

Nordisk Film & TV Fond Launches Themed-Years with Documentary Focus in 2021

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This year's focus on documentary filmmaking is the first of several themed years to come.

Proudly associated to six high-end creative documentaries competing at CPH:DOX - *President, Sabaya, Children of the Enemy, How to Kill a Cloud, Raising a School Shooter* and *Trust Me*, Nordisk Film & TV Fond is celebrating in 2021 its Documentary Year.

By highlighting documentary films for a full year, the Fund intends to lift its own support measures, understanding of the sector through data collection and analysis, while building bridges between documentary professionals and decision-makers.

Liselott Forsman, CEO at Nordisk Film & TV Fond said: "Last year the Fund decided to install yearly themes to put light on a certain sector in our industry, like awards do for shorter time periods. The Fund's first themed year in 2021 celebrates the high quality of Nordic documentaries.

"Having stayed the same for a number of years, we've raised our documentary support by 20% from January this year. Our themed year naturally also acknowledges industry challenges. We want to encourage a documentary discussion by sharing our distribution research and by raising strategic issues at Nordic industry events like CPH:DOX and Nordisk Panorama.

"During recent years, the majority of our high-end documentary applications have tended to come from Denmark. Is there something in the financing system of one Nordic industry that could inspire neighbouring countries? What about industry bridges between fiction and documentary? Considering the size of Iceland, the country is amazingly strong in co-producing fiction, while documentary applications are rarer. In short, how can we all be even stronger together? This bridge building perspective of the themed year is strengthened by our Audiovisual Collaboration 2021 project, which focuses on just that."

Karolina Lidin the Fund's Senior Documentary Advisor, who has co-conceived the documentary year, introduced the themed year in more detail.

Regarding the **20% budget rise to documentary filmmaking**, she said: "The Fund consistently receives more qualifying applications than we have the means to support, and it is evident that producers are struggling more than ever to finance the high-end, border crossing documentaries that it is Nordisk Film & TV Fond's mandate to support and promote. A few years ago, it was decided to contribute higher grants to fewer projects, but given the impressive number of high-quality documentaries coming out of the Nordic Region, we want to acknowledge this by offering top financing to more projects this year."

Lidin also announced the publication of a **report on Distribution of Nordic Documentaries**. “Later this month, we will be launching a report covering the full distribution of documentaries supported by the Fund, premiering between 2015-2018. It is a comprehensive, facts-and-figures presentation of the financing and distribution reality for high-end creative documentaries, pre-pandemic. For Nordisk Film & TV Fond, it has obvious relevance, given that financing and distribution make up a big part of assessment criteria according to our financing policy. So, it is important for us to keep abreast of the overall results of the films we support, and develop our assessment practice in accordance with shifts in the industry. Having such a valuable collection data on hand, it would only make sense to share it with the documentary community at large. The more we know, the better we can navigate current and future challenges.”

As part of the Fund’s **Audiovisual Collaboration 2021**, a third session will be held April 27, during CPH:DOX’s CPH:CONFERENCE. “As the third session in Nordisk Film & TV Fond’s collaborative initiative with Finnish Ministry of Culture and Education, we are putting the spotlight on future post-pandemic challenges for the Nordic and European documentary industry,” said Lidin. “In a current distribution landscape where audiences verge towards easier access and global platforms are on the move, is the money in fact where the audience is? As Nordisk Film & TV Fond launches the report on financing and distribution of high-end creative documentaries, we have gathered a braintrust of selected producers, film institutes, public broadcasters and European policy makers to discuss how to best nurture the documentary value chain and reach future audiences.”

“On the drawing board, we have a follow-up session at Nordisk Panorama, where we, hopefully IRL, will be able to go deeper into the issues discussed at CPH:CONFERENCE, again emphasizing the importance of the Nordic model of collaboration, the synergy between financing and distribution, and the ultimate sharing of responsibility and ownership of a vibrant Nordic documentary community,” continued Lidin.

Looking further ahead at the Fund’s strategic approach and support to documentary films, Lidin said: “We are looking into more efficient methods of tracking financing and distribution information on a running basis. The long and rigorous process of gathering and analyzing the information for the distribution report showed that much valuable data is not readily available. In a rapidly changing market, actually knowing what works, what doesn’t, and why, is a prerequisite for dealing proactively and not simply reactively. Again, the more we know and share the better we can reach the audiences who truly deserve the films that we make!”

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For further information:

Liselott Forsman, CEO Nordisk Film & TV Fond, liselott@nftvfond.com
Karolina Lidin, Senior Documentary Advisor, karolina@nftvfond.com

About Nordisk Film & TV Fond:

Oslo-based Nordisk Film & TV Fond is funded by 22 partners: the Nordic Council of Ministers, five national film institutes/foundation, and 16 broadcasters and streaming services in the Nordic region. The Fund’s primary purpose is to strengthen the Nordic audiovisual industry through top financing of feature films, drama series, creative documentaries, support to cross-border Nordic distribution and cultural initiatives. The Fund is the main sponsor of the Nordisk Film & TV Fond Prize for Outstanding Screenwriting of a Nordic TV drama. It administrates the prestigious Nordic Council Film Prize and co-organizes Nordic Talents.