

“Our market backs ambitious projects by authors with a unique artistic vision”

Gudula Meinzolt • Director of the DOCM at Visions du Réel

by MURIEL DEL DON

21/04/2017 - Cineuropa caught up with Gudula Meinzolt, director of the DOCM (Doc Outlook-International Market) at the Visions du Réel festival in Nyon



(© Leo Lara / Universo Producao)

The [DOCM at Visions du Réel](#) is one of the most important markets in Switzerland and internationally for documentary film. The Nyon market focuses on exchanges between directors from all over the world and professionals from all sectors of the film industry. **Gudula Meinzolt** talked to us passionately about this unique festival and market.

Cineuropa: In your opinion, what sets the DOCM at Visions du Réel apart from other European markets? What are the highlights of this year’s edition?

Gudula Meinzolt: Our film market, like the festival itself, backs ambitious projects by authors who have a unique artistic vision. Unlike other Swiss markets, we want to build a bridge between the various regional divisions of the industry, whilst remaining in touch with the international market.

The Pitching du Réel section is very special and unique in its field and encompasses three key stages. We want to create a positive and stimulating dynamic between directors and guests (producers, distributors, institutions, TV channels, foundations, curators in the field of contemporary art, etc.). A film is the fruit of multiple partnerships between stakeholders from various sectors in the film industry and many others.

These days, securing funding for an arthouse feature film is becoming increasingly difficult. At the DOCM, directors can weigh up different methods and approaches to development and funding. The Medialibrary is another distinctive trait of Visions du Réel which allows films that have already been completed to find the right audience and market. Although we host a significant number of accredited professionals (1200), the atmosphere of the festival is informal and friendly. It is easy for professionals to network and find partners for new projects.

In your opinion, why is it important to support films still being made at a festival like VDR?

Visions du Réel wants to discover new filmmakers, new cultures and new approaches. The festival allows us to observe and support filmmakers in whom we believe and who could end up presenting their films at Nyon. VDR aims to link emerging directors and directors who are already established. This year at Pitching du Réel for example we will be hosting Claire Simon along with directors working on their first or second films. We want to work in close contact with young people because we know how hard it is to find the necessary funding to film a first or second feature film. It's a delicate time for fledgling directors as they try to develop their artistic identity. What we absolutely don't want to do is format them, but instead to open doors for them, put them on the starting blocks, guide them and give them the tools they need to present and support their ideas. Every film is born from a collective effort of cooperation, which is why we try to build synergies between different professionals: editors, sound designers, directors of photography, etc. It's important for young people to meet and discuss the problems, challenges and concerns they share in common. The DOCM offers directors who have already completed their films the chance to present them and maybe even sell them internationally, kicking off or developing their careers, but it is also an essential springboard for emerging directors.

With the Doc Think Tank, Visions du Réel offers a platform for discussion of the current and future state of the audiovisual market: how do you see this evolving?

We're currently in a stage of experimentation. The digital market has changed everything. We are facing new challenges, extra problems, and uncertainty. We need to discuss the situation and the challenges, above all those associated with audiences: how and where do we find them? We also have to consider video-on-demand platforms, new virtual reality initiatives and the rise of web docs and transmedia storytelling. We always try to listen to the film market, picking up on the issues at stake and making them our own. Every year we have a section dedicated to Swiss projects that have not yet been finished but are still being made, and invite guests to come and talk about the problems they faced at the start of their careers and where they went from there. It's very brave of the guests to talk about their artistic journeys. This year we have **Anka Schmid**. As well as all this we offer filmmakers post-production support and tackle ethical issues such as the remuneration of the protagonists of documentary films. We've realised over the years that a lot of our directors are also artists, which is why the upcoming edition will also focus on the relationship between contemporary art and film.

(Translated from Italian)