

Last festival edition with Christoph Terhechte

Press Release
13 February 2025



Christoph Terhechte, festival director of DOK Leipzig | Photo: Susann Jehnichen

Christoph Terhechte, artistic director of the DOK Leipzig festival for documentary and animated film and managing director of the Leipziger DOK-Filmwochen GmbH, has decided to terminate his contract for personal reasons two years before its expiry on 31 January 2028. He will therefore remain in his position until 31 January 2026 before taking early retirement. This means that the 68th edition of DOK Leipzig, which will take place from 27 October to 2 November 2025, will be the last under his direction.

“Guiding DOK Leipzig through the past five years and defending the international standing of the world’s oldest festival of documentary and animated film was a challenge for the team and for myself as artistic director“, said Terhechte. „Our combined effort enabled us to rise to the occasion. Health issues have now prompted me to step down. I shall nonetheless remain loyal to the festival and hope that our recent successes can be continued.”

Over the years, Terhechte has implemented a number of innovations: By launching a new programme structure and reducing the number of films, he streamlined the programme to create a clear, concise profile. With the introduction of a Golden Dove for feature-length animation films and the reorganisation of the competitions, he has strengthened the role of animated film at DOK Leipzig. He also established the audience competition with a jury of Leipzig film enthusiasts and created two new out-of-competition sections. „Panorama: Central and Eastern Europe“ reflects an important regional focus of the festival and „Camera Lucida“ brings together challenging and artistically outstanding films. After a hybrid festival edition in 2020 due to the pandemic, Terhechte consciously set the focus back on in-person events and emphasised the importance of cinema culture. He also expanded the festival’s presence during the year with the „DOK Days“ and the summer cinema.

„I deeply regret Christoph Terhechte’s decision. With him at the helm, we were able to put the DOK-Filmwochen GmbH back on a solid economic footing. After the difficult years that the coronavirus pandemic caused for the festival industry, Mr Terhechte and his team have done an excellent job in stabilising the festival and recently achieved a record number of

68th International Leipzig
Festival for Documentary and
Animated Film

27 October to 2 November

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visitors in 2024," said Dr Skadi Jennicke, Deputy Mayor for Culture and Arts of the City of Leipzig.

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Upon being informed of Christoph Terhechte's decision, the Supervisory Board took steps to initiate the process of choosing a successor, which will begin shortly. A selection committee consisting of the chairwoman of the Supervisory Board, Dr Skadi Jennicke, members of the Supervisory Board and external consultants from the film and documentary film industry will work together to fill the position. A suitable successor is expected to be found by the third quarter of 2025.

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Christoph Terhechte has been a key figure in the international film festival scene for 25 years. From 2001 to 2018, he was Head of the International Forum of New Cinema at the Berlinale, making it a global catalyst for independent artistic cinema. Before taking over as director of DOK Leipzig on 1 January 2020, he was artistic director of the Marrakech International Film Festival. Prior to his involvement in film festivals, Terhechte, who studied political science and journalism, worked for many years as a film critic in Paris and Berlin.

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