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International
Documentary
Film Festival
Amsterdam

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Policy plan **idfa**

2025 - 2028

Amsterdam: documentary capital of the world

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Summary

In spite of a number of turbulent years, IDFA (International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam) has continued to grow into a pluriform international documentary institute for creative documentary film and new media art with a stable reach in excess of 250,000 visits. IDFA is a flexible, multifaceted institute serving the entire chain, from finance through exhibition, geared towards the general audience, professionals and school students. Its major new activity is the documentary exhibition venue Het Documentaire Paviljoen, which aims to be open to the public on a daily basis and with which IDFA seeks to expand its reach and strengthen its connectedness to new generations: one of the organization's key areas of focus for the period ahead. Alongside this, diversity and inclusivity continue to play an undiminished role within the DNA of IDFA and all of its activities. Greater attention will be devoted to making IDFA accessible to people with a disability. Sustainability – both on-screen and behind the scenes – also remains a critical element of the institute's foundations. In terms of operations, together with other film festivals IDFA is taking the next step in relation to fair pay.

Manifesto

We live in a world characterized by conflicts, changes, uncertainty and polarization. Various wars – as well as many other armed conflicts around the world – have led to rearmament and the return of the threat of nuclear annihilation. The climate catastrophe is making an impression on almost everyone and everything, as is fear of the unrestrained advance of technology. Belief in democracy, governments and other institutions is crumbling while we are experiencing a potent, widespread struggle for emancipation: all of which is creating huge tension.

In recent years, the global pandemic has given us pause for thought. Covid (temporarily) turned our world upside down and has led to increased introspection. The urgent call and need for a more satisfying, more equitable way of life only grew during the coronavirus era. When in lockdowns almost everything else fell away, the world longed for art as a remedy against stagnation and isolation. Now that we're coming up even harder against limitations and uncertainties, change – both personal and systemic – has become even more essential.

To help us deal with this uncertainty, change and level of existential threat, we need unerring mirrors that can show us whether we have our true values in order. That show what is authentic, what is fragile and of value, and act as a counterweight to a culture dominated by sensational representations and provocative stories. The debate within society is in need of new stories and voices to describe the world

in which we live. IDFA believes that documentary art is supremely suited to holding up such mirrors to us. That it is capable of helping shape the public space, as a creative bearer of in-depth content and as a stimulating source of inspiration for much-needed debate.

It is far from an exaggeration to place IDFA and documentary art within the context of epoch-making transformations, climate disasters and wars. Change only becomes conceivable when it is molded in a creative way; when it can move and inspire an audience. This is the essence of the work of artists and thinkers, of filmmakers and festivals such as IDFA. In a world of streaming platforms, AI, media saturation, post-truth, influencers, likes and shares as well as a broadly felt crisis of confidence in society, not only is it essential that documentary makers can show their work, but also that they can think seriously about the future and the meaning of their profession.

A cultural institute such as IDFA, however, can only remain acutely relevant by having something different to offer from that proposed by activists or journalists, politicians, entrepreneurs or academics. It is only when it is able to stand apart that art has something to offer to the world. Art is concerned with everything, but beholden to nothing. IDFA stands outside of the world in exactly the same way, but embraces her so tightly that at times it becomes one with her. IDFA is absolute in its isolation, and complete in its embrace. Both. Sometimes confusing, always uncompromising.



Vision and mission

Vision: IDFA believes in the creative documentary as a free, personal, artistic vision of complex social reality. Such documentaries give structure to opinions, show what is vulnerable and worth striving for and promote social debate.

Mission: IDFA seeks to contribute to the (improvement of) the international documentary climate, specifically by stimulating the position and (creative) development of independent makers, by promoting more inclusive ways of acting, and by giving a voice and an audience to under-represented filmmakers.

Foundations

IDFA's starting point is the creative documentary (film). The most important foundations underpinning this are artistic quality, audience reach and social commitment. IDFA applies four key principles in this respect: 'inclusivity & accessibility', 'innovation & sustainability', 'new generations' and 'live and online'. These foundations will continue to support IDFA during the upcoming period.

Artistic quality

Documentary is an autonomous artform, and IDFA stands for the creative documentary. Works that reveal reality in an artistic way, as well as expressing the vision of the maker. Like journalistic reportage, documentaries offer us insights into the changing world around us; but in the case of the creative documentary, artistic qualities such as originality, expressiveness and cultural-historical value also play leading roles. Within its various programs, IDFA explicitly gives space to documentaries that offer new ways of looking at form and the world; films and projects with a unique visual language that play with conventions. Particular attention is devoted to documentaries that challenge the dominant (artistic) worldview, substituting for this a vision of their own.

Audience reach

As outlined above, the films and projects screened at IDFA are often more adventurous than the standard fare offered in the movie theaters. We show documentary art that aims to go beyond expectations: an enchanting combination of differing artistic visions from present, past and future. This does not mean that IDFA wishes to operate on the fringes, or that it does not (strive to) reach large audiences. One of IDFA's strengths is that it is able to reconcile these seeming contradictions: the festival has an extensive reach, without being confined by a commercial model and/or just showing more of the same.

Social commitment

Creative documentaries provide insights into society, open our eyes and stimulate the individual's critical faculties. IDFA seeks to relate to topical social



themes through documentaries from all over the world that reflect on the most pressing issues of our age. Through films that are not one-dimensional, but which reveal the complex natures of such problems. Films that give scope to nuance, opinions, discussion and emotions – as a counterpart to a world in which complex issues are frequently reduced to simplistic, clickable content. IDFA wishes to be an independent institute clarifying an era and a cultural zeitgeist through documentary and debate.

Inclusivity, diversity and accessibility

IDFA offers a great deal of scope to films and projects from non-western cultures. And to work made from a wide range of perspectives by under-represented filmmakers. This is in IDFA's DNA, and that of the IDFA Bertha Fund, as well as being an integral component of the documentary genre, within which there is huge scope for histories that have received (too) little attention. At the same time, IDFA seeks to go a step further than simply offering a platform to non-western cultures, women, the LHBTIQ community and people with a disability. Real inclusivity means suppressed perspectives being incorporated into the big narratives about and for the world. No one is then dominant, and perspectives can intermingle. This is the goal on the horizon.

New generations

IDFA also wishes to be a place where new generations can grow. Including school students and students in intermediate vocational education, visitors, as well as young filmmakers and employees. An institute where young people can experience a cultural and social awakening, as well as undergo professional and creative development. A place that shapes personalities, teaches people to relate to the others around them; a place where you can expand your world and feel safe. By responding in this way to younger generations, culture can put down roots in society. IDFA wishes to give confidence to the future. Confidence in a new generation of audience members, who look at life – and therefore also at the arts and culture – in a way less determined by external frames. In a more uninhibited, less rigid way. This is the strength IDFA seeks to embrace.

Technological innovation and sustainability

IDFA's DocLab offers a regular showcase for new

technological forms and the major contemporary digital pioneers, allowing them to find their own languages and experiment with new forms of narrative and presentation. Often, this work raises questions concerning how we relate to new technologies. It helps us navigate thorny ethical dilemmas surrounding AI, blockchain and the metaverse. IDFA believes that showing, experimenting with and critically interrogating this technology is now more important than ever.

However, technological innovation in a broader sense is also part of IDFA's organizational culture. IDFA, for example, was involved from the start with Fiona; IDFA is an initiator in the development of a tool for online screenings, presentations and conversations; film logistics has now also been digitalized and an environmentally friendly solution found for film transportation and voting for the audience award. All of these have a favorable impact on the environment. As far as sustainability is concerned, IDFA is seeking not only to reduce its own (negative) impact and meet climate goals, but also to contribute to positive change by presenting inspirational programs to audiences, professionals and (school) students, as well as by playing an encouraging role towards its partners and the documentary industry.

Live and online

Cinema is live. IDFA is live – a shared, communal, social experience like a concert, the opera or a play. Especially at a time when film is increasingly being relegated to small screens, IDFA's role is also to sustain the connection between documentary film and the cinema, theater and the big screen. The coronavirus pandemic led to a huge acceleration in the implementation of new technologies, and this means we are able to reach audiences, professionals, talent and (school) students with online screenings and programs. Now that we are back in the theaters, the challenge is to further investigate the new opportunities presented by our time, without destroying the accomplishments of the past. IDFA sees online or hybrid principally as an extra presentation platform through which to reach a (new) audience – during the festival, but above all also throughout the year – that is unable to or has difficulty travelling to Amsterdam to visit the theater.

Reflection

IDFA is a prestigious documentary film festival, and at the same time much more than an audience-oriented festival only for films. For instance, IDFA is closely affiliated to the IDFA Bertha Fund. In addition, DocLab explicitly devotes attention to interactive and immersive documentaries. Furthermore, each year there are two markets for professionals from the Netherlands and the rest of the world, and we also organize activities for talent, school students and students all year round. In March 2024, we also opened the doors of our own theater specially for

documentaries in Amsterdam! This marks the next step in the development of the pluriform (inter) national institute IDFA has become. An institute that serves the entire chain, from finance right up to exhibition, and which is geared towards audiences, professionals and school students. Our core values are artistic quality, social commitment and an extensive reach, based upon foundations of inclusivity, innovation and sustainability.

Recent years have been uncertain and unpredictable. During this chaotic period, IDFA has managed to further strengthen its leading position within the sector. In 2020, during the coronavirus pandemic with its long lockdowns, IDFA was still able to reach a large online audience. When in 2022 the world opened up again, a recovery took place, followed by further growth in visitor numbers in 2023. The course that was adopted four years ago has been successfully continued: with an even tighter focus on artistic quality and a more diverse, worldwide range, IDFA reached a large audience within the Netherlands with more than 250,000 visits and more than 3,000 professionals and 50,000 school students attending. In the period ahead, IDFA will continue to aim for an extensive reach of approximately 250,000 visits per year. We will be making greater efforts to attract a young, culturally diverse audience, (also) to our own theater in Amsterdam's Vondelpark. We also expect an increase in the number of school students reached by our education program.

In these unpredictable and ominous times, the documentary as a genre has gained in power and significance. Now more than ever, we need the depth and empathy that documentary art provides. To inspire social debate, but also to show us what is authentic and valuable. More and more documentaries are being selected for A-list film festivals such as Venice, Cannes, and Berlin. The commercial streaming platforms are also programming more documentaries. Which is good, but also has a downside. On the one hand, the focus is principally on accessible documentary entertainment, and on the other on social documentaries with the greatest possible impact. IDFA aims to show the full rich spectrum of the documentary, and will continue to stress a diverse range of films and new media works with artistic, social and/or personal significance.

What we do: activities

IDFA will continue to develop during the period ahead, with the major new activity being the opening of its Het Documentaire Paviljoen venue in March 2024. IDFA serves the entire industry chain: from finance through to screening during the festival, as well as year-round in its own theater, throughout the country and online. And from providing distribution and training and inspiring the industry to educational screenings. All of these activities cross-pollinate and reinforce one another. We serve audiences, professionals, talent and school students, and focus special attention on upcoming generations.

Festival

During the period ahead, each year in November we will celebrate flourishing international documentary art, together with more than 3,000 professionals and a large audience (approx. 250,000 visits, of which 60,000 school students). Each year, we expect to receive in excess of 4,000 submissions. Following a rigorous selection process, the festival screens some 300 productions, more than 100 of which are premières. The festival presents a representative sample of genres and strives for gender equality, as well as a spread of countries of production and cultural backgrounds of makers. The program profile, painstakingly built up and proven over time, remains the same, consisting of three umbrella sections: the competition programs, the international harvest and the focus programs.

Competition programs with premières

The core of this festival program is made up of two new all-première competitions: the International Competition and the Envision Competition. The former is intended for more well-balanced, classic documentaries that appeal to a wide audience. Envision is for new themes and innovative forms. The major criterion for the competitions is artistic excellence. The aim is to represent every continent in each competition, and to ensure a balanced representation of genders. Alongside the two main competitions, awards are presented for the best Dutch documentary, the best youth documentary, the best short documentary, the best debut, the best interactive documentary.

International annual harvest

The annual international documentary harvest is brought together in Best of Fests and Signed. These program sections include films that have had their première elsewhere in the world, but which are so interesting that IDFA does not want to withhold them from its audiences. The other programs are Paradoxs, a program of experimental documentary art, and the Top 10s compiled by renowned

documentary makers such as Laura Poitras (2022) and Wang Bing (2023) and Johan Grimonprez (2024).

Focus programs

Each year, IDFA presents three focus programs in which the festival makes connections and offers insights into a particular theme. These themes have an artistic basis or respond to social issues. These programs give color to the festival and provide greater in-depth context to the films.



Events and talks

To attract and retain new audiences or offer the current audience new experiences, IDFA also uses other forms of presentation at exceptional locations. These include exhibitions and installations, live music and theater in combination with documentary, often with partners including Internationaal Theater Amsterdam (ITA) and Amsterdam Dance Event (ADE). The Film and Filmmaker Talks are accessible to both audience members and professionals, while the Industry Talks – a series of talkshows in varying shapes and sizes – are accessible exclusively to attending professionals.

Cultural diversity of the program

Each year, the diversity of the festival program is assessed and monitored. In 2021-2024, the percentage of non-western films remained stable at approx. 40%. The goal for the period ahead is to at least maintain this stable percentage, and where possible to move towards 50%. In terms of female makers, the percentage set in 2019 of 50% remains the annual goal.

Het Documentaire Paviljoen

Having a hub all of its own offers IDFA the ultimate opportunity to further define the institute, maintain its profile all year round and make new connections. This center – offering a range of functions and spaces – is accessible to all, every day. Here, all of IDFA's activities can be brought together and new

programs and initiatives developed, expanding to become a new cultural 'living room' for Amsterdam, with a reputation spreading throughout the Netherlands and internationally.



In Het Documentaire Paviljoen, IDFA is able to strengthen and deepen its relationship with its current audience. In addition, IDFA sees this new pavilion building as the perfect opportunity to reach and retain a new audience. Not only through new initiatives and (program) collaborations, but also by presenting successful festival programs. The flourishing documentary genre is and remains the starting point of IDFA's programming. Cinema and new media are central to this; however alongside film, VR, installations and exhibitions, there is scope for photography, audio, theater, dinners, events and everything else that doesn't fit neatly into a category. IDFA expects to welcome some 20,000 visitors to the Het Documentaire Paviljoen each year.

Alongside its public programming, the pavilion will host workshops, masterclasses, residences, networking meetings and discussion programs for talent and experienced professionals from the documentary industry throughout the year. What's more, education will be a major spearhead of the Het Documentaire Paviljoen's programming, with meetings and workshops for teachers as well as schools' screenings for school students. IDFA aims to help media-savvy school students learn to look critically at images, all year round.

New Media

DocLab

With the rise of immersive media, artificial intelligence and biometric technology, the digital revolution has entered a new phase. This is leading to growing concern about the impact of technology on our behavior, and on the physical world. Digital culture is an essential way of getting to grips with these developments, making them tangible and developing alternative scenarios. Critical examination of technology is therefore more urgently needed than ever, as is offering scope for the autonomous artistic development of interactive, immersive media.

IDFA's DocLab came about in 2007 as an interdisciplinary platform for art at the intersection of technology and documentary. It soon became one of the world's leading première platforms, as well as a meeting place where audiences and professionals involved with interactive and immersive media come together each year among exhibitions, performances and conferences. In recent years, DocLab has also become a platform for research and the sharing of knowledge, and works to stimulate finance, distribution and exhibition – the ecosystem – for immersive documentary art.

During the period ahead, DocLab will continue to present activities for both professionals and audiences during the festival. For professionals, there is the DocLab Forum (focused on the financing of new media works) and the annual Summit. In the case of the audience programming – which consists of exhibitions and live events – the principal areas of focus for the next four years are to increase audience reach and improve accessibility.

DocLab attaches great value to the sharing of knowledge and critical reflection on new technology through interdisciplinary and artistic practical research. Its successful Research & Development program in cooperation with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is to continue, and is now complemented by a new collaboration with Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. The aim of this partnership is to investigate the broader social impact of immersive content through artistic research, audience research and practically oriented experiments.



During the next four years, DocLab will make use of its platform and international network to actively stimulate the ecosystem. A new international coalition will build bridges between festivals, museums and new locations for presentation and distribution. Alongside pilot programs (on distribution, archiving and presentation/production), IDFA will use the Het Documentaire Paviljoen in particular as a venue for the presentation of international co-productions and immersive presentations. As a co-initiator of the Moonshot coalition, we are seeing a sector-wide need for just such a hub for both public and professionals all year round.

Training and funding

IDFA Bertha Fund (IBF)

The IDFA Bertha Fund (IBF) is a fund closely affiliated with IDFA that has been operating since 1998 and continues to gain relevance year on year. The Fund supports documentary makers from countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Oceania, and Eastern Europe. The combination of a festival, two markets, a training program and the IBF is exceptionally strong and unparalleled anywhere in the world. A network of makers and their films spreads across the world from Amsterdam, connecting north, south, east and west.

The IBF brings together a love of documentary with a mission to tell urgent stories to the largest possible audience. Each year, the fund receives almost 750 applications, of which (only) some thirty can be accepted. The selection is made by a new committee of experienced documentary professionals each year. Many of the applications concern films tackling socially relevant themes that have the potential to appeal to audiences worldwide.

Films produced with a contribution from the IBF are often screened at IDFA, allowing the world to get to know these films, cultures and makers. We also invite the makers to Amsterdam, where they can make a contribution during the festival to the global debate on inclusivity and tolerance. Filmmakers receive individual mentoring and can participate in one of the workshops or labs in IDFA's talent development programs. During IDFA, their films can be selected for a huge number of international festivals, as well as purchased by distributors, television channels and platforms. This gives these films a kick-start to go on to be seen by a global audience.

The IBF is an autonomous foundation affiliated to IDFA in a 'personal union' ['personele unie': a Dutch legal form whereby people can serve on various boards (of the same company) at the same time]. IBF works with an annual budget of more than € 1,200,000 and is financed independently of IDFA by the Bertha Foundation, Creative Europe Media, Ford Foundation and the Nationale Postcode Loterij. IDFA and the IBF work together closely on obtaining finance.

Talent development

Young filmmakers still have to find their way in the (documentary) world, and are subject to ever greater commercial and performance demands. IDFA supports this young talent all year round, with the focus firmly on their creative development and that of their projects. Participants in IDFA's talent programs receive personal mentoring, can gain inspiration and build a long-lasting network of peers and experienced professionals which will serve them well throughout their careers.

The supply of new film talent is of the greatest importance in keeping the documentary genre young and dynamic. By playing an active role in the development of a new generation, IDFA is also able to rely on a steady supply of new films by new makers. During each festival, some 50 documentaries by debut directors are screened. A significant proportion of these are the fruits of IDFA's own training and finance activities.

Talent comes both from the Netherlands and the rest of the world, and – through our connection to the IDFA Bertha Fund – the emphasis for us is on non-western makers. IDFA occupies a unique position by focusing on documentary talent within an international context and through the close association between the festival, the IBF and the markets. Bringing this talent together all year round in the Het Documentaire Paviljoen, in various different programs, only makes this cross-pollinating effect stronger. The most significant talent development programs during the period ahead are:

IDFAcademy: a four-day training program during the festival for approx. 100 young filmmakers and producers from the Netherlands and the rest of the world.

IDFA Project Space: teams from 16 selected projects from all over the world work intensively on their projects while being mentored by international film professionals. The program runs from June to September, with online modules and a week in Amsterdam. Half of the projects are affiliated to the IDFA Bertha Fund.

IDFA Project Space NL: six selected Dutch talents spend five months working intensively on their projects until they have a fully-fledged film plan, supported by tutors. This course is interlinked with the international programs referred to above.

Stimulating the (inter)national documentary industry

Forum

The Forum is an international co-finance and co-production market where each year more than 60 carefully selected projects are presented to financiers, distributors and other creative and financial parties. The Forum has grown from a European platform focused on the financing of television documentaries to an event with a global (non-western) selection of high-quality creative documentary projects. The Forum contributes through its selection process, guests policy and programs to what IDFA considers important: a pluriform range of filmmakers from diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds. In recent years, scouting, intensive cooperation with the IBF and a sliding scale of prices mean that the proportion of projects from Africa, South America, Asia and Eastern Europe has increased markedly.



The various categories within the Forum reflect the various genres, finance strategies and stages of production of the projects. One third of the selected projects are new media projects. The Forum also plays a pioneering role internationally by focusing attention on youth documentaries. Alongside finance, the Forum facilitates international co-production and distribution.

Docs for Sale

Docs for Sale is an online and on-site market showcasing more than 300 new documentaries each year which can be viewed by subscribers on demand all year round. These are partly titles selected by the festival, which gives the international distribution of these titles a push. In addition, there are titles that did not make the festival cut, but which are of interest in terms of distribution, television, platforms and/or screenings at international festivals.

To give an extra impulse to the distribution of the latest Dutch and international festival films, during the festival these are screened not only to audiences in the cinemas, but also in special industry screenings, geared exclusively to buyers and programmers.

Industry Talks

Alongside doing business, a major reason for many professionals to visit IDFA each year is to gather inspiration and knowledge. An extensive, annual program of talkshows is organized to facilitate this: from Filmmaker Talks to Film Talks, from Meetups and Expert Meetings to Thinktanks and Industry Sessions. This programming is hugely appreciated by the guests as it helps them stay up to speed in a rapidly changing international market. During the period ahead, IDFA will continue to place on the agenda urgent topics such as fair co-production, diversity & inclusivity and sustainability in production and selection processes.

Professionals

As well as the general audience, IDFA also focuses on documentary professionals from the Netherlands and around the world. Specific attention is paid to Dutch makers, female makers, makers from non-western countries and new media makers. In 2018, a record number of 3,410 professionals attended IDFA. The targets for this period are to receive 3,000 to

3,500 professionals. Thanks to its leading position within the international documentary industry, IDFA is able to work towards increasing diversity in a targeted way. This is done on all fronts within the Forum, Docs for Sale and the Industry Talks. And not only through wide-ranging programming, but also through a broad spectrum of invited guests: from producers, financiers, television stations, filmmakers and new media makers to tutors and selection teams, participants in and hosts of the talkshows and jury members. More than 30% of the professional guests welcomed by IDFA in 2023 came from non-western countries. The aim for the years ahead is to increase this proportion to 50%. A fund is being set up to cover the increasing cost of travel and accommodation in this respect.

Education

In the same way that every child should have seen *The Night Watch*, every school student (from Amsterdam) should have seen an IDFA documentary. Preferably in the theater, and otherwise in the classroom. In this way, IDFA wishes to make a contribution to the creation of a media-savvy generation who look at the world both critically and with wonder and who are not afraid to broaden their horizons. In a society dominated and polarized by media and technology, the stimulation of this attitude is now more crucial than ever.

IDFA's education program consists firstly of school screenings during IDFA in Amsterdam and in theaters throughout the Netherlands. Secondly, film lessons and workshops are given year-round in the Het Documentaire Paviljoen. Finally, an online range of films and lessons is offered free of charge in the classroom through Docschool Online.



We focus on primary school children from ages 9 to 10, all school students in secondary education and intermediate vocational education (Dutch: mbo). The starting point for this is an accessible, recognizable program for all school students. Alongside screenings for school students, teacher meetings are held to maintain good synergy with education. For example, a program has been developed aimed at school students with a visual disability, who can access part of the program through audio

descriptions, as well as having dedicated learning materials. Another result is a masterclass for talented students at the Mediacollege.

From 2013 to 2016, the reach of the education program expanded from 12,000 to more than 32,000 school and mbo students. In 2019, we reached more than 40,000 school students. For 2021-2024, the ambition was to reach 50,000 school students a year; a target that was hit in 2022. In the period ahead, we aim to steadily increase this reach to 60,000 school students. However, the shortage of teachers is a limiting factor: this hits precisely those schools in the Randstad area with socially vulnerable

students the hardest. IDFA keeps its programs accessible by charging a relatively low amount per student. Pressure is also taken off of teachers by ensuring a direct link to set educational goals.

In cooperation with Eye Filmmuseum, NFF, IFFR and Cinekid, during the past period IDFA compiled a joint range of films available throughout the Netherlands. IDFA is also working intensively with other partners from the Filmeducatiernetwerk (Film Education Network), both within Amsterdam and nationwide through satellite theaters throughout the country. This makes IDFA a significant player and partner within Netwerk Filmeducatie.



Organization

To strengthen and streamline the institute in organizational terms, the two foundations – IDFA and IDFA Bertha Fund – have been made into a ‘personal union’ [‘personele unie’: a Dutch legal form whereby people can serve on various boards (of the same company) at the same time] with a single Supervisory Board. Orwa Nyrabia and Cees van ‘t Hullenaar are the artistic and managing executive directors. Selin Murat is the executive director of the IBF. The Supervisory Board and directors strive for a diverse organization and subscribe to the code on diversity and inclusivity.

The members of the Supervisory Board do not receive any remuneration and are limited to a maximum term of 2 x 4 years. The Supervisory Board is made up of seven members and meets with the Board of Directors at least four times a year. The audit committee meets four times a year to consider the (working) budget. The remuneration committee holds annual progress meetings with the Board of Directors. The strategic planning committee supervises programming and positioning. The Board of Directors also reports to the Supervisory Board every quarter in writing in relation to the program, finances, organization, strategy and procedures.

The collegial board meets weekly, and the directors hold weekly management team meetings with the heads of the departments. Every department draws up an annual plan that is monitored and evaluated by the directors. This evaluation will consider KPIs such as performance figures, financial figures and the results of the various satisfaction surveys.

IDFA is signed up to the Cultural Governance Code. The vision, mission and aims are defined and expressed within the organization, in consultation. Major leading aims for the organization are improving the artistic quality and diversification of the program, partners, audience and organization. Audience retention and reaching a younger audience, as well as increasing income (also from audiences) remain major goals. IDFA monitors whether its partners operate in line with IDFA’s social and artistic aims.

In 2023, the policy plan 2025 – 2028 was drawn up in close cooperation with the management team, staff and Supervisory Board. Within the organization, the (social) vision, mission and ‘foundations’ were again discussed and redefined. The Supervisory Board, Board of Directors, directors and staff are at the service of the following social goal: to stimulate the documentary climate, both in the Netherlands and internationally.

Personnel policy

The size of the IDFA team is flexible, consisting in 2023 of 84 FTE. Alongside a regular complement

of employees on permanent contracts (26.1 FTE) and employees on temporary contracts (22.8 FTE), the organization expands during the run-up to the festival with freelance workers (21.6 FTE), interns (1.9 FTE) and 416 volunteers (11.3 FTE).

Internationalization and diversification of the workplace are increasingly significant factors. Human resources policy is geared towards the recruitment of a good team each year as well as creating working conditions that are experienced by everyone as safe. Conditions that allow our people to excel and make a meaningful contribution on the basis of their different backgrounds and perspectives.

To further increase social safety, a code of conduct has been drawn up and shared defining what is desirable and what is undesirable in the way we deal with one another. Two internal confidential counsellors and one external confidential counsellor have been appointed. The Fair Practice Code is also applied within IDFA. This deals, alongside fair financial rewards, with transparency and involvement of the team in the organization’s development (policy plan and annual plans), the communal determination of work processes and the carrying out of assessments of and with employees.

IDFA strives to be a diverse, inclusive organization. During the past period, the Supervisory Board, the Board of Directors, the staff, the selection committees and the team of scouts have been given a more varied composition. Diversity is actively addressed when filling vacancies.

Alongside the attention to diversity and inclusivity described above, we also devote attention to the development of our employees. A personal training budget is available and annual training courses are offered on public speaking, languages, time management and conducting job interviews.

Under the supervision of Platform ACCT (the Cultural and Creative Future Employment Market Platform), in 2024 the film festivals drew up a Working Code for Film Festivals (Dutch: Werkcode Filmfestivals). This lays down: a common salary structure, a conversion tool for freelancers to gear their rates to salaries, a common set of secondary employment conditions and a coordinated education policy. From 2026, IDFA – together with the other festivals – will sign up to this common remuneration guideline.

Audience reach (and venues)

Between 2013 and 2016, IDFA saw visitor numbers increase from 234,500 to 277,000. The festival’s

reach subsequently increased further, peaking at a record number of almost 300,000 visits in 2019. During the coronavirus pandemic, visits fell to 192,000 (online). With 240,000 visits in 2022 and 265,000 in 2023, IDFA has seen the upward trend re-established and we can conclude that, post-covid, IDFA has almost recovered, but not yet entirely.

The aim for the period ahead is to consolidate at 250,000 festival visits. IDFA continues to focus on its current audience groups, and additionally will devote greater attention to reaching young people and a culturally diverse audience. To this end, IDFA will focus on collaborations within Amsterdam and the broader region – the Het Documentaire Paviljoen will play a pivotal role in this all year round. This year-round programming in the rest of the country and in Het Documentaire Paviljoen is leading to cautious growth. Together with steady growth in the number of educational visits, IDFA expects to be receiving some 300,000 visits again in 2028.

Reaching a young, culturally diverse audience

In recent years, IDFA's audiences have become steadily younger: from 19% to 29% in terms of audience members under 45 years of age. Reaching young people is particularly made easier by an integrated approach. Communication is of great importance, as is the use of a specific pricing strategy. A new working group has been set up for the period ahead made up of young IDFA employees thinking strategically about policy and programming for young people and about inviting partners and young guest curators. What we offer to students will also be intensified, in cooperation with student associations. The 50,000 school students IDFA reaches each year also have the potential to become the audience of the future (as well as perhaps a new generation of documentary makers).

IDFA in Amsterdam and the Netherlands

IDFA has grown from a compact festival around Amsterdam's Leidseplein square into a city-wide event with countless activities and programs throughout the country. The core of the festival is formed by the centers around the Amsterdam squares Muntplein, Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein, as well as on the banks of the River IJ. In addition to these, there are satellite locations in the Amsterdam districts Zuidoost, Oost, West, Nieuw-West and Noord. IDFA therefore flows through the capillaries of the city. Outside of Amsterdam, multi-day activities are being continued in Nijmegen, Groningen, Rotterdam and on the island of Vlieland. IDFA works with public broadcaster NPO, enabling three festival documentaries to be shown on television during the festival. Each year, a number of films can also be watched at home in an online format. After the festival, IDFA tours the country with its prize winners under the banner The Best of IDFA on Tour.

Professionals

In terms of the professional activities, it is important that there is a central cluster of locations in

Amsterdam able to accommodate the 3,000 to 3,500 IDFA guests. However, the prices of both venues and hotels within Amsterdam city center are rising alarmingly, and space for culture generally is becoming ever scarcer. For the period 2025-2028, it is of great importance that IDFA's position within the city is assured. One route towards this is a more intensive collaboration with Internationaal Theater Amsterdam. The long-running festival base problem seems to have been resolved with the move to Het Documentaire Paviljoen. Not only will this be the venue for year-round programming, but IDFA will also have its offices here.

Accessibility

Approximately one in ten people in the Netherlands has a disability. Which means approximately 1.7 million people who cannot take attending arts and cultural events for granted, as much of what's on offer is not accessible to them, even though they have as much right to access this as anyone else. For this reason, during the past period IDFA drew up an inventory of which physical disabilities throw up what barriers to visiting the festival.

On the basis of this inventory, opportunities and areas for improvement were identified. Since then, concrete steps have been taken, such as better services for wheelchair users, more films with audio description and subtitles for those with hearing disabilities, live subtitling for Q&As and discussions and a number of low stimulus productions. In 2023, the festival program contained 35 such productions. Additionally, all films shown online offer a choice of various subtitling and audio description options. Finally, in cooperation with an institute for special education, IDFA has developed a range of educational resources for children with visual disabilities. In terms of programming, during the period ahead we will implement a step-by-step expansion of the number of low-stimulus productions and productions accessible to people with an auditory or visual disability. The target for this is that at least 10% of programming during the festival and in Het Documentaire Paviljoen will be made accessible in this way.

Attention to accessibility will also be increased in the industry program. Not only by making the programming wheelchair accessible and through live subtitling, but also by putting this theme on the agenda of international professionals. In this way, IDFA is seeking in the longer term to contribute to more documentary product by, with, and for people with a disability.

IDFA Online

Together with NFF, IFFR and Cinekid, in 2020 IDFA developed a tool to bring the festival online. Thanks to this dashboard, films can be streamed live with an introduction and followed by a Q&A. In 2021, a film was screened live daily from the Tuschinski 1

cinema, generating 5,580 online visits. In 2022, once again every evening a new film was programmed online with an introduction that could be viewed on demand. All (twelve) films were subtitled, and a number were provided with audio description. This program racked up more than 2,500 visits. In 2023, three films from the IDFA Bertha Fund were made available on demand throughout the festival, with subtitles, generating 960 visits. We will continue to test, develop and present online formats during the period ahead as a regular component of the festival or throughout the year, aimed at audiences who have difficulty attending the screenings in the theaters. Experiences and results will be exchanged with other film festivals.

Communication

With its communications, IDFA addresses the following target groups: the audience, professionals, the education sector, partners, sponsors, and subsidy providers. Marketing and communication play a crucial role in the profiling of IDFA; expressing its identity as laid down in this policy plan as an artistic, inclusive, innovative & sustainable institute for global documentary art. Other key areas are reaching and activating a wide range of target groups.

Online marketing and communication are playing an ever-greater role in the communications mix as a whole. IDFA has a large online reach, with its website attracting on average 1.4 million visitors a year. Since 2021, the number of followers on social media has increased by 50%, to 230,000. Additionally, the number of subscribers to the newsletter has grown to 93,000. Thanks to a data warehouse set up specially for IDFA, we have relevant data that allows us to tailor contact and communication moments specifically to the individual needs of the visitor.

One of IDFA's primary goals is to reach younger, more culturally diverse audiences. IDFA uses the Cultural Segmentation Model© as its starting point for this. This model describes eleven target groups on the basis of cultural behavior, preferences and media behavior. During the period ahead, IDFA will focus more intensively on young urbanites aged between 25 and 40 ('cultural omnivores') and young people who are about to graduate or who have just graduated ('new cultural explorers'). Data from the Cultural Segmentation Model© means we are able to better reach and motivate this (culturally diverse) young generation. In terms of reach to students, we are continuing our collaborations with various student associations, which in 2023 contributed to a considerable increase in the number of students visiting the festival.

When it comes to reaching a young (culturally diverse) target group, concrete collaborations with (media) partners are extremely important. Last year, IDFA actively focused on new collaborations with

Subbacultcha, Mr Motley and Cineville. Existing collaborations with WePresent, OneWorld, Cineville and We are Public were expanded. In our own theater in the Vondelpark – where we program in co-creation all year round – the young target group will be reached in particular through collaborations with young curators, individual media makers, cultural ambassadors and specific (media) partners.

Alongside the focus on a younger audience, in relation to accessibility IDFA will also focus on audience-members with physical disabilities. During the festival, but also online and in Het Documentaire Paviljoen. The accessibility of the festival locations and specific productions with facilities for people with disabilities will be clearly communicated in a targeted manner. IDFA will make every effort in its communications and programs to better coordinate with, and present a more multi-dimensional picture of, people with disabilities.

The most important goal in relation to professionals is to profile IDFA as a global, inclusive, innovative and sustainable institute for creative documentaries and new media. Collaborations with international trade journals and our own publications allow the content of our program and activities to be disseminated. Calls for professionals (accreditation, submission of films and projects) are also placed on non-western platforms and advertisements are placed on websites and in the catalogues of festivals in Africa, Asia and South America. During IDFA, we invite journalists from non-western countries to diversify the number of publications as much as possible.

Media mix

In 2023, IDFA created a new mobile-first website consisting of several 'pillars' (Institute, Professionals, Festival) which better conforms to the wishes and requirements of the target groups IDFA serves. The website attracts an average of 1.4 million visits a year.

IDFA is able to connect more and more people to the festival through e-mailings: from 63,000 in 2019 to 93,000 in 2023. These mailings go out to various target groups: the general audience, professionals, teachers, Friends of IDFA and people interested in DocLab. The newsletters reach 43,000 festival visitors, 36,000 professionals, 8,800 people interested in new media and 5,400 teachers.

The number of followers on IDFA's social media channels is growing steadily, and these are becoming ever more active. IDFA currently has a total of approximately 230,000 followers, spread across various platforms. This includes 101,000 followers on Facebook (IDFA and DocLab), 43,000 on Instagram (IDFA and DocLab), 18,000 on YouTube and 17,000 on LinkedIn.

Traditional media are still important resources, both in the run-up to and during the festival. Examples

include the program magazine, which is included as a supplement with the Volkskrant newspaper and is sent to Friends of IDFA and is also available at cultural venues throughout the country (print version 50,000, digital reach 696,000); the VPRO Gids TV listings magazine includes a supplement (200,000); there is a program guide for professionals (3,500); as well as advertisements in daily and weekly newspapers and magazines. The festival campaign, which each year is developed by a young Dutch documentary maker, ensures visibility both online and in the city as well as in theaters throughout the Netherlands.

Alongside paid and owned media, IDFA could not do without earned media through collaborations with media partners in the Netherlands and abroad, such as de Volkskrant, De Groene Amsterdammer, VPRO, NPO, and renowned international film journals such as Variety, Screen and The Film Verdict. In addition, our collaborations with (media) partners such as OneWorld, WePresent and CJP are essential in reaching a young, culturally diverse target group.

Finally, free publicity in the Dutch, regional and the international press plays a significant role in our communication. In recent years, international attention for IDFA in particular has grown massively with publications worldwide, not only from North America and Western Europe, but also from Asia, South America, Africa and Arab countries.

Sustainability

Each year, IDFA presents films, talkshows and new media works centered around sustainability and the environment. IDFA also takes concrete measures towards a more sustainable, environmentally friendly festival (and cinema). These measures reduce emissions, combat pollution and strive for an efficient use of resources in the festival's work. In the move to Het Documentaire Paviljoen, measures were taken to make the building sustainable by re-using existing elements and investing in insulation – as well as more energy efficient infrastructure and equipment. An energy scan was carried out by an expert from the city authorities. Additional measures were then taken on the basis of this. A follow-up process has been initiated with the city authorities.

At the end of 2023, a baseline measurement was carried out giving insight into where IDFA can gain the most benefits. A collaboration was entered into to this end with the Green Producers Club (GPC). In 2024, the results of this are being taken as the basis for a roadmap towards a sustainable approach to the management of the festival with a view to being completely climate neutral no later than in 2050.

IDFA also plays an active social role in influencing its audiences, partners and suppliers. For example, IDFA enters into long-term collaborations with organizations making efforts towards sustainability

and environmental consciousness, such as Oxfam Novib. A code of ethics has been drawn up for our partners, which states that IDFA will only work with organizations that operate in a sustainable, environmentally friendly and socially just way. By informing stakeholders of our choices, we encourage them to likewise move in the direction of sustainable choices. By working together with other festivals, we share ideas that promote the sustainable transition of the film industry as a whole.

Finance

During the past two periods, IDFA has undergone substantial financial growth: from almost €6,000,000 in 2017 to €8,600,000 in 2024. During the period 2025-2028, we are striving for consolidation with a budget that will stabilize at €9,000,000. IDFA sees opportunities to expand the income it generates itself, particularly through Het Documentaire Paviljoen. IDFA is however expressing its concerns that the structural subsidies will remain unchanged in the period ahead, while all costs have already increased and are set to increase further. IDFA needs a more solid basis – particularly in relation to Het Documentaire Paviljoen – in order to not become too dependent on generating its own income at a time of great financial and economic uncertainty.

Period 2025 – 2028: financial prospects

During the period ahead, the budget is set to stabilize (without index-linking of prices) at €9,000,000. Audience-generated income should therefore show a slight annual increase, as should income from sponsors and other revenue sources. In relation to expenditure, a particular increase will be seen in personnel costs, due to fair pay. This is covered in part from an additional contribution from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. In addition, operating costs are increasing, due principally to the programming in Het Documentaire Paviljoen. The finance for the pavilion is separate from that of the festival. IDFA sees the pavilion as one way of entering into new partnerships while intensifying existing ones and developing new business models. To put the programming of the pavilion on a firm footing, an additional structural contribution was requested from the City of Amsterdam, but this was rejected. This gives cause for concern.

Finance mix

IDFA has a broad mix of finance. Alongside structural subsidy from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the City of Amsterdam, successful appeals have been made to public and private funds and sponsors in the Netherlands and internationally. IDFA also receives various subsidies from European programs, and the commercial sector is an important partner. IDFA expects to see slight growth in private donations (Friends, bequests and young patrons) through the initiation of a new foundation

with a fundraising board. The income derived directly from box office takings and the sale of passes and workshops is set to increase somewhat. Het Documentaire Paviljoen will (also) bring about new business models to add to the finance mix, although at present basic funding for this is lacking.

Risk analysis

Since 2021-2024, IDFA has worked with a multiannual budget. One important pillar of IDFA's financial resilience is the maintenance of a financial buffer of

between 7% and 8%. In addition, IDFA has an annual working budget with a contingencies allowance of €160,000 to cover disappointing (audience) income and unexpected costs. We are working with separate budgets for Het Documentaire Paviljoen and the festival, so that any surpluses or shortfalls affect only the activity concerned. The personnel costs make up an ever-greater proportion of expenditure. IDFA has set itself the aim of not allowing the permanent festival team to grow any further in terms of FTEs.

