

# DOKU FEST

International Documentary  
and Short Film Festival

A large audience is seated in a dark theater, looking towards a stage. On the stage, a large screen displays the year "2024" in bright yellow, pixelated numbers. The stage is dimly lit, with some equipment visible on the floor. The audience is mostly in silhouette, with some heads and shoulders visible in the foreground.

2024

We are grateful and proud to share this year's annual report for DokuFest. Thanks to your support, we've celebrated another amazing year of creativity and connection, bringing together diverse audiences, artists, and innovators.

Thank you for being part of this journey. We're excited to continue inspiring, connecting, and celebrating in the year ahead.

<b>10-11</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>
<b>12-13</b>	<b>WINNERS FILM PROGRAM</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>COMPETITION</b>
<b>17-25</b>	<b>SPECIAL PROGRAM</b>
<b>28-35</b>	<b>EVENTS</b>
<b>36-37</b>	<b>DONORS</b>
<b>42-65</b>	<b>DOKULAB</b>
<b>68-69</b>	<b>GENERAL SUPPORT FERTILE GROUND</b>
<b>76-77</b>	<b>PËRMBLEDHJE</b>
<b>78-79</b>	<b>FITUESIT PROGRAMI I FILMIT</b>
<b>82</b>	<b>PROGRAMI I GARËS</b>
<b>83-91</b>	<b>PROGRAME TË VEÇANTA</b>
<b>94-101</b>	<b>EVENTE</b>
<b>102-103</b>	<b>DONATORËT</b>
<b>108-131</b>	<b>DOKULAB</b>
<b>134-135</b>	<b>GENERAL SUPPORT FERTILE GROUND</b>



**ANNUAL REPORT**

**EDITION XXIII**

**2-10 AUGUST 2024**

**PRIZREN, KOSOVA**

**FESTIVAL REPORT**



**246 Films**

**66 Countries**

**7 DokuTalks**

**3 Masterclasses**

**9 Workshops**



**11 Music events**

**9 Exhibitions**

**15.355 Attendees**

**108 Staff members**

**119 Volunteers**

# SUMMARY

The 23rd edition of DokuFest took place from August 2 to 10, 2024, in Prizren. This year's program featured 246 film screenings, 7 engaging debates, 3 insightful masterclasses, 9 workshops, 9 exhibitions, and 11 live music performances that brought together filmmakers, artists, and audiences from Kosovo, the region and across the world.

A total of 3,325 films from 119 countries were submitted, and from these, our programming team carefully selected 103 films to compete in eight competition sections and further 143 number of films had their World, International, and European premieres during the festival, further solidifying DokuFest's role as a space for new voices and powerful storytelling.

With all this, DokuFest continues to be a significant platform for ground-breaking cinema, where a diverse selection of documentary and narrative films that challenge conventions and ignite conversation strives.

Each year, DokuFest presents a theme that reflects pressing societal concerns. This year's theme, "NEW ORDER," focused on the big changes happening around the world today, such as geopolitical tensions, environmental crises and wealth disparity, prompting meaningful discussions around shared human concerns.

The gap between the rich and poor, along with conflicts like the wars in Gaza and Ukraine, suggests the international system may be shifting. Other factors, such as the rise of the Global South's economy, Russia's military actions, and China's economic challenges, point to possible major changes ahead.

Through a selection of films and discussions on these pressing topics, the festival aimed to explore whether we are seeing the end of the old-world order and the start of a new one.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our sponsors, partners, team, volunteers, and filmmakers for making this year's festival possible. Join us next year as we continue to explore the transformative power of film.



FILM PROGRAM

# NEW ORDER

:DOKU  
FEST

# WINNERS

WINNERS



BALKAN DOX WINNER

**Another Day**

by Eneos Çarka

INT'L FEATURE DOX WINNER

**A Fidai Film**

by Kamal Aljafari

INT'L SHORT DOX WINNER

**History is Written at Night**

by Alejandro Alonso Estrella

INTERNATIONAL SHORTS WINNER

**The Death of a Hero**

by Karin Franz Körlof

HUMAN RIGHTS DOX WINNER

**Silence of Reason**

by Kumjana Novakova

GREEN DOX WINNER

**Apple Cider Vinegar**

by Sofie Benoot

TRUTH DOX WINNER

**23 Mile**

by Mitch McCabe

NATIONAL FILM WINNER

**Like a Sick Yellow**

by Norika Sefa

AUDIENCE AWARD WINNER

**Afterwar**

by Birgitte Stærmose

TALENT DOC AWARD WINNER

**Workers' Wings**

by Ilir Hasanaj

DISTRIBUTION AWARD WINNER

**reMemBer2.human**

by Durim Klaiqi



# COMPETITION

As always, competitions were central to our curation, and this year's selections were as impressive as ever. The featured films in the **Balkan Dox Competition** highlighted our year-long search for the best documentaries from the region, offering a diverse look at the production in terms of both style and content.

Our **International Dox Competition** for feature-length and short films was a place of discovery for us and our audience. We continued to highlight human rights and environmental issues in the **Human Rights** and **Green Dox** competition sections, showcasing films on some of the most pressing topics of our time.

The **Short Films Competition** featured some of the best short films, including entries from major film festivals and several world premieres, a fact that filled us with pride and **Truth Dox Competition** focused on personal and global stories exploring the notion of truth.

In our **National Competition**, we showcased an equally impressive roster, with films crowned at major festivals before their screenings here. With 14 films in competition, it was no overstatement to call it one of the best years in Kosovo's film history.

# SPECIAL PROGRAMS

## VIEW FROM THE WORLD

DokuFest presented a selection of 10 bold nonfiction films in its renowned View from the World strand, showcasing some of the most politically engaged works of the year. Among the highlights were *No Other Land*, *Soundtrack to a Coup D'Etat*, and *Direct Action*, a trio of films addressing urgent political issues. The program also included two Cannes Film Festival premieres: *Lula*, by Oliver Stone, which explored the life of Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and *The Falling Sky* by Eryk Rocha and Gabriela Carneiro da Cunha, about the Indigenous Watoriki community in Brazil. Sylvain George's *Obscure Night - Goodbye Here, Anywhere*, which delves into the plight of African migrants in Morocco, added to the strand's focus on pressing global issues.

Rounding out the selection were several other notable films, including *Hollywoodgate*, which examined the Taliban's rise as a military force after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, *Copa 71*, about a little-known Women's World Cup, and *Life and Other Problems*, a reflective piece by Max Kestner. Also featured was Klára Tasovská's *I'm Not Everything I Want To Be*, a moving portrait of Czech photographer Libuše Jarcovjáčková. The diverse selection showcased the vitality of documentary filmmaking and the commitment of these filmmakers to addressing important social and political topics.

## FOCUS UKRAINE

In collaboration with Docudays, we proudly presented Focus Ukraine, a powerful program showcasing the resilience and creativity of Ukrainian documentary cinema and photography. Supported by the IZOLYATSIA foundation, Trans Europe Halles, and the ZMINA: Rebuilding program, this was DokuFest's largest country-focused initiative to date. The selection featured a range of 9 short and feature length films addressing both personal and societal issues central to Ukrainian life amidst conflict, such as the legacy of Soviet totalitarianism, the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, and the everyday resilience of Ukrainians during wartime. These films provided audiences with an in-depth understanding of the impact of the ongoing war on Ukrainian society and the profound emotional, cultural, and political challenges faced by its people.



## NO OTHER LAND: FILMS ON PALESTINE

Another special program titled No Other Land: Films on Palestine, offering a timely and essential exploration of the Palestinian - Israeli conflict amidst the ongoing war in Gaza and escalating tensions in the Middle East. The program aimed to shed light on the conflict's roots and its far-reaching consequences. The feature film Route 181: Fragments of a Journey in Palestine-Israel, by Palestinian filmmaker Micha Kleifi and Israeli filmmaker Eyal Sivan, stood out as a profound examination of the complex relationship between two nations living on the same land.

The documentary, filmed in 2002, takes viewers on a disorienting journey along the 1947 partition line, offering an intimate portrayal of the region's enduring turmoil. Another significant work, No Other Land, documented life in the occupied village of Masafer Yatta, highlighting the resistance against forced displacement while capturing the unlikely friendship between Palestinian activist Basel and Israeli journalist Yuval.

The program also featured Three Promises, a deeply personal film composed of family home videos that mirrored Palestine's long struggle for freedom, and UNDR, a short film by Kamal Aljafari, which used archival footage to craft an unsettling narrative about incursions in Palestine. Miranda Pennell's Man Number 4 provided a chilling reflection on the voyeuristic nature of witnessing conflict through a photograph from Gaza, while Dancing with Palestine celebrated the Palestinian tradition of dabke as a form of cultural resistance.

## 1974: THEN IS NOW

The year 1974 is widely celebrated as one of the most significant in cinema history, with masterpieces from acclaimed directors like Coppola, Cassavetes, Scorsese, Altman, Rivette, and others. The same holds true for nonfiction films from that year, but a more compelling narrative emerges when reflecting on these documentaries fifty years later. These 1974 films, addressing politics, power, sexuality, and aesthetics, resonate with contemporary issues, offering early glimpses into the narratives we face today. They document conflicts such as the Israeli - Palestinian war, the struggle for gender and sexual equality, the evolving notions of state power, and critiques of the criminal justice system. The program "1974: Then Is Now" presented eleven remarkable films in four thematic sections, allowing audiences to revisit and reflect on these historical moments and their relevance to current realities.

We were excited to present "1974: Then Is Now" in Prizren, a specially curated program by Eric Hynes, Senior Curator of Film at the Museum of the Moving Image in New York City.

## SPOTLIGHT: EDUARDO WILLIAMS

Argentinian filmmaker Eduardo “Teddy” Williams demonstrated a unique ability to capture life in medias res, where characters and groups of young people often experience what seems like temporary amnesia. This disorientation frequently leads to shifts and transformations, transporting them into alternate realities that are not simply a continuation of their previous experiences. Though the previous place or moment is not entirely forgotten, Williams’ characters navigate through their own imaginative logic, propelled by the inventive magic of his cinema. This movement through space, time, and various cultures feels remarkably lifelike, as if guided by uncharted maps of imagination.

Often finding themselves in supermarkets—a symbol of choice and abundance—his characters might not always find what they seek there. Yet, whether in another supermarket, on a rooftop, in a jungle, a city street, a chat room, or among friends, they ultimately discover a sense of communion. DokuFest was excited to showcase Williams’ work in Prizren through a special spotlight program featuring three films: *The Human Surge*, *The Human Surge 3*, and a collection of five early shorts where Williams experimented with various video formats and textures. This program, curated by guest curator Pamela Cohn, offered a rare chance to explore the distinct worlds of this innovative and ambitious filmmaker.

## PLEASURE HEADS MUST BURN: MUSIC ON FILM

DokuFest continued its exploration of music and film with an eclectic program titled *Pleasure Heads Must Burn: Films on Music*. Highlights included *Mutiny in Heaven: Nick Cave’s The Birthday Party*, which followed the post-punk band *The Birthday Party’s* move from Australia to London, and *Mogwai: If the Stars Had a Sound*, documenting the Scottish band’s creation of their album *As the Love Continues* during the lockdown.

The program also featured *Ryuichi Sakamoto I Opus*, capturing Sakamoto’s final piano performance, and *Efterklang: The Makedonium Band*, which followed the Danish band’s collaboration with Macedonian musicians at the Makedonium monument, followed by a live performance. The selection concluded with two films about music and freedom: *HAIYU - Rebel Singer Mariem Hassan* and *Dancing Palestine*.

## TRIANGLE PROGRAM

The program featured three screenings, curated by partner festivals including BIEFF – Bucharest International Experimental Film Festival, Vienna Shorts, and DokuFest. It delved into the fragile, intense emotion of longing for a different reality—seeking more peace, security, order, and beauty. The first screening was held in May 2024 at Vienna Shorts, and the third will take place in September at BIEFF in Bucharest.

The Triangle Project, an initiative from Vienna Shorts, this year was dedicated to the theme of Longing for Political Stability, focusing on the universal desire for safety and the absence of fear regarding future steps, days, or elections. In a world of ever-shifting political landscapes, this yearning for stability resonates deeply across societies. The project explored longing as a driving force, much like Kieślowski’s *Talking Heads*, asking: What do people most want from life? This theme extended into questions of belonging, autonomy, political security, and societal change, examining how longing shapes both personal and collective aspirations.

## SPECIAL SCREENINGS

In special screenings, four films were presented. *Classified People* by Yolande Zauberman, shot clandestinely in 16mm, offered a powerful example of radical documentary filmmaking. It provided an intimate portrayal of how state-sanctioned segregation deeply infiltrated the private lives of those affected. *Return to Kosovo*, co-directed by Emma Strauss, Julius Strauss, Donald Harding, and Ben Harding. Julius received a message from the massacre survivor Besnik, 20 years after the atrocities. The film was a moving reflection on memory and resilience.

The National Premiere of *On the Way* by Samir Karahoda served as the closing film of the edition. Additionally, the Lumbardhi Experimental Ensemble delivered a unique performance accompanying the documentary film *The Wrestlers (1975)* by Besim Sahatçiu. This project, led by Ilir Bajri, featured new sonic expressions crafted during a week-long workshop with participating musicians. The performance intertwined musical reflections with the historical and cultural heritage of traditional wrestling competitions in Gora and Opoja, and was commissioned by the Lumbardhi Foundation.



ARE YOU UP FOR ADVENTURE?



## ODE TO CELLULOID: FILMS ON FILM

Aligned with its longstanding exploration of cinema, its history, and representation, the festival featured three exceptional feature-length documentaries, each reflecting a shared passion for film preservation.

Ehsan Khoshbakht's *Celluloid Underground* introduced Ahmad Jorghanian, an Iranian film collector reminiscent of Henri Langlois, whose vast collection of over 5,000 prints and posters was hidden across Tehran, defying the country's ban on Western films. The documentary highlighted the tireless efforts of Ehsan and Ahmad to save these films, celebrating cinephilia and their unique friendship. Peter Flynn's *Film is Dead. Long Live the Film!* paid tribute to collectors dedicated to rescuing films from obscurity, while Matevž Jerman and Jurij Meden's collaboration uncovered a treasure trove of Slovenian avant-garde and experimental cinema, rounding out this remarkable selection.



PLUGOVE

## BLAST FROM THE PAST

Once again, we looked back into the history of our beloved Lumbardhi cinema, bringing back a small piece of what had been screened there in the past. In close collaboration with the Lumbardhi Foundation, under the title *Blast from the Past*, we screened three exceptional films from cinema greats Federico Fellini, Stanley Kubrick, and Wim Wenders.

Special Presentation: Soundwalk Collective & Patti Smith Correspondences (Screening)

*CORRESPONDENCES* was an evolving project between Soundwalk Collective and Patti Smith, spanning over a decade and traversing various geographies and natural environments. The artists uncovered sonic traces left by poets, filmmakers, revolutionaries, and the impact of climate change. Stephan Crasneanski, the founder of Soundwalk Collective, explored and captured the sounds of some of the world's most remote places, seeking to awaken a sonic memory within the landscapes and reveal past and present histories of our world.

The resulting compositions reflected the human relationship with the environment, existence, and the creative process. Initially conceived as long auditory journeys, Stephan shared these recordings with Patti Smith, providing her with new sonic landscapes to inspire her poetic vision. Their collaboration, which began with a chance encounter on a plane, grew through ongoing correspondence, allowing them to reflect on life and nature. For *CORRESPONDENCES*, they created eight pieces that reversed the traditional relationship between sound and image—sound came first, and visual elements were later edited to accompany the music. The works spanned themes from human intervention in the oceans, nature's resilience after Chernobyl, to decentralized societies envisioned by Kropotkin, and Pasolini's final night, forming thought-provoking audiovisual experiences.

## FUTURE IS HERE + NEW WAVE + FOREST OF FRAMES

For over a decade, the Future is Here film school has been a cornerstone of DokuFest's mission to empower young voices in Kosovo. This initiative has provided a space for self-expression, filmmaking skills, and guidance in creating compelling documentary narratives. Now in its 12th edition, the program, supported by the National Endowment for Democracy, continues to shape the future of Kosovo's cinema, especially in areas like editing, sound design, and post-production, where opportunities are limited. Eight fresh short documentaries will be showcased on August 6 during Talent Day at DokuFest, a testament to the dedication and passion of the students under the mentorship of Dea Gjinovci, Lert Rama, and Eroll Bilibani. Editing workshops, led by alumni mentors Trendeline Halili, Flutura Balaj, and Hana Ahmeti, have further polished the films, while masterclasses from filmmakers such as Andrijana Stojkovic, Samir Karahoda, and Norika Sefa have enriched the creative process.





# DOKUNIGHTS

This year's edition saw DokuNights evolve into a new format, transforming into a citywide musical embrace with three separate stages featuring music acts that pushed the boundaries of sonic exploration. Curated by Nita Deda and Lert Rama, the selection spanned a diverse array of musical styles, ranging from centuries-old ceremonial songs to contemporary acts with modern approaches to sound.

Notable performances included a concert by the Palestinian shamstep music collective 47 Soul, a site-specific performance created by Tiran Willemse and Nkisi for DokuFest, a rave night at the castle hosted by Berlin's influential label/collective Hypersoft, preceded by a live cinematic performance by Gianmarco.

Prizren's own Agona Shporta launched her debut album in her hometown with an acclaimed band of jazz musicians, while Prishtina's electronic music producer Eljesa Beka released a deeply personal album at the festival, followed by a quadrophonic live performance by Finnish music legend Aleksí Perälä. Herrensauna returned to DokuFest with a special performance featuring hallucinatory sound compositions and sacred Sufi chants by Gegezen, while Danish pop, indie-rock, post-rock, and electronic band Efterklang presented both a film and a concert at the iconic Lumbardhi Cinema.

The festival opened with the otherworldly artist Aisha Devi, who performed her new visual and musical production Les Immortelles, and closed with a concert by Orkestra Shkodra, celebrating the rich heritage of Shkodra in northern Albania and the artistic soul of a city where everyone sings.

# DOKUPHOTO

DokuFest joined forces with DocudaysUA to spotlight Ukrainian documentary cinema and photography through Focus Ukraine at DokuFest in Kosovo. This partnership created the festival's largest country-focused showcase to date, highlighting the resilience and creativity of Ukrainian culture.

DokuPhoto, the accompanying photo exhibition for Focus Ukraine at DokuFest, showcased impactful photographs by Ukrainian artists. This year's DokuPhoto exhibition featured the profound and intimate work of Ukrainian photographer Mykhaylo Palinchak, who delved deep into the lives and landscapes of his war-torn homeland. The exhibition offered a window into the personal and communal resistance that defined contemporary Ukrainian war history.

The exhibition was curated by Sasha Nabieva, curator of the Interdisciplinary Art Lab: Docu/synthesis x Ukraine War Archive on behalf of DocudaysUA, and Ferdi Limani on behalf of DokuFest.

The Focus Ukraine project was implemented by DokuFest Kosovo and Docudays UA with support from the IZOLYATSIA foundation, Trans Europe Halles, and Malý Berlín, and was co-financed by the ZMINA: Rebuilding program, created with support from the European Union under a dedicated call to aid Ukrainian displaced people and the Ukrainian Cultural and Creative Sectors.

# DOKUTALKS

DokuTalks served as a vibrant nexus for film professionals, activists, and scholars, fostering a rich exchange of ideas and experiences. Curated by Eroll Bilibani and Dea Gjinovci, this year's DokuTalks featured 7 thought-provoking panel discussions, 3 hands-on masterclasses, and 9 compelling exhibitions, all centered on cinema's power to inspire change and address global issues.

The panels and masterclasses explored the intersection of storytelling with pressing issues like climate change, archival preservation in conflict zones, and the evolving role of film festivals in a post-COVID era. Discussions highlighted the deep connections between communities and their environments, the challenges archivists face in preserving history, and the significance of trust and collaboration in filmmaking. This dynamic series emphasized how storytelling, archival efforts, and collaborative practices are crucial for cultural memory and resilience.

# MASTERCLASSES

Master Class - Birgitte Stærmo "Afterwar" was filmed over 15 years using a blend of documentary and fictional storytelling to create an elevated sense of reality and a truer narrative. The film, co-created with the main cast, used research interviews as a basis for writing the fictional script, focusing on inner story rather than factual events. Director Birgitte Stærmo revealed the process and method behind the film in this Master Class.

In Conversation with Eduardo Teddy Williams. After experiencing this year's DokuFest spotlight artist, Teddy Williams, join us for an in-depth conversation on Wednesday, August 7, from 15:00 to 16:30 at De Still café. The talk, moderated by Pamela Cohn, will delve into Williams' unique approach to cinematic storytelling.

Master Class - Sylvain George

The master class examined how modern democracies can be judged by their power to make things appear or disappear, focusing on "exhibition," "underexposure," and "overexposure." Using insights from Walter Benjamin, Donna Haraway, and various cinematographic examples, the session explored aesthetic and political modes that challenge accepted boundaries and address urgent needs described by Frantz Fanon as "feasts of the imagination."



# EXHIBITIONS

“Hands on the Archives: War Destruction, Collective Documenting, and Technologies of War Representations” explored Yugoslav war-era archival documents—photos, videos, and texts—in various academic, educational, architectural, and artistic contexts.

“Connecting Dots: Exploring Shared Film Heritage,” a collaborative initiative by DokuFest and Beldocs, supported by the EU’s “Culture and Creativity for the Western Balkans” project, showcased research from residency programs on Yugoslav film archives, magazines, newspapers, and contemporary Kosovar cinema.

The GALERIA 17 VR TOUR offered a 360° virtual experience of ten diverse exhibitions from August 3rd to 5th at DokuCaffe, from 13:00 to 18:00. Visitors used VR glasses to explore works by local and international artists, including exhibitions curated by Natalija Vujošević, Blerta Hoçja, Fitore Isufi-Shukriu, and Ana Frangovska, and explored themes from “Babylonian Vision” to “Visibility Horizon.”

KAOS CAMPING, a Hungarian art group, performed using super 8mm and 16mm films, creating a special sensory experience through extended cinema.

DwP Corner by Humanitarian Law Kosovo presented “Illegal Theater” by Sovran Nrecaj, a documentary on Kosovo’s parallel education and culture system in the 1990s. The video-documentary was displayed in brightly colored tents, reminiscent of the era’s makeshift performance spaces.

The Threshold Turn, curated by Leart Rama for DokuFest, featured Mauro Ventura’s (Dj Saliva) immersive exhibition alongside light therapy by Soma\_Light\_Therapy. Ventura’s gate-like sculpture divided the space into a serene light therapy area and a symbolic exploration of transitions and boundaries.

“STORIES WE TELL,” the second camp exhibition at DokuFest, featured video interviews of young participants from all communities across Kosovo reflecting on personal growth and evolving perspectives. These testimonies revealed the impact of engaging with diverse peers on challenging stereotypes and promoting mutual respect.

Goran Djordjević’s exhibition at Pykë-Presje showcased lesser-known works in his hometown of Prizren. It featured 1975 graphic works from “Processes in a Square System”, mid-seventies experimental films like “The Open Book” and “Family Photos”, and a 30-minute film of 15-second portraits of over 100 artists, including Joseph Beuys and Marina Abramović, shown publicly for the first time.

# “I Can’t Sleep at Night” BOOTH

Returning to the city’s heart for another year, the annual booth—titled “I Can’t Sleep at Night”—welcomed visitors into a space designed for reflection. Stepping inside, guests found a large journal waiting, inviting them to leave a mark through brief notes, poems, stories, or personal reflections.

Visitors were encouraged to express their thoughts and emotions freely. Each day, the entries were collected, scanned, and posted online, with plans to eventually display them around the booth. The booth opened on August 3rd and remained accessible throughout the festival.

# DOKUKIDS

During this edition, DokuKids offered a series of diverse and educational workshops for young people, where around 300 young people were able to join. These workshops were carefully co curated by Malborë Krajku and Idriz Morina.

50 films and 9 workshops were planned, offering a mix of theory and practice that enabled children aged 7-11 to learn techniques and develop skills in various fields under the guidance of experts and well-known artists. The films were shown daily from the Innovation Training Park (ITP), with workshops covering topics like data science and AI, live video performance, 35mm film, ecological art, stop-motion animation, yoga, mobile filmmaking, and robotics. Each workshop provided a hands-on learning experience, fostering creativity and knowledge in the young participants.

The workshops were organized in collaboration with various partners, including the IPKO, IPKO Foundation, and Cactus Education.

*The DokuKids program was made possible with the support of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.*

# DONORS

The growth of the festival, making it the biggest event in Kosovo and among the most important ones in the region, is done thanks to the continuous support of our long term partners and supporters.

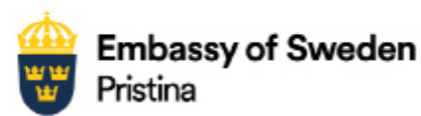
DokuFest is funded by international organizations, state and local institutions, foreign embassies in Kosovo and commercial sponsors. We are very grateful for their backing, for those who returned with us, and even increased their support as well as the new partners that joined us for the first time this year.

Their belief in our cause is very much appreciated and we continue working hard to make the festival even more magical and a bigger success each year more and more.

## Founding Partners



## Principal Partners



## Sustainable Partners



## Media Sponsor



## Supporters & Sponsors








# DOKULAB

# THE EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF DOKUFEST





**DokuLab, the educational department of DokuFest, empowers youth through film and storytelling, combining audiovisual tools with traditional methods. Focused on fostering social awareness and critical thinking, DokuLab offers training, workshops, and the Film Production Centre to support educators and inspire young voices in cinema.**

In 2024, DokuLab, the educational department of DokuFest, continued to champion Kosovo's creative and cultural progress, focusing on empowering young voices, educators, and the next generation of storytellers. Our work is centered on Film Production Centre for Youth, where high school students receive essential resources, mentorship, inspiration and a supportive space to create nonfiction narratives. This nurturing environment, drives the growth of the country's creative talent, fostering a rich storytelling culture.

DokuLab's partnerships further amplify our impact. With Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) funding, we will sustain and expand Kosovo's cultural landscape over the next five years, providing invaluable support for creative initiatives. A new collaboration with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) establishes the Innovation and Training Park (ITP) in Prizren as a regional hub, focused on equipping young filmmakers and digital storytellers with the skills needed to thrive in the digital age.

Furthering our educational outreach, DokuLab integrates film and multimedia education into classrooms across Kosovo, providing teachers with resources that deepen students' understanding of social and environmental responsibilities. Supported by the National Endowment for Democracy, this program aligns with Kosovo's national curriculum, bridging art and education to create a meaningful learning experience.

Through partnerships with UNICEF, we will also equip youth from 11 municipalities with skills in storytelling, photography, and cinematography. This initiative will yield impactful stories and a short documentary, spotlighting the transformative potential of Kosovo's young storytellers.

DokuLab's multifaceted approach is building a lasting foundation for Kosovo's creative industries, positioning the next generation to shape a more inclusive and culturally vibrant future. The following pages provide detailed insights into each project.

# CREATIVE FORCE

SUPPORTED BY THE SWEDISH EMBASSY / SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY  
YEAR: 2024-2028

Supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) from 2024 to 2028, DokuFest's new "Creative Force" program is designed to strengthen Kosovo's creative industries, promote talent development, enhance gender equity, and engage communities in societal dialogue. This program positions DokuFest as a leader in merging art with social change, particularly through the film festival and educational department, DokuLab.

**Aiming for Cinematic Excellence** DokuFest has long been more than a film festival—it symbolizes Kosovo's post-conflict cultural rebirth. Under the Creative Force program, the festival aims to attract a global audience by presenting diverse documentaries and short films addressing critical social and political issues. By curating this rich, internationally relevant content, DokuFest aspires to elevate Prizren into an important hub for cinema and cultural exchange, establishing it as an influential platform for both local and international filmmakers.

## Empowering Education Through Cinema

DokuFest's educational branch, DokuLab is dedicated to bringing film education into schools across Kosovo. By integrating documentary filmmaking into classrooms, DokuLab equips students and teachers with tools for creative expression and social commentary. The collaboration with the Innovation and Training Park (ITP) in Prizren promises to create an essential space for young filmmakers and aspiring creatives, fostering growth in the film industry while helping shape a generation that understands and appreciates cinema as a means of social reflection.

## Championing Gender Equity in Cinema

A core idea of the Creative Force program is promoting gender equity within Kosovo's film landscape. DokuFest's commitment to amplifying female voices and showcasing women's stories provides both visibility and support for women in film. Through mentorship and targeted resources, DokuFest is working to dismantle stereotypes and empower female filmmakers. This effort extends beyond festival programming to cultivate an inclusive environment, offering women the chance to shape Kosovo's cinematic narrative.



### Creating Inclusive Spaces for Social Dialogue

Beyond cinema, the Creative Force program champions societal inclusivity, tackling pressing issues such as democracy, human rights, and climate change. New initiatives, like Social Cinema, are designed to engage senior citizens in Prizren and Prishtina, encouraging meaningful intergenerational conversations. Through these screenings and discussions, DokuFest aims to strengthen community bonds, reflect on shared values, and foster a deeper understanding across generations.

### Impact on Kosovo's Economy and Creative Industries

DokuFest's influence reaches beyond the cultural sphere, contributing significantly to Kosovo's economy. The festival's 2024 edition attracted over 15,000 direct attendees, and as many visitors, bringing a notable economic boost to Prizren's local businesses. Supported by Sida and various other sponsors, the Creative Force program strengthens DokuFest's role as a key player in Kosovo's creative economy, driving growth and generating new opportunities for emerging artists.

### Building a Resilient and Sustainable Future for Kosovo's Cinema

DokuFest's commitment to sustainable practices is a central component of the Creative Force program. From implementing eco-friendly initiatives at the festival to fostering a culture of social responsibility, DokuFest's forward-thinking approach sets an example for Kosovo's creative industries. These actions highlight DokuFest's role as not just a festival, but a resilient, socially engaged movement that promotes positive change through cinema.

Through its multifaceted initiatives, DokuFest is transforming Kosovo's cultural landscape, creating a vibrant, inclusive, and socially conscious space for artistic expression. As the Creative Force program unfolds over the next five years, DokuFest's legacy will continue to inspire, educate, and engage Kosovo's communities, paving the way for a thriving creative industry that resonates both locally and internationally.



# STORIES WE TELL

SUPPORTED BY SMART BALKANS (NORWEGIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY)  
YEAR: 2023 – 2025

“STORIES WE TELL,” is an initiative funded by “SMART Balkans” to use audio-visual media as a bridge for dialogue and understanding among young people from diverse communities in Kosovo. Through three different camps, young individuals aged 18-25 gathered to share their thoughts and experiences, with a focus on promoting mutual respect and challenging misconceptions rooted in media and societal views.

For years, DokuFest has leveraged the power of film and visual media to inspire creativity and encourage independent thinking among youth. The project now has taken this approach further by addressing the influence of media on perspectives, especially around ethnic and gender issues, which are often clouded by misinformation. “STORIES WE TELL” aims to empower young people to confront these biases, using dialogue as a powerful tool to uncover truths and foster understanding. In an unfamiliar environment, participants will find themselves immersed in discussions with peers from diverse backgrounds, challenging them to view one another with openness rather than through preformed ideas.

The project brought together almost 40 young people over three camps, where they were paired to work on short video projects. Each pair created 5-10 minute videos, using art as a medium to capture their perceptions of each other. These videos not only serve as a record of their experiences but are also part of curated exhibitions that were showcased at the festival and traveled to several cities in Kosovo. By collaborating with local civil society organizations, media, and cultural institutions, DokuFest aimed to create spaces for open discussion, encouraging young people to explore new information and perspectives.

The project places a special focus on reaching marginalized groups and ensuring broad participation from across Kosovo. At the end of the camps, participants were interviewed, reflecting on how their views have evolved over the experience—from “what they knew before” to “what they know now.”

These reflections, along with the video exhibitions, culminated in a public event during DokuFest in the summer, inviting a wide audience to engage with the outcomes of the project. The exhibitions were accompanied by screenings, masterclasses, and debates, allowing participants to reconnect and further their understanding. This holistic approach enabled DokuFest to gather valuable insights for future initiatives, identifying any gaps in representation and refining strategies to amplify the impact of its work on youth engagement and cultural understanding in Kosovo.



# SCHOOLS AND DOCUMENTARIES (KNOWLEDGE SHARING FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT)

SUPPORTED BY THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY  
YEAR: 2022 – 2025

DokuFest's "Schools and Documentaries" project has built on previous successes to empower teachers, students, and institutions across Kosovo, using film as an educational tool to address social and human rights issues. Supported by the National Endowment for Democracy, the project has expanded educational resources and fostered meaningful discussions within the classroom.

## Film Education

Each year, DokuFest's "Future is Here" film school brought together around 15 high school students to create original films on social and human rights topics, encouraging them to debate issues like identity, climate change, and gender equality. Established in 2013, the film school has seen the participation of 98 students from 15 municipalities across Kosovo, Albania, and Serbia, resulting in the creation of 72 documentary films. By giving young people a platform for self-expression and intercultural dialogue, the project nurtured a generation of socially conscious storytellers.

## Films in Education

The project also trained educators across Kosovo to integrate film and multimedia into their teaching. Using the revamped Teacher's Digital Library, teachers had access to a comprehensive selection of films, clips, and activity guides that aligned with the Kosovo Curriculum Framework. Developed to support both offline and online classrooms, the library contained films and guides created by thematic experts to tackle critical issues, such as hate speech and misinformation, that affect students' social understanding.

Workshops, regularly held since 2018, trained over 200 high school teachers from various regions of Kosovo. Teachers from subjects including language, social studies, and even sciences contributed to the library by developing 115 film guides to enhance classroom engagement. These workshops also fostered collaborations with education professionals, broadening the impact of film in education not only in Kosovo but also in Montenegro and Albania. Through partnerships with UnderHill Fest in Montenegro and KOSH in Albania, the program expanded regionally, enabling cross-border knowledge sharing on integrating films into educational contexts.

## Creating a Lasting Resource

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Teacher's Digital Library was redesigned to adapt to the needs of online and hybrid classrooms. The library provided teachers in both middle and high schools with accessible materials, fostering learning through film that could be downloaded and shared widely. Lessons were created to challenge hate speech, encourage human rights discussions, and provide students with emotional resilience tools.

Film guides became an invaluable resource, offering educators structured content for classroom use, from film screenings to interactive activities. Teachers noted that the guides promoted critical thinking and student engagement, making learning more effective. The collaborative nature of the project also engaged Kosovo's education directorates across 17 municipalities, establishing formal agreements to support the program's growth. This was recognized by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation that has signed a memorandum of collaboration with DokuFest, while State Agency for Accreditation has accredited DokuFest to provide trainings to high school teachers in use of Teachers Digital Library.

By expanding its reach and enriching educational resources, DokuFest's "Schools and Documentaries" project has proven itself to be a transformative initiative, fostering critical thinking, cultural dialogue, and an inclusive learning environment across Kosovo and beyond.



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR  
DEMOCRACY

SUPPORTING FREEDOM AROUND THE WORLD



DOKU  
FEST

# DIGITAL FILM INNOVATION AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

SUPPORTED BY DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT (GIZ) GMBH  
YEAR: 2024 – 2025

DokuFest Launches “Digital Film Innovation and Cultural Transformation” Project to Empower Kosovo’s Future Filmmakers DokuFest, has launched an ambitious new initiative: the Digital Film Innovation and Cultural Transformation (D:Fict) Project. Created in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, D:Fict aims to empower Kosovo’s next generation of digital storytellers and filmmakers. This project is based at the Innovation and Training Park (ITP) in Prizren, a vibrant hub for collaboration among local and international companies, vocational training programs, academic institutions, government agencies, NGOs, and the cultural sector.

As digital literacy and creative skills become essential, D:Fict responds to a growing need by offering a one-year program, with potential expansion over five years, designed to nurture young talents in digital and film production. Through a series of workshops and hands-on projects, the initiative will train youth aged 12 to 18 in both foundational and advanced content creation and filmmaking, setting the stage for a new wave of digital creators in Kosovo.

The program draws on two DokuFest initiatives: the Digital Skill Factory and the Digital Film Factory. These platforms provide a comprehensive learning experience, ranging from audiovisual literacy to advanced digital film production. What makes D:Fict stand out is not just its focus on technical skills but its mission to inspire young people to use cinema as a tool for social change.

D:Fict aligns with Kosovo’s Digital Agenda 2030, addressing gaps in digital literacy and cybersecurity awareness while also contributing to a digitally skilled workforce. By concentrating on the cultural and creative sectors, the project supports Kosovo’s broader digital transformation goals.

In its first year alone, D:Fict aims to equip at least 200 young people with essential digital and filmmaking skills, producing content that captures the unique voices and perspectives of Kosovo’s youth. Beyond individual skill development, the project also strengthens ITP’s position as a regional center for Creative and Cultural Industries.

A crucial factor in D:Fict’s success is its network of collaborations with local and international organizations, which ensures that participants receive expert guidance from industry professionals and access to valuable resources.

Through D:Fict, DokuLab continues its commitment to social development through film. This project stands as a model of innovation in digital education, equipping Kosovo’s youth with the skills and confidence to lead the way in creative industries as they move into a digitally connected future.

56

57

# KOSOVO INNOVATION SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT +

SUPPORTED BY THE DUTCH EMBASSY

YEAR: 2023 – 2024

The Kosovo Innovation Social Transformation Plus (KIST+) project, led by DokuFest and the Kosovo Education Center (KEC), aimed to drive social change and innovation across Kosovo through education and community engagement. Covering a period from June 2023 to May 2024, KIST+ focused on equipping local communities with digital media literacy and addressing issues like radicalization prevention and inter-ethnic relations.

KIST+ partnered with schools and NGOs across 12 municipalities in Kosovo, creating a foundation for impactful, long-term collaboration. The project's early phase involved selecting community representatives and renewing memberships at school clubs. DokuFest and KEC hosted an induction meeting to connect with both formal and informal community organizations. After initial challenges in securing NGO participation, the project team succeeded in creating partnerships that set a collaborative tone for the entire project.

Throughout the year, the project hosted a summer school program, "DokuKids," which offered training on topics ranging from fake news and social media algorithms to stop-motion animation. Over 100 students and community representatives attended this summer school, gaining skills in media literacy and filmmaking. Participants also created 12 stop-motion animations, showcasing their creativity while exploring socially relevant themes.

To support education on critical issues, KIST+ selected films for community screenings, including works that address radicalization, digital literacy, and inter-ethnic relations. Teachers received training and developed film guides to facilitate these screenings. Teachers and students engaged in discussions after viewing the films, fostering a deeper understanding of these themes in a collaborative setting.

Human interest storytelling also became a core part of the KIST+ program. Students produced 11 short human-interest films, exploring topics like social integration and media literacy. By working closely with community members and school clubs, these young filmmakers created narratives that highlighted the project's themes, reinforcing the importance of social cohesion and media responsibility.

In addition, KIST+ introduced a Digital Social Transformation Challenge, providing mini-grants for school-based initiatives that tackled inter-ethnic relations and countered hate speech. The challenge culminated in a friendly competition, with schools recognized for their creativity and commitment to positive social change.

KIST+ concluded with a final event featuring project exhibitions and screenings, celebrating the achievements of students, teachers, and community collaborators. By fostering digital literacy, critical thinking, and a spirit of collaboration, the KIST+ project has left a lasting impact on Kosovo's educational and social landscape. Through these efforts, DokuFest and KEC demonstrated the potential of education and storytelling to empower communities and build a more connected society.

# YESS PROJECT FOR STORYTELLING AND FILMMAKING

SUPPORTED BY UNICEF  
YEAR: 2024 – 2025

DokuFest, in partnership with UNICEF, is launching a powerful new series of youth initiatives that harness the art of storytelling and filmmaking to drive social change. These projects aim to provide young people with creative tools to express themselves, engage with their communities, and address pressing social issues.

Central to this initiative is the Youth Empowerment for Storytelling and Social Change (YESS) project, which will guide 250 students from 11 municipalities in Kosovo through hands-on training in storytelling, photography, and cinematography. Over two-day workshops organized at the local level, students will gain practical skills in visual storytelling, followed by training in post-production editing. With ongoing support from DokuFest mentors, these young creators will produce 10 compelling short films that reflect human interest stories from their own communities.

Running from October 2024 to April 2025, the project empowers students not only to explore their creativity but also to become active voices for change within their communities. Through these films, they will have the opportunity to address issues such as social equity, human rights, and environmental responsibility, bringing fresh perspectives to Kosovo's social landscape.

By focusing on youth engagement and creative expression, DokuFest and UNICEF aim to inspire a new generation of socially aware filmmakers and storytellers. These projects are part of DokuFest's wider mission to nurture Kosovo's young talent, instill confidence, and foster a community of young artists who contribute meaningfully to cultural and civic life. Through YESS, Kosovo's youth are poised to make a lasting impact, using their voices and talents to shape a brighter future for their communities.

# CONNECTING DOTS: EXPLORING SHARED FILM HERITAGE

SUPPORTED BY THE “CULTURE AND CREATIVITY FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS” (CC4WBS) PROJECT  
YEAR: 2023—2023

DokuFest, with support from the British Council, implemented “Connecting Dots: Exploring Shared Film Heritage,” a project dedicated to preserving and reinterpreting Kosovo’s film legacy within the broader context of Western Balkan cinema. Running from October 2023 to September 2024, the initiative bridges cultural and historical gaps by delving into the region’s cinematic past and examining how Kosovo’s narratives are woven into Yugoslav-era and contemporary cinema.

The project unfolded through a series of research residencies held in Kosovo and Serbia. Researchers explored themes like the social impact of historic cinemas in Prizren and the role of female filmmakers in post-Yugoslav Kosovo. In Prizren, researchers Ivona Djurić and Radisa Cvetkovic investigated local cinema history, resulting in a fanzine and a documentary essay. Djurić’s fanzine, *The New Wave of Female Voices in Kosovo Cinema*, honors Kosovar women directors who have reshaped narratives on war, gender, and social transformation, while Cvetkovic’s film, *Kino Memories*, documents the community’s connection to iconic cinemas like Kino Bistrica.

In Belgrade, researchers Bengi Muzbeg and Tevfik Rada conducted archival research, uncovering Yugoslav-era films and publications that highlight Kosovo’s cinematic contributions. Their findings are being organized into a digital platform, accessible through DokuFest, to ensure broad, ongoing engagement with this unique heritage. The online platform, enriched with rare films, documents, and academic analyses, serves as a resource for future study and cultural preservation.

DokuFest also engaged the public through screenings, discussions, and exhibitions at both DokuFest and the Beldocs festival. Highlights included the exhibition “Connecting Dots,” featuring archival materials, and a DokuTalk session on the ethical dimensions of archiving, moderated by prominent regional figures. The project’s outreach events attracted over 700 attendees, sparking dialogue on the region’s complex cinematic history and the roles of memory and preservation.

Through this project, DokuFest not only preserves Kosovo’s film heritage but also fosters cultural exchange and collaboration, establishing a foundation for ongoing dialogue and shared understanding across the Western Balkans. “Connecting Dots” is a powerful example of how cinema can bridge history and foster connections that transcend borders and generations.

*All works are presented on a project website: [dots.dokufest.com](https://dots.dokufest.com)*





# BREAKING BORDERS

SUPPORTED BY BRITISH COUNCIL  
YEAR: 2024 – 2025

DokuFest, in collaboration with the Scottish Documentary Institute (SDI), is launching Breaking Borders, an innovative project to bring together emerging filmmakers from Kosovo and the UK. This initiative, designed to promote cross-cultural understanding and creative collaboration, is set to take place in Kosovo, providing a unique residency for SDI's Bridging the Gap and DokuFest's Future is Here alumni. Together, the teams aim to use the power of documentary filmmaking to explore the theme of reimagining cooperation in a polarized world.

The project begins with a structured cultural immersion phase, where participants will engage in activities aimed at deepening their understanding of each other's backgrounds. This foundational stage—comprising film screenings, moderated discussions, and workshops—establishes a shared ground of respect and empathy, which becomes a catalyst for creative synergy.

Following this cultural exchange, the project shifts focus to hands-on filmmaking. During the residency, filmmakers will collaborate in cross-cultural teams to develop and produce short documentaries. Guided by experienced mentors, they will explore narrative development, technical skills, and thematic exploration, with Kosovo as their creative canvas. The aim is to create films that not only reflect the filmmakers' shared experiences but also act as a documentary of the collaborative process itself, highlighting how diverse perspectives can unite to produce impactful narratives.

This partnership is particularly significant for DokuFest, known for its dedication to social impact through cinema, and SDI, renowned for fostering independent documentary talent. The alliance represents a fusion of DokuFest's established platform in Southeast Europe and SDI's expertise in documentary training, marking a fresh approach to international collaboration. By positioning filmmakers as agents of social change, the project encourages participants to use their art to address critical social and political issues.

Breaking Borders goes beyond traditional resource-sharing, aiming instead to set a new standard for documentary collaborations by integrating cultural and professional exchange. As part of DokuFest's commitment to inclusivity, the residency provides an opportunity for participants to create work that resonates globally, demonstrating cinema's transformative power to bridge divides and inspire change.



# GENERAL SUPPORT

SUPPORTED BY ROCKEFELLER BROTHERS FUND \ YEAR: 2024 – 2026

From 2024 to 2026, the General Support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF) has been essential to our operational framework.

This support has been instrumental in covering daily operational expenses, providing us the flexibility to strategically allocate resources toward our core mission and organizational priorities.

The financial stability and flexibility granted by RBF funding have been vital in meeting essential operating costs, ensuring the sustainability of our mission-driven work. This support allowed our organization to focus on delivering impactful programs without the usual constraints of funding limitations.

# FERTILE GROUND

SUPPORTED BY PRINCE CLAUS FUND \ YEAR: 2023 – 2025

DokuFest has extended “Fertile Ground,” a project supported by the Prince Claus Fund, into 2024. This initiative blends an artist residency with the ‘Future is Here’ film school and the ‘Connecting Dots’ project, creating a dynamic environment of artistic collaboration and educational growth.

In 2024, two SEED Awardees from the Prince Claus Fund completed their residencies during the DokuFest festival, actively contributing to talent development programs and exhibitions. Their involvement added depth to the festival’s educational offerings, strengthening the connection between emerging artists and the DokuFest community. Looking ahead, DokuFest will welcome additional SEED Awardees into the residency program in 2025, further enhancing this valuable collaboration.

“Fertile Ground” underscores DokuFest’s commitment to sustainable partnerships and intercultural exchange, significantly advancing nonfiction storytelling in the Western Balkans. It is a testament to DokuFest’s role in nurturing the next generation of artists and storytellers.