

DOCUMENT HUMAN RIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL

18th edition

25 – 31 January 2021
Online, documentfilmfestival.org

INTRO

Whilst we're still very much in the eye of the storm, both globally and at home, we hope that this edition offers an engaging and social space for us to come together to affirm our shared relationship to human rights and love for innovative, thought-provoking films.

Through screenings and events addressing historic and real-time erasure of lives and experiences, this edition takes a deep dive into the 'politics of viewing' and the role of cinema in a world of perpetual emergency.

Films in the programme offer a counterpoint to the dominant flows of images and media that saturate our daily lives – generating complex and personal responses that prompt new ways to look at the world, and hope of claiming agency and solidarity from crisis.

The Programme

We open the festival with a live, [desktop-documentary performance](#) by filmmaker and media artist, Kevin B Lee, exploring [Bottled Songs](#), a cross media project depicting strategies for making sense of terrorist propaganda and its viral circulation in the contemporary mediascape.

Highlights of the screening programme include the coming together of 2000's L.A. and 1970's Belfast in Mariah Garnett's intimate and playful odyssey of family and sectarianism, [Trouble](#); Truong Minh Quý's lyrical, quasi-sci-fi, [The Tree House](#); Jonathan Rescigno's explosive portrait of a French former-mining town, [Strike or Die](#); a new work by experimental pioneers the Otolith Group, [INFINITY Minus Infinity](#), exploring the entanglements of climate and racism in the creation of The Commonwealth; and two films that have prompted sister investigations by multidisciplinary research group, Forensic Architecture – Amel Alzakout & Khaled Abdulwahed's profoundly personal, first-hand reflection on a fatal migrant crossing, [Purple Sea](#); and Palestinian artist Emily Jacir's, [Letter to a Friend](#).

Two workshop events with writer and film curator, So Mayer, invite you to an 'anarchival' reimagining of lost queer histories via their new short book, [A Nazi Word for a Nazi Thing](#) – and a rare screening of Barbara Hammer's 1990 classic of queer experimental cinema, [Nitrate Kisses](#).

We collaborate with LUX Scotland and filmmaker and researcher, Ed Webb Ingall, for a screening and discussion event with Glasgow-based [housing activists](#). And Ukrainian filmmaker Iryna Tsilyk leads a [director masterclass](#) around her astonishing debut feature, [The Earth is Blue as an Orange](#).

Our annual [Critical Forum](#) discussion returns with a focus on how the global pandemic has impacted the work of human rights film festivals, with guest speakers from festivals in Bologna and São Paulo. And we've teamed up with Glasgow-based art writing organisation MAP Magazine to commission series of new essays exploring some of the works and themes threaded throughout the programme.

The Document team x

TICKETING & HOW TO ACCESS FILMS AND EVENTS ONLINE

How to watch films

All our films are available online, from anywhere in the UK via our streaming platform, Indy on Demand in partnership with Shift72.

All films are available throughout the festival week, from 25 to 31 January, with the exception of *Infinity Minus Infinity* (available from 26 Jan for 48 hours) and *No Data Plan* (available from 27 Jan for 48 hours).

In order to watch films, you need to create an account on the platform [here](#). It's free and easy to join, you only need your email address. You will receive confirmation of your account and any film purchases on the same email address, so keep your log in details handy.

Once you pay for the films you want to watch, they will appear in My Library.

You can also browse and add the films you want to watch to My List.

Rental & Watch Window

Once you rent a film, it will be available to watch anytime within a specific window that covers the full festival week.

By pressing play, you can start watching the film and have 48 hours to complete it. Within this time frame, you can pause, re-watch or control your viewing as desired.

Please make sure to watch the film before the Rental and Watch Window expire.

If you purchase a ticket or a pass in advance, the Rental Window will start once the films are released on the platform.

How to join live events

We will host a variety of [live events](#) - including Q&As with filmmakers, a director Masterclass, a live performance, an illustrated talk, panel discussion and many others.

You can join us in the Zoom (free, registration required) and watch on Facebook Live.

To access Zoom events, you need to download the app for FREE from zoom.us or from your device's app store.

Ticket prices

The film programme is available for individual rental (£5 full price / £3 concessions), or as a bundle containing all the films included in the programme (£15 full price / £10 concessions).

You can choose what you pay based on your circumstances* – you won't be asked for any proof, we just ask that you are honest!

If you would like to pay the concessions price, add the promo code '**concession**' at checkout.

We have a limited number of community tickets (which provide free access to watch the films). Again, no proof is required, just get in touch at info@documentfilmfestival.org and we will facilitate that.

Our live and pre-recorded events are free to access from anywhere in the world. Keep an eye on our website and social media channels for the exact date & time of the live events.

*We suggest purchasing a concession priced passes and tickets if you are: student, under 16, senior citizen over 65 and anyone in receipt of Universal Credit, Job Seeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance or Carer's Allowance.

System requirements & devices

Read more [here](#) about the requirements to use the platform and watch content.

You can watch the films from multiple devices (including iPhone/iPad and android devices, via the SHIFT72 app.

You can use Chromecast to connect to your TV to watch the films available on the platform.

Access



Films listed with the **CC** icon, will have full closed captions / SDH available. All other films in our programme will have English subtitles.



Events listed with the icon above will have live captioning available.

Live Q&As and discussion events will be recorded and posted later on our website and platform with English subtitles.

Contact us (info@documentfilmfestival.org) if you need further assistance.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Monday, 25 January

6pm Opening Night | a live performance edition of Bottled Songs, with Kevin B Lee

Tuesday, 26 January

7.30pm Strike or Die Q&A - POSTPONED

Wednesday, 27 January

7.30pm Trouble Q&A (live captioning available)

Thursday, 28 January

7.30pm Purple Sea Q&A

Friday, 29 January

2pm Director Masterclass: Iryna Tsilyk

7pm A Nazi Word for a Nazi Thing with So Mayer

Saturday, 30 January

1pm We're Still Here Q&A (live captioning available)

3pm Critical Forum: Human Rights Film Festivals – Resilience, Solidarity and Creativity during Covid19

6.30pm letter to a friend Q&A

Sunday, 31 January

12pm Forming a Residents Association – The Role of Video in Response to the UK Housing Crisis

3pm Nitrate Kisses | Reading the Anarchive with So Mayer

EVENTS

Opening Night: Live performance of Desktop Cinema with Kevin B Lee (co-director of *Bottled Songs* 1-4).

Live event Mon, 25 Jan, 6pm, on Zoom (free, [registration required](#))

Join us on our opening night for a special live desktop-documentary performance from filmmaker and media artist, Kevin B. Lee. Register for FREE, [HERE](#).

Kevin's latest work is [Bottled Songs](#), an ongoing cross-media project produced in collaboration with fellow artist, Chloé Galibert-Lainé, depicting strategies for making sense of online terrorist propaganda and its viral circulation in the contemporary mediascape.

Presented in partnership with [Scottish Documentary Institute](#).

Closing event: Nitrate Kisses | Reading the Anarchive with So Mayer

Live event Sun, 31 Jan, 3pm, on Zoom (free, [registration required](#))

Join us as we close the festival with an informal discussion led by film writer and curator, So Mayer – open to all!

We'll be touching on some of the major themes and works of this year's festival, exploring the creative processes that link politics, film and activism, and ideas around the 'anarchival' (re)claiming of collective histories.

Speakers TBC – check our website for more info soon!

Supported by Film Hub Scotland, part of the BFI's Film Audience Network, and funded by Screen Scotland and National Lottery funding from the BFI.

A Nazi Word for a Nazi Thing | with So Mayer

Live event Fri, 29 Jan, 7pm, on Zoom (free, [registration required](#))

Join us for an illustrated talk and discussion with the fabulous So Mayer, around their recently published short book, [A Nazi Word for a Nazi Thing](#) (2020). Framed by a rare screening of Barbara Hammer's recently restored [Nitrate Kisses](#) (1992), we'll be discussing questions around archiving, erasure, queer/feminist politics and cinema!

A Nazi Word... explores queer art and cinema in juxtaposition to the historical erasure enacted by the Nazis through the infamous 1937 art exhibition, *Entartete 'Kunst'* (Degenerate 'Art'), that sought to appropriate and erase the cultural output of minorities. It's a lively and exhilarating critique of the power and politics of moving images – particularly in relation to the dynamics of conflict, crisis and emergency that have striking contemporary relevance – and a beautiful, speculative anarchive of queer film history.

Supported by Film Hub Scotland, part of the BFI's Film Audience Network, and funded by Screen Scotland and National Lottery funding from the BFI.

Critical Forum: Human Rights Film Festivals – Resilience, Solidarity and Creativity during Covid19

Live event Sat, 30 Jan, 3pm, on Zoom (free, [registration required](#))

Almost a year since the pandemic became a global reality, the landscape of film festivals looks very different, with online screenings, virtual meeting rooms and many aspects threatening their survival. Human rights film festivals have been some of the most severely affected festivals because of the volatile political contexts in which they operate, the inability to reach out to the most vulnerable communities and the increasingly shrinking resources. Despite these struggles, many of these festivals have adapted, while cultivating solidarity and resilience among each other and with the film industry.

This year's Critical Forum focuses on how the pandemic affected human rights film festivals and independent filmmakers, how they found new ways of operating and reaching out to audiences.

Guests: Giulia Grassilli (Researcher at University of Sussex, UK, lecturer at University of Bologna, Italy and Festival Director of Human Rights Nights, Bologna), Manu Sobral (Entretodos Human Rights Film Festival) and Magali Rocha (Producer [To See You Again](#), Amate Films). Moderated by Oisin Kealy.

Documentary Masterclass: Iryna Tsilyk

Live event Fri, 29 Jan, 2pm, on Zoom (free, [registration required](#))

Join SDI in conversation with Iryna Tsilyk about her acclaimed debut feature *The Earth is Blue as an Orange*, a documentary exploring a family's resilience and creativity in dealing with the trauma of living through war in Ukraine. The masterclass will discuss the process of developing a story collaboratively with the protagonists, building trust and working with responsibility on the thin line between art and reality.

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Writer/Director Iryna Tsilyk graduated from Kyiv National University of Theatre, Cinematography and Television named by Karpenko-Kary in TV directing in 2005. Her previous short fiction and documentary films were presented and awarded at various international film festivals. In addition, Tsilyk has been working as a writer. Some of her works have been translated into various languages and presented at different international literary festivals.

Presented in partnership with [Scottish Documentary Institute](#).

Forming a Residents Association - The Role of Video in Response to the UK Housing Crisis

Live event Sun, 31 Jan, 12pm, on Zoom (free, [registration required](#) - films will screen as part of the event)

Following a screening of short films *Forming a Residents Association* (1974) and *Home and Dry* (1987), filmmaker and researcher Ed Webb-Ingall will be joined by Tamima Lerkins (Women Asylum Seekers Housing/WASH) and Joey Simons (Living Rent Glasgow) to discuss and reflect on the role of video in response to the housing crisis.

This event is part of an ongoing research project developed in partnership with Grand Union, Birmingham, Nottingham Contemporary, LUX Scotland and Rule of Threes, Liverpool. It takes the form of a series of meetings, screenings and workshops, connecting a national network of community and activist organisations with galleries and museums. The aim is to co-produce a 'tool-kit' of resources and to share findings across these cultural and community partnerships.

FILMS A-Z

Bottled Songs 1 to 4

Chloé Galibert-Laîné & Kevin B. Lee
Germany, France, USA / 2020 / 77m
French, English with English subtitles
Available 25-31 Jan / UK only

Bottled Songs is an ongoing media project depicting strategies for making sense of online terrorist propaganda and its viral circulation in the contemporary mediascape. Filmmakers and media researchers Chloé Galibert-Laîné and Kevin B. Lee compose letters addressed to each other, narrating their encounters with videos originating from the terrorist group the Islamic State (ISIS). They use a desktop documentary approach to trace and record their investigations playing directly upon their computer screens.

The wider project takes multiple forms: a multi-part episodic series, multiple two-channel installations, a feature length film, and audiovisual performance lectures - exploring the volatile and mutational nature of contemporary terrorism across medias, and the network of intersubjective desires perpetually (mis)perceived, (mis)understood, commented, shared, re-purposed and re-contextualized.

The first phase of the project consists of four short films, each taking the form of a desktop epistolary composed by one researcher addressed to the other.

Bottled Songs 1: The Observer / 18m
Bottled Songs 2: Looking Into the Flames / 18m
Bottled Songs 3: My Crush Was a Superstar / 12m
Bottled Songs 4: The Spokesman / 12m

Presented in partnership with Scottish Documentary Institute.

INFINITY Minus Infinity

The Otolith Group
UK, United Arab Emirates / 2019 / 50m
English with English subtitles
Available 26-28 Jan / UK only

Drawing from dance, performance, music, recital, and digital animation, INFINITY Minus Infinity looks at the entanglements of climate and racism in the creation of The Commonwealth, the 1948 British Nationality Act, and the unstable and ambient fear that constitutes citizenship in the UK today.

The film continues The Otolith Group's (Kodwo Eshun and Anjalika Sagar) exploration of the conditions of post-human life, harnessing the forces and the fictions of 21st Century black feminist digital cosmology, and the black feminist poetics of the Brazilian philosopher Denise Ferreira da Silva to interrogate the past, present and future of Britain's "hostile environment".

Presented in partnership with UNESCO – Refugee Integration Through Language and the Arts.

letter to a Friend

Emily Jacir

Palestine / 2019 / 43m

English with English subtitles

Available 25-31 Jan / UK only

Live Q&A Tue, 26 Jan, 8pm, on Zoom (free, registration required)

Filmmaker Emily Jacir asks her friend at Forensic Architecture to start an investigation before an inevitable act occurs.

Interlacing images, textures, movements, traces, and sounds from over a century, *Letter to a Friend* recounts in minute detail a home and street in Bethlehem - a place marked by movement, migration, survival, and war.

Presented in partnership with Glasgow Refugee Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNet).



Nitrate Kisses

Barbara Hammer

USA / 1992 / 67m

English with English subtitles

This first feature documentary by Barbara Hammer, a pioneer of queer experimental cinema, weaves together the allegorical, historical and erotic - challenging past and present erasure of queer lives. This haunting visual collage juxtaposes striking images of gay and lesbian couples with footage of unearthed, forbidden and invisible histories, including archival footage from one of the earliest gay films in the U.S., *Lot In Sodom* (1933).

“Nitrate Kisses questions how history is recorded and encourages the viewer, gay or straight, to save scraps, letters, books, records, and snapshots in order to preserve our ‘ordinary’ lives as history.” – Barbara Hammer

Supported by Film Hub Scotland, part of the BFI’s Film Audience Network, and funded by Screen Scotland and National Lottery funding from the BFI.

No Data Plan

Miko Revereza

USA / 2019 / 70m

English, Tagalog with English subtitles

“Mama has two phone numbers. We do not talk about immigration on her Obama phone. For that we use the other number with no data plan.” In his accomplished first feature, undocumented filmmaker Miko Revereza depicts a train journey he took across America in 2018. Utilising a potent

mix of discreet recordings, sound design, on-screen subtitles and Instagram stories, the film successfully reflects its maker's lived experience, but also that of the millions of other marginalised people whose every movement is similarly imperilled. Both scintillating observational study and politically charged personal documentary, *No Data Plan* is a travelogue of an altogether different kind.

Presented in partnership with LUX Scotland.



Purple Sea

Amel Alzakout & Khaled Abdulwahed

Germany / 2020 / 67m

Arabic with English subtitles

Made from images filmed by the Syrian artist Amel Alzakout after the boat on which she was fleeing Syria sank off the coast of Lesbos, *Purple Sea* reports on the moment in which the co-director and the other passengers are floating in the sea in their life jackets, waiting to be rescued.

Co-authored with filmmaker Khaled Abdulwahed, Alzakout poignantly narrates her perilous journey, and her poetic commentary feeds into a confrontational psychological reflection on this moment of personal crisis and collective tragedy.

Presented in partnership with Goethe-Institut Glasgow.

Strike or Die

Jonathan Rescigno

France / 2020 / 93m

French with English subtitles

In December 1995 begins one of the most violent struggles for social justice in French contemporary history. A thousand miners take to the streets in a merciless battle against the state and to keep their rights.

Twenty years later, the dual processes of de-industrialisation and a flash archiving of their history have aimed at separating the people from their sense of struggle.

Strike or Die is composed of unreleased video footage of the time, filmed at the heart of the strikes and images of the present inhabitants of the city. The film paints a portrait of two generations who fight, body and soul, and for whom the battles have never ceased, despite all appearances.

Presented in Partnership with Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC).

The Earth is Blue as an Orange

Iryna Tsilyk

Ukraine, Lithuania / 2020 / 74m

Ukrainian with English subtitles

Single mother Anna and her four children live in the front-line war zone of Donbas, Ukraine. While the outside world is made up of bombings and chaos, the family is managing to keep their home as a safe haven, full of life and full of light. Every member of the family has a passion for cinema, motivating them to shoot a film inspired by their own life during a time of war.

The creative process raises the question of what kind of power the magical world of cinema could have during times of disaster. How to picture war through fiction? For Anna and the children, transforming trauma into a work of art is the ultimate way to stay human.

Presented in partnership with Scottish Documentary Institute.

The Tree House

Truong Minh Quý

Singapore, Vietnam, Germany, France, China / 2019 / 84m

Vietnamese, Ruc, Kor, Jrai with English subtitles

Mars, 2045. An unnamed filmmaker thinks back to the people he filmed in the mountains, caves and small villages of Vietnam: members of the Cor and Rục peoples. He is working on a film in which he combines their memories – for example, of the Vietnam war and being driven from their homes by the Americans – with his own.

One of his subjects is Hồ Văn Lang, a man who lived in the forest for 40 years after his home was bombed. He remembers Cao Thị Hậu, whose cave used to be her childhood home, and his father cooking fried crickets for him when he was a child. But what about his own intentions? Did he have the right to put these people in front of his camera, to enter their world and take their stories?

Utilising historical footage filmed by American soldiers, and his own powerfully associative images and narratives, Truong Minh Quý constructs a moving and provocative meditation on representations of home.

To See You Again

Carolina Corral Paredes

Mexico / 2020 / 93m

Lina, Angy and Edith, mothers and family members of disappeared loved ones, participate in the exhumation of more than 200 bodies buried in secret by the Morelos Attorney General during a failed war against organized crime. Amidst deafening silence from the authorities, they set about self-training in forensics, cataloguing the bodies of the disappeared in the hope of identifying them for their loved ones and providing a small measure of peace.

Through the voices and actions of these remarkable women, Peredes has crafted a potent and moving film that mourns a nation where ordinary citizens take on the burden of pain and trauma in the face of the complicity and impunity of state power.

Presented in partnership with Femspectives.

Trouble

Mariah Garnett

USA, UK / 2019 / 82m

English with English subtitles

A queer American filmmaker looks at the legacy of the Troubles through the lived experience of her estranged Northern Irish father. *Trouble* conflates fact and fiction, history and the present moment, violence and stasis, foregrounding the stakes of identarian conflict alongside a growing intimacy inside of a small, globally scattered family.

“Through a combination of letters, interviews, archival footage, and uncanny reenactments of the period (featuring Garnett herself in the role of her father), this slyly self-reflexive yet deeply felt film provides a fragmented account of a teenager struggling to find an identity in a rapidly deteriorating society, and the parallel struggle of a filmmaker attempting to connect with her estranged father.”
Queen’s Film Theatre, Belfast.



We're Still Here

Melissa Herman

UK / 2020 / 68m

English with English subtitles

London's housing is under attack. As developers - hand in glove with councils and housing associations - demolish necessary social housing to replace it with unaffordable apartments, more people are now standing up for their rightful place in their city.

Jasmin and other families in the Focus E15 hostel were threatened with being moved outside London. They fought and are now rehoused locally but their fight is not over.

The keyworkers rent in West Ham was going up by 40%... "If you don't like it you can move out!" Their only recourse was a rent strike.

72 people perished in the Grenfell Tower tragedy. Local people are determined to make sure no council ever ignores the residents' fears again.

Filmed over four years, *We're Still Here* documents the impact of a system that puts profit before people, and those who are fighting back.



CREDITS

Festival Producer: **Alexandra-Maria Colta**

Programme Producer: **Sam Kenyon**

Press and Marketing Coordinator: **Ane Lopez**

Technical Coordinator: **Lewis den Hertog**

Web Development: **Ralph Mackenzie**

Trailer and graphics design: **Christopher Dickson**

Programme advisors: **Poppy Kohner, Oisín Kealy**

Official Media Partner: **The List**

Captioning: **Emilia Beatriz, Nicole O'Reilly, A. B. Silvera**

Thank you: Paula Larkin, Mona Rai, Document Board, Centre for Contemporary Arts, INDY Cinema Group, all live captioners and volunteers.

Document is funded by Screen Scotland through the Film Festivals Fund and supported by Film Hub Scotland, part of the BFI's Film Audience Network, and funded by Screen Scotland and Lottery funding from the BFI.

Funders

Screen Scotland, Film Hub Scotland

Official Partner

The List

Online Screenings Platform

INDY on Demand

Partners / Supporters

Goethe-Institut, SDI, UNESCO-RILA, LUX Scotland, GRAMNet, STUC, Femspectives, MAP magazine