



International  
Documentary  
Film Festival  
Amsterdam

Amsterdam, Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## **IDFA 2019 opens with a call for gender parity and inclusion**

**Today, the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) was officially opened in Royal Carré Theater, marking Amsterdam as the documentary capital of the world during the next 11 days.**

The youngest filmmaker of IDFA 2019—the 21-year-old Canadian-Vietnamese director **Carol Nguyen**—kicked off the evening with a call for diverse representation in the film industry.

*“If you ask me, today is the best day to be a woman in film. Within the last few years alone, we have seen a rise of diverse representation in mainstream media. Society and our audiences are more conscious than ever about the lack of gender and racial parity in film. Film festivals have even set gender parity goals for themselves. We are all demanding it. Because of this, I am optimistic,”* **stated Nguyen**, adding that there is still a lot of work to be done, but we must do it together.

In his speech, **IDFA Artistic Director Orwa Nyrabia** emphasized the important role of documentary films in today’s turbulent times.

*“In such times, when standing against racism, exclusion, injustice, oppression or global warming might be called “elitist,” when state subsidies for arts and culture are being cut down in various parts of the world, allowing populist approaches and discourses to take over—it feels like we don’t have much choice. We can choose to escape reality by watching a fun romantic comedy in order to forget. We can choose to lose sleep, fall into the trap of continuous draining panic, and watch a sensationalist commercial documentary. But, in fact, we do have a third way: we can protect our sanity, our balance, and our integrity while we face such a reality. This is where good cinema comes in”* **said Nyrabia**.

During the next 11 days, until December 1<sup>st</sup>, in **20 locations** across Amsterdam, IDFA will present **329 films and new media projects** from **85 countries**. The festival will welcome over **3000 professional guests** from more than 90 countries, **17 national delegations**, and **147 world and international premieres**.

The 32<sup>nd</sup> festival also marks **the highest percentage of female filmmakers in IDFA’s history**.

**[Opening film of IDFA 2019: \*Sunless Shadows\* by Mehrdad Oskouei](#)**

Selected for IDFA’s Feature-Length competition, ***Sunless Shadows***, directed by Iranian **Mehrdad Oskouei**, takes us into a personal world of five young Iranian

women, all accomplices in the murder of a male family member. Filmed in a small detention center, ***Sunless Shadows*** deals with the reality of young women who chose the ultimate act of violence to save themselves and their loved ones from ongoing abuse. Realized with the support of the **IDFA Bertha Fund**, Mehrdad Oskouei's film tells a timeless story of violence against women; how some women respond; and the subsequent consequences inflicted by society.

The 32<sup>nd</sup> edition of IDFA will last **until Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup>**. The IDFA Award Ceremony will take place on the evening of **Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup>**, in Eye Arena, where the winners in the various competition categories will be announced.

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***Editors' notes:***

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For more information about the festival and key dates, please visit our website or [click here](#).

*IDFA's audience program is supported by [Fonds 21](#), [Creative Europe Media](#), [VSBfonds](#) and [Democracy & Media Foundation](#).*