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Press release *doxs!*

doxs! documentaries for children and youth #17

42nd Duisburger Filmwoche

5 - 11th November 2018

Exploring Reality –

The 17th edition of doxs! presents ambitious films, demanding curiosity about the world we live in

Heading to the moon with a self-made spacecraft, following avatars through an apocalyptic New York City or accompanying a YouTube star to Hollywood? When films set out to explore, the cinema makes for a magnificent travelling companion. The documentary gaze navigates us through thick clouds and clear blue skies towards the flickering horizon: The everyday life of children and adolescents.

The 27 contemporary documentaries of this year's festival are exploring different atmospheres, environments and living conditions. Quite often, political and social issues are mirrored in their personal observations and experiences: The war in the Ukraine, the fate of young African refugees, climate change in Mongolia, the economic crisis of the Canary Islands or the self-centred capitalism of influencers. The protagonists are keen to rise to the challenges presented to them. They are fighters, bursting with – occasionally childish – curiosity, always pushing forward, not afraid to think beyond the status quo.

Festival director Gudrun Sommer: "The selection favours films that are curious about the world we live in. Migration, digitalization and personal challenges are shaping the everyday life of adolescents. In creating a dialog with students and festival guests we intend to discuss and reflect on this generation's framework conditions."

Supporting programme and awards

The initiative "Outstanding Films for Children", as well as the new **documentary film scholarship of NRW**, set new and intense impulses for documentary filmmaking, that involves young audiences. During the doxs! film festival, the panel "**We have enough hobbies already**" will not only present both initiatives, but also offer profound insights in the filmmakers' artistic compositions and experiences in working with children and adolescents.

For an impressive sixth consecutive year, the doxs! documentary programme is thinking outside the Duisburg-box, visiting other cities as part of the festival's **doxs! ruhr** programme as well. The usual hosts Bochum, Dinslaken, Dortmund, Essen, Gelsenkirchen and Moers are joined by Bottrop and its **Filmforum of the Education Centre**, making it the seventh cinema partnering with doxs!.

In collaboration with the **Kulturrucksack NRW**, students of the Reinhard-und-Max-Mannesmann-Gymnasium are once again presenting a whole programme slot of the festival. The students reviewed documentaries beforehand and selected "**A butcher's heart**", "**Girl on a mission**" and "**Little Fire**" to be shown.

Altogether, 19 productions are nominated for an award, including the aforementioned three contributions. A youth jury will select the winner of the **GROSSE KLAPPE** award, which is endowed with 5,000€ and presented by the Federal Agency for Civic Education.

An international jury will honour the best European children documentary with the **ECFA** Documentary Award, presented by the European Children's Film Association for the third year in a row in Duisburg.

In addition to these competitions, doxs! is once again realising a programme for nursery schools and a selection of documentary works with little to no language at all. This special programme is aimed at "Integration classes", involving students that have only recently emigrated and sought refuge in Germany.

Programme Preview – Films in 2018

Inner sense of security

Noëll needs a strictly planned out daily routine and fixed rituals. Everything out of the ordinary unsettles and frightens him. In **Little Fire** (NL 2017, Director: Nicky Maas), Gerrit, a tough family friend with a motorcycle, takes Noëll on a liberating adventure, trying to loosen his constant need for security and forming an unlikely bond between the two. The road trip proves successful – the 11-year old boy, having a hard time connecting with people, lets his guard down, learns to trust Gerrit and opens himself to the world.

In comparison to Noëll, the protagonists of **Phil and the never-ending sadness** (DE 2017, Director: Marco Giacomuzzi) and **Promise** (DE 2018, Director: Bünyamin Musullu) are not struggling with an over-developed sense or need for security, but with its complete depletion. The 11-year old Phil, after suffering the devastating loss of his biological father and the separation from his step-father, fell into a deep depression. Only a hospitalisation could help him get back on track and regain his zest for life. Promise (10 years old), shares his new home at Hotel Mado in Cologne with his three-year-old twin sisters, his mother and many other refugees. He explores the maze of rooms and corridors of his new home with a digital camera at hand, with every picture slowly increasing his orientation and confidence in this new environment.

Hostile worlds

When being different may cost you your life: In **The World is Round So That Nobody Can Hide in the Corners - Part I: Refuge** (DE 2017, Director: Leandro Goddinho), a young Nigerian describes how he not only lost his homeland, but his boyfriend as well when having to flee to Europe due to his homosexuality.

In a time of war and facing a lack of hope and perspective, the two protagonists of **Anya and Serjozha** (DE 2018, Director: Ivette Löcker) try to find their voice using their creativity.

Only thirty kilometres away from the eastern Ukrainian front they are fighting their own war against the dominant macho mentality, seeking to provoke their audience with quirky performance art.

Obon (DE 2018, Directors: André Hörmann, Anna „Samo“ Bergmann) takes its protagonist on a journey through time. One of the last survivors of the Hiroshima atomic bombing reflects on her authoritarian father and makes a gentle plea against patriarchy and militarism.

What does the future hold? **Operation Jane Walk** (AT 2018, Directors: Leonhard Müllner, Robin Klen-gel) pictures a dystopian scenario: a multiplayer shooting game becomes a post-apocalyptic guided tour through a destroyed New York City, ravaged and ruled by gangs. Let's play!

We need to talk!

If there is nobody to trust and confide in or if the issue demands the protection of one's identity, the "Kindertelefoon" (Child Helpline) in the Netherlands provides a sympathetic ear. **Listen** (NL 2017, Director: Astrid Bussink) presents a cross-section of conversations between children and the Kindertelefoon, which demonstrates the importance of a patient and empathetic confidant for children, who need someone to talk to.

Shame/Fame (NL 2017, Regie: Eef Hilgers) deals with quite the opposite: how communication becomes a tool to publicly defame, bully and stigmatise. The film portrays enablers of hate speech, creators of humiliation videos and its victims. It is an online journey through what previously remained invisible, but is now relentlessly mapped by the internet era. The documentary showcases sensationalism and moralists, new media hypes and their side effects while getting into contact with perpetrators and their victims.

In **A Butcher's heart** (NL 2017, Director: Marijn Frank) Wessel, the son of a butcher, gets called "animal killer", bullied by classmates because of his father's profession. He questions their hypocrisy; do they think meat grows on trees? The film mirrors the current explosive social topics of animal welfare and meat consumption among youngsters. Both subjects gain popularity and can be found in an increasing amount of festival entries in the recent years.

Reaching for the Stars

Travelling to the moon – a dream that is as real for Bandura in **Apollo Javakheti** (GE 2017, Director: Bakar Cherkezishvili) as the herd of sheep he is tending. The teenager is living in a rural village in the Georgian region of Javakheti, lightyears away from an astronaut training program in the United States. However, his endless imagination helps the boy to believe in his seemingly impossible dream.

Miruna, the protagonist of **Girl on a mission** (NL 2017, Director: Heleen D'Haens, Eva van Barneveld) desires a life without chaos and confinement. Living in a Romanian slum, she dares to dream big as well with one ambitious goal in mind: She wants to join the police force!

The young Belgian rapper **Si-G** (BE 2017, Director: Frederike Migom) already has her dream come true: She has the opportunity to record a song and shoot a video with her idol and mentor.

One last summer of hedonism and hormones on La Gomera, the air already saturated with a certain longing - and fear - for what comes next. The youngsters in **Everyone in Hawaii Has a Sixpack Already** (DE/ES 2018, Director: Marvin Hesse) are enjoying every last grain of sand and ray of sunshine before they have to leave their beloved home as there is no secondary school in this paradisiacal corner of the Canary Islands.

Anton serves his thousands of followers as an example of how to make your dreams come true. He is a YouTube star, continuously releasing new vlogs of his travels and adventures. The idea for **My Last Video** (DE 2018, Directors: Gerd Breiter, Andreas Bolm) has already been discussed with adolescents as part of the doku.klasse project in 2017 in Duisburg. The 21-year-old protagonist finds himself at a turning point in his career. He wants to move forward, to Hollywood to be precise, from blog to blockbuster.

Information and Contact

doxs! is organised by the city of Duisburg. Main sponsor is the Ministry of Culture and Science, NRW. All screenings are accompanied by conversations with invited filmmakers. The visit of all events is completely free of charge for schools as well as for accredited guests.

The screenings take place from the 5th to the 11th of November in Duisburg in the **filmforum**. The cinema and our festival centre are located **at the Dellplatz**.

The doxs! ruhr - screenings take place from the 5th to the 8th November 2018 in **Bochum, Dinslaken, Dortmund, Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Moers** and – for the very first time – in **Bottrop**.

Please visit www.do-xs.de/presse for **free print material** of the films for editorial use.

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