

DOKUDAILY

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WELCOME TO DOKUFEST!

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PHOTO: ELMEDINA ARAPI

WELCOME LETTER

Between Uncertainty and Hope: “Endless Greed Mental Void”



PHOTO: ELMEDINA ARAPI

Dear friends,

As I struggle to write this welcome note in these times of uncertainty, I cannot help but go back to a few months ago and to a different struggle, that of when we were brainstorming and deciding the theme of this festival. In the end, we chose a grim, unhappy and diagnostic one. Endless Greed Mental Void, we called it: a sort of a mirror to the world that we live in.

Never before have we hesitated so much before announcing a theme. Not because we lacked vision, but because vision itself is now suspect.

In the days that follow and in many of the films, you'll find countless struggles and even more uncertainty and suffering: from the frontline of Ukraine to the shores of Cape Verde, from the swamps of Cuba to the Everglades, from the Atacama Desert to the bat caves of China.

Unforgettable faces of mothers still looking and yearning for their missed ones in Sri Lanka, a panicked mother looking for her separated kid on the south border of USA, an absent mother of a child deep in rural China, or a filmmaker's missing mother somewhere in Ireland. And many, many more!

Individual as well as collective struggles. Deep and unsettling suffering. With some rays of joy here and there.

Stories so great and filmmakers so brave that watching these films and putting up this programme felt both terrifying and a blessing at the same time. Because making films, speaking and even thinking has become so difficult today in the presence of such enormous struggle and suffering.

When we began programming this edition, two wars were unfolding. Bombings were a daily occurrence, death was omnipresent while waiting at food lines in Gaza, and hospitals were the deadliest places to be. By the time we reached the final stage, a third war, catastrophic in scope, had begun. Still no end in sight to this madness. This is the atmosphere that we are working in. In a world where the choice of not speaking up to injustice is turning into the norm. Numbness into a daily occurrence. Hope into a distant idea.

Therefore, writing a welcome note for a film festival seems like a luxury not earned. Like living in a bubble. This year's programme is an attempt to resist this numbness. To reclaim language from manipulation. To insist that the act of telling, listening, and gathering still matters, and that festivals like this one also matter, despite everything and against all odds.

So, I will refrain from writing more specifically about films and events and everything else that is part of the festival and what is usually common for me to write about on such an occasion. I just leave it to all of you to discover instead.

I invite you to experience the festival by offering you these films, conversations and music, with the hope that, by doing so, you will be rewarded as much as we were in preparing all this for you.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to all the extraordinary people that have made this beautiful journey with us and this dream of ours possible: our generous sponsors and partners, the dedicated DokuFest team, and all of our wonderful volunteers, as well as to the filmmakers and artists who shared their work with us this year. We are very well aware that this festival would not be possible without you. Thank you.

Here's to a great festival for us all!

Veton Nurkollari
Artistic Director

ON FILMS

Short Journeys into Vast Realities

A TALK WITH SAMIR KARAHODA



Humanity is once again being challenged by a year marked by violence and wars, bringing with them numerous moral and legal dilemmas. These developments have also influenced the selection of films that will be screened at the 24th edition of DokuFest, reflecting the current crises while also including stories from the past by distinguished filmmakers who have left an indelible mark with their creative work. For the film selectors, this task is far from easy.

Samir Karahoda, curator of the short film program, admits that the weight of responsibility in preparing the program is significant, given the reputation DokuFest has built over the years.

"I believe the audience and guests will feel this dedication, as there will be much to see, hear, and enjoy during these days. Every detail has been carefully prepared throughout the year. In the end, I hope Prizren feels like one big open-air cinema, and that people talk about films instead of politics, at least for these few days."

Being a filmmaker himself, a craft he has mastered through years of experience in film selection, Karahoda shows empathy toward filmmakers and is deeply sensitive to their creations.

"I try to maintain a critical eye for the standard we've built over many years, but I always leave space for new and still-unknown voices that deserve to come to light."

For him, the first thing he looks at is the storytelling form, as that is where the director's skills and signature become evident.

"A strong theme can lose its impact if told in a conventional way. The form reveals whether the filmmaker has the courage to tell a story differently. I'm also interested in the author's sincerity, in aesthetics that aren't just decorative but arise from genuine emotion. When building the programs for cinema audiences, I try to place films with different forms next to each other, so the audience can experience not only new stories and ideas but also new ways of telling and feeling."

According to him, this year's International Shorts category presents a clear through-line:

"Regardless of the country they come from or the style they use, the filmmakers are focusing on political themes, human rights, and the personal experiences these issues affect daily. Some films tell small family stories that reflect bigger issues like migration, inequality, or loss; others serve as portraits of places or cultures. Meanwhile, some of them break the classical rules of storytelling, they experiment with formats, use artificial intelligence, or archival footage. In general, these are not ordinary films, but works that aim to provoke the audience and open debates about the world we live in."

He also adds that the short film is the best tool to cross borders more quickly and affordably.

"The short form is precisely the medium that more boldly challenges creative boundaries whether it is aesthetic, thematic, or political. Authors have more room to experiment in this format; they touch on themes like identity, migration, or intimacy, and they don't try to explain everything to the viewer. They simply choose a topic, tell it in the way they know or believe suits the story best, and leave you with questions that last longer than the film itself. This freedom, to me, makes the short film the most courageous cinematic medium today."

He also highlights the special new program Masters on Short, which is being unveiled for the first time at DokuFest this year.

"The idea is to screen short films made by world cinema masters before they became famous. These early works show the beginnings of their craft, their first attempts, small mistakes, and the courage to try new forms. For the first edition of this program, we've selected four short films by Wim Wenders a great opportunity to see how his cinematic language began, long before classics like "Paris, Texas" or "Wings of Desire". I think this program will especially inspire aspiring filmmakers, showing that every great director started with small experiments, minimal resources, but big ideas."

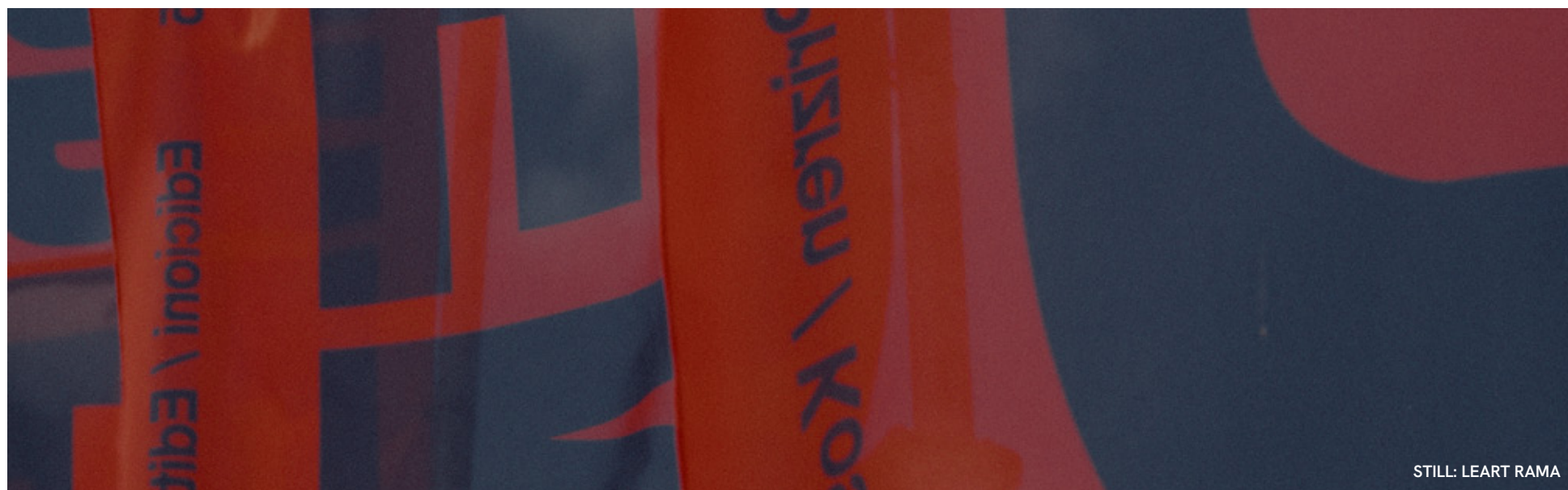
Now it's up to the audience to enjoy not only the documentaries but also the carefully selected short films during the first nine days of August: all chosen with great love and dedication for the 24th edition of DokuFest.



**MBI
FILMAT**

DokuFest's Journey from a Small Idea to an Ongoing Mission

A TALK WITH VETON NURKOLLARI



On the eve of DokuFest's 24th edition, Artistic Director Veton Nurkollari spoke about the feelings, memories, and challenges that have shaped one of the most important cultural events in the region.

With no grand ambitions but a clear mission, the festival began as an effort to bring a once-daily part of life cinema back into operation.

In this interview, Nurkollari discusses the festival's modest origins, the challenge of changing audience habits, the curatorial choices that reflect the latest developments in global cinema, and the films he himself would recommend to viewers.

In this conversation for DokuDaily, he highlights the 24-year journey and the essence of DokuFest, a festival born from passion, carried on with persistence, and inspiring through content.

DD: Now that another edition of DokuFest is starting, how do you feel?

VN: Like I have butterflies in my stomach. But actually, I feel good. And why wouldn't I? Another year, another edition, another achievement. So yes, I'm happy. Maybe a little tired, but that's okay.

DD: When you started the festival, did you imagine it would last this long, especially considering how many initiatives in the region start with a bang but barely survive the early years?

VN: No, I didn't imagine it. Back then, we had no ambitions. That's why being here at the launch of the 24th edition of the festival a longevity we never imagined feels great and makes me proud. But no, I couldn't have imagined it at the time. Maybe it's not even possible to imagine something like this. Some people are very ambitious. We weren't.

And maybe that's exactly why it worked. We didn't have big ambitions, we didn't have money, and we had to do it all voluntarily, with other volunteers. We pushed forward the idea that something could be done even without money just with willpower and love. To do something for this place, for these people, for this city that was our small ambition: to try and bring cinema back to this city.

Our ambition was simple. It was that cinema over there: Lumbardhi. We wanted to find a way to bring films back to that screen, to make the cinema work again.

And people liked it, and we liked it. The mission to bring film back to the cinema wasn't fulfilled in the first year, nor the second, or third, or fourth. So we kept going, because this is still our mission. We're still trying, working, and fighting for that place. And in fighting for that place, we're also doing it for this city, for this country Kosovo and beyond that, for other noble purposes, like education. Along the way, we realized that this too is a kind of mission.

DD: Since you brought up returning film to the cinema, how do you view people's current habits regarding cinema-going?

VN: People's habits are influenced by many things. Once upon a time, going to the cinema in this city was a widespread habit partly because there weren't many other habits. Now people watch films on their phones, in their bedrooms, on Netflix, everywhere. And that old habit is nearly impossible to bring back.

However, the need for cinema still exists. I'm aware that the numbers and habits of the past can't be brought back, because people's habits have changed. There are so many other ways to fill time now, and cinema is no longer primary. But the need still exists and because of that, we keep trying.

But how successful we'll be in reviving it or whether it can ever be revived I'm skeptical. Cinema as it once was is no longer possible. This isn't just true here it's happening everywhere. New habits have emerged. People spend their free time immersed in new technological inventions. You can't tell someone, "Don't use your phone, don't watch Netflix: go to the cinema."

Still, cinema has its place how big, I can't say for sure. But we offer films, both during the festival and outside of it, by creating programs through DokuKino. We try to bring quality films, whether new or classic, and I think that's one way to build a decent audience.

A full return to what once was? I don't think that's possible.

We need to understand that longing for the past is pointless. But new paths can still be found.

DD: Over the years, how has programming at DokuFest changed especially considering that this year's program includes over 250 films? And how has filmmaking evolved in that time?

VN: Creating a program for a festival like DokuFest first requires internal education by those of us working in that area. That's why we watch a lot of films, travel a lot, stay well-informed and all of this shapes what we eventually present.



PHOTO: SUER CELINA

A significant part of DokuFest's program is made up of competition films, which determines our selections. We only take recent films no older than a year and a half, often just one year. So we need to be very informed whether from films submitted to us, what we see at other festivals, or industry news.

Those of us behind the programming must be up to date with new trends, new films, what's dominating or interesting. Then we try to incorporate that and build a program.

The other part of the program includes special sections curated freely, which is a particular joy. There, we can express ourselves more freely. We're not limited by year, theme, or topic. It's part of our curatorial vision what we want to bring and why.

If you look more closely, you'll see that this year features more fiction films than in the past though even before, there were some. This year there are many, both old and new. Many of the newer ones blend fiction with documentary styles or rules. That intersection between fiction and documentary is what guided our selections.

Why did we bring that? It ties back to a longer history of programming at DokuFest, and how in recent years, filmmakers increasingly use fiction elements within documentaries. We found it interesting to showcase some of the most successful films in this sub-genre so viewers can see that documentary film isn't limited to one form. Whether fiction or animation they're all films.

The division is undergoing reevaluation and renaming. That's not up to us. But we provide this platform where films are shown and we enjoy bringing these styles, genres, and trends to audiences and filmmakers alike, because many of them might find inspiration there.

DD: If you were just a regular viewer looking at the program from the outside, what would you notice and what would you recommend to the audience?

VN: Okay, I'll try. The film about the Irish hip-hop band Kneecap is an exceptional moment a film where the band members play themselves in a movie about the band, titled Kneecap. Not only is the film excellent, but the band is at an interesting moment in their career and in a politically charged time, with accusations against one of its members. It's a very current story, with a band that's outspoken on Palestine and critical of the UK government.

From other films especially in the feature documentary competition there's an Irish film I really liked: A Want in Her, a Cuban film, and a Chinese film titled Always. A strong selection across documentary sub-genres.

Some excellent films in the Balkan and national competitions. Three films in the special program in collaboration with Lumbardhi offer a retrospective a tribute to the late great director David Lynch with *Lost Highway*; the film *1984* based on George Orwell's famous novel, a reflection on an imagined moment that sadly feels like it was made for today. With a Big Brother controlling everything, and a love story that serves as an incredible allegory for creeping autocracy something we're seeing around the world.

There are also several music-related films: one on Kosovo's music scene, *Palace of Youth*, and another about musical icon and multi-instrumentalist Warren Ellis his work in music and his animal shelter efforts in Indonesia. He was scheduled to visit Kosovo, but it didn't happen due to logistical issues.

And there are many more films.

On the Theme

The world is entirely made of language. We just need to speak it.

A CONVERSATION WITH RINA META AND BLERTA HAZIRAJ ABOUT THE 24TH EDITION OF DOKUFEST.

What we know about DokuFest is that the themes selected over the years become so familiar, they feel like sentences whose meanings we've always known. From Breaking Borders to You'll break mine, I'll break yours, from Future My Love to this year's mental, greedy, and empty endlessness that urges us to think, we are given a space to discuss the world, even with broken teeth, even while sipping morning coffee in Prizren, and even across the world from wherever DokuFest visitors come.

Rina and Blerta know Prizren well. They have lived this city to the rhythm of the festival, and this year they worked on articulating and developing DokuFest's theme, which speaks to the stance toward a state of numbness, this collective diagnosis that the festival's artistic team has shaped into its thematic thread. As Rina puts it:

"Initially, the references through which this state was articulated came from statements, stances, and creations of past years, which often sounded prophetic and frightening in light of what is happening today."

To address this reality, what we insisted on together with DokuFest, DAMAR, and Blerta Haziraj was the creation of a reflective space where we stop the world for a moment to give names to the feelings we need in order to confront the crises in the world, in our country, and within ourselves. It was important to us that the promotional space of the festival not turn DokuFest into a spectacle, but into a shared context of resistance.

Browsing through previous editions of DokuDaily, the word "future" in all its forms appears strongly and insistently. Rina and Blerta each have their own version of how they envision the future. Blerta defines it as "bright," while Rina calls it "being together." But in this edition of DokuFest, we talk about the present, about what is taking shape in today's discourse, taking into account that we are living in profoundly turbulent political and social times and are more visually exposed than ever before to collective madness. In speaking about the present, we refer to urgencies, which the theme has absorbed into language and articulation.

For Blerta, the urgency is: identifying and articulating "what" is happening to the world. To write and reflect on what is happening to the Earth, to the environment. What different peoples across the world are experiencing. Whether it's war, violence, the oppression of peoples, or passivity in the face of social catastrophes. Translating these realities into words and sentences that awaken us, stir us, make us think, and respond through a language that demands responsibility.

Rina, on the other hand, refers to the ways people connect to one another around the world. In a moment of hyper-normalization of crises, emotional and informational exhaustion, it is important to understand our connections to the world, to the people closest to us, to communities, to festivals, to the artists with whom we share life, as something vital.

Every opening of DokuFest brings with it a slogan that echoes collective calls for the issues closest to the heart, but this year, the word itself gains power by becoming an image in its own right. To understand this process, Rina and Blerta also worked on creating a vocabulary that deliberately stops us, asks us to sit, to read, to observe the importance of understanding, of being challenged or comforted by the text. Rina explains the process like this:

"The campaign is built on the word 'Endless' not just as a description, but as a structure, a typographic system, and a psychological state. Through this typographic structure, a language landscape has been created that constantly shifts, never sits within a typical grid, but is continually presented as compressed or expanded, in a kind of tension with space. Part of the campaign is also the 'Dictionary' another 'Endless' moment that we are developing together with Blerta and which has found its place in all the promotional materials of the festival, with the aim of creating spaces of calm, pause, reflection, learning, naming what is happening around and within us."

In many conversations with the team, the need for self-education and the pushing of oneself to see the world without prejudice is often mentioned. But this process is also labor. And often, we might find ourselves listing and ordering the reasons why we do the things we do.

For Blerta, even though she admits that this work has sharpened her patience, she finds joy in the care given to "the dance of every sentence," emphasizing that this meticulous attention has found its place in the world even beyond the festival.

While celebrating their collaboration, Meta says that another joy in this process was the attentive reading of many authors or song lyrics in a new light names like John Berger, Etel Adnan, Susan Sontag, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Imran Mir, and even lines from songs like Lift You by Moin, and other bands injected into the process by "Xhaxhi" like The Smiths, Bauhaus, Lankum, Fontaines D.C., The Fall, etc.

Just like words that are layered with meaning and travel through people's minds until they return and find themselves in the right place, Rina and Blerta have found a moment of unconventional return to DokuFest and to Prizren, in their own ways.

For Blerta, it brings back "The magic that surrounds and builds DokuFest. The inspiring people of the festival and the lessons I have taken from them. The long conversations about cinema, film, and music. Above all, that strong feeling of joy that carries you every time you come to Prizren, which changes every year, but is always warm."

Rina, on the other hand, sees this return as a form of belonging to a place where you can always feel at home: "For me, the main pillar of DokuFest as a film festival, as an act of resistance, as a punk movement, is and remains Veton Nurkollari. His artistic and human vision, the way he builds the festival as a true and irreplaceable space, is the reason I came to DokuFest in 2003 and why I continue to return."

We invite you to think about the world and get to know it with every possible tool available. We invented words ourselves and we continue to reinvent them, in order to reach territories of experience that we can feel even in language as it shifts. See the dictionary and the word this year as a way of looking another in the eye and just like the world, language demands an uncompromising dedication to be understood.

On Youth

For all the stories that matter

A TALK WITH EROLL BILIBANI

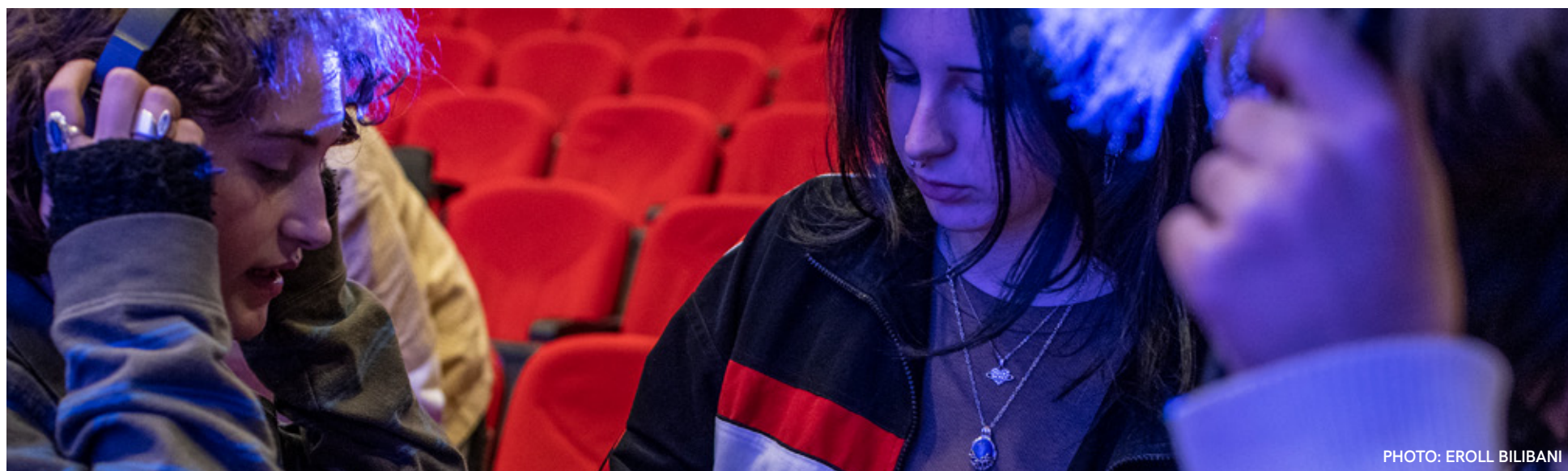


PHOTO: EROLL BILIBANI

Dokudaily talks with the Dokufest's very own Eroll Bilibani on all the programs and partnerships carried out throughout the years, and new collaborations that will open exciting possibilities for all filmmakers in the region. This edition starts today, but all the work done before the festival, will find its way to host you to the screenings, to the talks and to the thrills of watching what the new generations have prepared for the silver screen.

DD: For 13 years, DokuFest has been hosting sessions of the Future is Here program that invites young people to learn and experiment with film. Over the years, we have seen developments in the treatment of themes that range from the collective and historical, to intimate and personal narratives. What developments and directions of narratives can we expect from young filmmakers this year?

EB: What stands out this year is how personal and experimental the films have become. You feel it in the humor and playfulness of a superhero parody, in the raw honesty of living with disability, and in family conversations that unfold like confessions. At the same time, there are works that reach outward: the daily grind of a soldier navigating a male-dominated world, or a collective portrait of Termok-iss and the spirit of community. Side by side, you have the deeply private and the collective, the attic full of forgotten objects and the abstract meditation on what "home" really means. What excites me is not only the subjects but the ways they're being told — young filmmakers are searching for new forms, new languages, refusing to settle for convention. That blend of intimacy, social reflection, and bold experimentation feels like the direction we'll see more of in the years ahead.

I'm extremely proud to see films from the 13th generation of these young and aspiring voices. Each year they remind us why we built this program in the first place: to give them space, tools, and confidence to claim their own stories. Although the funding that sustained this program has now come to an end, our commitment has not. We will be looking for new partnerships and new supporters, because these voices matter — they're not only the future of filmmaking here, but also a mirror of the society we live in. Supporting them means ensuring that their stories, however fragile or daring, continue to find their way onto the screen.

The collaboration with the Scottish Film Institute in partnership with British Council marks an extraordinary opportunity for new and up and coming filmmakers, while some of them will pitch their projects and learn more during the Short Film Forum sessions this year in Prizren. In regards to this Bilibani says: This year's Short Film Forum gathers a strikingly diverse set of voices. The projects we've selected come from the edges: stories

marked by silence, loss, memory, and defiance. Some are raw, others are radically experimental, but all share a refusal to imitate or conform. That's the reason they're here. The Short Film Forum was created precisely to hold space for this kind of filmmaking, work that may not fit into neat industry boxes but insists on new forms, sharper voices, and deeper risks.

Backed by the Swedish Embassy, Sida, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, and in partnership with film centres from Kosovo, Albania, and North Macedonia, the Forum is about more than pitching or development, it's about breaking through structural barriers that have long stifled short films in the region. With the guidance of Jing Haase, we're working to turn this into a permanent hub where short films from the Balkans can grow, connect, and claim their audience. This year it's eight films, next year it will stretch further across the region. The thread binding them together is simple: urgency. These are films that need to be told now.

DD: Also, regarding the Short Film Forum, you have had the opportunity to be part of the selection team for new film projects. Given this fact and the fact that over the years you have had the opportunity to see the developments of different generations of filmmakers, looking at the region as well, how important are such platforms for the development of film projects? What void do such programs fill?

Platforms like the Short Film Forum matter because they fill a gap. In this region, young filmmakers don't have enough space to test their ideas, to meet decision-makers, or to practice pitching without pressure. Over time, I've watched different generations come through, and the ones who had access to such platforms grew faster, more confidently. It's



PHOTO: EROLL BILIBANI



about giving them tools and visibility early on, so their projects are supported and their voices are heard.

DD: Throughout the year, DokuFest focuses on creating an environment that operates in the field of documentaries and short films that goes beyond the festival by creating continuity and sustainability for anyone who will deal with films. One of these programs has been Breaking Borders in partnership with SDI (Scottish Documentary Institute) and the products from this collaboration will be screened at this edition of DokuFest. Can you talk more about the benefits of this collaboration and what it has brought to the scene, culture and filmmakers?

Breaking Borders has been special. In a world increasingly fractured by politics, history, and borders literal and metaphorical Breaking Borders offered a bold response: co-creation. A unique partnership between DokuFest in Kosovo and the Scottish Documentary Institute (SDI), this initiative brought together emerging filmmakers from opposite ends of Europe for a deeply collaborative residency grounded in storytelling, cultural exchange, and political consciousness.

It was not just about making films, but about building trust across borders that are usually closed. Supported by the British Council's Collaborative Grants, the program gathered eight alumni, four from each organization who had previously taken part in SDI's Bridging the Gap or DokuFest's Future is Here programs. Over the course of 19 days in Prizren, these up-and-coming filmmakers were invited to leave behind their usual creative routines and immerse themselves in the layered realities of each other's worlds.

The idea was simple, but powerful: radical collaboration. Through hands-on workshops, long conversations, film screenings and lectures, location scouting, and mentorship by acclaimed filmmakers Saeed Taji Farouky and Kumjana Novakova, the participants pushed past polite cooperation into deeper, riskier creative territory.



DD: This year's DokuTalks program combines various panels that talk about the behind-the-scenes of filmmaking, the context in which film productions live, but also issues related to culture, public spaces, and issues of memory. How would you define the process of compiling these discussions?

EB: When we started there was no blueprint on how to design DokuTalks. No glossy "industry" master plan. Just years of endless conversations, reshaping the way we talk about cinema, activism, and art. In post-pandemic 2021, with filmmaker Dea Gjinovci we began to twist the traditional "talks section" into something that felt alive. Something that didn't bow to conventional jargon. That's how DokuTalks happened: a place where filmmakers, activists, and scholars cut through the noise and swap stories that actually matter.

This year's talks orbit around one stubborn idea: RESISTANCE. Whether it's women rewriting narratives of war and peace, artists confronting silence and numbness, or filmmakers facing a system that undervalues short films, each talk dives into same topic fighting back, creating, and enduring. Our DokuTalks don't aim for polite consensus; they open cracks. They challenge how we watch, how we remember, and how we claim public spaces that are shrinking fast. Together, they sketch a map of filmmaking that's as much about survival as it is or filmmaking craft that we are passionate about.

DD: What are you most excited about this year regarding the 24th edition of DokuFest?

EB: Every August, Prizren turns into a film city, and this year marks the 24th time we get to make that happen. What excites me most is how the festival keeps reinventing itself without losing its roots. Alongside screenings and concerts, we're bringing three programs that feel especially close to me: the Short Film Forum, Breaking Borders, and Future is Here. Each carries its own energy, new filmmakers daring to experiment, young voices from Kosovo and the UK rethinking collaboration across borders, and a generation of students shaping their first films through the school we started more than a decade ago. I'm also excited in a simpler, more human way: to walk the streets of Prizren buzzing with people, to meet old friends who return year after year, and to welcome new ones who will hopefully carry this place with them long after. And what I look forward to most: gathering around films that demand to be seen, and sharing that urgency together at a Festival and in the city that makes it possible.

INTRODUCTION TO DOKUNIGHTS



PHOTO: TUGHAN ANIT

Eight nights of electrifying performances. Eight nights of collective spirit. DokuNights, the festival's diverse and forward-thinking music programme, makes its grand return.

Curated by Nita Deda and Leart Rama, this year's edition provides a wide constellation of eclectic artists, offering up bold electronic soundscapes, lush folk melodies, rollicking traditional instrumentals and euphoric club heaters. Last year, DokuNights took place at Prizren's celebrated Lumbardhi stage; now, it takes to the skies, the Sonar stage of Kalaja playing host to a non-stop party above the city. And you're all invited! The trek up to the fortress is more than worth it.

Part of the mastermind curating duo behind this year's stunning selection, Leart Rama gives his insight on how this programme came to be and what it represents for him:

"DokuNights has always aimed to be a counterculture or rather, a program that consistently tries to bring new energy, to cultivate new voices, and to give the city a new color.

The programme, from the very moment it began forming as an idea, as a concept, long before I became part of DokuFest, has always felt like an organism that constantly evolves, changes, and adapts to the times and the moment the world is experiencing. One thing that has never changed at DokuNights is the passion to offer a window into the world of music, where every rule of sound can be broken and reimagined: a world we in Kosovo, for many reasons, don't get to see every day. This year's program selection is exactly that: a combination of what feels urgent to express through sound, and what might heal our hearts even for just a single minute."

General Sponsor



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The party gets started!

WRITTEN BY GUS EDGAR-CHAN

And what better way to step through this window than with the liberating energy of an all-night cross-continent celebration? On August 2nd, three sets—Melbourne-based IN2STELLAR, Berlin-based Byron Yeates and Kosovo's very own Rebiswan—get the party started with what Rama describes as "a balance between '90s and 2000s trance, reimagined house music, and techno, with one aim: to experience ecstasy on the dance floor".

These electronic beats meet ancestral Albanian melodies the following night, as the greatly anticipated Shkodra Elektronike brings us the best of both worlds.

On August 4th, we segue into the goosebump-inducing 'ethno-chaos' of Ukrainian world-music quartet DakhaBrakha, before we are rewarded with the transportive songwriting of Ibadet Ramadani and her dreamy solo album on August 5th.

August 6th is all about breaking boundaries, as Cinna Peyghamy, YAAND and urbau each take center stage to present an uncompromising gathering of thrilling sound compositions.

On August 7th, upsammy and LUXE arrive. Rama's personal pick, he describes these talents as emerging "with a completely new language", whose "emotional expression through art hits a peak that's hard to achieve, because it comes directly from the sincerity of the artist's soul". This is not a night to be missed.

Then, of course, on August 8th, DokuNights proudly welcomes Kosovo pop juggernaut Yll Limani, as he treats us to his scintillating brand of heartfelt ballads and vibrant pop, in what promises to be one of the biggest nights in the history of the festival.

DokuNights ends in style on Saturday with a double bill: first, Pulse of Berat takes over Kino Lumi for a riotous celebration of everything that has come before, and then Sound Metaphors DJs, Sleep D, and Genc Elezaj up the tempo, carrying us into the night and beyond, the sunrise lighting up an image of complete, transcendent togetherness. Rama puts it best:

"On the very last night, when 6 AM comes, we're always in each other's arms."

Here's to another edition of DokuNights—see you there!



PHOTO: AGON DANA

ON PEOPLE

The Team that Works with Heart for DokuFest A Festival that Speaks to the World

SHKRUAR NGA FISNIK MINCI



Prizren stands on the brink of an energy explosion called DokuFest. The film screening venues and the music-filled nights are ready to welcome the audience that, once again, transforms the city into the cultural heart of the region.

One day before the opening of the 24th edition, the festival team is in constant motion. In the small offices, the cobblestone alleyways, and public squares, you can now feel the anxiety, the exhaustion, the work and the love. All of it in service of art and the promotion of the city.

DokuFest's Executive Director, Linda Llulla, shared that after intense efforts to prepare the 24th edition, the time has come to enthusiastically welcome filmmakers and film lovers from around the country and the world.

"Despite the many challenges we've faced this year, we still found a way to prepare an edition that I believe will be unforgettable for everyone involved in both the film and music programs."

Linda Dobroshi from the Public Relations team describes DokuFest's year as a graph.

"There are very quiet periods, then May comes and everything changes. People start arriving, the city pulses differently, and you're gripped by a mix of excitement and nostalgia."

She emphasizes that beyond the lights, posters, and screenings, there's a great deal of unseen work.

"I really wish people understood how important the festival is for the city. It's not just an event that 'happens,' but a collective effort born each year from deep dedication."

This year, she's especially looking forward to two standout events: the return of David Lynch's cult classic *Lost Highway* and Ylli Limani's performance during the magical DokuNights.

Being part of the festival again this year is an unmatched feeling for Vanesa Bellanica, also from the Public Relations team.

"Every time feels like the first time. I'm not exactly scared, but I'm not not scared either. It's a sweet kind of confusion. But I love this festival deeply and I'm incredibly excited for this edition."

Malbora Krajku, along with Idriz Morina, curated DokuKids this year with a more focused approach aimed at offering a new experience for the youngest attendees.

"We tried to give more space to teenagers, but interest was lower. That's pushing us to think of new formats for the future." But with 40 films dedicated to children and international collaborations like the one with Clermont-Ferrand, DokuKids remains one of the festival's treasures.

For Krajku, the lack of adequate financial support from local authorities has created difficulties for organizers, forcing them to reduce the number of cinemas, staff, and volunteers.

"Despite this, the team is extremely positive about delivering a great edition filled with new moments, special experiences, and unforgettable friendships."

She's also eagerly awaiting the Future is Here program featuring films by young directors created over several weeks in Prizren.

"This year we're screening work from the 13th generation of young filmmakers. It's a special program, and as always, we try to bring new voices that offer fresh perspectives on meaningful topics."

Meanwhile, Alba Çakalli has to handle every detail even dealing with a fine for using her phone while driving. And she keeps her cool.

"This time I made a mistake, and I accepted the fine."

Managing duplicate public permits, insurance headaches, a catalogue with numerical typos (including a non-existent Roman numeral!), she embodies the true spirit of a festival producer: finding creative solutions to unexpected problems.

"My next worry is the weather on opening night. But we'll get through the rain before the opening. We'll get past the city noise before the screenings start. We'll overcome every obstacle... and we'll enjoy it."

After the colossal work to bring another new edition to life, DokuFest once again proves it's not just a festival.

It's an act of love. A call for unity. A platform for reflection and action.

And there's nothing that can stop it.

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