



**DOKU  
FEST**  
International Documentary  
and Short Film Festival

# FESTIVAL REPORT

EDITION XX

06 - 14 AUGUST

PRIZREN KOSOVA



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*The International Documentary and Short Film Festival DokuFest marked its 20th edition in the city of Prizren from 06-14 August 2021.*



Following a difficult pandemic year in 2020, this year DokuFest reopened its cinemas for the jubilee edition, which also marked the largest cultural event in the country and the region.

The in-person edition of the Festival had a tremendous positive economic impact for the local businesses and for youth who joined our team and had a chance to develop a series of new skillsets. Volunteers were again an integral part of the Festival, maintaining DokuFest's reputation as people's festival that engages largest number of volunteers in Europe.

Despite all obstacles and limitations imposed by the pandemic, we managed to organize the jubilee edition of the festival with considerable number of accredited guests, supported by DokuFest team and Volunteers.

The theme of this year's festival contained three words: Re: set Re: mix Re: act, with the central notion actually being letters RE in the root of these words. Thus, the festival tried to explore many facets and aspects of these words in the context of the world reemerging from the pandemic and reimagining itself in this new situation. A number of films touched upon the theme and we were excited to bring back our audience and meet them at the cinemas after such difficult times.

The smiling faces of the teenagers, in yellow t-shirts, returned to the numerous DokuFest locations. Nearly 120 volunteers who were otherwise known as "busy bees" assisted in the progress of activities within the festival, guided by 50 staff members over two consecutive weeks.

DokuFest began to accept film applications for the 20th edition from November 1 2020 until April 15 2021 accepting more than 3,000 films from around the world. The full program of the festival was announced in July. This year's program led by the artistic director selected 234 documentaries and short films from 60 different countries around the world. We also provided 57 films to our virtual audiences through our online platform. The films of this edition were spread through 8 competition programs and 11 special programs carefully curated for our jubilee edition.

More than 60 local, regional and international journalists received their accreditation to cover the festival activities. Alongside rich film program, six music performances, two masterclasses, four panel discussions and three exhibitions saw around 10,000 people attending the festival program.





## ***Films in Competition***

On July 9, 2021 DokuFest announced the full slate of films in competitions for its 20th, jubilee edition. Culled from a record number of over 3.000 submissions, the festival showcased a selection of **106 films** from **60 countries**, across eight competition sections, featuring some of the finest work of non-fiction, as well as a great array of short fiction and experimental cinema produced lately. Almost all of the films that screened at the festival were the Kosovo premieres, making it the largest platform of film showcasing in Kosovo.

From the rich and diverse selection of films in competitions we were delighted to welcome back a number of filmmakers with their new works and were equally thrilled to present some of the upcoming best and brightest new voices in cinema with their debut films.

## ***Special Programs***

For the 20th jubilee edition the Artistic Team of DokuFest curated 11 special programs for the audiences.

First in a series of specially curated programmes for its 20th, titled 20 FOR 20: REPLAY and comprised of 20 films that have screened at DokuFest in these past years. Not to say 20 best films but rather the films that somehow define the taste and curatorial practice of the programming team of DokuFest.

A program that celebrates 20 years of the festival with 20 great films! We could do more but had to stop somewhere!

For our hailed View From The World section, we hand-picked festival favorites and award-winning films, including Sundance, Berlinale and IDFA winners, and promising an unforgettable journey to whoever surrenders to them.



This special edition, we presented a collaboration with the Albanian National Film Archive for a program titled IMAGES FROM THE SIEGE – A NEWSREEL HISTORY OF COMMUNIST ALBANIA. A four-hour selection, featuring thirteen newsreels, short and medium length docs, this program chronicled four and half decades of Albanian political and cultural life with films produced by its Kinostudio.

The dream of a group of enthusiasts to revitalize the cinema in the old city by initiating a festival of documentary and short films not only is fulfilled, but 20 years later celebrated the undeniable influence on the local cinematography and its success internationally. Alongside its qualitative programming, for 20 years DokuFest, has not just inspired younger generations of filmmakers, but also has integrated films in the education system and has helped creating and producing films that have gained immediate recognition from the most renowned film festivals around world.

## **Sonic Nights**

In order to protect the public health, DokuNights has not been organized, as the space where this program is held has not enabled the social distance. But for this year DokuNights has been modified to Sonic Nights. Therefore, we decided to place a stage in the Castle, where the space is larger, with a regulated distance, with only six performances with music content, which was an acceptable solution and has impressed the audiences as well.

After a long day of high temperatures, Prizren lit up at night while people walked to the castle to enjoy the performance of a successful Tunisian artist Dhafer Yousseff.

Bendik Giske, a Berlin based, Norwegian queer artist, and saxophonists was the first to perform at Lumbardhi open air stage after the grand opening of the twentieth edition of DokuFest bringing an unparalleled feeling of listening to live music on site.



## ***DokuTalks and Master Classes***

DokuFest's long term partnerships with various local and international institutions and donors have always created opportunities and open space for public discussions on pressing issues and inspiring lectures for young and aspiring cultural practitioners.

In a public lecture, photographer Paul Lowe explores how the photographic image has engaged with the historical moment, from its inception in the mid 19th century to the present day, while Ron Haviv who has witnessed some of the historical events that have defined our times looked at his work and its impact from Central America to the Balkans, Arab Spring and the Insurrection in Washington DC.

At a public talk, DokuFest guests also had a chance to listen to Ezra Winton, a Director of Programming at Cinema Politica on relationship between documentary, festival screenings and activism.

Successes of Kosovar cinematography undoubtedly brought to our attention a need for

a public discussion on importance of structured support to the New Wave of Kosovar Cinema. Moderated by film critic and programmer Neil Young a triple Sundance winner Blerta Basholli and Samir Karahoda, Cannes Film Festival's nominee for EFA's European Short Film, were joined by Wouter Jansen, the head of sales at Square Eyes and Brigid O'Shea, co-director of Documentary Association of Europe to discuss the best possible approach.

And our traditional discussions on Climate Action as well as on Dealing with a Past brought prominent speakers to address the issues of environmental activism, as well as questions of freedom and creativity that lead artists to bold actions.

Iva Radivojević an artist and filmmaker who currently divides her time between subarctic Alaska, Brooklyn and Lesbos delivered a masterclass inspired by an essay titled "Derrida, Specters, Self-Reflection" by Akira Mizuta Lippit in which Life, Spectrality, and Autobiography are outlined as the elements of a secret cinema (and Derrida himself).







## ***DokuPhoto***

For our jubilee edition DokuPhoto came in a form of a two-day master class designed in collaboration with VII Foundation and VII Academy and led by VII Photo Agency photographers Ron Haviv and Paul Lowe was open to photographers, filmmakers, writers and artists interested in digging deeper into documentary practice.

Through a VII Academy scholarship offered to 15 participants from Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia the two day masterclass helped them to learn and explore how to research, plan, produce, edit and present an extended photo essay / documentary photography or film project. It also explored and critically evaluated the ethical concerns relating to documentary representation, sources of funding and the fundamentals of grant writing.

## ***Exhibitions***

A collaborative project of Dokufest, Slobodna Zona Film festival and Fond B92 from Serbia created opportunities for intercultural exchanges between the youth of Kosovo

and Serbia through an educational and comprehensive program to reflect their views through the creation of audiovisual portraits in which they will have the opportunity to express views about their peers.

The audio-visual works of the participants were presented in the exhibition during the jubilee edition of DokuFest. Many visitors had the opportunity to listen closely to the videos of young people in the form of audiovisual portraits and to converse with them.

A photo exhibition of never-before-seen black and white images of the acclaimed Kosovar actor Bekim Fehmiu, taken during his 1972 visit to Albania and only recently discovered at the Albanian National Film Archive in Tirana. Many of these pictures were taken by the prolific cinematographer Bardhyl Martiniani who followed Bekim throughout Albania.

Fehmiu's return to Albania came at a pivotal time in the communist regime. It's not clear why but repressive Albania was undergoing a period of liberalization in the arts. Changes were noticeable in cinema, literature, painting, and sculpture.





Therefore, DokuFest and the Albanian National Film Archive joined forces to pay tribute to Bekim Fehmiu, one of our most beloved and memorable screen icons through an exhibition in Shani Efendi Gallery.

### ***Special Events***

The stage at the Lumbardhi Bahçe cinema on Saturday night belonged to members of the table tennis club “Lidhja e Prizrenit”, who for a few minutes showed their skills. At this stage the visual story on their vicissitudes for several years to obtain a place to train on a daily basis was revealed at the local premiere of the film “Displaced” by director Samir Karahoda. The screening of this film has brought touching moments to the audience, which has shared the difficult conditions of the athletes, who still do not give up their dream to compete and succeed. There have even been requests for similar films to be made for other sports, which have a similar fate.

After the success of Samir Karahoda’s film about ping pong trainer and two senior players sacrifice to train young and passionate kids, in the Cannes Film Festival we also celebrated

the amazing news that Leart Rama’s film Four Pills at Night had its global premiere in Locarno Film Festival. Lear Rama, one of the DokuFest’s Future is Here alumni with his latest work showed that talent and dedication can truly flourish and there is space for any creative mind to do better and more.

Kosovo has faced numerous barriers to get to the amazing level it is today even though the infrastructure where athletes exercise still lack the necessary equipment. Shortly after being accredited in the Olympic Committee, Kosovo celebrated the first gold medal in judo, won by the extraordinary, Majlinda Kelmendi.

“Go Go Kosovo” by Jane Stockdale and Jordan Laird is a portrayal of the Olympic Committee of Kosovo that explores the difficulties of Kosovar young sportists to compete in high level competitions around the world and at the same time is also a celebration for the now victories of Distria Krasniqi and Nora Gjakova, the judoka’s from Peja who won golden medal at the Olympic games “Tokyo 2020”.

After receiving many tips regarding the DokuFest events, Viola von Cramon, Greens/





EFA MEP and European Parliament rapporteur on Kosovo took the opportunity to visit the 20th edition of the festival, which is taking place in Prizren. In a brief interview with DokuStories she explains what brought her to DokuFest.

“Everyone told me if I have the opportunity, no matter when, but I should visit the DokuFest. So it’s well known, all over the place in Europe, but also amongst Kosovo fans and friends. Since I have been to Serbia, Belgrade, Presevo, I took the opportunity to come to Prizren for two days”, says von Cramon, shortly after visiting the photo exhibition: Bekim Fehmiu’s Visit in Albania.

She praises the cultural cooperation atmosphere created during the festival events. “Of course it’s a big pleasure, it’s a great honor to be here at this lovely weather with great people, this international flavor, this way of cultural cooperation it’s really amazing and I feel so comfortable to be here. I couldn’t spend my summer break better than here”.

Two special announcements were made during the receptions hosted by many of DokuFest’s supporters.

The support of Swedish Embassy will now empower DokuFest to create a grant scheme for young Kosovar filmmakers and will aim to respond to the challenges of contemporary society, such as, erosion of democratic institutions and lack of dialogue and inclusion, by merging arts and culture with wider relevant social issues.

These grants are intended to provide alternative funding for filmmaking in Kosovo, for filmmakers who can develop and deliver the project within a set time-frame.

The partnership with OSCE will create a training program to support young women and men to make documentary films regarding human rights. DokuFest already showed that even the young filmmakers can reach wider audiences, thus the partnership to encourage and support young documentary filmmakers to aspire to excellence and to reach out to a worldwide audience.



# WINNERS

*The winners of the 20th, jubilee edition of DokuFest were announced on 14 August 2021 in an award ceremony held at Lumbardhi Open Air Cinema in Prizren, in the presence of numerous dignitaries, guests, jurors, sponsors and partners of the festival.*



## Balkan Dox Competition



### Winner

#### Reconciliation

by Marija Zidar

##### Jury Statement:

*In documentary filmmaking, some topics are more difficult and sensitive to approach and deal with than others. In Reconciliation, Marija Zidar tried and succeeded to see and paint the whole picture of blood feuds and attempts at reconciliation between families, both rooted in the ancient tribal code in the secluded mountains of Northern Albania. Her perspective is both insider's and outsider's, her take on the topic and the subjects involved is extremely sensitive and highly ethical, so the subjects function as complex, highly developed characters without losing authenticity and without even a hint of being exploited. With the visual appeal of the beautiful, but harsh mountains, the societal landscape is matched with a natural one in a seamless, clever way, making Reconciliation a well-rounded film, smartly made, convincing and compelling, important on the cinematically level as much as on the topical.*

## Best Balkan Newcomer Award sponsored by Balkan Documentary Center

### Winner

#### Rampart

by Marko Grba Singh

##### Jury Statement:

*The director handles with subtlety and depth a very thematically complex film, building a bridge from a familiar world to a new one. A blend of culture, history, political and social commentary, all wrapped up in a world that is as appealing as it is informative. This becomes an experience that tends to challenge the relationship between viewer and screen, managing distance in place of violating closeness, provoking dialogue instead of consumption.*

### Special Mention

#### Telenovela: Grey-Scale in Color

by Filip Martinović

##### Jury Statement:

*'All the world's a stage', William Shakespeare once proudly said. In his film Filip Martinović argues that his world is much closer to the ones of telenovelas, TV soap operas which were extremely popular in the Balkans at the turn of the century. So, he stages a filmic telenovela dealing with his life! Lost fathers, angry mothers, disappointed grandmothers, newly discovered loves - all the ingredients for real drama (with a touch of humor) are here! Muchas felicidades señor Filip!*

Marija Zidar - acceptance speech



## International Dox Competition



## Winner – Feature Dox

### WE

by Alice Diop

#### Jury Statement:

We were impressed and moved by the intelligence of this film, which effortlessly extends a psychogeographic tour of one city's periphery through embodied observational scenes that touch on multiple social crises, historical context stretching back centuries, and an intimate personal approach that reconstitutes an alternative sense of collectivity. The film's critique of this national multicultural project is handled with nuance, playfulness, and a sharp attention to race, religion, class, and immigration status. Its essayistic structure delivered a constant sense of discovery and engendered in us a state of deep listening. The Best International Feature Film goes to Alice Diop's WE.

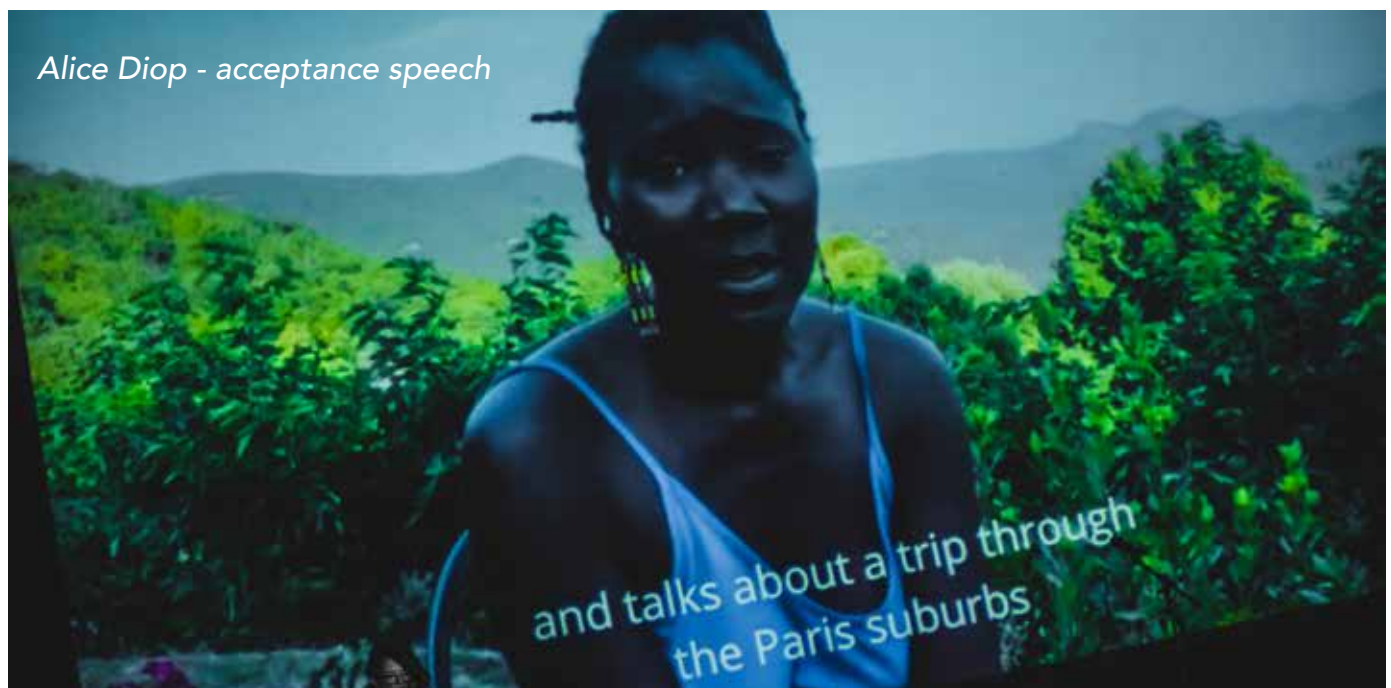
## Winner – Short Dox

### The Rifleman

by Sierra Pettengil

#### Jury Statement:

This archival film respects the materiality of its sources, ignoring depoliticized current media narratives to excavate histories we've forgotten. We admired how this film weaves together a story about an institution in transition and a story of one individual who subjected it to his control. Its investigation into how states protect their own criminals, connect tools of power to the control of white supremacy, and narrativize the violent Other, spoke to us universally. The Best International Short Dox goes to Sierra Pettengill's The Rifleman.





## Int'l Short Film Competition



### Winner - Int'l Short Film

#### The Criminals

by Serhat Karaaslan

##### Jury Statement:

Through a very powerful cinematic language the film brings into light a local social and political issue while reminding and warning us about the panopticon. The jury gives the award to Serhat Karaaslan's *The Criminals*.



Serhat Karaaslan - acceptance speech

## National Film Competition

### Winner - National Film

#### A Child

by Bekim Gurri

##### Jury Statement:

Simply realised yet emotionally complex, this universal story of love, patriarchy and understanding, delivers its narrative with both grace and empathy. The jury gives the award to Bekim Guri's *A Child*.



Bekim Guri a- acceptance speech

### Special Mention

#### Mardhë

by Flaka Kokolli

##### Jury Statement:

The jury has decided to give a Special Mention to a film from National Competition that portrays the tragedy of war with creativity and simplicity through power of animation. The award goes to Mardhë.

### Distribution Award

#### The Driver

by Valter Lucaj

Given by Radiator Ip Sales

## Human Rights Dox Competition



### Winner

#### Our Memory Belongs to Us

by Rami Farah and Signe Byrge Sørensen

##### Jury Statement:

*The jury has decided to recognize a film that speaks to the documentary relevance of personal and collective remembrance when marked by enactment of defiance to state violence. The filmmakers use a minimalistic approach to stage a re-telling of events that culminated not only*

*the beginnings of great socio-political upheaval, namely events between 2011-2021 in Daraa, Syria, but also the friendships and affective connections that went into confronting and unveiling a violent and authoritarian state apparatus. The haste in which the film was produced is afforded allowance by the immediacy of recording and preserving, at great peril, the evidence of tremendous social solidarity. The smuggled drive, containing the footage that serves as the backdrop for the acts of remembrance we become privy to, is made lieu de memoir mediating the evidentiary material of 'eyewitness' testimony in the form of videos and the performative stage in which three political activists lay claim to their interpretation of the past. Through both a staged screening and reconstruction of events the retelling and performance of memory we are invited to ask questions about the documentary film as a vehicle of remembrance. The Human Rights Dox Award goes to Our Memory Belongs to Us by Rami Farah and Signe Byrge Sørensen.*





## Green Dox Competition



### Winner

#### White on White by Viera Čákanyová

##### Jury Statement:

The Green Dox jury on the occasion of the 20th DokuFest is happy to award a documentary shot in a radical situation with guidance from modern technology. We appreciate the absurd humor and extreme honesty that the filmmaker was willing to endure to show us the true face of climate change. We award *White on White* as winner of the Green Dox Prize.



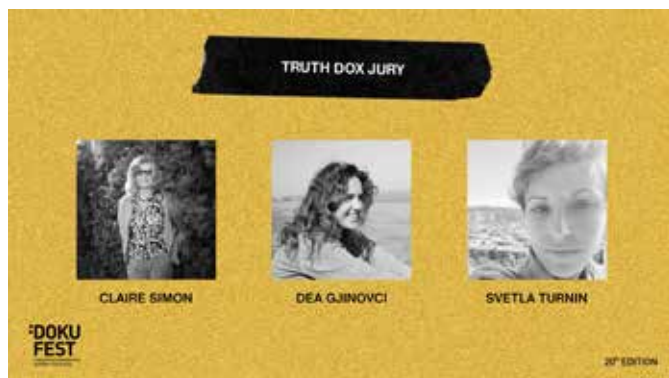
Viera Čákanyová - acceptance speech

### Audience Award



After counting votes from the audience Valter Lucaj's short film *The Driver* has been awarded the Audience Award.

## Truth Dox Competition



### Winner

#### Writing with Fire

by Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh

##### Jury Statement:

The winner of this year's Truth Dox Award follows the incredible story of the creation and rise of the first news organization founded by Dalit women in India. Featuring unique access to the protagonists, this inspiring film shatters stereotypes about women and poverty and gives us a lesson about women's empowerment. Beautifully lensed and skillfully framed, their story is told with a fresh sense of liberty. Young and courageous women who teach each other the profession of journalism and digital media production, are also teaching us valuable lessons about activism and comradeship. Journalism for them is a daily practice of democracy - we see how their brave

reporting leads them to influence lives, bring important cases to court despite police inaction, counter the propaganda of Hindu nationalists and bring justice to communities... Their dream of uplifting people's voices while seeking dignity and equal rights for the Dalits is part of their success story and is what makes *Writing with Fire* our standout selection for this award.

### Special Mention

#### The Silence of the Mole

by Anaïs Taracena

##### Jury Statement:

We were impressed by the artistry and precision with which the director of this film tells the harrowing story of an unspoken hero, the journalist Elias Barahona, who infiltrated and spied on the most dangerous and repressive government in Guatemalan history. Every encounter, testimony and image of this film are strung together with beautiful dramaturgical skill as an important chapter of the country's history unfolds on screen. Humility and great ambition are virtues both the director and the protagonists share and their genuine friendship is felt throughout. As a first feature, *The Silence of the Mole* is a commendable cinematographic achievement as it fulfills one of the great duties of filmmakers - to give life to important stories in the face of death and repression.



Rintu Thomas - acceptance speech



*Festival closed with the screening of Spike Lee's latest film DAVID BYRNE'S AMERICAN UTOPIA, a recording of a Broadway show with the same name.*

*A rare concert film that packs in brilliant music, incredible visuals, a vital political message and jokes, it feels as if Spike Lee has reinvented a legendary Stop Making Sense.*





# SPECIAL PROGRAMS & SCREENINGS

*A selection of Special Programs that were carefully curated for DokuFest audiences.*



## 20 FOR 20: REPLAY

First in a series of specially curated programmes for the 20th, jubilee edition, titled 20 FOR 20: REPLAY and comprised of, you guessed it already, 20 films that have screened at DokuFest in these past years. Not to say 20 best films but rather the films that somehow define the taste and curatorial practice of the programming team of DokuFest. A program that celebrates 20 years of the festival with 20 great films! We could do more but had to stop somewhere!

Among the titles to be screened are some of the past winners of the festival, such as Pietro Marcello's *La Bocca Del Lupo*, Ognjen Glavonić's *Dubina Dva*, Dea Gjinovci's *Sans le Kosovo* and Dorian Jespers's thrilling short *Sun Dog*.

As well as a number of gems, including Verena Paravel and Lucien Castaing-Taylor's highly innovative and groundbreaking *Leviathan*, Gary Tarn's haunting *Black Sun*, Bill Morrison's mesmerizing *Dawson City: Frozen Times*, The Ross Brothers' cinematic boundary-blurrier *Bloody Nose, Empty Pockets*, Lendita Zeqiri's single take short *Balcony*, Garrett Bradley's stunning short film *America* or Iain Forsyth &

Jane Pollard's fictitious look at 24 hours in the life of rock icon Nick Cave in *20,000 Days on Earth*. Plus some more great films too!

The full list of the films from 20 FOR 20: REPLAY program:

*Black Sun* by Gary Tarn

*Dawson City: Frozen Times* by Bill Morrison

*Did You Wonder Who Fired The Gun?* by Travis Wilkerson

*Dubina Dva* by Ognjen Glavonić

*La Bocca Del Lupo* by Pietro Marcello

*Leviathan* by Verena Paravel & Lucien

Castaing-Taylor

*Meteors* by Gürcan Keltek

*20,000 Days On Earth* by Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard

*Bloody Nose, Empty Pockets* by The Ross Brothers

*¡Vivan las Antipodas!* by Viktor Kossakovsky

*Ballkoni* by Lendita Zeqiraj

*The Baby* by Ali Asgari

*Small Town* by Diogo Costa Amarante

*Sans le Kosovo* by Dea Gjinovci

*A Man Returned* by Mahdi Fleifel

*Brotherhood* by Meryam Joobeur

*Genius Loci* by Adrien Merigeau

*Sun Dog* by Dorian Jesper

*Vever (For Barbara)* by Deborah Stratman

*America* by Garrett Bradley



*Screening of 20000 Days on Earth*

## **SONIC EXPERIMENTS: MUSIC ON FILMS**

In its continuing exploration of anything and everything connecting music and film, DokuFest is thrilled to present this year's selection of films in its Sonic Experiments: Music on Film program.

7 remarkable and diverse films are part of the program, including a collaboration between two emblematic figures of music and film, namely Spike Lee and David Byrne in a film titled *American Utopia*, which inevitably resembles that other collaboration of Byrne and Jonathan Demme in the unforgettable *Stop Making Sense* concert film.

Several films from the program center at the electronic music scene and its protagonists, such as about legendary Turkish producer İlhan

Mimaroglu and his charming wife Güngör in *Mimaroglu: The Robinson of Manhattan Island* or about a number of near forgotten electronic music's female pioneers in *Sisters with Transistors*, superbly narrated by legendary multimedia artist Laurie Anderson.

Portraits of musicians, such as that of a British composer Matthew Herbert in *A Symphony of Noise*, of Lucio Dalla, a famous Italian singer and songwriter brilliantly brought to life by inimitable Pietro Marcello in *Per Lucio* or the one about Reverend Vince Anderson in a film simply titled *The Reverend* are also part of this eclectic selection.

Program wraps up with a wonderful story of two Welsh farming brothers who turn their farm into a recording studio in *Rockfield – The Studio on the Farm*.

---

## **VIEW FROM THE WORLD**

DokuFest's hailed View From The World section, comprising thirteen hand-picked festival favorites and award-winning films, including Sundance, Berlinale and IDFA winners, and promising an unforgettable journey to whoever surrenders to them.

Here you'll find stories from post pandemic Wuhan in Shengze Zhu's *A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces*, an aging but still lucid Mikhael Gorbachev in Vitaly Mansky's *Gorbachev. Heaven*, equally lucid and often ironic Avi Mograbi as he continues his exploration of Israel's occupation of Palestine in *The First 54 Years – An Abbreviated Manual for A Military Occupation* as well as several films set in Iraq, Syria and Iran, such as *Sabaya*, *Radiograph of a Family*, *Children of the Enemy* and *Notturmo*, the latest films from great Gianfranco Rosi.

There are also films about unusual mayors and teachers, early female travelogues and Japanese women volleyball team, about a leftist thinker and suffragist and about a famous actor and comedian in films titled; *The Grocer's*



*Son, the Mayor, the Village and the World* by Claire Simon, *Mr. Bachmann and His Class* by Maria Speth, *Terra Femme* by Courtney Stephens, *The Witches of Orient* by Julien Faraut, *Her Socialist Smile* by John Gianvito and *Belushi* by R.J. Cutler.

A treat for any cinephile!



## IMAGES FROM THE SIEGE A NEWSREEL HISTORY OF COMMUNIST ALBANIA

This year we presented a collaboration with the Albanian National Film Archive for a program titled IMAGES FROM THE SIEGE – A NEWSREEL HISTORY OF COMMUNIST ALBANIA. A four-hour selection, featuring thirteen newsreels, short and medium length docs, this program chronicles four and half decades of Albanian political and cultural life with films produced by its Kinostudio.

Beginning with the Russian-produced doc, SHQIPËRIA (Albania) (1945) directed by the famed documentarian Roman Karmen, the series charts Albania's early alliance with the Soviet Union then its unexpected switch to close ties with Maoist China.

Along this vivid, non-fiction journey, we see a mosaic of chilling totalitarian show trials, military parades and the cult of Enver Hoxha in full flourish at his 1985 state funeral. The final portion of the program concludes with the

massive popular demonstrations in the 1990's that signaled the end of Albania's one-party system.

DokuFest will also present a photo exhibition of never-before-seen still black and white images taken during a 1972 visit to Albania by the acclaimed Kosovar actor Bekim Fehmiu (1936-2010). The recently discovered photos capture Fehmiu's rare trip along with Albanian personalities such as the writer Ismail Kadare and film director Dhimitër Anagnosti. Born in Sarajevo, Fehmiu grew up in Prizren which makes the premiere presentation of these photos such a special event. In 1967, Fehmiu attained international fame after appearing in the Cannes-winning Yugoslav fiction feature, I EVEN MET HAPPY GYPSIES.

IMAGES FROM THE SIEGE – A NEWSREEL HISTORY OF COMMUNIST ALBANIA was curated by Iris Elezi, a filmmaker and currently the director of the Albanian National Film Archive and the Albanian-American filmmaker Thomas Logoreci.

*At one time, for much of the world, Albania was a country as mysterious and unknown as the surface of the moon.*

*The trickle of foreign journalists and tourists who managed to get inside the Marxist dictatorship were escorted on carefully monitored tours. These travelers who wrote about their experiences in Albania always noted its fierce isolation, its rigid Marxism and the thousands of concrete defense bunkers that dotted the countryside. Albania's Nobel-nominated novelist, Ismail Kadare referred to this traumatic time in his country's 20th century history as one of, "ever greater firmness, of never letting up."*

*From the time its communist leader Enver Hoxha (1908-1985) came to power in 1944 to the collapse of the socialist system in 1992, Albania was a strict dictatorship that banned all religious practice, the watching of foreign television programs and even the giving of Muslim or Christian names to children.*



## **ECSTATIC PEACE/ A COUNTRY WITH FIVE STARS: Short Films by Iva Radivojević**

In DokuFest you can find films from all over the world and there might be a chance you can get all this internalized in one storyteller. This is the case if Iva Radivojevic, whose short films lined up were shown at DokuKino in Prizren. "Utuqaq", "Mixba", "Following Crickets", "Love comes Slyly like a thief", "Natto", "Despers USA", "Avram" "Between colors of I", "Notes from the Border", "Themistokleous 88" and "Quietly I Walk the Wrong Way" screened one after another showing parts of the world seemingly unconnected to each other, but they all reflected ways how people live, dream and how they face difficulties.

Radivojevic in the beginning of the screening explained that many films have been shot in different stages of her life, some of them have had the utmost productional refinement and some of them lacked something, but it is all part of the journey. To put it into her words "I do not strive for perfection".

Opening with "Utuqaq", film about researchers in the Arctic, exploring the melting of the ice.

In a frightful but quite manner the narrator's voice said: "Ice has memory", makes one think more about the necessity to act sooner rather than later about climate change. The depiction of the Artic seems pure and eerie, the soundtrack added the urgent sensation contradicting mobility.

After some time of seeing icy portrayals and we see a few visitors measuring blocks of ice, the narrator declares: "Every day is Monday here". The stagnation shows shades of ephemerality and wonder, but the struggle to read the situation where all colours have disappeared.

Jumping to "Avram", a short story displaying honest thoughts about wars, especially the war in Israel and Palestine. The main character, Avram, speaks in a pragmatic way about the unnecessary implications of higher political powers, spending their money to empower wars and not peace.



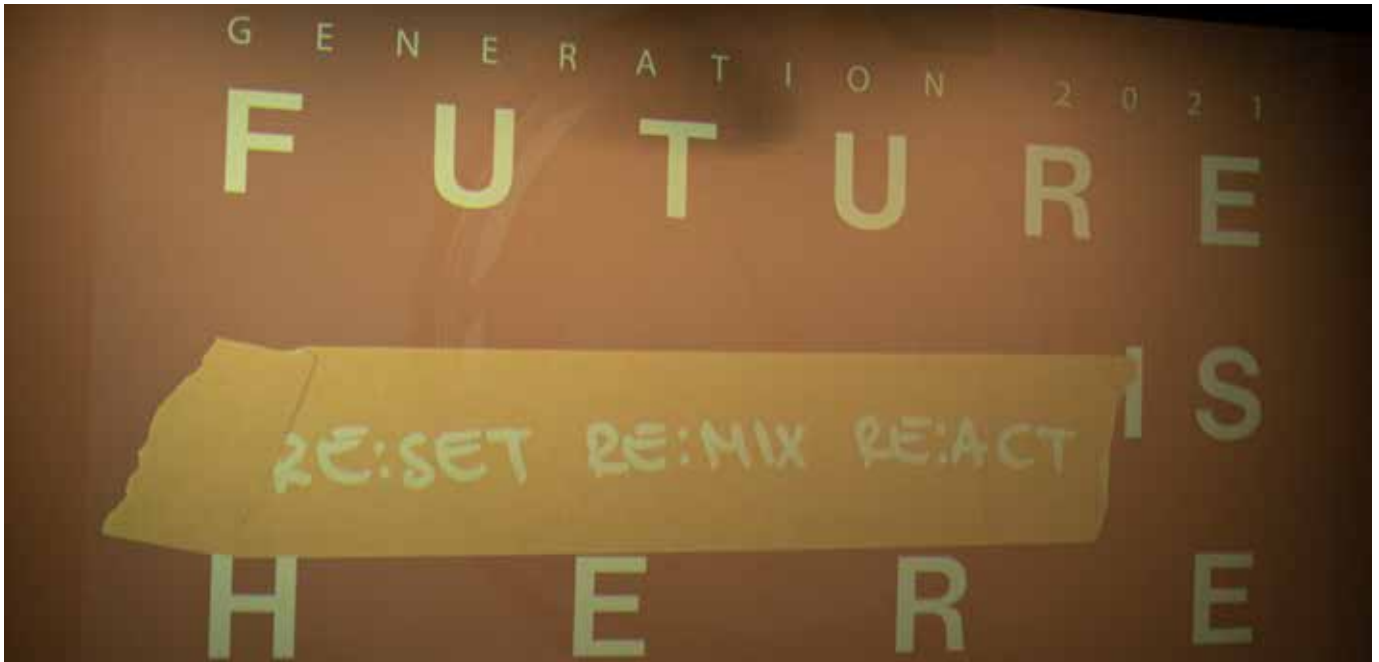
Radivojevic's cinematography builds up to momentums suspended in time. Fleeting feelings which find a home in visuals and narrations. The last shown film was "Quietly I Walk the Wrong Way", a film shot in an iPhone during the pandemic. This film shows in simple ways that those unnecessary shots which take heart-warming feelings which connect a person the power of experiencing simple things in life. Frames of sea, riding a car and domestic situations bring expand the ways storytelling can be from now and on.

All the screenings presented parts of the world which show how conflicts really evolve and how documenting refugee's, a story of a dead man, a meditative journey of two people who will never meet is in essence what film should explore. The versatility shown in these films speak to many levels on how narrating a story can be one sided but at the same time it can become the ultimate truth.

Iva Radivojevic also presented a masterclass at KinoKlub in Prizren.



## **"FUTURE IS HERE" WITH PROMISING YOUNG FILMMAKERS**



DokuFest's for the ninth year in a row invited youngsters who wanted to make a film of their own in its film school program. On the second week of January, those who participated in this program developed their ideas for films and got to know better the process and dedication one must have to visually represent a story.

"Lokja" by Jon Nila, "Father's Path" by Alba Cikaqi, "Hope" by Lyra Pozhegu, "Time" by Endri Maloku, "Night Out" by Future is Here Collective, "Bushi" by Hana Sedolli and Ben Gorani were screened yesterday at 20th edition of DokuFest.

Their diligence and perspective were reflected in each of the works which show another face of Kosovo's youth: one that is inspired to do more and better and treat with great responsibility delicate themes, be them their own family stories, their personal experiences, or stories that in a way belong to everyone.

The head of DokuLab, Eroll Bilibani, after all the short films were presented said: "Future is here".

"I want to congratulate lead tutor of this project Blerta Zeqiri, and everyone who has supported all of you while your stay in Prizren, where you have made new friends. This is the first generation who worked all together in one

film "Night Out". We for sure will keep going on to do more work like this with Future Is Here Collective."

There is something special about "Night Out" because every one of the participants got involved as a team to create this film. The plot is simple: A few friends are having a drink after a long time of quarantine. Drink after drinking they open to each other from topics such a mainstream music, to national problems and then after to the matters of the heart. It is refreshing to see the simplicity in which visuals after visuals unfold while exploring and grasping the nostalgic way everyone used to do things.

All the young directors who spoke at the Q&A after the screening expressed gratitude and the pleasure to have worked so hard on these projects.

Witnessing the future of the cinematography of Kosovo has a different feel while Leart Rama, a contributor to DokuLab who also attended this program, is now in Locarno Film Festival presenting his film "Four Pills at Night".

This film school is part of a major project trying to introduce films to the educational system in the Balkans and is supported by NED (National Endowment for Democracy).



## DISPLACED & 4 PILLS AT NIGHT

### **NATIONAL PREMIERE OF "DISPLACED" BRINGS EMOTIONS**

The stage at the Lumbardhi Bahçe cinema on Saturday night belonged to members of the table tennis club "Lidhja e Prizrenit", who for a few minutes showed their skills. At this stage the visual story on their vicissitudes for several years to obtain a place to train on a daily basis was revealed at the local premiere of the film "Displaced" by director Samir Karahoda. The screening of this film has brought touching moments to the audience, which has shared the difficult conditions of the athletes, who still do not give up their dream to compete and succeed. There have even been requests for similar films to be made for other sports, which have a similar fate.

Carrying the ping-pong table by the main protagonists of the film, Jeton Mazreku and Ermegan Kazazi, as well as the services of the coach Rifat Rifati for the members of the club "Lidhja e Prizrenit", have recreated some of the

scenes from the film "Displaced", which has been recorded as the first film from Kosovo to enter the official competition of the Cannes Film Festival, from where it received the nomination to be the candidate of this renowned festival for the "European Film Awards", also known as the "European Oscar".

Karahoda's film presents the real story of many difficulties of the activity of the table tennis club "Lidhja e Prizrenit", which is also an indicator of the challenges faced by young talents across Kosovo, lacking the infrastructure and proper support from the institutions. This is also reflected in the dialogue between the main characters of the film, one of them constantly being judged for having returned from Germany to live, work, and compete in Kosovo. Despite this, Jeton does not give up, but he is still committed to his club, even with the intention that one of his teammates to be qualified for the most culminating competitions. But Ermegan reminds him of the reality they face: "Japan what, when we cannot exercise properly and the school principal changes the



padlock, and we want to compete with the world? Just imagine, we are the best team in Kosova and we wander like a ping pong ball, and we play in wedding halls ", says Kazazi, in the epilogue of the film; instantly receiving the sympathy of the audience.

In the Q&A held after the screening of the film, director Karahoda has stated how he has become familiar with this story since 2004. "I believe you liked the film, but you also felt bad. We have seen how many talents this country has. This film is dedicated to all talents of Kosova. My son is one of the talents who play in Prishtina, and who cannot play in winter because there is no place for him. This has been an additional reason to touch on this topic. As a parent, I cannot accept that our children grow up like this, so all I could do for them was this film", he said, adding that the story is 100% true and that it has been worked carefully on. "There are even worse things that have not been put in the film. Because of the country's image, I did not want to publish them," said Karahoda.

According to him, corruption has hampered the achievements in sport of Kosovar talents. On this occasion, he mentioned the two Olympic gold medals won by judokas Distria Krasniqi and Nora Gjakova.

"I want to be a little harsh, because our souls really hurt until we shot the film, when we saw the conditions. If so much money had not been stolen, we would surely have some 300 halls and some 12 medals", claimed Karahoda.

The coach Rifat Rifati, claims that after the successes achieved, they expected a reward, and it came in the form of displacing them from where the Prizren table tennis players trained. "For me it was a pain, a serious condition, I was touched in my heart and my soul, but I did not give up ... These children have given me the strength and will to do this sport properly," he says. Ermegan Kazazi has admitted that he never thought he would play in a film, but expressed his gratitude for the director's work, which has brought pride to all.

The producer of the film, Eroll Bilibani said that the completion of this project has not been easy, also due to the fact that the delays in payments have come as a result of bureaucracy within cultural institutions, in which case the obligations have been fulfilled only after the confirmation that the world premiere of the film will be in Cannes.

At the very end of this premiere, the local authorities have made a commitment that the table tennis players from "Displaced" will become "Placed".



## **A NIGHT OF DREAMS COMING TRUE – CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF KOSOVAR CINEMATOGRAPHY**

After the success of Samir Karahoda's film about ping pong trainer and two senior players sacrifice to train young and passionate kids, in the Cannes Film Festival and, announced yesterday at the stage of Lumbardhi Bahçe, that this film will also participate in Toronto Film Festival, we also celebrate the amazing news that Leart Rama's film *Four Pills at Night* had its global premiere in Locarno Film Festival.

The anticipated screening of these two films brought together a fully packed audience ready to watch history in the making. Saying it so, Karahoda is the first filmmaker to participate in many film festivals in the world such as Berlinale, Cannes and now in Toronto and Leart Rama shortly after he directed the film was accepted in Locarno. As Veton Nurkollari said: "This is not a coincidence, even though the last year has been tough on all of us, this is the best year for Kosovan cinematography".

"*Four Pills at Night*" screened for the first time in Kosovo and Nurkollari gave us more insight on the making of this film: "This film was shot for two days, during a difficult time of global pandemic, and then edited for nearly one month, and right after that, the film scored its first success by participating in Locarno Film Festival."

Nurkollari added: "This film was produced with limited financial resources. Do not think that all the people lined up here did this for profit, they did this film because they are passionate, courageous. In this small country, a lot of things can happen and Leart, Nita, the whole time showed dreams can come to life, there are opportunities to work hard, and you can do films that compete in major film festivals."

While the whole team of contributors to the film rushed to the stage, Nita Deda, the producer of "*Four Pills after Night*" said: "I feel honoured to be here on this stage with all of you, and I want to thank DokuFest which relentlessly supported the making of this film. But not only







for the support on this film, I want to thank you for all these 20 years and for opening your hearts to passionate people like Leart, like me. In DokuFest young filmmakers can find a safe space where they can work and learn and make their dreams come true."

Leart Rama's film visually narrates a story which is personal, but it affects and connects with so many more. Inspired by the rave scene in Prishtina, and his own personal input, this film is the film a generation which finally finds itself truthfully represented in cinema.

The director of "Four Pills after Night", a DokuFest alumni shows that talent and dedication can truly flourish and there is space for any creative mind to do better and more.

Right after, was screened "Displaced" by Samir Karahoda, telling the real story of ping pong trainees in Prizren, doing their best to train kids who are passionate and who will someday, for sure compete in elite competitions.

After Veton Nurkollari announced the achievements of this film, how much it means to the city of Prizren and to Kosovar cinematography, he gave the word to Karahoda to express his sentiments: "The plot's idea came to my mind many years ago while discussing with my friend Jeton. I would have never believed to be able to do this film after 15 years, but nothing had changed for the players who wanted spaces to train. So many things have not changed in Kosovo after the war, and I decided to do this movie hoping that something will eventually change."

This year is truly a victory for Kosovar cinema, exploring new themes, and reaching new heights of success. Last night was about dreamers, who worked hard to make their dreams come true, and inspiring others to do the so much more.

## **GO GO KOSOVO, A CHANT THAT WILL LAST A LONG TIME**

Kosovo has faced numerous barriers to get to the amazing level it is today even though the infrastructure where athletes exercise still lack the necessary equipment. Shortly after being accredited in the Olympic Committee, Kosovo celebrated the first gold medal in judo, won by the extraordinary, Majlinda Kelmendi.

"Go Go Kosovo" is also a celebration for the now victories of Distria Krasniqi and Nora Gjakova, the judoka's from Peja who won golden medal at the Olympic games "Tokyo 2020".

The first film shown by Karahoda which made its premiere in Cannes Film Festival, explores

Stockdale explained the origins of how it started: "The idea for this films started nine years ago when I was in a barbecue in Kosovo and we were talking about the upcoming Olympics in London and everybody was really excited about it but also frustrated because Kosovo was not allowed to compete and as they told me the story of the Kosovo Olympic theme, I was blown away by the passion, the enthusiasm and the commitment. This was such an inspiration, and this is how it started."

Jordan Laird joins the sentiment of Stockdale and says a little bit more about his journey shooting for this documentary: "The journey of this film has not been an easy one, but if there is anything we've learned along the way from Toni, Majlinda etc, is that anything worthwhile



the immeasurable sacrifice two local ping pong players making the most of any space and liberty given to train young people who are passionate and who will maybe one day, be gold medallists too.

"Go Go Kosovo" was part of the special screening section at DokuFest, and it truly was a true resemblance of all the fight done to achieve high levels. At certain points of the film the audience rushed to clap enthusiastically as if they were experiencing the matches for the first time.

One of the directors of this documentary, Jane

requires hard work, dedication, patience and a little bit of time".

Through all the step backs and hard training, Kosovar athletes were allowed to compete under their own flag in Rio 2016. Sports were breaking the ice, while opening a strong conversation about Kosovo and it was firstly a statement of Kosovo being there represented more than anything else.

But Kosovo proved right to those who relentlessly supported sportsmen and sportswoman and



wrong to those who tried to undermine the progress.

The audience was moved and emotional because this hard journey of Olympic athletes is a metaphor for any thriving cultural and social sector in Kosovo. After both screenings the audience got to hear the support and greetings from all of those who participated in "Go Go Kosovo".

Ulrika Richardson, the UN Development Coordinator in Kosovo said: "It is such a pleasure to be here, on behalf of UN in Kosovo, first, congratulations to DokuFest, the 20th year, your anniversary has been a journey. Tonight, the theme is sports, and I truly believe that the whole spirit of DokuFest which is about

our societies, and sports is just that fantastic expression of all that."

Besim Hasani was also present during the screening, and this documentary also shows his own struggle and endless efforts to make a dream come true for all Kosovars to participate sports and compete in Olympic Games.

He said: "From 1991 to 2004, there was a struggling journey the destination of which none of us knew. For someone it might just look interesting but for us it is our life. This was our dream, to be equal with everyone".

So many competitors who represented Kosovo in the Olympic Games made an appearance through the screen thanking everyone who saw



friendship, cooperation, respect, equality, everything that we think are good dimensions of our way being together, the social fabric of

the film and assuring everyone that they still will compete and go on.

There is nothing left to say but "Go Go Kosovo"!

***This event was made possible with the support of***



**UNITED NATIONS  
KOSOVO TEAM**





**PERFORMANCES**





## **DOKUFEST'S FIRST SONIC NIGHTS ENDS ON A HIGH NOTE**

Bendik Giske, a queer artist, and saxophonists performed at Lumbardhi open air stage after the grand opening of the twentieth edition of DokuFest.

Added to this performance, in perfect syntony, were shown the visuals created by Florence To and the live sound fx by Bridget Ferill.

While the audience rushed to get inside Lumbardhi, experiencing the unparalleled feeling of listening to live music on site, here at Dokufest, the performer waited until it was quiet, so he could take us on a musical journey.

The Norwegian artist, based in Berlin unchains the limitations of the relation between body and instrument. Sounds were flowing, creating an atmosphere of calmness seconded by a sense of rush and dynamicity. Mixing sounds equals experiencing a different set of combed feelings indulging an otherworldly performance.

He is inspired by electronic music and jazz, perfecting this musical blend with the capacity of the human being of carrying on the performance.

Giske uses physicality and explores the limitations of playing the instrument while using the body as a guiding sign of when a performance can reach its peak and its end. Spontaneity and vulnerability are key themes of his presentation.

Playing on electronic blocks without the need to layer or loop sounds but rhythmically building a raw feeling and an immediate connection,

really spoke to the audience. It truly was a movable feast.

Using the body as a corporal unit of the performance is crucial to better understand the artistic choice of Giske. It brings a whole new perspective of how music can be produced, created, and performed for audience. It is an exercise of muscular memory, the liberty to interpret cherishing every 'mistake' and letting the human side flourish through electronic beats, microphones, and synthetic sounds.

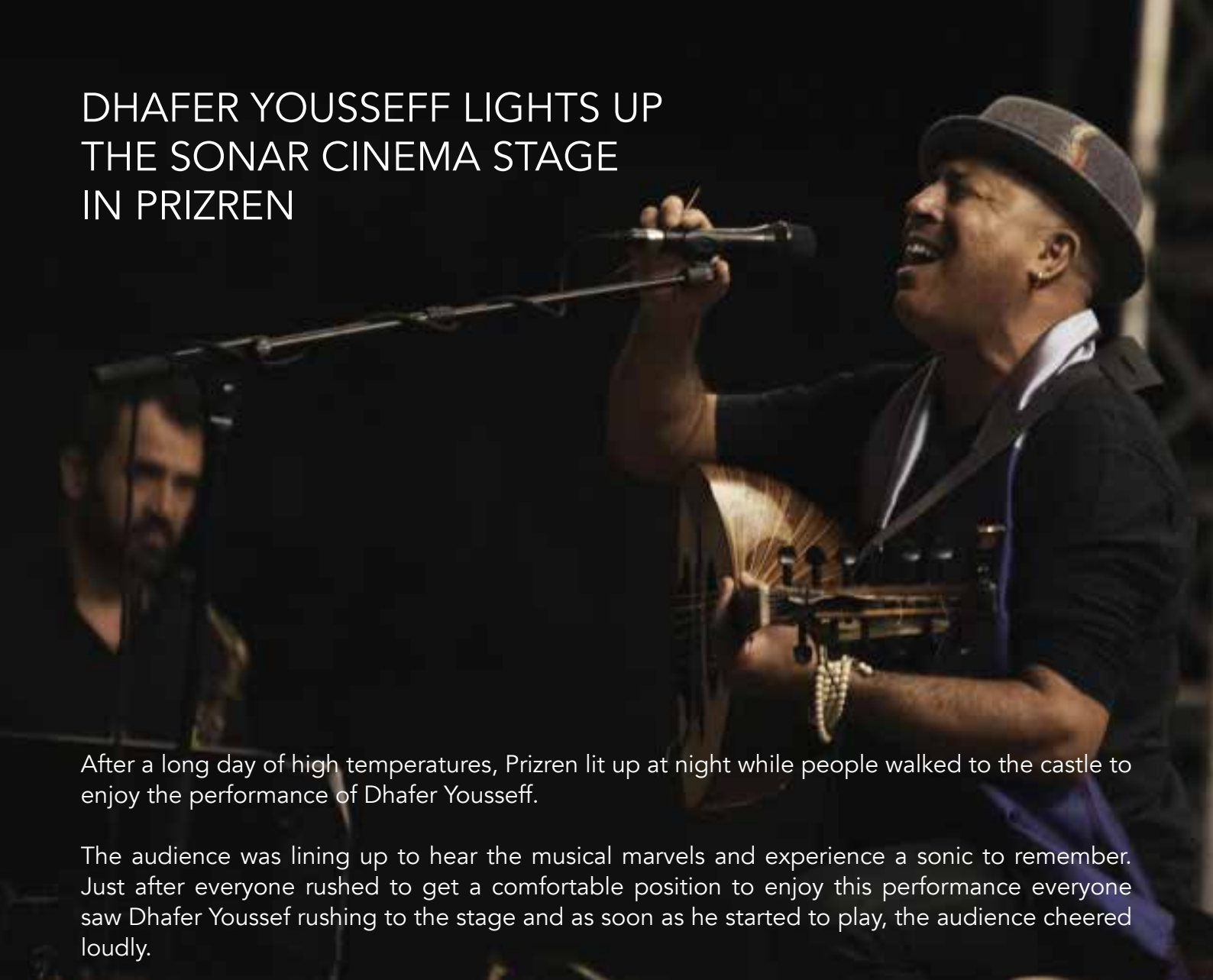
The playful and ecstatic vibe brought while a set of astral visuals accompanied the performer, added a tone of levitation while embracing the peculiarity of the journey.

The audience felt like they were in different places at the same time through sound: from the jazz bars to the core of the electronic scene and from then straight to another world where sound can be reinvented again and again.

It is not enough to say that the hype met its expectation when the audience at the end of the performance cheered and clapped and kept asking for more.

The night ended while bits and pieces of sounds remained in the air matching to the windy stage of Lumbardhi in Prizren.

# DHAFER YOUSSEFF LIGHTS UP THE SONAR CINEMA STAGE IN PRIZREN



After a long day of high temperatures, Prizren lit up at night while people walked to the castle to enjoy the performance of Dhafer Yousseff.

The audience was lining up to hear the musical marvels and experience a sonic to remember. Just after everyone rushed to get a comfortable position to enjoy this performance everyone saw Dhafer Youssef rushing to the stage and as soon as he started to play, the audience cheered loudly.

A light chilly night was the canvas where sounds painted a perfect movie like picture. Yousseff's musical machinery made the audience immerse in a wondrous journey. All we had to do was just listen.

Dhafer Youssef is a successful Tunisian artist who has travelled the world in many important stages. His musical journey started when he was five years old and since then he has continued to explore more on different musical traditions, sounds, lyrics to produce original sound inspired by folkloric music and jazz. He plays the Arabic lute and with that he masters the art combining soulful lyrics, playful sounds and calming rhythms which speak to the soul on a core level.

His artistry while playing the instrument, accompanied by skilled instrumentalists lifted

the stakes and emotions. Seeing him play on the Sonar Cinema stage was the perfect embellishment of a sound coming from a palimpsest of musical culture and an audience eager to listen a great soulful performer.

Getting to listen to this performance after a day watching wonderful representations of filmmakers from all around the world was truly the highlight of the weekend.

For everyone who wants to have a good hold of what it means to live Prizren besides from all the main touristic points of the city, is for sure, getting to see and hear a performance in the castle.

The sound of time and space mashed in a historical setting make you feel you can relive through time and space.



A dreamy night indeed. Özçelik's singing took us on a journey of love, self-discovery, and glee. Once again Prizren's Castle hosts a performance which bring an audience ready to experience magic. There is something special about hearing performances at this stage because the audience can get the best view of the city while staying at a certain altitude and hearing a sound of it own different solely unique from the sound dispersed in Prizren.

A cheerful audience followed Deniz Özçelik sing her own song some of which she has recently created and some of them she sang after a long time she created them. Her lyrics are truthful and emotional, expressing her experiences with strong and erratic emotions. The need to be accepted, the ability to love someone who does not love you back, the freeing feeling of letting someone go but most importantly expressing them musically makes her performance unparalleled.

All of us had the urge to clap and sing along while she jumped from performing her own

songs to very popular musical creation which everyone knows by heart.

Deniz Özçelik mixes modern music with jazzy tones and Turkish folk. Her scatting voice rejoices with her high notes creating an airy sound, expanding through space. Her performance combined instruments and an electronic booth which she controlled, creating a choir of different sound which were tastefully brought together.

The main theme of this performance was love which comes in many forms. Her concern about the planet, forest fires, animal rights pronounced themselves through her performance. To her, raising awareness through music shows that her songs are not only about personal experiences but also raise important questions. Through a weepy melody, sorrow spelled itself when she sang about issues that matter to her.

Besides expressing her thoughts on the issues that matter to her, Deniz opened her soul to the audience through well build verses about loss, vulnerability and making lemonade out of lemons.

Delightfully she ended the performances in a cheery song, where drums, guitar and bass were a true ensemble of celebrating the little things in life.

After her performance, the audience went back in the city and while watching their steps, one could hear them humming to different melodies of her songs.



**A NIGHT OF LOVE,  
JOY, AND MUSIC  
WITH DENİZ ÖZÇELİK**

A person is shown from the chest up, playing a daf (a traditional Persian frame drum). They are wearing a dark, patterned garment. The scene is dramatically lit with a strong red light, creating a high-contrast, moody atmosphere. The person's face is partially illuminated, and their hands are visible as they play the instrument.

# A SONIC NIGHT OF PASSION AND TRADITIONAL RHYTHMS

Sonic Nights performance by Mohammad Reza Mortazavi made the audience feel like they stopped in time just to enjoy music and have fun.

The Castle of Prizren has hosted numerous artists from all around the world bringing new cultures to the stage. This edition of DokuFest has been and is a celebration of creative minds from despite their medium of expression. Sonic Nights at the Sonar Cinema stage is proof of the versatility of artists who performed in Prizren and just showed how much people missed listening to music together.

Mohammad Reza Mortazavi performance welcomed everyone who wanted to have a good time and listen to every beat under the red lighted stage. Mortazavi is an Iranian artist based in Berlin, whose sound relies on playing instruments like daf (a traditional percussion instrument of Persian origin) and tombak (an Iranian goblet drum).

Seeing him playing with different instruments while taking time to prepare for another flow of rhythm was soothing and mesmerising.

He as an artist tries to find the balance to tell the story through percussions, beats and flowing rhythms which can make everyone dance. Managing to deliver emotions skilfully and emotionally is hard to keep up and let yourself free to reinvent a new rhythm. His dedication to using instruments cooperates with the limits of the body, the ability to move and play under certain limitations.

Using such traditional instruments can be a burden to invent a sound which are not alike those what we generally think when we listen to daf, or other culturally based instruments. The idea of expanding the range of what can a traditional tool do pinpoints to a certain sound which we might have hears from childhood. But the same sound can produce other emotions and atmospheres.

Universalizing the sound of these instruments seems an important task to deliver, and Mortazavari, did just that in Prizren.

Showing how chameleonic sound can be opens new avenues of what music can do and what artists can produce or create. Mortazavi's performance last night was surely one to remember.

While everyone was cheering and clapping for him to play more, the artist set down once again and played his instrument combined creating a whole new other delightful party for everyone to listen.

Mortazavi's performance was not the last staged in the castle. Everyone who wants to be part of a celebration of life, films and culture can immerse into the sound at the Sonar stage.



# AN OUTSTANDING NIGHT OF CELEBRATION

DokuFest ended its 20th edition welcoming everyone to the stage of Sonar Cinema in Prizren's castle - "Opa Cupa" and Cesare dell'Anna concluded the Sonic Nights cheerfully, while inviting everyone to dance their hearts out. As soon as they came on stage the audience up on their feet and enjoyed the music.

The ending of this year's festival couldn't be celebrated better than having everyone at the most stunning scenery of Prizren's castle. This event was organized in collaboration with Hemingway Fan Club Albania, The Italian Cultural Institute in Tirana, and Embassy of Italy in Kosovo.



A celebratory closing night of dance, rhythms, and improvisations by the vibrant brass band 'Opa Cupa' and with their leading trumpeter and composer Cesare Dell'Anna.

The sultry sound of "Opa Cupa" is the sound of making a feast out of life. The band kept the audience on their toe's song after song. "Opa Cupa" marks the first Balkan project born in Salento. The leader of this band Cesare dell'Anna invited many times people to dance to life, to freedom and it felt like a love letter to DokuFest.

Their story reflects in their music, the narratives immigration, departures, love life, separation and dismantling social frames. Everyone can feel the embrace of being accepted, while the

band jumps to percussions, beating drums and firry saxophones. Experimenting is not their only forte, with their music "Opa Cupa" capture the essence of human being, ready to get a hold of any pleasure life offers you.

This was an emotional night too. After the award ceremony everyone who saw the films, who worked so hard on the festival were together as a big family in joy of having the possibility to do DokuFest all over again as before the pandemic.

The immense power of listening to such a direct sound which offers you the possibility to be carefree captures the spirit of this festival which is an open door for everyone who wants to dare to dream and make dreams come true.



# DOKUTALKS / MASTERCLASSES EXHIBITIONS





## **KOSOVO'S NEW WAVE CINEMA: THE SUCCESS, THE STRUGGLE, THE NEED FOR A BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE**

Future holds a lot at stake for Kosovo's cinema. Filmmakers are challenging the quasi-non-existent infrastructure while building one of their own, in their own terms. Juggling with financial problems, the never resting passion to share their stories with the world, the need of international recognition and establishing a healthy environment for filmmakers and film in Kosovo, were a few of the main subjects discussed yesterday at Shani Efendi.

DokuFest's contributions to build an environment where films can happen were mentioned throughout the talk. Samir Karahoda and Blerta Basholli talked about their experience with their own feature films and how this organization brought a new light how to better manage creating their films and getting international recognition.

Blerta Basholli while talking about her own experience as a filmmaker said:

*"Working hard and making a film that is true to yourself it is challenging, but you can make it from here (Kosovo) as well. That was the beginning of the wave. It was only then when I realised that it doesn't matter where you are if that's Kosovo or any other country, if you really love this and if you really want to make a film you can make it no matter what. It is not easy to make film anywhere in the world, in any country but especially in a country where is not enough budget or crew or not even facilities to make the film. Film after film motivated us to do this."*

When asked about if this year it's the peak of success and should it be celebrated or not Blerta Basholli says:

*"It must be celebrated in a way, I really hope the success will expand in other years. This (industry) is only going to grow and hopefully we will be represented in many festivals. We are in a weird situation when the filmmakers are pushing more for financial benefits than the government because that is our basic funding place."*



A public talk about Kosovo's New Wave Cinema where Blerta Basholli, Samir Karahoda, Wouter Jansen and Brigid O'Shea moderated by Neil Young weighed in on how to celebrate the success and the problems facing cinematography in Kosovo.

Samir Karahoda whose short film made its debut last week at DokuFest after being screened at Cannes Film Festival went more in depth and explaining how much the Kosovar film scene has done in these last few years regardless of its late and humble start.

Furthermore, Karahoda said:

*"Being part of this film festival has helped a lot of us, especially the Kosovo filmmakers who for the first time were shown here in DokuFest. I know that young people don't know this but for more than 15 years was not possible to do films and the first feature film in Kosovo was shot after the year 2000. There was a difficulty working professionally and after few years Dokufest started to challenge this system by developing gradually."*

Karahoda expressed the necessity to have a more open view and more inclusive approaches to welcome everyone who has the will and desire to work on films. He shares a little bit of his experience when he first presented films in international scenes. "We must be open because the talent lies everywhere. Maybe you can be scared, for example with my two first films I was not confident and there is a long way ahead to do better things."

After the insightful perspective of Basholli and Karahoda, Neil Young asked Brigid O'Shea to get an international perspective on Kosovo's new wave cinema. She said:

*"I should start with advocacy: how do we encourage governments or people in high position power to change their policies or develop their policies agilely with time. Because times are changing and filmmakers to. No film funding system can survive in the shape for 20 years, because films are made differently now, the way we watch films has changed and tastes have changed. The internet has changed everything. I work mostly in advocacy and what I have come to realise now through the lobby is that we have to be on the same page because we are all fighting for the same thing: to make more and better films and to have those films seen by more audiences and even better audiences."*

Then O'Shea highlights the positions in which filmmakers are now in Kosovo and the challenges they are facing:

*"I also really admire you guys; it is impossible to live in a vacuum of being apolitical about these things but to have the double role of being creative people that are changing the face of European cinema and advocating for your films is really tricky work. This is where the international recognition come in handy because we strengthen through co-production. The question equity is important. We must remember that the world is not based on meritocracy. Not always the best films get the best recognition. It is mostly the most financially powered films that get the most recognition."*

Wouter Jansen, an Oscar film selector weighed on this matter on how Kosovo's cinematography should also make a step of showcasing movies outside the veil of the international recognition. Jansen said:

*"I really like talking about waves, the Romanian new wave a clear one was and maybe it has happened the same as in Greece but these movements were carried on by people of the same age. If I look now at the film you mentioned in Kosovo it's interesting to see that the directors are from different age groups and experience. This is a good year for Kosovo, and I don't know any country besides France that is featured in any major film festivals as excessively as Kosovo. There is a risk of giving too much emphasis on only when you are successful when you go to Sundance because we were talking before what if there is good film shown here that doesn't partake in major film festivals would you have the same kind of exposure like being selected there. Now it's so much more on how you translate this success in a kind of infrastructure where you can nourish talent from this gained experience."*

This public talk was a perfect sum of the main issues facing cinematography in Kosovo and how realistically can this industry develop and maintain the same success it experienced this year.





## **THE PAST LEFT BEHIND RECONCILIATION, COPING WITH LOSS AND BREAKING BARRIERS**

DokuTalks tackled the need to have closure and a better understanding of the conflictual past. Blerta Basholli, Jeton Neziraj, Marija Ristic and Bekim Balaj held a truthful public talk reflecting on how they have portrayed bits and pieces of the past in their work. Discussing the ability to have artistic freedom and the liberty to discuss openly difficult themes which still feel like open wounds, seems to be a necessary discussion raising the stakes of any cultural medium, journalism, and activism.

Bekim Balaj, the moderator of this event expressed how his work as an activist for transitional justice is a solid contribution to deal with the past in terms of building policies. He asked the journalist Marija Ristic, about her documentary 'The Unidentified', a project aiming to map mass graves and taking to perpetrators and victims', years after the 1999's war.

Ristic said:

*"We did this project as a multimedia page on the largest mass graves in former Yugoslavia. The idea basically behind that because we speak a lot in politicized terms around dealing in the past. Our idea was born in Bosnia because we were trying to find one mass grave for the documentary we were doing and then we realised that only people who work in the Institute of Missing*

*Person or the International Tribunal of ex-Yugoslavia know where the exact location is. We thought why we do not try to map all the mass graves in former Yugoslavia, and we have been talking about this topic for years and still we did not have an idea that there are 1,600 mass graves. Then we started to work with the largest mass grave, we mapped 60 of them".*

When asked about the reception of the documentary Ristic had this to say:

*"I think it did have an impact in terms of the people that it reached out. My basic idea behind it was to affect the prosecution side because I was following the trial. The reason I did it was to share with everyone to know about this story. Everyone needs to know about the situation in Kosovo."*

Part of this multidisciplinary talk was also Jeton Neziraj, a playwright, whose work in theatre always sparks debates and aids in having a direct approach to delicate matters. His view on the need to speak truth to power through theatre is an impactful and courageous way to stand the ground on matters of dealing with the past. His most notorious works related to this topic like "The Return of Karl May" and "In Five Seasons: An Enemy of the People" have stirred conversations regarding politics, the guts to remain impartial and fair in tense times and denouncing corruption:

*"To briefly explain my approach to theatre. There are artist plots who prefer to choose a comfortable position and this enables them not to get involved in these sensitive political themes of society that happened for various reasons because they do not want trouble, and often because these themes are dangerous or have been of land for a period and deal with the subject of other justice".*

Then Neziraj explained his views on how an artist with a political stand can have their say no matter what.

*"It is an aesthetic and ethical choice to remain impartial because that is how they follow a line that is dominant to seek and follow the government in power. In some cases, these artists do not believe in the notion of political art. According to them, if the theatre deals with current problems, it becomes a kind of political pamphlet. By thinking like this, they reduce the purpose of theater. I belong to the other side of artists that are not few. I appreciate this kind of theatre because it causes commotion and people are confronted everyday with problems and why not show this in theatre. There have often been backslashes and people might have felt frustrated. Theatre aspires to change but is different from activism because theatre wants to make change for a long term. And this is the moment to heal these painful wounds. And theatre can help do just that", expresses furthermore Neziraj.*

Blerta Basholli, a renowned Kosovar director, spoke about her experience while shooting 'Hive', the movie, which won several prizes at Sundance, explains more her perspective on the matter:

*"Some of my future projects have to do with our past and present because they are things that interest me, motivate me to work and I am honest while I work with these kinds of projects because I have gone through these things. You do not have to experience these things, but that's how it works. It's a lot easier for me to relate to something I've been through, and I hope to make other films about things I have never experienced, but I believe I relate to the same things I did. It all depends on why you make art and what is your motivation as an artist to make a kind of art".*

Having different sets of view of dealing with the past only makes it easier and more manageable to tackle this topic. Most people after the war periods in the Balkans still cope with loss. Missing loved ones. Never finding them. While this talk went to its end with proposing a more open and generative discourse while stressing the need of many parties to partake in this process to tell the truth and make peace with the past.

---

## **SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT ONE STEP AT A TIME**

Re: Act for Environment panel urged the necessity to do more and faster in order to salvage the environment for a better future.

Now it is time to react, said all the speakers at Shani Efendi in Prizren, in a talk discussing environmental issues. During this week all the attendees felt the high temperature in the afternoon in the city, while during the talk the moderator Visar Azemi, the executive director of Balkan Green Foundation, mentioned the obvious fact that we are now experiencing the repercussions of global warming. He also

spoke about the need to educate everyone and making it basiliary.

Adriatik Bytyqi's contribution in reacting for the environment has its bases in recycling glass. The usage and glass waste has been and is a huge problem in the world but also in Kosovo and Bytyqi's take is a good way to reuse it again.

His work with Tiki Mosaic started in 2015 and he explained:

*"We collected the glass and respectively the residues and tossed away glass which were used to build windows. Our equip collected the glass from all Kosovo. And in a way we are trying to manage to not to impact in polluting the environments*



Nita Luci, Granit Gashi, Adriatik Bytyqi, Nebojsa Redzic spoke about the main issues and where their activism and action rely on to do better for the environment in Kosovo.

*because glass is problematic to recycle. For it to be fully recycled in an open space it takes 1 million years. So, we are trying to collect in our depots and from there we are selecting glass, then transform it through heat and from then we create mosaics of different forms. While doing these mosaics we are trying to redesign and creating a palette which our staffs of designers has created different styling to be used in different places in hotels, pools, cafeterias, etc."*

He goes on about the need for building up support internationally.

*"We have now tried to expand internationally to Greece, Germany, Serbia, Croatia, Hungary but we need the support of local and national authorities to expand our work. We can only work with 5% of the wasted glass and making it accessible and recyclable, costs a lot", says Bytyqi*

Granit Gashi talks more about his work as an activist: "The case in Mitrovica proved that a lot of people are aware of the environmental issue but there is a lot of work to do. We are witnessing development in the private sector which are trying to reuse and support the environmental issue. We have created a critical mass which is keen on addressing these problems which are facing.

Lately Sharri has been a heated argument about the water which has been taken from the locals to build hydro centrals. But it has sparked a lot

of debates. Sharri now is a delicate issue and the people living there face the restrictions of water. Nebojsa has been one of the clearest voices against this act:

*"What has happened there is no picnic, what has happened in the mountains of Sharri is a pure destruction of the environment. There is a lack of planification, no accountability and no financial value can replace the harm done there. There is an untruthful stance from local and national authorities regarding this issue. People seek personal profits and if we analyse the investments done for personal gaining. We have understood the touristic approach and investments done there, but this we cannot bare to understand."*

While speaking about the Sharri situation he compares it to the previous scenery and claims the situations has gotten worse.

*"It was not possible before to not see water in Sharri but now it looks like a wasteland. There is no drinkable water. People have reacted strongly through protests, petitions, sending letters to authorities and speaking to those in power. We are tired of double standards; we see many international companies working here in Kosovo which do not respect the same regulations they respect in their countries. This must stop," says Redzic.*

Nita Luci, professor in University of Prishtina was part of this panel and brought an academic and anthropological approach to the matter:



*"There is a research mostly as understanding nature as an expression of an older tradition which gets often romanticized, or engineers which try to treat this issue from a technical perspective. We must understand the main issues regarding the environment in Kosovo and pinpointing to our main battles. We have accompanied many activists inspired for motion around the world. Now we are doing a research which is historical in a sense but also modern in the activism context."*

She shared some of the main arguments we discovered in this research:

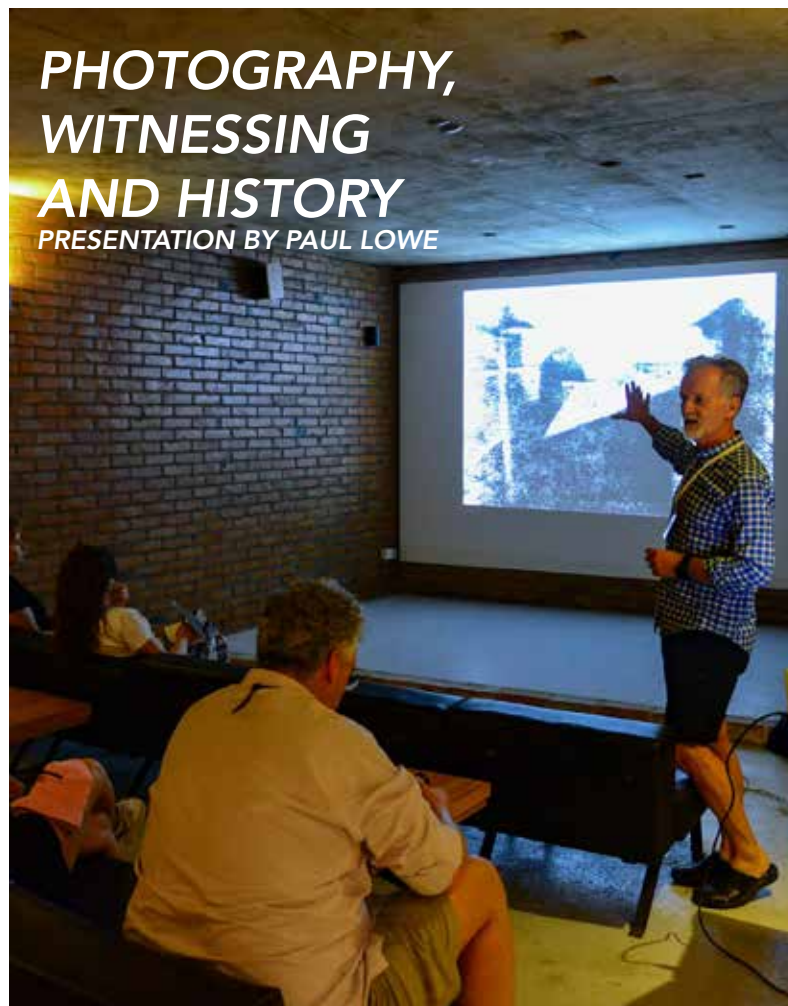
*"Social and capitalistic systems have the same approach to nature. States like ex-Yugoslavia or Hungary have treated it alike. In the cold War, big infrastructural projects have been part of the political game. This concept of mis XX century, in the way it has internalized modernity is not different from what neoliberals do."*

Then Luci offered some insight on how to act better for the environment and the urgency of the matter.

*"I think that the solutions which will make consumers responsible is not only not taking plastic bags because that is the same as curing symptoms, but we also need to treat the root of this problem, like for example how can we face this growth by 1.5 Celsius raise in temperature," said Luci.*

All of us can play a part on saving the environment and easing our struggle but we need to discuss directly not only how the general population can act, but also building policies to follow up.

The end of the conversation at Shani Efendi, organized in collaboration with Balkan Green Foundation ended by invited everyone to think more before they act. Time is running and our planet needs immediate solutions.



In its relatively short history, photography has arguably become the predominant medium through which we represent the world around us. It is hard to imagine a world without the photographic image, so ubiquitous it has become as a form of communication, documentation, and personal and artistic expression. Today, more photographs are taken every two minutes than in the whole of the nineteenth century. We now photograph everything, every moment of our lives and the world around us. Photography has arguably become the means through which we most strongly remember the past—and represent the present—forming the foundation of not only our collective social memory, but also our personal memories too. This presentation by Paul Lowe explored how the photographic image has engaged with the historical moment, from its inception in the mid 19th century to the present day.



# THE UNDENIABLE POWER OF DOCUMENTING WAR AND CONFLICT THROUGH PHOTOS

Ron Haviv, a world renowned photographer whose work reflects on human rights issues and conflict and one of the co-founders of "VII Agency" through a public talk on day one of DokuFest reflected on how photography can change the course of history.

Ron Haviv presented some of his most important projects while also raising many questions about photography, witnessing, and troubling relationship with truthfulness. His photographic chain of witnessing war crimes, violence and human loss is a service to the people who suffered through wars and conflict, to justice and memory.

His work is a depiction of despair, fear, and loss. One of the projects shown at this public talk was the 'Biography of a photo', discussing two of his most famous works, one taken in Panama framing a man covered in blood and the other in Bosnia of a shoulder in the premise kicking dead bodies in the streets. As he says, now he has no control over these photos, and they are there for everyone to see and use.

Showing a series of photographic documentation of some of the most markable conflicts in the world, Haviv tackled the importance of having an eyewitness who can show to the world what is happening in a place where is difficult to get an immediate visual sighting of what is happening in real time.

Haviv during his talk showed a presentation of how the Serbian audience reacted to his photos taken in Bosnia during the war when

they were shown in a gallery in Belgrade. The stubbornness and rage of the audience highlighted the lack of will of confronting the past.

Reflecting on how photography can change or spark new reactions take a radical nudge in a place where people try to cope with the sense of guilt and in the meantime shows how people can react to a traumatic and horrible past.

While going back in time Haviv mentioned what he had learned in history books and how western leaders would react to the Shoah: they would say that they did not know.

*"Nobody should have to say that they didn't know. Photography should have a reason and a purpose to hold people accountable for what they have done", said Haviv.*

The thin line between ethics and photography at a time of crises is dilemma which Haviv brings a very simple response to:

*"If there can not be done something to save a life, one must document it to hold accountable the people who did the deed."*



# LIGHTS, VALUES, ETHICS!

## A PUBLIC TALK BY EZRA WINTON

Ezra Winton, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Communication and Cultural Studies at Concordia University. He is Director of Programming at Cinema Politica, and has curated political film programs tackling a wide range of political topics. He researches and writes about ethics, curatorial politics and screen cultures, including peripheral, settler and Indigenous cinemas.



What is the relationship between documentary, festival screenings and activism? Is sharing socially engaged films with audiences enough to inspire change? Is the audience act of knowing about injustice enough to end injustice? Do festivals have a responsibility to offer alternative ways to share and screen political documentaries? In this discussion, film professor, curator and writer Ezra Winton makes critical connections between documentary politics, ethics and values in the world of film festivals.



This masterclass explored the idea of the Specter who is at the same time both visible and invisible.

Perhaps haunting. Both biographical and autobiographical.

The Specter is arrived at from elsewhere, an outside, and all the while remains secret.

The eye, the narrating Specter, the gaze, reflection and self reflection are all components of the masterclass.

The masterclass is inspired by an essay titled "Derrida, Specters, Self-Reflection" by Akira Mizuta Lippit in which Life, Spectrality, and Autobiography are outlined as the elements of a secret cinema (and Derrida himself).

The class will dissect these elements to lean into the secret, and explore questions of dream logic and the mythical in my moving image work. It will include the world premiere of Gaàda (2021), a 'process' film assembled from footage I shot in pre-production for my new film Aleph.





"HOW DO I SEE YOU?" a joint project between DokuFest and Free Zone concluded activities with the second generation of intercultural camp.

The project "How Do I See You?" **Funded by the European Union** office, it aimed to create opportunities for intercultural exchanges between the youth of Kosovo and Serbia through an educational and comprehensive program to reflect their views through the creation of audiovisual portraits in which they will have the opportunity to express views about their peers.

The audio-visual works of the participants from Kosovo and Serbia were presented in the exhibition 'HDISY' in August of this year during the jubilee edition of DokuFest. Many present had the opportunity to listen closely

to the videos of young people in the form of audiovisual portraits and to converse with them.

Through the project activities, the young people during the meetings in the intercultural camp in Kosovo and Serbia had the opportunity to get to know each other through art and culture in a space free from the language of hatred and mutual prejudice.

During the start of the project, the activities, among other things, helped these young people in promoting and creating narratives that address the intercultural issues faced by young people in Serbia and Kosovo through a space where ideas are exchanged and different opinions are respected, which is based on mutual respect.



# BEKIM FEHMIU IN ALBANIA EXHIBITION

DokuFest in collaboration with the Albanian National Film Archive presented a photo exhibition of never-before-seen still black and white images taken during a 1972 visit to Albania by the acclaimed Kosovar actor Bekim Fehmiu (1936-2010).

The recently discovered photos capture Fehmiu's rare trip along with Albanian personalities such as the writer Ismail Kadare and film director Dhimitër Anagnosti.

Albanian-American filmmaker Thomas Logoreci explains the joy while preparing this exhibition.

*"We were in the archives, doing a project with UCLA, to preserve every still photograph taken in the communist time, production but also documentary photos. Some events, like the Bekim's visit were captured on still film, and we found these in an unmarked envelope, in the Bekim folder negatives but it was an envelope of photos taken that afterwards in 1973 there were some figures that went through some trouble and it was like we cannot talk about Bekim's visit anymore. Yugoslavia-Albania had problems, in 1974 the repression in Albania became much tighter so the photos were safely put away, but we found them last summer. When I held them up to the light I knew instantly what these photos were. Iris will tell you I said 'Oh my God it's the Bekim Fehmiu visit'. To see Ismail Kadare, to see Dritwro Agolli, to see Xhanfize Keko, in these still images was an amazing discovery and brought us much joy in archive that day, to print them for the first time, to expose these negatives that have never been exposed before".*

Born in Sarajevo, Fehmiu grew up in Prizren which makes the premiere presentation of these photos such a special event. In 1967, Fehmiu attained international fame after appearing in the Cannes-winning Yugoslav fiction feature, *I EVEN MET HAPPY GYPSIES*.







Curated by Fejsal Demiraj, "Preserving Traditional Albanian Gastronomy - From North to South" is a masterclass in traditional Albanian Cuisine that will be conducted by four chefs practicing traditional methods and promoting the use of local ingredients in their cooking practices.

"Preserving Traditional Albanian Gastronomy - From North to South" explores the Albanian regions of Korca, Gjirokaster, Shkoder, and Dukagjini and the flavors that identify each region.

Chefs Shpresa Bacelli from Voskopoja, Urim Jace from Permet, Gjon Dugila from Shkodër, and Fetije Nikqi from Reka e Allagës, Rugovë prepared food for tasting and will talk about their practices.



***Preserving Traditional Albanian Gastronomy - From North to South" also included The Realiteti i ri campaign with gastronomy and private sector as a mobile, foot action, with hand sanitizers placed at the entrance of all the cinemas in DokuFest during the festival. The hand sanitizers are branded with QR codes and link to the [realitetiri.com](http://realitetiri.com) page with information of COVID-19 a latest protection recommendations.***

# ***VOLUNTEERS***

***THE SMILING FACES OF DOKUFEST***





The smiling faces of the teenagers, with the yellow T-shirts, have returned to the numerous locations of DokuFest. Last year, the liveliness usually brought by volunteers was missing, as the festival was held on the online platform, due to restrictions as a result of the pandemic. This year about 100 volunteers, known as "busy bees" will assist in the progress of the activities within the international documentary and short film festival. At the same time, they will make sure that the festival guests feel at home, offering orientation assistance across Prizren.

DokuFest executive director, Linda Llulla-Gashi is satisfied that the 20th jubilee edition of the festival is being attained with the presence of volunteers, because according to her they are one of the important pillars, but also the joy of this cultural organization.

"Volunteers are the pillar of the festival. They are the joy of the city. They are mostly required to smile, enjoy each other's company, gain new experiences and certainly contribute to the organization and progress of the festival. Without their undeniable help, we would not be able to carry out our activity during the 9 days of the festival", says Llulla-Gashi.

She regrets that due to objective reasons, fewer volunteers had to be accepted this year compared to the usual editions.

"Considering that this year there won't be DokuNights, we have reduced the number of the volunteers from 150 to 100. Of course, the interest has been great, especially from other cities of Kosova, but also from abroad. "This year, we did not have the opportunity to invite all those who have applied, but I hope that next year we will give this opportunity to them as well", claims the director of DokuFest.

According to her, the concept of volunteering is quite emphasized within DokuFest because this was the way the festival was born, 20 years ago.

"The whole idea of this festival has been volunteerism. 20 years ago, when the first

edition of DokuFest was held, all those who were involved in the organization worked voluntarily. So all DokuFest staff once volunteered and now they are in leadership positions of the organization. This has continued for years and has become a tradition, because the very concept of the festival is volunteerism and the promotion of volunteer work ", emphasizes Llulla-Gashi. According to her, this promotion of volunteer work within the festival over the past 20 years has also influenced the training of new generations for different skills.

"By working as volunteers, young people gain skills in various jobs, in specific jobs that are required at the festivals. This way, we train and prepare them for the labor market in different profiles, especially in profiles that are lacking in Kosova, such as: projectionists, subtitling, organization of events, etc.", says the executive director of DokuFest.

