo, one might speak of a collective greed to have an almost vampiric approach toward archives, but no one reflects on the fact that the overlapping presence of the listener harms this archiving process more than the lack of archiving itself. From deeply bitter and unyielding experiences, I can say that it takes real backbone to listen to stories that rivalized narrativized histories. Many of the interviewees remember things the same way, making it nearly impossible to distort the truth.

The purpose of archives and research into them refers to the idea that the truth will be fully captured and remain standardized. But what remains behind is that entire emotional map which is not easily exhausted, speaking to the relentless effort to reactivate a screen.

This entire history of the festival began with the desire to reactivate the big screen of Kino Lumbardhi. Somewhere, sometime, on an old DokuFest calendar, it was noted that the cinema would open in 2013. And indeed, very close to that date, Kino Lumbardhi opened its doors, because at a certain moment ten people decided to come together, having never been to a film festival before, let alone a documentary film festival, contemplating the very nature of the festival and marking the fact that this culture is not created alone.

I have a personal yearning for the structural support of cultural events, and listening to many of these conversations, the economic aspect fades away in the face of the extraordinary passion shown over the years at DokuFest. Undoubtedly, this has come with its own challenges, facing constantly-changing times, but it is important to mention that everyone engaged in this festival has known love to the point of pain. This speaks of sleepless nights, the worries of generators, electricity that was unstable for a very long time, and films lost in postal services around the world. And this entire tangle began to make sense right here where we are: in Prizren.

Looking back often signals to us that we must not repeat the same mistakes. But what all the conversations I've had about DokuFest have proven to me is that mistakes were the gears of progress.

The future is entirely unknown. We cannot grasp the present, nor can we exhaust the past. Looking back over the years of DokuFest signifies precisely this. I hope you feel a slight flutter in your heart as you journey through the years, realizing how important it is that the events that made us who we are become known.

You will be able to find retrospectives for each day in DokuDaily. Somewhere there is a lot of love, somewhere there is blood and sweat, but most of all, there are stories that everyone knows, yet few have been written down. This does not speak of an ambition to appropriate an archive, but of a boundless desire to share. Because culture is never selfish. No matter how refined, it belongs absolutely to everyone.

Blerina Kanxha



AJNUR: “I FEEL LIKE I AM HOSTING MY OWN DAUGHTER”

How Dokufest creates networks of care, companionship and belonging in a city shaped by migration.

It is a well known fact that every August, DokuFest literally transforms Prizren. As one walks through the streets, one encounters filmmakers, artists, volunteers and visitors from all over Kosovo, the region and the world, whereas majestic cinemas spill into all sorts of squares and courtyards.

A little bit further from all that magic, some of the festival's most meaningful encounters take place. They happen away from the screens, behind the doors of local homes. For many years now, Prizren residents have opened their homes to DokuFest staff, volunteers and guests coming to get their share on the festival's program. Relationships that often begin as communication based on the logistics of accommodation, gradually become something far much stronger – a home away from home for guests, and family away from Prizren – for locals.

Ejona Bala, Dokufest staff who is staying in the house of Ajnur Morina, says: “Everytime Ajnur says: sit down, let's have a cigarette together, she reminds me of my mother. I immediately stand up and call my mother to say hi!”

And the feeling is certainly mutual for Ajnur, who says that everytime she looks at Ejona, she feels like she has opened the doors to her own daughter, Zana: “They look so much alike” – she notes, reflecting in melancholy about the fact that both her daughter and son live abroad for a long time now.

Ajnur is as lively as one can be, despite being a retired nurse who worked for decades from the year 1972 to 2017, precisely nine years ago. To this day, she still remembers how difficult it was to adapt to a quieter life. “I miss working,” she says. “As long as a person can, they should work.”

After retirement, the routines that had structured her days slowly vanished, making room for more thinking and wandering about her newly arising identity of a retired stay at home woman. At first, she did not notice the change that much, as she took care of her daughter's children in Turkey for about a year. “When I came back in Prizren, I was astonished with myself, I kept wondering: who have I become?”, she recalls, noting how restless she would be before retiring, waking up at 6:00 A.M, leaving lunch ready at 7, and then leaving for work. Nowadays, she created a new routine for herself, around which she likes to have pazar finished possibly before 8 A.M. “After that, I sit down and watch TV - listen to medical advice on what to avoid during this heat, in eating and doing.” At this age, says Ajnur, seems like all you want is for someone to walk in and out of your door, “me ndrru nji muhabet” [have a conversation].

When her husband passed away 1.5 years ago, Ajnur decided to approach Dokufest team and offered her house to staff & visitors Dokufest was hosting. “I figured it's best to not be alone at that difficult time for me”, says Ajnur. “When someone comes to stay with me, I melt,” she adds to the conversation with a stunning smile on her wise motherly face.

“I told Alba I was interested in hosting. Last year I had two girls staying with me, and I enjoyed it so much.” Hospitality, for Ajnuri, seems to live in small gestures: preparing a Turkish coffee in the



morning, a conversation on the terrace after work, homemade sūtlac waiting in the kitchen - for which she does not take no for an answer. All that talk on avoiding sugar, she considers nonsense. “My husband ate all the right things, but he got sick and died anyways”, says Ajnur.

“Rrini si n'shpi t'juj”, is the phrase Ajnur always tells the girls staying over at her house, which in translation, means something similar to: make yourselves feel at home.

"I know what it means to have your children far away," she continues. "I sent my son abroad when he was only fourteen. Every mother knows what that feels like. I can't take care of my own children every day anymore, but if I can make these young people feel welcomed, I will surely do so."

She only wishes that there was more time for her to sit together with the girls and chit-chat. "I love talking with my girls, but you all work so much nowadays. I wish we could just sit for longer on the terrace and share a glass of wine."

As the conversation comes to an end, Ajnur stands up to bring homemade sùtlač to the table before insisting one more time: "Come on, let's have Turkish coffee. I was waiting for you two and I haven't had one yet."

In a city where many families have experienced migration, Ajnuri's story on how Dokufest staff & visitors have helped her cope with the longing for someone to talk to is hardly unique. What is remarkable is how the festival quietly creates new forms of kinship - temporary families brought together through generosity, care and everyday rituals.

For Dafina Karahoda, who has been hosting DokuFest staff for the past three years, opening her apartment was initially accompanied by uncertainty.

"At first, I was hesitant to rent out my apartment because I was afraid it might get damaged," she says. "But every person who stayed there treated it with care." Since then, the initial hesitation has been replaced by enthusiasm of welcoming new people.

"I really enjoy the exchange that happens between visitors, DokuFest staff, tourists from Kosovo and abroad, and Prizren itself."

For Dafina, hosting extends beyond handing over the keys. She makes a point of remaining available throughout every stay, making sure any requests or concerns are addressed as quickly as possible. Hospitality, however, is something she inherited as much as she has learned throughout the dynamics of the festival.

"Many of my family members have been hosting guests for years," Dafina explains. "As they get to know guests, they even prepare meals for them - that said, if they like them as much. People here really enjoy taking care of that aspect of hospitality, especially with young people from Kosovo and the volunteers she hosted."



PHOTO: SUER CELINA

Similar to Ajnur's story, the woman of Dafina's family that have decided to host visitors have also lived alone for quite a long time due to the emigration of their children. Looking back, Dafina believes the festival offered something meaningful in return for the people who decided to host visitors. "Everyone who stayed there helped them get through the day, through their solitude" she says.

Even language, Dafina adds, rarely becomes a real barrier. "There are many people in Prizren who are excited to welcome DokuFest visitors. Sometimes the older hosts don't speak English, but somehow they always find a way to communicate."

For Dafina, who chose to stay and build her life in Prizren, the festival reflects something that already exists within the city.

"We're used to this in Prizren. It's a smaller city. It doesn't have the pace of bigger cities. There is a strong sense of community."

In the sense of the patterns of hospitality noted in conversations with Ajnur and Dafina, DokuFest has also become an unlikely social infrastructure. It temporarily redistributes people, care and companionship across the city. The festival needs places to accommodate its growing community, while some residents need precisely the thing that a festival brings with it: people. What looks, from the outside, like a practical

arrangement of accommodation can therefore become an emotional exchange of care - and one that is particularly meaningful for older people whose social worlds have narrowed with retirement, widowhood or the migration of their children.

There is also something quietly political about this exchange. At a time when migration is often discussed through numbers, remittances and labour shortages, the emotional and social costs of people leaving are less visible. DokuFest does not solve those problems, nor should it have to. But for a few weeks, it creates an alternative to the isolation produced by them. It brings young and old, local and foreign, those who stayed and those who are passing through, into the same domestic spaces. The value of that encounter cannot be measured only by the price of a room.

Perhaps this is what makes the homes of DokuFest hosts so important to the festival's story. They remind us that a cultural festival does not exist only in cinemas, galleries and public squares. It also exists in kitchens, on balconies and around coffee tables, in the largely invisible labour of people who cook, clean, wait, listen and make room for others.

Valmira Rashiti

CAPTURING DOKUFEST THROUGH THE YEARS

A take on what changed and what persisted, from the festival's life-time photographers

Susan Sontag notes that photography carries multiple meanings. To see something in the form of a photograph, she suggests, is to encounter it as a potential object of fascination: "The ultimate wisdom of the photographic image is to say: There is the surface. Now think, or rather feel, intuit - what is beyond it, what the reality must be like if it looks this way."

That invitation to look beyond the surface is precisely what inspired this article: to think and wander through the realities of DokuFest over the past 25 years, as seen through the lenses of local photographers who have returned to it year after year. Their photographs have captured more than films, screenings and festival stages. They have captured the people who gather around them: the audiences, volunteers who grew up to become Dokufest key staff members, filmmakers, artists, the joy of late-night conversations as well as the dancing that took place right after those conversations ended.

That is why photographing DokuFest is not simply to document what happens; it is to decide what becomes visible. Twenty-five years of DokuFest offer not only a history of the festival, but a history of looking. So we spoke to Elmedina Arapi - Photographer and Coordinator of Photography within Dokufest, and Ferdi Limani - Photographer, in order to shed some light over what does it mean to keep photographing a world that keeps changing? Because if history repeats itself, the photographs do not simply repeat it. They give us another chance to look back.

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PHOTO: FERDI LIMANI

Doku Daily: For how long have you been photographing with Dokufest?

Elmedina: I have been working as a photographer for DokuFest since 2016. Since 2020, in addition to photographing during the festival, I have also been coordinating the team of photographers. This has given me the opportunity to experience the festival not only from the perspective of a photographer, but also as part of its organizational team.

Ferdi: I haven't worked as a photographer at DokuFest for that long, perhaps four or five years in total. But because I have been involved in organizing photography exhibitions, and during the early years was one of the festival's founders, I have always been taking photographs [of the festival].

DokuDaily: When you look back at your photographs over the years — documenting the festival's development and the political and social themes DokuFest has addressed — what changes do you notice, not only in the festival itself, but also in people, their emotional expressions, and the way they experience Prizren during DokuFest? Has the excitement for cinema survived?

Elmedina: When I look at photographs from previous years, I notice that the festival has continuously evolved, not only in terms of its content, but also in the way people experience it. Every year, I see greater participation, more diversity, and an audience that connects increasingly with the themes being explored. The emotions have changed as well; today, people are more open, more engaged, and experience the festival as a complete cultural experience, rather than simply as film spectators. I think the enthusiasm for cinema has not only survived, but grown stronger and become part of DokuFest's identity.

Ferdi: DokuFest was born as a protest — an attempt to save cinema, but also to create the kind of cultural event that was missing from our society. Year by year, people have changed alongside the festival, and we can say that, as a result of this evolution, we now have perhaps the most developed film scene in the region.

DokuDaily: As a photographer, you have seen DokuFest from very close up, capturing some of the festival's most intimate and revealing moments — through its audiences, volunteers, filmmakers, artists, late-night gatherings and everyday encounters. Do you think your photographs have, in some way, documented the evolution of the festival and the community that has grown around it?

Elmedina: Yes, I believe my photographs have documented that evolution. When I compare photographs from the early years with those I take today, I can clearly see the changes, and the ways in which the festival has grown and adapted to the times. The growing number of visitors, greater participation in activities, and the community that has developed around DokuFest are all clearly reflected in the photographs. For me, they are not simply memories, but also a visual record of the festival's development and of the people who make it special.

Ferdi: I can say that the photographs from the earlier editions did do that [documented the evolution of the festival and the community], perhaps because many of them were taken while I was doing other work at the festival, such as working as a projectionist. I always had my camera with me, though. Now, with the passage of time, when I look back at those photographs, I realize just how important they are.

DokuDaily: DokuFest has never shied away from being a political festival, as well. How difficult is it to make photographs that can also convey politics to the audience?

Elmedina: It is not only difficult when it comes to political themes, but with any subject that aims to convey a particular message. As a photographer, the challenge is to find a moment that communicates that message without losing the atmosphere and energy of the festival. Balancing the artistic side, the atmosphere of DokuFest, and its political or social themes is not always easy. But I think that, in many cases, I have managed to capture those moments that speak for themselves.

Ferdi: I believe this happens naturally, because the festival's politics and themes are always deeply present — not only visually, but also in the emotions of its audience.

DokuDaily: How would you describe your relationship with DokuFest today? Beyond the work itself, I imagine DokuFest has also become something of a second home for you, hasn't it? What does DokuFest mean to you on a personal level, and what keeps bringing you back every year?

Elmedina: Yes, I can say that DokuFest has become my second home. It is one of the first festivals where I worked as a photographer, and it is where I learned many of the things I now consider fundamental to my profession. It was at DokuFest that I learned how to photograph a scene, a film screening, and the dynamics of a festival. Because it is connected to the early years of my journey as a photographer, it has had a huge impact on both my professional and personal development. It helped me become more social, learn how to work as part of a team, and build meaningful connections with wonderful people.

I often joke that I am one of the “children DokuFest raised.” There is also a sentence I repeat every year: if there ever came a year when I was not part of DokuFest, honestly, I wouldn't know what to do in Prizren during that week. For me, DokuFest is not just work or a festival; it is a part of my life.

Ferdi: When we started DokuFest, I was 19 years old. As the youngest member of the group, the festival and its energy had a profound impact on me, changing my life and giving direction to my career. Over the years, I became more focused on my own journalistic work, but I have always remained open to collaborating with the friends who continue to work for the festival. Throughout the year, I often find myself going to the festival's offices to see them and have a cup of tea, because the tea is always pouring [alb: xhygymi është gjithnjë në zjarr].

Valmira Rashiti



PHOTO: ELMEDINA ARAPI

JETON JAGXHIU: IN THE TRANSITION FROM PRINT TO DIGITAL MEDIA, WHAT'S MISSING IS FOREPLAY

One of the ideators of Dokudaily, speaks about the social context of the early 2000s, when writing about a documentary festival was an act of bravery.

DokuDaily: Knowing that you were one of the people who helped conceive the festival newspaper, DokuDaily, we wanted to take a step back and look at the context in which print media existed at the time, and more broadly, at the process through which DokuDaily came into being.

Jeton Jagxhiu: I am a graduated engineer of graphic technology. So I know everything about print. And I've always been very interested in print, I've worked in that field, with newspapers.

I was interested in newspapers because, besides being an engineer, I also like to read. So I'm interested not only in how a newspaper is technically produced, but also in how it is written and what it contains. I write myself, too, you know... short stories, things like that. As far as I remember, DokuDaily came out as a newspaper around the fifth or sixth edition of the festival. In 2006, I believe.

Now, how did the idea of having a newspaper for the festival come about? I don't want to take all the credit for myself. At the time, I had an office — a graphic design and production studio — and three or four people working with me. We were all involved in fundraising for DokuFest. That was one of the things we were doing.

The other thing was marketing DokuFest. So we had these two responsibilities. I was more involved in fundraising - I'm talking about raising money from commercial sponsors, rather than institutions or organizations such as the OSCE and others. Those responsibilities were handled by other people within DokuFest.

And when it came to fundraising, the biggest problem was the context of that time. We're talking about 2005–2006, when there was no social media and the internet was terrible. We weren't connected to the internet in any way like we are today. We did basic searches through Internet Explorer, because Google wasn't really there for us at the time.

Commercial sponsors wanted to put their money where they could be seen. We weren't visible on television, we weren't visible in newspapers, because everything was concentrated in Prishtina. And, in that context, people simply weren't very interested in documentary film festivals. It wasn't something like football, where you could expect mass public interest.

The festival programme was basically printed as a leaflet. With each edition, we started printing more pages, almost like a fanzine, and distributing it.

Then I went to the Rotterdam Film Festival, one of the most creative festivals in the world, perhaps one of the biggest. And



that's where I saw the newspaper. Not exactly a newspaper — they had something similar to what we were doing, but in a proper newspaper format, printed on a rotary press. It was dedicated to the festival, interviews, different stories and so on. It really looked like a newspaper. And they distributed it throughout the festival spaces, just as we did — wherever guests gathered, at the entrances.

That's when the idea came to me: how do we increase our sponsors' visibility? The first step towards that was the newspaper.

DokuDaily: To increase visibility.

Jeton Jagxhiu: Visibility, you know? So I connected the dots. I thought, let's distribute this through the kiosks. The sponsors would pick it up, open it, see their advertisement, read an interview, see what was happening, how it was happening. Because they didn't even have a clue of what Prizren was like, you know, or how far we had come.

The second step was to promote the festival itself. Apart from a small circle of people who came here — filmmakers, our friends, people from the Prishtina and Gjakova cultural scenes — hardly anyone knew about it. There was a good atmosphere

around it, and those people would come. But now the newspaper could reach people... But we didn't even have a distribution network!

That's why I thought of going to Koha Ditore. I told Veton about the idea, because in these things, support matters too. You tell two or three people about an idea, and if they dismiss it, you just give up. As people in Prizren say, "A master [usta] is not one who makes things, but one who knows how to ask for them!"

So I went to Flaka [Surroi] and said: "Could you sponsor us? You could print the newspaper at your own expense, and we would provide the content, and it could come out together with the Koha's Annex on Culture [Shtojca për Kulturë]."

She was skeptical about the documentary film festival. She said, "You don't have staff, you don't have an editorial team, how are you going to write?" And I think that skepticism was justified.

DokuDaily: How many years into the festival were you when you approached her with this idea?

Jeton Jagxhiu: Around five or six years. It was the fifth or sixth edition. I said, you know what? Let's make an agreement. We would cover the printing costs and print 3,000–4,000 copies — basically, an extra print run of that Annex. And that's how we reached an agreement.

But then someone had to put together those eight pages of content, right? We would draw maps, include things that were repeated from the festival programme, but there still had to be actual content. So I started writing myself. That year, I hadn't seen much of the festival, because I was busy doing interviews. I also contacted Fisnik Minca, journalist, at the time. We didn't have an editor, we didn't really have anything — not even a clear concept of what we were producing. We didn't know what to fill the pages with.

The first edition included interviews with the marketing directors of the festival's sponsors. The effect was phenomenal. The sponsors saw the courage it took for us to put a festival out there in front of the entire public in Kosovo. Then that opened the door to what we saw the

following year: we had twice as much media attention. Newspapers started coming to Prizren, television stations started coming. Then Koha became the festival's general media sponsor...

That willingness to do something, to push the festival forward — to take it, let's say, from this stage to the level of international festivals — came from an incredible enthusiasm that had developed after the war. You could go to a local business and ask, "Can you give us your generator?" and they would give it to you. You could ask, "Can you give us some qebap for the festival? We don't have any money," and they would give them to you. That's the kind of time it was.

DokuDaily: How did the conceptual process of DokuDaily develop in the following years? Did you have a clearer idea of what you wanted to create, or did a practice of writing and producing it gradually emerge?

Jeton Jagxhiu: I was probably responsible for the content for another edition, and then Fisnik Minca took over. Fisnik probably went on to build a team, but I was involved with the newspaper for about two years, until it became more established.

In the second year of the newspaper, I wrote three short stories about DokuFest. I had written them throughout the year and then simply published them. But now, now it's not like it was before. The solidarity is missing.

DokuDaily: Drawing the attention to the state of press today. What do we lose in the transition from print media to digital media?

Jeton Jagxhiu: We lose the foreplay. When you watch a film on a laptop, it doesn't have that foreplay. You don't go and wait in line for tickets; you don't talk to people. And then there's the aftermath of the foreplay, too — talking about what you just watched. This whole process is part of the experience. With the transition to digital, that's what is missing. Maybe we need to strive and find the "foreplay" for this transition, too. And I'm sure we can find it.

Dokudaily: A printed magazine is revered as a valuable heritage in our bibliotheques, sometimes valued as if it had a soul. Meanwhile, a monument in the middle of a square, say that of Skanderbeg, is often perceived as a testament of the undeserved authority. The two pertain to public space and memory. In this regard, how can one monumentalize an independent print that liberates? How can one "spiritualize" an authoritarian volume that limits?

Jeton Jagxhiu: This is a difficult question to answer. The reason being, we should analyze the two of these dichotomies separately to then bridge them. (speaking of the disassociation of the citizens to the monuments) During the communist regime, certain monuments have been erased, certain have been added without mutual consent. The same thing is being done in our times: heroes are being produced rapidly, forced into existence. It is a misfortune because through mutual consent, consistency and sustainability would've been created. Without consensus erasure is enabled.

When it comes to the print media, a warning in regards to its end has been given since the 1950s/60s. I would read Marshall McLuhan's Gutenberg Galaxy while studying a field that was predicted to die eventually. However, that idea of press is being transferred from one platform to another. I do not think that it will disappear... From the papyrus to letters, from letters to the screen. This is happening rapidly, but the written word will not disappear. It takes shape as the idea of expression, and it persists.

jona b
Valmira Rashiti

DAILY PICKS



IVAN RAMLJAK/ 100' **DOKUKINO, 8 AUG @ 12:30**
PEACEMAKER

In 1991, as Croatia stood on the brink of war, Josip Reihl Kir, the Osijek police chief committed to dialogue and peace, was assassinated. Peacemaker reconstructs the final months of his life through witness testimonies and archival footage, exploring his efforts to prevent the Croatian-Serbian conflict. More than three decades later, key questions about his murder—and those who ordered it—remain unanswered.

SOPHIE FIENNES **DOKUKINO, 8 AUG @ 17:30**
HOOVER STREET
REVIVAL/ 100'

Blending documentary, religious art, music and cinema, this kaleidoscopic film immerses viewers in the life of The Greater Bethany Community Church in South Central Los Angeles. At its center is Bishop Noel Jones, brother of Grace Jones, whose powerful sermons, gospel music and community leadership reveal the faith, energy and spirit of a vibrant congregation.



DEA GJINOVCI **DOKUKINO PLATO,**
THE BEAUTY OF THE **8 AUG @ 20:30**
DONKEY (LA BEAUTÉ DE L'ÂNE)

A filmmaker and her exiled father return to his forgotten village in Kosova. By collectively recreating his childhood memories, imagination uncover hidden war truths but also brings back to life the remembrance of fragile moments of joy.

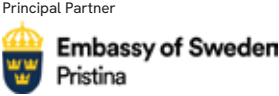
ALISA KOVALENKO **TEATRI "BEKIM FEHMIU"**
TRACES/ 85' **(SALLA E MADHE), 8 AUG @ 17:30**

Traces follows Iryna Dowhan as she documents the stories of women affected by war and violence. Through survivors' testimonies, the film creates a space for healing, solidarity and hope. Avoiding direct depictions of violence, it focuses on the visible and hidden traces carried by six women, exploring resilience, courage and mutual support in the aftermath of conflict.



PARAJANOV TRIPTYCH **DOKUKINO, 8 AUG**
HAKOB HOVNATANYAN 10'/ KYIV **@ 19:30**
FRESCOES 15'/ ARABESQUES ON
THE THEME OF PIROSMANI / 21'

Parajanov explores Hovnatanyan's portraits through playful montage. Footage from a destroyed film survives as a short cinematic collage. Through Pirosmani's paintings, Parajanov crafts a portrait of Georgia.



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