



International  
Documentary  
Film Festival  
Amsterdam

Amsterdam, Wednesday, October 28<sup>h</sup>, 2020

## **IDFA announces opening film and final competition programs**

With the 33rd edition of IDFA around the corner, the **festival announces its opening film; the Feature-Length, First Appearance, Mid-Length, and DocLab competitions; the non-competitive DocLab Spotlight section; and the Creative Use of Archive competition.**

In presenting the **complete selection of 258 titles**, IDFA offers its unwavering support to the filmmakers and industry leaders who are fighting for the future of cinema. The festival also extends a call to act together and act now for the film industry that the world cannot lose—one that values high-quality exhibition as much as inclusion, transparency, and accountability.

IDFA is proud to welcome an **outstanding lineup of jury members** for this year's competitions. The list includes exceptional producers such as **Marie Pierre Macia, Diana Elbaum, and Els Vandevorst**; critics such as **Finn Halligan**; directors such as **Hubert Sauper, Alice Diop, and Audrius Stonys**; festival directors such as **Intishal Al Timimi and Christoph Terhechte**; cinematographer **Edward Lachman**; and novelist **Abdelkader Benali**.

IDFA's festival selection includes **48% women filmmakers**, with **57% women filmmakers** in the competitions. The **258 titles come from 72 different countries**, including co-production countries.

*“Amidst all the uncertainty and big questions of this era, the films and the new media projects we watched, discussed, and selected offered us hope and affirmed our faith in the future. The IDFA 2020 program tells us, without doubt or hesitation, that documentary art is just essential, relevant, and meaningful. Here’s a more inclusive program than ever, a program that takes us a step further from the overwhelming immediate moment and shows us a larger worldview. It protects our sanity and helps us find balance in the middle of all the chaos,”* said Artistic Director **Orwa Nyrabia**.

### **Opening film**

The festival will open with the world premiere of [\*\*Nothing but the Sun\*\*](#) by Paraguayan-Swiss director **Arami Ullón**. A quietly earth-shattering film, *Nothing but the Sun* lucidly contrasts the hot, arid atmosphere of Paraguay's Chaco region with the devastating stories of the Ayoreo people, an Indigenous community violently uprooted from their ancestral territory by white missionaries. Between past and present, forest and desert, folk songs and church hymns, Ullón's poetic feature lays bare the raw emotions of the human condition, seen through a culture on the brink of disappearing, but not without a voice.

### [IDFA Competition for Feature-Length Documentary](#)

**12 films** by some of the world's leading filmmakers are selected for the IDFA Competition for Feature-Length Documentary. The selection includes giants of documentary film, but also theater and visual art. The lineup's diversity is a force to be reckoned with, both in terms of regional spread and stylistic choices. With strong artistic concepts and bold formalist approaches, each title displays the mark of an auteur, from hybrid films to cinéma vérité. Such a selection, in this year especially, affirms the significance of documentary film for the world.

### [IDFA Competition for First Appearance](#)

A cinema of feelings, a cinema of facts: the IDFA Competition for First Appearance explores both. The **12-title selection includes 10 world premieres** and a notable presence of female filmmakers from lower-volume production countries, heralding a promising future for documentary film. Collectively, the selection invites audiences to enter an honest, genuine world as the filmmakers really see it. Exploring the creative documentary through different lenses, these up-and-coming directors offer the tools to cherish it, and the tools to rethink it. Still, they keep us guessing—as it turns out, sometimes reality is stranger than fiction.

### [IDFA Competition for Mid-Length Documentary](#)

Presenting a wide spectrum of documentary film, the **12 titles** in the IDFA Competition for Mid-Length Documentary look to the fringes of society, where people live, work, play, and struggle to make ends meet outside the status quo. Always self-reflexive, never passing any judgement, these filmmakers find new, creative ways of connecting with their subjects. Looking outward and looking inward; shooting for two decades or atop a deadly mountain range, the selected titles put the “person” back in “personal” whether behind the camera or in front of it.

### [IDFA DocLab Competition for Digital Storytelling\\*](#)

With **10 selected titles**, the IDFA DocLab Competition for Digital Storytelling celebrates how digital art is exploring the liminal space between tangibility and tactility. Selected projects include documentary stories in virtual spaces, augmented reality in public space, algorithmically-driven identity games, and an aging artificial life. Together, the selection invites users to travel from their homes to other virtual places in the space-time continuum.

### [IDFA DocLab Competition for Immersive Non-Fiction\\*](#)

Comprised of **9 titles**, the IDFA DocLab Competition for Immersive Non-Fiction opens up new possibilities for live performance in digital art, as artists increasingly experiment with different platforms in response to the challenges of 2020. Selected formats include online immersive theater, full-dome experiences, and multi-sensory experiments. All submerge audiences in completely new realities.

## [IDFA DocLab Spotlight](#)

The non-competitive new media section includes **10 titles** with themes such as galactic justice, (post)human grief, and caretaking of artificial beings. Highlights include **Vincent Morisset's** *Motto*, an interactive novella made up of a thousand tiny videos co-created with readers all over the world. **Ainslee Robson's** point-cloud dreamscape *Ferenj: A Graphic Memoir in VR* immerses the user in an afrosurrealist world of nostalgia and in-between identities. Other highlights include the online multi-user version of the National Theatre's *All Kinds of Limbo*, *XR Broadcast*, an Extended Reality performance and musical journey inspired by the influence of West Indian culture on the UK's music scene.

The IDFA DocLab competitions & Spotlight are part of the **do {not} touch** program, a collaboration between **IDFA on Stage** and **IDFA DocLab** to explore how artists reshape the art of reality as it moves between online and physical worlds.

## [IDFA Competition for Creative Use of Archive](#)

Now in its second year, the IDFA Competition for Creative Use of Archive includes **10 titles** from across the festival program. The selected films, which feature archival material, found footage, propaganda films, and everything in between, crack open our shared history to dig up new archaeologies and where we might fit in. Obsessively documenting ourselves, unearthing state secrets, re-constructing past events, and re-casting historical icons: This selection explores the cinematic histories that define us. The findings are imperative—our past, present, and future are at stake. **The selected films will compete for the Beeld en Geluid IDFA ReFrame Award.**

\*Due to new travel and exhibition restrictions, it is not possible to present all DocLab competition works equally to an international jury. Therefore, the festival will forgo the DocLab juries and awards this year. IDFA will present an alternative scheme to celebrate and support projects in the DocLab competitions.

*IDFA's competition program is supported by [Ammodo](#).*

*The IDFA Competition for Creative Use of Archive is supported by [Beeld en Geluid, the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision](#).*

*IDFA DocLab is supported by the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy of the Netherlands](#), [CLICKNL](#), [Gieskes-Strijbis Fonds](#), [Netherlands Film Fund](#), [Flanders Audiovisual Fund](#), [VIVE](#), [VIVEPORT](#) and the [Special Friends+](#).*

*DocLab research collaboration partners are [MIT Open Documentary Lab](#), [Beeld en Geluid](#), [ARTIS-Planetarium](#), [CreativeXR](#), [Diversión cinema](#), [Het Nieuwe Instituut](#), [POPKRAFT](#), [The Immersive Storytelling Studio \(National Theatre\)](#) and the [Tolhuistuin](#).*

**IDFA 2020 runs in Amsterdam venues and online from Nov 18 until Dec 6, in addition to online markets (November 16 to 20).**

*IDFA puts health and safety first. The 33rd festival edition will take place in Amsterdam and online, with comprehensive hygiene measures in place at all on-site venues. See the latest updates at [idfa.nl/covid-19](https://idfa.nl/covid-19).*

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**Editors' notes:**

For film stills, please [click here](#).

For more information, please [click here](#) or contact our press office.

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*For more information about **what's on offer if visiting IDFA in Amsterdam or online**, please visit our website or just [click here](#). You can also find all **key dates here**.*

*IDFA's audience program is made possible by [Fonds 21](#), [Creative Europe Media](#), [VSBfonds](#), [City of Amsterdam](#), [Democracy and Media Foundation](#), [Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds](#) and [Zabawas Foundation](#).*