

Docnomads Alumni collaborations and co-productions (2014-2019)

Between 2014-2019 the Docnomads Alumni students produced **12 completed feature-length documentary films** that were premiered festivals like **IDFA** – International Documentary Film Festival of Amsterdam (the Netherlands), **Locarno** Film Festival (Switzerland), **CPH:DOX** – Copenhagen Documentary Film Festival (Denmark), **JDF – Jihlava** International Documentary Film Festival (Czech Republic), **Sarajevo** Film Festival (Bosnia-Herzegovina), **DOK Leipzig** – International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Films (Germany). The films travelled around the world to hundreds of international documentary festivals and received many awards like **Fipresci Award** at IDFA, **Doc Spirit Award** at Docs Port Incheon or **Movies that Matter Award** at ZagrebDox.

6 short documentaries are completed that were premiered at festivals like **Doclisboa** International Documentary Film Festival (Portugal), **DOK Leipzig** – International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Films (Germany), **Vision du Réel** – Festival International de Cinema Nyon (Switzerland) or **Edinburgh** International Film Festival. One short got nominated for the **EFA -European Film Awards**.

Another **19 feature-length documentaries** are in development, production or post-production receiving grants from **Sundance Institute** (USA), **IDFA Bertha Fund** (The Netherlands), **Berlinale World Cinema Fund** (Germany), **Creative Europe MEDIA** (EU), **DMZ Docs Fund** (South Korea), **Doha Film Institute** (Qatar), **Vision sud Est** (Switzerland), **Asian Cinema Fund** (South Korea) or from national film institutions like the **Hungarian National Film Fund's Incubator program** that supported two projects of Docnomads Alumni students.

4 short documentaries are in production receiving grants from **Tribeca Film Institute** (USA), **IDFA Bertha Fund** (The Netherlands) or **Goethe Institute** (Germany).

2 documentary series are in production supported by Portuguese and Belgian public broadcasters.

1 VR documentary is also in production.

In total from **44 documentary projects**, **35 are international co-productions**, almost all the films are collaborations between Docnomads Alumni students in terms of direction, cinematography or production.

Completed feature-length documentaries:

1. The Next Guardian

Directed by: Arun Bhattarai (DN1) & Dorottya Zurbó (DN1)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 74 minutes

Shooting location: Bhutan

Project status: finished

World Premier: IDFA - November 2017

Co-production between: Éclipse Film (Hungary), Sound Pictures (Bhutan), KRO-NCRV (the Netherlands)

Collaboration between alumni students: Co-director: Arun Bhattarai (DN1) & Dorottya Zurbó (DN1)

Log-line: The contrasting dreams of two generations clash within the microcosm of an ancient Buddhist monastery in Bhutan, when Gyembo an ordinary teenager is chosen as the next guardian of their family monastery by his father.

Short synopsis: In a remote village in the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan, Gyembo (16) and Tashi (15) aimlessly roam while their father meticulously polishes the ancient relics inside the altar of their family

monastery. This family has been taking care of the monastery from one generation to the next for thousands of years. Following tradition, the father wants his son Gyembo to carry on the family heritage but he has other desires just like his sister. The film through bittersweet micro-situations takes us inside a Bhutanese family where the contrasting dreams of two generations are caught in a time clash.

2. Easy Lessons

Directed by: Dorottya Zurbó (DN1)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 78 minutes

Shooting location: Hungary

Project status: finished

World Premier: Locarno FF 2018

Co-production between: Éclipse Film (Hungary), Hungarian National Film Fund's Incubator program

Collaboration between alumni students: assistant cinematographers: Arun Bhattarai & Ásia Dér

Synopsis: Easy Lessons is a poetic journey of a beautiful, young girl, Kafia who on the brink of adulthood breaks up with everything she grew up with in Somalia. Cultural values, taboos and dogmas fall apart in the most casual situations while trying to adapt to a new life in Europe, Hungary. Her Mum helped her escape her fate but how can she explain the changes she lives through to her most loved one? She wants to do it for a sense of duty or a desire of resurrection, but how... This inner struggle becomes the film itself and maybe the only form of confession.

3. Tiny Souls

Director: Dina Naser (DN2)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 85 min.

Status: Finished film

Shooting location: JORDAN

Premier: CPH DOCS 2019

Co-production: JORDAN, LEBANON, QATAR, FRANCE

Synopsis: After escaping the Syrian war, a free-spirited 9-year old and her family must navigate confined life when stranded in Zaatari Refugee Camp, Jordan. Over four years, the director follows her characters' lives within barb-wired camp walls, capturing the resilient shift from childhood to adolescence, along with many states of adapting and survival in between, leading up to the eventual clash that threatens their fate.

4. Once up on a Time in Hungary

Director: Oliver Victoria (DN1)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 80 min.

Shooting location: Hungary

Project status: finished film

World Premier: Doc Point Helsinki Film Festival 2015

Co-production between: DocNomads, Arca, Mercado de Luz

Collaboration between alumni students: director: Zimu Zhang DoP: Oliver Victoria, editor: Sari Haragonics

Log-line: A Family decided to scape from the City life, to experience a new but old style life.

Synopsis: Reka and Istvan have five children, they have set up a different kind of living, in the nature, apart from any school system, growing the fields, and making bread with their hands, everything there as it has to be, in a more real world. But the question reminds there: For how long they will be able to be there?

5. Lost Paradise

Director: Oliver Victoria (DN1)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 90 min.

Shooting location: Portugal, Azores

Project status: finished film

World Premier: Cinemateque Mexico City

Co-production between: DocNomads, Mercado de Luz, Palmera Films, Arca.

Log-line: Wonderful Azores islands portrayed as the continent Atlantis.

Synopsis: Three parallel realities of three couples living now in Azores islands, among their differences, we find many similarities that give us the cosmovision of being in an island and also some signs of our past. Azores is only our lost paradise, that maybe we never lost.

6. Sabina's Shadow

Director: Oliver Victoria (DN1)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 101 min.

Shooting location: Mexico

Project status: completed

Co-production between: Mercado de Luz, Manosanta

Log-line: A Visual/sensorial experience through shamanic practices and magic mushrooms

Synopsis: In Huautla de Jimenez, magical land of Oaxaca, lives the spirit of a cosmic woman: Maria Sabina. People can see her, talk to her and also be healed by her from beyond. Angel, a 12 year-old boy, an inheritor of this tradition, is preparing for his own shamanic initiation. While this story takes place, the director of this film is invited to live and experience in his own flesh the path of this ancestral practice.

7. My Granny from Mars

Directed by: Alexander Mihalkovich (DN3)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 83'

Shooting location: Ukraine

Project status: completed

World Premier: Jihlava 2019

Co-production between: Belarus, Ukraine, Estonia

Synopsis: Babushka Zina is originally Ukrainian, but because of the current political situation she has remained in Russian-occupied Crimea. Separated from her family, she lives in a forgotten seaside town while trying to decide whether to stay or to leave. The sounds of Russian contemporary music and folk songs add to the atmosphere of her exile town, which is seen through a sensitive lens filled with sentimentality. But the consequences of the unsatisfactory political situation are ever-present in this place, which is like a different planet. The way in which the director records Zina's relationship to her friends and family betrays a deep respect for this old woman, her life wisdom, and her experiences.

8. Aswang

Director: Alyx Ayn Arumpac (DN2)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 85'

Shooting location: Philippines,

Project status: finished film

World Premier: IDFA 2019

Co-production between: Cinematografica (Philippines), Les Filmes L'Oeil Sauvage (France), Straydog Productions (Norway), Razor Film Produktion GMBH (Germany), Qatar (via Doha Film Institute)

Collaboration between alumni students:

Director: Alyx Ayn Arumpac (DN2)

DOP: Tanya Haurylchyk (DN2)

Synopsis: "Aswang" is a term in the Philippines for witches, vampires, ghosts and werewolves—a collection of evil spirits that feature heavily in myths and popular films. But since President Rodrigo Duterte took office, they have been appearing in real life on the streets of Manila.

In Duterte's drug war, death squads have shot, tortured and kidnapped tens of thousands of drug users, dealers and innocent bystanders over the past three years. Duterte gives police officers free rein to use brutal violence, which is particularly directed at the poorest sections of society. According to Amnesty International, this amounts to state terror and crimes against humanity.

Aswang follows a group of people whose lives have been caught up in these events: a journalist who tries to make a stand against lawlessness, a coroner, a missionary brother who comforts bereaved family members, and a street kid with parents in prison and friends in the cemetery. The film is a shocking account of unprecedented violence and the moral bankruptcy of a regime that still enjoys support from voters.

9. Sugar Cage

Directed by: Zeina Alqahwaji (DN4)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 60 minutes

Shooting location: Syria

Project status: completed

World Premiere: Dok Leipzig - October 2019

Producers: Zeinah Alqahwaji & Read Films (Ali Hammoud)

Short synopsis: In an attempt to record a standstill life, the filmmaker trains her camera to examine the intimate life of her aging parents over the course of 8 years since the beginning of war in Syria, observing scenes of isolation, fear and stagnancy that overshadow life at home still yet equated with enough sensibilities and love bonding them together against the heaviness of time and war.

10. The Future Cries Beneath Our Soil

Directed by: Hang Pham Tu (DN2)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 95 minutes

Shooting location: Vietnam, Philippines

Project status: completed

World Premiere: DMZ Docs

Co-production between: Vietnam, Philippines

Collaboration between Docnomads Alumni: Producer: Jewel Maranan, Director: Hang Pham Tu

Short synopsis: Surrounded by the surreal landscape of Quang Tri province, four men live their lives inseparably from each other. The rhythm of their everyday lives is defined by moments of togetherness in a house with no doors where they all come to drink, smoke, play guitar and sing songs about love and the revolution of the past. Feelings of hatred interweave with compassion, swelling amidst the stagnation of time and space, seemingly awaiting for an unknown. One day, the unknown comes and

takes one of them away, leaving the others to go on slipping through an undesired life. Meanwhile, the landscape, located in the border between North and South Vietnam, is what lives on, revealing traces of a war that has outlived its conclusion.

11. I Used to Sleep on the Rooftop

Directed by: Angie Obeid

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 60 minutes

Shooting location: Lebanon

Project status: completed

World Premiere: FID Marseille

Co-production between: Lebanon, Qatar

Synopsis: Nuhad, a 53-year-old Syrian woman, had never left Syria until the war made her reconsider her existence in a country where she didn't belong. In 2015, she made the decision to leave Damascus. Her destination was Beirut and Angie, a 27-year-old Lebanese woman – Nuhad's son's friend, the only possible host. Angie's house becomes Nuhad's refuge, an antechamber leading to indefinite asylum destinations. Angie observes the older woman projecting her own life onto the confines of the small apartment, and finds intersections between her own life and Nuhad's: both are vainly trying to move out of their own walls to find the right place in which to exist. Unsatisfied, Angie is waiting as well, living vicariously through Nuhad's experience.

12. The Forbidden Strings

Director: Hasan Noori

Producer: Afsaneh Salari (DN2)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 72'

Shooting location: Iran and Afghanistan

Project status: finished film

World Premier: IDFA 2019

Collaboration between alumni students: producer: Afsaneh Salari, associate producer: Hoda Siahtiri
Log-line: Akbar, Hakim, Soori and Mohammad are born to Afghan parents in Iran and dream of being rock stars. Never allowed to perform a concert in Iran, they take a dangerous journey from Iran to Afghanistan - a mother land they've never seen - in order to perform their first concert in front of the ruins of Buddha, in Bamiyan.

Synopsis: They've been making music together for years, despite the disapproval of the people around them. Akbar, Soori, Mohammed and Hakim are the only young immigrants in Iran who have formed a rock band. All they miss now is an opportunity to play live. The Forbidden Strings shows the musical foursome struggling to get themselves heard, and follows them in the run-up to a historic day. As the title suggests, they face quite a few challenges along the way. All four band members are children of Afghan parents who fled to Iran, and that means they face dangers if they return to their homeland. Their families are worried about them. The rockers promise to stay out of trouble when they go to Kabul for their show, but they realize what they're up against soon after arriving. Clearly, Afghanistan is still a very dangerous place. The moments of joy are infectious, but sobering reality is always lurking. An honest film about four young people who have to break with tradition to express themselves.

Competed short documentaries:

1. Outside the Oranges Are Blooming

Director: Nevena Desivojevic (DN3)

Genre: short documentary

Length: 20'

Shooting location: Portugal

Project status: completed

World Premier: Doc Lisboa

Co-production between: Black Rooster Studio (Serbia) + Terratrema Filmes (Portugal)

Collaboration between alumni students: director: Nevena Desivojevic DoP: Cristina Hanes DN3, sound designer: Venice Atienza DN4

Synopsis: High among the mountains, a man endures alone in a disappearing village. Wandering through the misty nature, roaming between the walls of his dark house, he bears his condition to serve the surroundings he has rejected.

2. Wild Berries

Director: Marianna Vas (DN3), Hedda Bednarszky

Genre: short documentary

Length: 19' 37"

Shooting location: Romania

Project status: completed

World Premier: DocLisboa

Co-production between: Aristoteles Workshop Association, Walla Collective, Match Frame Productions / Romania-Portugal-Hungary, 2018

Log-line: The sensorial journey of a solitary boy immersed in his own slowly disintegrating world

Synopsis: Wandering through fields and forests in a desolate landscape, a young boy heads further towards the unknown at every step. Observant and patient at times, bored and restless at others, he waits and searches for something that seems to remain out of his reach. He looks back at us as we follow him into his crumbling universe, driven by a desire for something in ourselves that perhaps never existed.

3. The Border Within

Directed by: Nuruzzaman Khan (DN4) & Boan Wang (DN4)

Genre: Short TV documentary

Length: 28 minutes

Shooting location: Bangladesh

Project status: completed

World Premiere: Taiwanese Public Television

Co-production between: Zzaman Film (Bangladesh), Authentic Film Productions (Taiwan)

Log-line: A Bangladeshi doctor has been helping Osman, a 14-year-old Rohingya refugee, to fulfil his dream. However, after a year of consistent trips between the capital and the camp, he starts to question the dream he is offering Osman.

4. En La Boca

Directed by: Matteo Gariglio (DN2)

Genre: short documentary

Length: 26 minutes

Shooting location: Argentina

Project status: finished

World Premiere: Winterthur International Short Film Festival, nominated for EFA

Short synopsis: In Buenos Aires, the Molina family lives and works in the shadows of the legendary Boca Juniors stadium. Selling fake tickets to the soccer games, they constantly get in conflict with the corrupt police. As her family sinks deeper into this underworld, the mother tries in vain to keep them all from falling apart.

5. Under the Dress

Director: Alexander M. Vinogradov (DN2)

Genre: short documentary

Length: 23'

Shooting location: Belgium, Russia

Project status: completed

World Premier: Vision du Réel 2019

Co-production between: Belgium, Russia

Synopsis: As a child, Aleksandr Vinogradov had his grandmother as an accomplice. In her home, he could dress up as a woman, explore his desires and identities, seek in himself what was absolutely forbidden by others. Today, in a country like Russia where people who do not practice heteronormative sexuality are pursued, Aleksandr delves into his childhood memories recorded on old VHS tapes, which take him back to the secret universe of freedom and tenderness that he shared with his grandmother. He then embarks upon a dazzling drag queen transformation in which he plays his own role: a character in search of his identity. Suspended in a performance between the real and the fantastic, Aleksandr confronts his ideas on sexuality, gender and his own past. Under the Dress is a form of self-portrait that combines the filmmaker's memories with his present day in an oppressive political context. An exercise of mise en scène close to Werner Schroeter's, an ultra-contemporary form of demanding the legitimate right to any form of sexual identity.

6. Hydebank

Director: Ross McClean (DN5)

Genre: Short Documentary

Length: 18

Shooting location: Belfast

Project status: Short completed - development funding received for feature-length

World Premiere: Dok Leipzig

Co-production between: Scottish Documentary Institute and Northern Ireland Screen

Collaboration between alumni students: Bronte Stahl second camera

Log-line: Governing the Northern Irish countryside, Hydebank Wood currently houses 104 young male offenders. Ryan, currently serving a 5 year sentence, has formed an unlikely bond with the prisons flock of sheep. Through their interactions, Ryan attempts to come to terms with the brutal act that led him here.

Synopsis: Sheep bleat. A young man feeds the small flock while it's still dark and takes expert care of a newborn lamb. A rising chorus of aggressive male voices in the background. Sheep and men live in a juvenile prison near Belfast. Behind the gates of the sheepfolds and the pasture a high security fence reinforced with barbed wire looms in the morning sky. A mosaic of impressions from a touching and poetic world in-between.

Feature-lengths documentaries work-in-progress:

1. Gross National Happiness

Directed by: Arun Bhattarai (DN1) & Dorottya Zurbó (DN1)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 80 minutes

Shooting location: Bhutan

Project status: development

Co-production between: Match Frame Productions (Hungary) Sound Pictures (Bhutan)

Log-line: Passang is a happiness agent from the government, travelling door to door measuring people's happiness among the remote mountains of Bhutan. On her mission she encounters various people chasing their dreams while she collects data from them. This satirical, film through an impressionistic mosaic discovers the real desires of a society behind the national identity created by Bhutan's Happiness Ministry.

2. Under the Stars

Director: Venice Atienza (DN4)

Genre: Feature-length documentary

Length: 63 minutes

Shooting location: Philippines

Project status: Post-production

Produced by: Svemirko Film Productions (A production house founded by Fan Wu - Taiwan and Venice Atienza - Philippines) & Ninjadog Studios

Collaboration between alumni students:

Film Produced by: Svemirko Film Productions (A production house founded by Fan Wu - Taiwan and Venice Atienza - Philippines)

Director: Venice Atienza - Philippines)

Sound: Fan Wu

Writer: Venice Atienza - Philippines Fan Wu - Taiwan, and Moshe Ladanga

Log-line: The film is a pause, an attempt to freeze time, and to record the last moments of a 12 year old boy's childhood, to celebrate this beauty before he departs and searches for a better future.

3. The Silhouettes

Director: Afsaneh Salari (DN2)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 80'

Shooting location: Iran, Afghanistan

Project status: post-production

Co-production between: Iran and Philippines

Supported by Sundance Institute, Asian Cinema Fund, Karlovy Vary docs in progress, Vision sud est

Collaboration between alumni students: director: Afsaneh Salari producer: Jewel Maranan associate producer: Hoda Siahtiri

Log-line: At the height of the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan in 1982, 1.5 million Afghans fled to Iran. TAGHI, born to refugee parents of that generation, opens a well to his parents' past as he seeks to trace the doors to his future in the homeland he hardly knows.

Synopsis: At the height of the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan in 1982, 1.5 million Afghans were forced to take a long journey to the border of Iran to flee war. The Safaris, an otherwise warm and gentle family, is a testament to the intergenerational consequences of this war and the waves of forced migration it continues to create. Taghi, the youngest Safari son born and raised in Iran, is soon ready to build his life after managing to finish higher education against all odds. However, along with all generations after him, Taghi inherits the limitations of his parents' perpetual refugee status. Now having come of age and reason, he seeks to navigate outside the protective walls of his family to trace his identity and the doors to his future away from the unwelcoming country he grew up in towards a homeland he never really knew. As he opens his plans to the family, Taghi faces the opposition of his parents who have long suppressed their longing for home. But also, as unrest continues in Afghanistan, what future awaits him in which land?

4. Sweeping Yerevan

Directed by: Nairi Hakverdi

Produced by: Liana Smbatyan (DN4)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 52 minutes

Shooting location: Yerevan

Project status: in Post-production

World Premiere: N/A

Co-production between: Margins Media (Armenia), Faites Un Voeu (France)

Log-line: SWEEPING YEREVAN opens a day in the life of a woman driven to sweep the streets of Yerevan in the middle of the night in order to sustain her family of seven as a direct result of the post-Soviet reality in Armenia.

Short synopsis: Marina, a middle-aged woman tries to sustain her family and handle all the heaviness of living in post-industrial city and being the only breadwinner of the family. She is sweeping the streets of the capital city of Armenia. At the crack of dawn in Yerevan Marina finishes sweeping and takes the bus back home to Charentsavan, a 40-minute drive. She lives through as she tries to juggle a disabled husband, a retired mother-in-law, and four children. By the end of the film, we get an intimate and rounded portrait of a person beyond her work, living in Charentsavan, a city with a former glory but with contemporary high rates of unemployment

5. A Rifle and the Bag

Directed by: Isabella Rinaldi (DN3), Cristina Hanes (DN3) & Arya Rothe (DN3)

Genre: feature-length creative documentary

Length: 89 minutes

Shooting location: India

Project status: in post-production

World Premiere: not yet released

Co-production between: Qatar (DFI), NoCut Film Collective (India), NoCut Film (Romania), Isabella Rinaldi (Italy)

Collaboration between alumni students (except for the co-direction): Cristina Hanes (DOP), Isabella Rinaldi (sound recordist)

Supported by: Doha Film Institute (Qatar), IDFA Bertha Fund Classic (Netherlands), Asian Cinema Fund (South Korea), AlterCine (Canada)

Logline: A young Indian couple of surrendered Naxalites is fighting for their children's future.

Short synopsis: Somi and her husband Sukhram met and fell in love while fighting in the Naxalite commando, the Maoist guerrilla that has been fighting since the 60's for the rights of the tribal communities of India. A few years ago, they deserted the movement and surrendered in front of the police. They live in a settlement they built with other former comrades. Their social status of surrendered Naxalites is compromising the future of their two children. They want to give their children the best education possible, but that comes with high risks. The film shows their attempt to escape this dead end, while exploring their controversial past.

6. 72 hours

Directed by: Anna Savchenko (DN2)

DOP: Tanya Haurylchyk (DN2)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 85 minutes

Shooting location: Belarus/Belgium

Project status: in development

Co-production between: PlayTime Films (Belgium), Sanosi Produ (France), Volia Films (Belarus/Estonia)

Log-line: Liubou's life is forever incomplete since her son was doubtfully accused, sentenced to death and executed, all within 11 months and ignoring numerous international appeals. Sharing her story she speaks out against death penalty in Belarus and hopes to at least get her son's body back.

Short synopsis: Liubou's life is a story of unfinished loss, grief and it's overcoming, small human against the merciless system machine. Her unfortunate journey has begun when her son Vlad was sentenced to death in Belarus, while his guilt was never decisively proven. She devoted her life to save her son, but never got a chance to. For the good memory of her son, she still hopes and fights for death penalty in Belarus to be abolished. It also is her way to live on and say goodbye.

7. The Land

Directed by: Marko Sipka (DN1)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 78 minutes

Shooting location: Bosnia-Herzegovina

Project status: postproduction

World Premiere:

Co-production between: Vizart Films (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Cinesport (Serbia)

Short synopsis: Krajina (pronounced [krâjina]), meaning 'frontier' or 'edge', is the land given by the Austro-Hungarian emperor in 16th century to the refugees from all over the Balkans to settle down and defend the border from the Ottoman Empire.

As they started their journey like the warriors for freedom, the curse has been passed from generation to generation... In this place there is no such a word as 'peace' , there is only time between the two wars.

Today, this land, formally the western part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, near the Croatian border, is still considered to be the imaginary line between east and west, between the two civilisations.

The last war in 90's had left only ruined houses, roads and fields overgrown in bushes and wild trees. The apocalyptic landscape suggests that this war will be the last one, since soon there will be no one remain to fight. People come here only to die or to bury someone.

The film follows, in the course of one year, the last five living people for whom this small Krajina village once used to be home. They never talk about those who had died in the battle, but they speak directly to them, as they believe their souls are still wandering around.

While visiting the ruins of their once homes they are trying to rebuilt the memories of their past lives...

Those memories told in the form of whispering fairy tales become a history of a never ending war...

The houses rebuilt and destroyed over and over again are the silent witness of the turbulent past.

This land is the place between the two worlds, between dead and living, between history and mythology.

8. No Winter Holiday

Director: Rajan Kathet (DN3)

Genre: Feature-length documentary

Length: 75 minutes

Shooting location: Nepal

Project status: production

Co-production between: Salpa Films (Nepal), Mirror & Story (Korea), NoCut Collectives (Romania, India)

Collaboration between alumni students:

Director: Rajan Kathet

CoProducers: Cristina Hanes (DN3), Arya Rothe (DN3), Isabella Rinaldi (DN3)

Log-line: Two women in their seventies shared the same husband. Now they must forget the past and work together to guard an empty, snowed-in Himalayan village for the whole winter.

Synopsis: It is mid-December and 200 families from the highland valley of Dhor have long gone southwards to escape the harsh winter. Back home, only two Dalit (*marginalised and 'untouchable'*) women in their seventies remain. Thuli and Kalima are widows and co-wives who have been tasked to guard the empty houses. While everyone is spending the winter in warmth, they have no off days. They are poor, have no family to depend on, and don't have land or property elsewhere. They depend on this job because what it pays will last them for half a year. In the winter, the valley lies under a blanket of snow and conditions are very harsh. With no-one but each other and their animals for company, Thuli and Kalima must keep themselves in good health to stay alive and accomplish their job. The villagers, when they come back in the spring and if not satisfied, may refuse to pay.

9. 2158 Stories of an Ordinary Man

Directed by: Ida Marie Gedbjerg (DN4)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 74 minutes

Shooting location: Hungary, Denmark

Status: development

Co-production between: Tambo Productions & Match Frame Productions

Log-line: 2158 Stories of an Ordinary Man is an essay film told by a young filmmaker. The story involves 3 different persons whose stories are connected by an old notebook and two faded photos.

Synopsis: The young female director Ida (29) discovers a notebook written by a deceased Hungarian man. His name was István Ács, he was factory worker and lived behind the Iron Curtain. Istvan meticulously wrote down every single film he watched between 1942 and 1994. In other words he left a precise fingerprint of an Era seen through the eyes of an ordinary man. The discovery of the notebook sends the director Ida on a journey. From the handwritten pages she starts reconstructing Istvan's life through the old films that he saw. Eventually she gets in touch with the son of the notebook writer, Istvan Acs Junior. Like his father, he is a factory worker and he writes down all the names of DVDs that he watches. Together they re-enact the life of Istvan Acs as if it was a movie.

10. It's Her Story

Directors: Asia Dér (DN1), Sári Haragonics

Genre: Feature-length documentary

Producer: Noémi Veronika Szakonyi, Sára László, Marcell Gerő

Shooting location: Hungary

Co-production: Hungary, USA (Sundance Production Grant)

Log-line: An intimate journey of two Hungarian women and a little Roma girl in their struggle to become a family in the shadow of a radicalizing country.

11. I haven't died

Director: Ásia Dér (DN1)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 80 min.

Shooting location: Hungary

Project status: development

Log-line: Gábor, a life loving art gallery owner gets pancreatic cancer. Chance of survival is only 5%, still he takes it as an opportunity to face his long suppressed existential questions.

12. Stories from the Sea

director: Jola Wieczorek (DN1)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Shooting location: Mediterranean sea

Project status: post-production

Synopsis: The Mediterranean connects and separates three continents and three world religions. For centuries it has been one of the world's major linchpins; it is being crossed, used, enjoyed, feared and loved day and night. Stories from the Sea portrays people on three ships that see this waters as a workplace, a place of longing and that of a human tragedy. The characters – even if each one's motivation to be on the sea varies – are all connected by the all-encompassing water, the constant movement of the waves and the distant horizon.

13. Marching in the Dark

Directed by: KINSHUK SURJAN (DN4)

Co-producer: ARYA ROTHE (DN3)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 74 minutes

Shooting location: INDIA

Project status: IN DEVELOPMENT

World Premiere: 2021

Co-production between: BELGIUM AND INDIA

Log-line: Amidst the slow genocide of farmer suicides unfolding in India, a group of aggrieved women farmers who recently lost their husbands, have quietly taken a pledge with a local psychologist to learn counselling and stop more suicides. But learning to heal others, is learning to confront one's own suppressed grief.

14. Tailings

Director: Pedro de Filippis (DN5)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Producers: Leonardo Mecchi, Bronte Stahl, Tarsila Nakamura

Length: 90 minutes

Shooting location: Brasil, Portugal

Project status: development

Collaboration between Docnomads Alumni: director: Pedro de Filippis producers: Bronte Stahl (UK), Tarsila Nakamura (Brasil)

Co-production between: Enquadramento Produções (Brazil), Maresciallo Films by Bronte Stahl (U.S.A. - DN5) and Tarsila Nakamura (DN5)

Synopsis: In the interval of three years, two mining tailings dams broke in Minas Gerais, Brazil, causing the country's worst socio-environmental disasters. After seeing his village washed away, an exile in Portugal attempts to digest the trauma through dance. An environmentalist is forced to leave her life of isolation for the international media spotlight. A school teacher keeps watch at night for the imminent break of a third dam that can bury his town in an estimated eight seconds.

15. We Are Inside

Director: Farah Kassem (DN3)

Producer: Cynthia Choucair

Genre: feature-length documentary

Shooting location: Lebanon

Project status: production

Co-production between: Lebanon, USA

Synopsis: After a decade away, thirty-one-year old Farah returns to her hometown of Tripoli in Lebanon, to that city getting increasingly conservative. But there is a secret refuge: her eighty-three year old father Mustapha's weekly all-male classical Arabic poetry club.

16. Hydebank

Director: Ross McClean (DN5)

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 75

Shooting location: Belfast

Project status: Production

Co-production between: Scottish Documentary Institute and Northern Ireland Screen

Collaboration between alumni students: Bronte Stahl second camera

Log-line: Governing the Northern Irish countryside, Hydebank Wood currently houses 104 young male offenders. Ryan, currently serving a 5 year sentence, has formed an unlikely bond with the prisons flock of sheep. Through their interactions, Ryan attempts to come to terms with the brutal act that led him here.

Synopsis: Sheep bleat. A young man feeds the small flock while it's still dark and takes expert care of a newborn lamb. A rising chorus of aggressive male voices in the background. Sheep and men live in a juvenile prison near Belfast. Behind the gates of the sheepfolds and the pasture a high security fence reinforced with barbed wire looms in the morning sky. A mosaic of impressions from a touching and poetic world in-between.

17. Yalla, Baba!

Directed by: Angie Obeid

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 90 minutes

Shooting location: Lebanon

Project status: development

Supported by: Doha Film Institute

Co-production between: Lebanon, Qatar, Belgium

Synopsis: In 1980, 32-year-old Mansour travelled to Belgium with his friends, bought cars, and set off on a long road trip fuelled by a love of adventure and discovery back to Lebanon, a country already tired from five years of an eventual 15-year civil war. Today, after 40 years, Mansour (70) is a retired geo-historian that still lives in Beirut and has not travelled ever since. It was only after his daughter Angie (30) left for Belgium to study that potent memories of this most adventurous time of his life have suddenly reawakened. Angie invites her father to Brussels to look for a new car and go on the same journey. The path, previously taken by Mansour, is no longer the same. On the 4,000 kilometres once crossed, countries have disappeared, and others were born. Some borders have faded, while others have emerged. Dictatorships have risen and fallen. Wars were extinguished, and others broke out, causing deaths, destruction and immense displacement along those same roads he once drove across. And Lebanon, caught between the sea and two conflicts, is no longer accessible by land. The journey of rediscovering the distance between Europe and Lebanon becomes an intimate discovery of the new father/daughter relationship beyond the borders of the traditional family context they are usually framed in.

18. Na Terra Fria (At the Cold Land)

Director: Agnes Meng

Genre: Feature length documentary / docu-fiction

Length: 90min

Shooting location: Gerês, Portugal

Project status: Development

World Premier: N/A

Co-production between: Filmes do Gajo (Portugal)

Collaboration between alumni students: Leading protagonist Kopal Joshy (DN5)

Log-line: This film speaks the past in the northern mountains of Portugal through local stories, folklores, tales and an Asian girl's peculiar adventure.

Synopsis: An Asian girl is invited to a far-away village in Trás-os-Montes to spend the New Year's Eve with her friend, who is from this village. He told her, time stops there and even sometimes goes backward. The Asian girl walks alone, almost lost, when she finally arrives to the village, she finds her friend is not there. She ends up being alone in the remote, isolated village at the northern mountains of Portugal, at a snowy winter's night. During the night, she met several villagers who tell her real stories, metaphorical folklores and mysterious tales, but all stories lead to a revilement of the village's hidden past.

19. Love is not an Orange

Director: Otilia Babara

Genre: feature-length documentary

Length: 70min

Shooting location: Moldova

Project status: late production

World Premier: unknown

Co-production between: Belgium/France/Romania/Moldova

Collaboration between alumni students: Produced by my former Docnomads tutor in Brussels semester.

Log-line: Love is not an orange is a film sewed from memories, sensations and longing. Delving into the ways we communicate and share love during long periods of separation.

Short documentaries work-in-progress:

1. Mountain Man

Directed by: Arun Bhattarai (DN1)

Genre: short documentary

Shooting location: Bhutan

Project status: development

Co-production between: Sound Pictures (Bhutan), Ryot Films (USA)

Collaboration between alumni students: Dir.: Arun Bhattarai, Editor: Dorottya Zurbó

Supported by: IDFA/Tribeca/Ryot Films: If/Then Global Pitch Grant Award

Log-line: One of Bhutan's first glaciologists risks his life every year as he hikes for days through dangerous terrain to measure the rapidly receding glaciers of the Himalayas. Will the glaciers ever stop melting at this pace or will he ever stop climbing?

2. The Asterisk Population

Director: Ahsan Mahmood Yunus (DN6)

Genre: Documentary Short

Length: 10 Minutes

Shooting location: Pakistan

Project status: development

Co-production between: Germany (Goethe Institute and Till Passow) and Pakistan (Ahsan Yunus)

Log-line: A member of the Christian community in Pakistan prepares for an unimaginable, potentially life threatening type of a dive.

SHORT SYNOPSIS: Ashraf Masih has been living in the Christian slums of Rawalpindi for as long as he can remember. Forced by circumstances, he earns a living by manual scavenging, a practice banned in most countries around the world due to the dangerous nature of the job. The film follows Ashraf as he prepares to dive in a manhole to open a blocked sewer without any protective gear. An intimate portrait and glimpse into the professional and personal lives of these sanitation workers as they confront the welfare state of Pakistan.

3. The Cacao Sorcerer

Director: Mariana Cadenas (DN3)

Genre: VR documentary

Length: 20-30 min

Shooting location: Belgium / Peru

Project status: early production

Co-production between: Belgium + Peru

Log-line: An immersive adventure into the ancient land of cacao and chocolate sustainability

Synopsis: How much do we know about the food that grows thousands of kilometers away? Deep into the tropical jungle, in a climate that exists only 20 degrees below and 20 above the equator. Here, in this rather narrow belt on our planet, is where cacao plants grow, the raw source of the universal sweet we all adore: chocolate. The Cacao Sorcerer is an immersive multi-sensorial documentary (sight/touch/taste) that enables you to travel to the origin of the cacao, learn the craft of fine chocolate making in the source country while raising urgent questions about food sustainability and traditional production schemes.

4. Exit Tales

Director: Mariana Cadenas (DN3)

Genre: short documentary

Length: 14 min

Shooting location: Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Belgium

Project status: late development

Co-production between: Belgium + Colombia

Synopsis: There are no limits to a child's mind. Their imagination runs free and is able to reframe almost anything into an adventure. Playing with the border of imagination and reality, Exit Tales is an animated documentary based on testimonies of children of the Venezuelan exodus in Latin America, fleeing with their parents or even alone in order to survive.

Documentary series work-in-progress

1. Sixty Thousand Years

Director: Martha Appelt (DN4)

Genre: documentary series for TV

Length: 6 episodes of 26 min each

Shooting location: USA, Portugal, Scotland

Project status: development and production

World Premier: Portuguese television (planned)

Co-production between: Portugal and Scotland

Collaboration between alumni students: director: Martha Appelt DoP: Agnés Meng

Log-line: A documentary series about the work of scientists and artists who push the boundaries of human knowledge.

Synopsis: Six documentary episodes following the work of scientists and science-artists who push the boundaries of human knowledge. Each episode focuses on the work of a scientist and an artist. In Boston we meet Clara Sousa e Silva, an astrochemist who looks for alien life. In this episode, her work is paired with portuguese astrophotographer Miguel Claro. In Scotland we meet satellite analyst Paul Quast and the doctor-singer-song-writer Chiara Berardelli. The series is under development and received development funds from the Portuguese Cinema Institute.

2. Borderline series, episode: Where the World Ends

Directed by: Anna Savchenko (DN2)

series in collaboration with other authors from Docnomads: Isabella Rinaldi (DN3), Ross McClean (DN5)

DOP: Tanya Haurylchyk (DN2)

Genre: episode of documentary series

Length: 52 minutes

Shooting location: Belarus/Belgium

Project status: in production

World Premiere: Belgian national broadcaster VRT and others

Co-production between: Off World Production

Log-line: 6 authentic border stories across Europe reveal the controversy and complexity of what symbolic dots and lines on the map could become when cutting into actual people's life.

Short synopsis: The border between Lithuania and Belarus once was a fluid border between Soviet republics. Today it is one of the forgotten European outskirts with the Schengen fence dividing communities, families, lives.