

HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT FILMS

AUTHOR: Andreea Bratosin, One World Romania Association (Romania)



- > Selecting a catalogue
- > Quality and Subject Matter
- > Type of Venue
- > Target Audience
- > Personal Taste
- > Timing
- > Local Cultural Events
- > Major Socio-Political Issues
- > Summary

Selecting a catalogue

Each season, KineDok creates a catalogue of films curated by members of the organization team from the respective partner countries. Each country's representatives propose the top two contemporary documentaries produced or co-produced in their homeland. The main criteria of the film selection include cinematic quality, diversity of topics and socio-political involvement. So, annually, you can choose from 12–16 documentary films. The film catalogue is then discussed and promoted with each venue manager to curate a specific program for their venue. The people or organizations screening KineDok films may vary; they can be cultural associations, public institutions, civic groups or individuals from all walks of life. Their selection of films always goes hand in hand with the ethical or cultural values and the identity of the screening venue. Any film selected from the KineDok collection can draw parallels to your local culture. There are several criteria you should take into account when selecting documentary films you want to screen.

Quality and Subject Matter

KineDok catalogue contains documentaries of artistic quality that cover a wide range of social and political issues, e.g. justice, freedom of speech, health & mental health, migration, institutional corruption, ageing and senior citizens in society, abuse and family trauma, collective trauma, minorities, inequality of opportunities, environment & climate change and many more.

“We decide on the films with the help of the KineDok coordinator. Currently, we are screening more Georgian films due to the political situation in the country. Generally, we choose cinematic films interesting to art professionals, photographers, etc. We usually know the available slots for film screenings a few months beforehand and decide a week before which specific film we will screen.”

Natalie

**CUBE IN CONTEXT,
GEORGIA**

<https://www.instagram.com/cubeincontext/>

Type of Venue

Screenings have to be adapted to the type of location (indoor, outdoor) and the atmosphere the organizers wish to create. For example, mainstream, audience-friendly films are more suitable for outdoor screenings, bars, and pubs, while artistic films for cinephiles are better suited for museums, libraries or art galleries. Ultimately it is up to you what to screen and for what kind of audience.

„We aim to screen all the catalogue items during the season. We try to screen as many films as possible outdoors while the weather is good and to use community spaces only during the cold autumn, and winter months. This significantly influences the planning of screenings, as lighter films are timed for outdoor screenings and heavier films for indoor screenings in winter.“

ZSUZSI, AKE-DEBRECEN (HUNGARY)

Target Audience

It is crucial to identify the potential audience for a specific subject represented in the film and invite them to the screening. For example, you can invite members of senior clubs and NGOs that work with older people to a film dealing with the role of senior citizens in society. Different organizers have different objectives; some want to build a loyal and reliable documentary film community, while others, who already have such a crowd or community-specific screenings, wish to focus on discussions about presented topics that relate to the lives of the community.

“Usually, we set the screenings around four weeks apart. We realized that when we try to make the screenings more frequent, it doesn’t work, mainly because our team members are unavailable so often. Sometimes, it depends on the space. Once we had access to a space for two days, so we organized two events on these two consecutive days while making sure they didn’t overlap with others. They matched in theme, so it worked perfectly. During the week, we hold the film screenings at 7 PM for indoor events, which works OK in Arad. People don’t stay that late in town. They watch the movie, join the discussion and are home at 10 PM. In summer, depending on the hour it gets dark, we show the movies outdoors, and people also stay out longer.”

Ioana

**CITIZENIT ASSOCIATION
(ROMANIA)**

<https://www.citizenit.ro>

Personal Taste

As a cultural event organizer, you must build your own curatorial vision. At the same time, you need to remember that you are screening films for an audience, not for yourself. There should be a balance between your personal taste and a clear sense of what your audience would watch.

BUILD YOUR OWN CURATORIAL VISION

“There is a creative process in choosing the films, even if it might not seem so. I check the list of films from the KineDok catalogue and think: first, which topics work best for my town; second, which films are a good fit with other events/festivals; third, which of the films follow up on the current world or local events; and fourth, which movie speaks to a specific audience we want to engage. And then, I consider my personal preferences and film reviews (I do serious research in that area). Now, I plan the program only 2–3 weeks ahead of time, but I would like to plan more in advance and have a sort of KineDok series, like a mini festival or film club. I know that the selection still is quite subjective, but I do my best.”

Simion

**PALATUL CULTURII
(ROMANIA)**

<http://www.palatulculturiiibistrita.ro>

Timing

Certain documentaries/topics can draw more attention if screened in a particular season. Think about which films can be associated with a summer or winter atmosphere. For example, films about travelling, sports, and family relationships have more of a summer vibe.

VIBE OF THE FILMS

Local Cultural Events

Consider important cultural events in your area that you can associate the screening with (e.g., film or music festivals, local spring/summer festivities, Open/White Night of Galleries, Museums or Libraries, Town days, etc.). An accompanying event could enhance the impact of the screening and increase the turnout.

“Usually, I check the calendar to see if there is any special date coming up or something interesting happening that could fit with any of the KineDok films. Then, I also approach potential guests for the after-screening discussions. For example, I write on FB that I am looking for such and such experts, and sometimes people send me tips, or I approach people with a lot of connections. Of course, it has to be quite low-cost because we don't have a budget for some high-profile celebrities.”

Blanka, FUTRA(Czechia)

Major Socio-Political Issues

Try cooperating with local organizations that focus on critical issues in your country, e.g., an LGBTQ+ film would attract more attention when screened during Pride Week or another event that focuses on the queer community; a film about the Roma community can be screened on the International Roma Day, etc. Remember that some issues can be seen as politically sensitive in some countries, so be ready for backlash or heated discussions with your audience.

Summary

Each season, Kinedok creates a catalogue of 12–16 films from which the local partners can choose to screen in their venue. The selection of films always goes hand in hand with the cultural values and the identity of the screening venue. There are several criteria you should take into account when selecting documentary films you want to screen:

- **Quality and subject of the film:** KineDok catalogue contains artistic quality documentaries that cover a wide range of social and political issues.
- **Type of venue:** Screenings have to be adapted to different types of locations (indoor, outdoor) and the atmosphere that the location and the organizers can create.
- **Target audience:** It is important to identify the potential audience for a specific subject represented in the film and invite them to the screening.
- **Personal taste:** There should be a balance between your personal taste and a clear sense of what your audience will be watching.

- **Right time (season, holidays):** There are certain documentaries or topics that can be more successful if they are screened in a particular season.
- **Regular or ad hoc local cultural events:** Take into consideration important local cultural events that you can associate the screening with.
- **Major social-political issues:** It is also possible to cooperate with local organizations that focus on major social-political issues in your country.

As a cultural event organizer, you must build your own curatorial vision. At the same time, you need to remember that you are screening films for an audience, not for yourself. There should be a balance between your personal taste and a clear sense of what your audience would watch.

PHOTOS:

Film stills (Apparatgeist; White on White)

Archive of our screening venues (Muzeul Amintirilor din Comunism Art Burg; Muzeul Cineastului Amator; Muzeul Literaturii Romane; Rezidenta Scena 9 – Bucharest Romania)