



NEWSLETTER


German Documentaries at Film Festivals

Fall & Winter 2025

A quick recap before this year's festival circuit starts

german documentaries





German Documentaries is the international label for the promotion of german non-fiction film productions abroad.

As an initiative of the **AG DOK** – the German Documentary Association and **German Films Service + Marketing GmbH**, German Documentaries presents german documentary productions at international festivals and markets and organizes co-production meetings and delegations.

In this newsletter, we would like to present a selection of the exceptional productions that were screened at international film festivals this spring and summer.



german documentaries



Festivals

The fall and winter festival season began and ended with **WITH HASAN IN GAZA** by Kamal Aljafari, which opened **Doclisboa** (October 16–26), which screened a total of eight German (co-)productions.

The **Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival** (October 25–November 3) also showcased it, along with nine other German (co-)productions. **TASTE OF SALT** by Raaed Al Kour celebrated its world premiere there and won the Award for Original Approach "for its uniquely tender approach to masculinity and its expressions in scenes of otherness. Encountering realities of migration through means of performative re-enactment and play," said the jury statement.

[Source](#)

ACTIVE VOCABULARY by Yulia Lokshina won the Golden Dove for feature-length film in the German Competition Documentary Film at **DOK Leipzig** (October 26 - November 1) and deals with school as a political place.

At the **Festival dei Popoli in Florence** (November 1–9), Mala Reinhardt, [German Films Face to Face Ambassador](#), sat on the International Feature Film Jury. Kamal Aljafari's **WITH HASAN IN GAZA** won the First Prize International Competition with the following motivation: "The jury awards the First Prize to a film that masterfully weaves memory and the present into a tapestry of resilience, where remembrance itself becomes a political force. Composed of footage shot more than two decades ago, it stands as a powerful testimony to humanity in the face of ongoing destruction. With a timeless and courageous gaze, the director confronts the violence of erasure, transforming the act of witnessing into an act of resistance."

[Source](#)

Doc@Just, Just Film's documentary program at the **Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival** (November 7-23), screened Ingrid Klausmann's **GIRLS DON'T CRY**, which portrays girls around the world in their everyday lives. They all have the same desire: the chance to live a self-determined, free life.

Isa Willinger also notes in her film **NO MERCY** that "female" tends to be equated with "empathetic" and "emotional." The film finds the great female directors of our time to figure out whether women make "harder films". **NO MERCY** celebrated its North American premiere at **DOC NYC** (November 12-30).

The grand finale of the festival winter was marked by **IDFA** (November 13-23), which showed 24 German (co-)productions. Among them was again Kamal Aljafari's **WITH HASAN IN GAZA**.

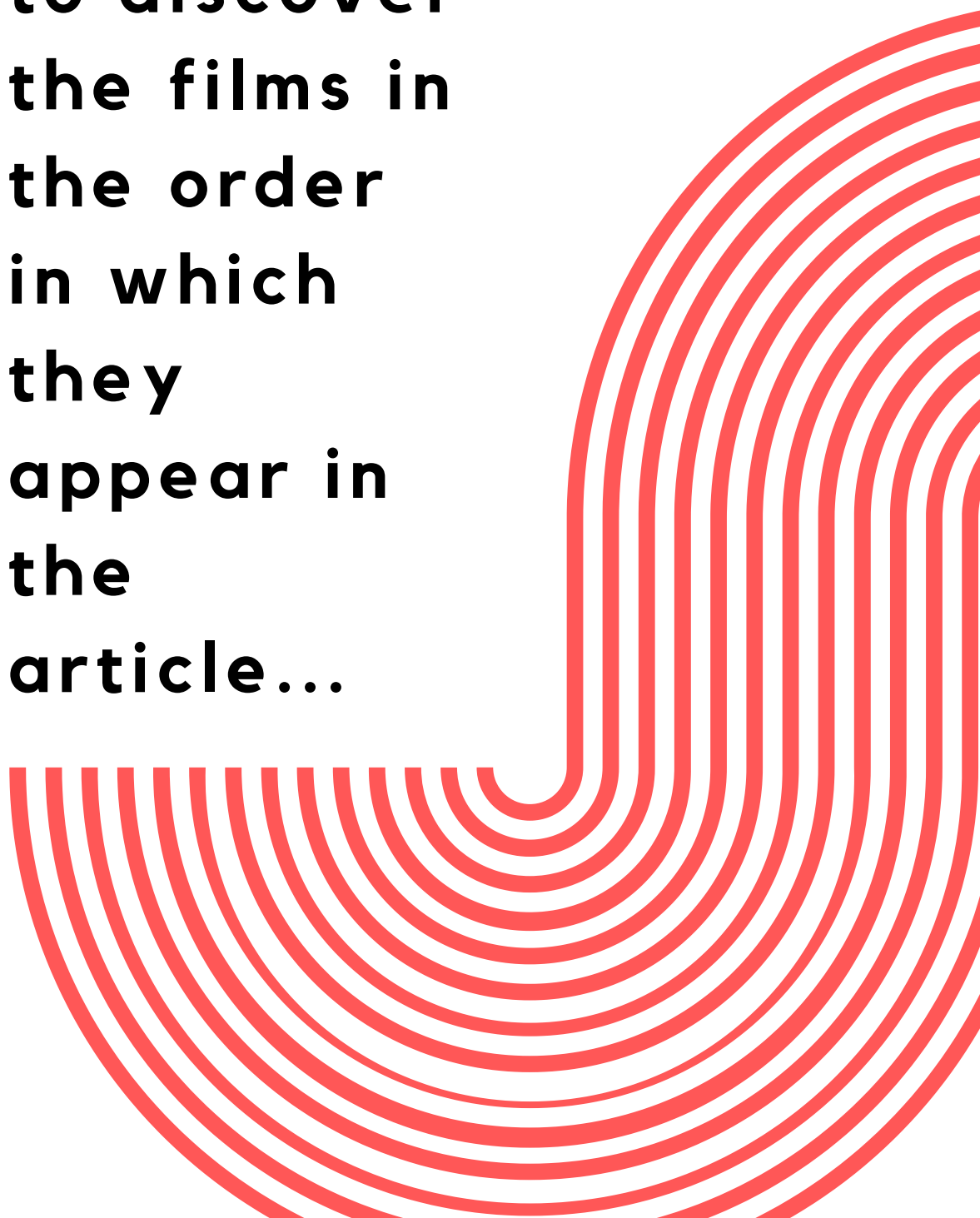
Marcin Wierzbowski's **DAS DEUTSCHE VOLK** had its Dutch premiere there. The film accompanies the families of the victims of the racist attack in Hanau in 2020 as they fight for answers from the authorities.

The IDFA Award for Best Cinematography in the International Competition went to **SILENT FLOOD** by Dmytro Sukholytkyy-Sobchuk.

Another predominantly German production also took home an award: **ARTIFICIAL SEX (EP. 1 & 2)** by Anan Fries was honored with the IDFA DocLab Award for Digital Storytelling.

This brought the 2025 festival year to a close and now we're looking forward for the 2026 festival circuit.

**Read on
to discover
the films in
the order
in which
they
appear in
the
article...**





WITH HASAN IN GAZA

by Kamal Aljafari

Synopsis

Three MiniDV tapes of life in Gaza from 2001 were recently rediscovered. This footage now stands as a testament to a place and time that no longer exists. What began as a search for a former prison mate from 1989—a man lost to time and war—led to an unexpected road trip from the north to the south of Gaza, accompanied by Hasan, a local guide whose fate remains unknown. As the camera moves through Gaza's streets and landscapes, it captures fleeting moments of everyday life—fragments of a reality now irreversibly altered. 'With Hasan in Gaza' transforms this forgotten footage into a cinematic reflection on memory, loss, and the passage of time—capturing a Gaza of the past, and lives that may never be found again.

Germany,
Palestine,
France, Qatar

2025

106 min

Original
Language:
Arabic

Subtitles:
English

Production Company:

Kamal Aljafari Productions

Berlin, Germany

[kamaljafari.productions@gmail.com](mailto:kamalaljafari.productions@gmail.com)

<https://kamaljafari.productions/Homepage>



TASTE OF SALT

by Raaed Al Kour

Synopsis

Ammar and Bilal both have experience as refugees living in present-day Germany. They meet thanks to an interview conducted by an actress and actor, who are using it as inspiration for a play they are preparing. However, the documentary film *Taste of Salt* follows their conversations, their everyday lives, and ultimately the theatrical performance that emerges from these conversations. The film thus recounts the experience of exile through three different means. Ammar and Bilal talk about their difficult experiences with migration and with their lives in their new home. At the same time, the camera follows them in distanced shots that emphasize their uprootedness in the German urban environment and, ultimately, in the artistic theatrical performance. Thanks to this, the film can be viewed as a testimony to the current waves of migration, a record of their everyday existence, and an empathetic portrayal of their feelings about life.

Germany

2025

88 min

Original
Language:
German and
Arabic

Subtitles:
English

Contact:

Raaed Al Kour
raaedalkour@hotmail.com

Further Information:

<https://viktorschimpf.com/taste-of-salt/>



ACTIVE VOCABULARY

by Yulia Lokshina

Synopsis

A Russian teacher criticizes the Russian invasion of Ukraine in class and is denounced by a pupil. After fleeing, she re-enacts the incident with her Berlin class.

Germany

2025

82 min

Original Language:
English, German and
Russian

Further Information:

<https://dok-spotters.de/en/2025/11/01/school-is-always-a-political-place/>



GIRLS DON'T CRY

by Sigrid Klausmann

Synopsis

What does it mean to be a girl in the world today? How do they fare in a restrictive world? The documentary "Girls Don't Cry" is about the longing of six girls from six countries, longing for a self-determined life in freedom, their desire to fall in love, without paternalism, without others having power over their bodies, with equal rights. We see Nancy, Sheelan, Selenna, Nina, Paige and Sinai deal with the crisis of puberty, their self-confident decisions in difficult situations, their courageous fight against brutal traditions such as circumcision, against social constraints and pressure, against beauty mania and prejudice. Being young and cool, even in the face of trauma and loss.

Germany

2025

90 min

Original
Language:
German, Spanish,
English, Serbian,
Swahili, Korean

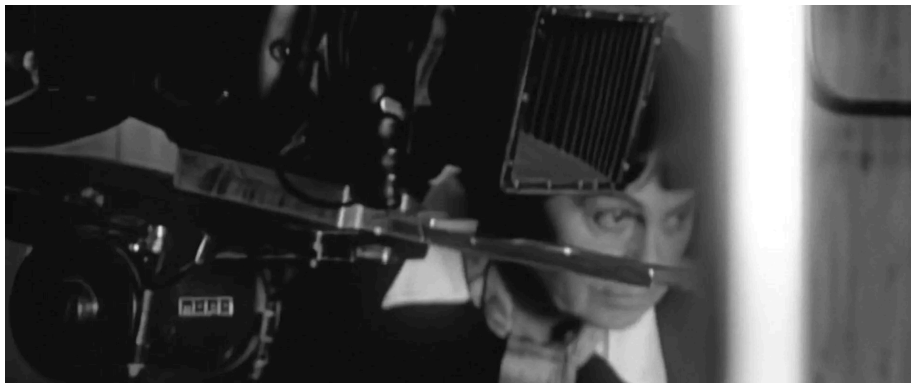
Subtitles:
English

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<http://www.farbfilm-verleih.de/>



NO MERCY

by Isa Willinger

Synopsis

An energetic, wild journey through revolutionary filmmaking by women—direct, sensual, uncomfortable, and full of power. Films show how we live. "No Mercy" gets right to the heart of today's burning issues: Where do we really stand in terms of power, gender, and freedom – in cinema as in life?

For her radical assessment, filmmaker Isa Willinger brings together some of the most important female directors of our time.

Germany, Austria

2025

105 min

Original Language:
English, French,
German, Russian, Farsi,
Dutch

Distribution:

RFF – Real Fiction Filmverleih e.K.
Hansaring 98
50670 Köln
Phone: +49 221 / 95 22-111
info@realfictionfilme.de

<https://www.realfictionfilme.de/no-mercy.html>



DAS DEUTSCHE VOLK

by Marcin Wirzchowksi

Synopsis

On 19 February 2020, a racist attack sent shockwaves through the German city of Hanau. A gunman shot and killed nine young people with migrant backgrounds at multiple locations.

In the years following the attack, Wierzchowski documented efforts by the victims' families to get answers from the authorities. Why was the emergency call center unreachable? Why was the café's emergency exit locked? And why was someone who had published a far-right manifesto allowed to legally own a firearm?

Germany

2025

132 min

Original Language:
German, Turkish,
Romanian and English

Production Company:
milk&water
Neue Teefabrik
Hohenstaufenstraße 8
60327 Frankfurt am Main

<https://dasdeutschevolk.de/>



SILENT FLOOD

by Dmytro Sukholytkyy-Sobchuk

Synopsis

A closed religious community in Ukraine has chosen to live in a beautiful landscape, where the front lines of both World War I and World War II once passed. It's a sunny village filled with the laughter of children from large families. Yet, the community's peaceful life is frequently disrupted by floods and war — two points serving as moments of reckoning in their memory. Nature and war are both relentless forces that take lives. The community comes together to overcome the aftermath of floods. The flood alters community life, just as the country is reshaped by war. Together with the community, we observe transformations, where the current war intertwines with the past ones, but the feeling of home can never be taken away from anyone.

Ukraine, Germany

2025

90 min

Original Language:
Ukrainian

Production Company:
Elemag Pictures GmbH
Tanja Georgieva-Waldhauer
Laasener Str. 1
07545 Gera

Phone: +49 036585503593
info@elemagpictures.com



ARTIFICIAL SEX (EP. 1 & 2)

by Anan Fries

Synopsis

An experimental video essay in which the artist tries to navigate the depressing reality of image-based violence online while searching for queer and creative moments in the current digisexual revolution. Both episodes are based on explorative conversations with AI girlfriends; Episode 1 is based on a sexy chat with a clingy replica bot, while Episode 2 features a critical conversation with Ani, Elon Musk's hyperactive anime girlie. The interactive project is a post-digital, post-porn deep dive into digital genitalia, digisexuality and digital intimacy.

Germany,
Switzerland


2025

18 min

Original Language:
English

Contact:
Anan Fries
ananfries@posteo.net

<https://ananfries.net/>



**Stay tuned, we'll be
in touch again when
the festival circuit
2026 started.**



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