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**IDFA's "The Female Gaze" as subaltern public sphere
for feminist discourse.**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis has conducted research into the International Documentary Festival of Amsterdam (IDFA). In 2014, IDFA had a subcategory named “The Female Gaze,” which focused on the question as to whether women make different films. This interpretation is limited in its conception, leaving important aspects of the female gaze (such as individuality and agency) aside altogether. Moreover, IDFA failed to provide an actual definition of the female gaze; instead, it merely posed a question. This thesis analyzed if a subaltern public sphere for feminist discourse could arise within the parameters of IDFA’s “The Female Gaze” subcategory. Nancy Fraser’s alterations to Habermas’ public sphere conceptions were presented as the main theoretical framework, and the method involved conducting a close reading of the booklet created for the subcategory. The main result of this research revealed that the festival placed a considerable amount of emphasis on the collectiveness to which female representation is often condemned within patriarchal society. Both in the interviews with directors and the descriptions of programmed films, IDFA’s editors seemed stuck in a traditional way of thinking and were manifestly unable to establish a subaltern public sphere for feminist discourse. IDFA, being a documentary festival, could have had the possibility to represent marginalized discourse as a larger festival. Programming a subcategory to highlight women in film seems to be a positive stepping-stone for such discourse; however, IDFA missed the mark for representing feminist discourse by adhering to a highly limited interpretation of the female gaze, entirely excluding the components that make the female gaze emancipatory and representing women as merely a collective of domestic beings.

INTRODUCTION

The International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) is the largest documentary festival in the world, attracting 300,000 visitors each year.¹ IDFA screens documentaries from all across the globe, and its programming can be divided into three categories: competitions, regular programming and the themed programming. The competition category features subcategories such as feature-length, first appearance, mid-length, and student competitions. The regular program category features subcategories such as Masters, Luminous, Panorama, Paradocs, Kids&Docs and Music Documentary.² The themes for these subcategories change annually, thus setting a different tone for the festival each year. Examples of subcategory themes over the years have included Shifting Perspectives: The Arab World (2017), Space (2018), The Quiet Eye (2016), Benjamin Barber Jihad vs. McWorld (2015), and The Female Gaze (2014). Additional to the themed program category is the guest of honor and accompanying Retrospective and Top 10 category, in which a filmmaker assembles a top-10 list of personal favorites. Each year, the entire festival programming comprises approximately 250 films.

In 2016, Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong published an essay on film festivals as public spheres.³ She proposed that researchers investigate film festivals within the context of public sphere theory, which was first coined by philosopher Jurgen Habermas in 1962 in *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*.⁴ Habermas defines the public sphere as "made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state."⁵ His conception of the public sphere was initially tailored to bourgeois society, which refers to a social class characterized by ownership of capital and property.⁶ Habermas's conceptualization of the public sphere has caused several debates and alternative conceptions, the most fundamental of which relate to issues of gender and diversity. Feminist scholars have critiqued Habermas' original conception of the public

¹ I Amsterdam, "IDFA, International Documentary Festival Amsterdam." Accessed January 24, 2024. <https://www.iamsterdam.com/en/whats-on/calendar/festivals/events/idfa-international-documentary-film-festival-amsterdam>.

² IDFA, "Program Sections," *IDFA Program Guide 2014*, March 16, 2015, 18. https://issuu.com/idfa/docs/idfa_program_guide_2014.

³ Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong, "Publics and Counterpublics: Rethinking Film Festivals as Public Spheres," in *Film Festivals: History, Theory, Method, Practice*, ed. Marijke de Valck, Brendan Kredell, and Skadi Loist (London/New York: Routledge, 2016), 85.

⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 3.

⁵ Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

sphere for neglecting issues related to gender and diversity; they argue that the concept is based on a historically male-centric perspective, and the exclusion of marginalized voices needs to be addressed in a more comprehensive understanding of public discourse.⁷

The connection between film festivals and public spheres has been recognized by many scholars; Leanne Dawson and Skadi Loist recognize that historically speaking, film festivals and public spheres have catered to a specific audience base and created a counter-public sphere.⁸ For example, LGBTIQ film festivals, in particular, became early subjects of research on queer cinema and queer film culture as social practices; initial academic studies of these festivals examined them as queer counter-public spheres and community organizations.⁹ Nonetheless, Wong's argument transcends simply tying film festivals and public spheres together but proposes that researchers should analyze film festivals as public spheres. Within this proposition, Wong argues in "Publics and Counterpublics" that a clear separation can be made between major film festivals as a bourgeois public sphere and smaller, niche festivals as public spheres based on marginalized discourse.¹⁰ She argues that

major film festivals can profitably be read through the heritage of previous bourgeois worlds, especially if we highlight the foundations of economic power and the strategies of cultural domination that emerge at points of contradiction within these complex, multilayered events. By contrast, rich theories of alternative/counter-publics and the thread many of these analyses share about the creative potential and demands on emergent publics force us to engage even more complex issues of specialized festivals in their social and cultural contexts and participation in wider festival networks and practices.¹¹

Even though Wong's argument, complete with extensive theoretical foundation, is relatively straightforward and clear, she remains uncertain and vague about how to operationalize such a perspective. Regarding the question of how researchers should analyze film festivals as public spheres, Wong merely provides a theoretical insight rather than a method. She emphasizes, "[I]t is important not to treat the generative idea of the public sphere as a recipe book for festival

⁷ Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text*, no. 25/26 (1990): 60, <https://doi.org/10.2307/466240>.

⁸ Leanne Dawson and Skadi Loist, "Queer/ing film festivals: History, theory, impact," *Studies in European Cinema* 15, no. 1 (2018): 2.

⁹ Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021), 83.

¹⁰ Wong, "Publics and Counterpublics," 86.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 95–96.

analysis but as a theoretical debate in which festival studies can actively engage.”¹² Nevertheless, from my perspective, in order to “engage film festival studies in the theoretical debate [on public sphere theory],” it is vital to specify how this analysis should be performed. While Wong’s conception of film festivals as public spheres is not new, it seems no scholars have attempted to operationalize her conception to research film festivals as public spheres. This thesis therefore aims to operationalize Wong’s proposal, taking the 2014 edition of IDFA as a core object of study. IDFA’s 2014 subcategory “The Female Gaze” seems suitable for testing Wong’s proposal, as its title implies a feministic component rooted within the category. Nancy Fraser’s alterations on Habermas’ original formulation of the public sphere (which focus on subaltern discourse) shall operate as a foundation for interpreting the empirical findings. This thesis shall not consider the entire programming of the subcategory but focus on the accompanying booklet that IDFA has distributed on the theme. A research question shall be formulated accordingly at the end of the next chapter.

¹² Ibid., 96.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

FILM FESTIVALS AS PUBLIC SPHERES

In 2016, Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong published “Publics and Counterpublics,” an essay on film festivals as public spheres. In this essay, she compares so-called A-list film festivals like Cannes, Berlinale, and TIFF (Toronto) with the bourgeois public sphere initially proposed by Jürgen Habermas in 1962. Correspondingly, Wong interprets the “alternative film festivals” that target specialized audiences and concerns as subaltern or counter-public spheres, as theorized by scholars like Oskar Negt, Alexander Kluge, and – in particular – Nancy Fraser.¹³ Wong states that film festivals do not create social issues; rather, she argues that, through selection, screening, and reception, they galvanize debates about such issues.¹⁴ According to Wong, these debates can be classified into two sections. A-list festivals such as Cannes, Berlinale, and Venice resemble debates in the classic bourgeois public sphere; these festivals are semi-governmental, not easily accessible, and dominated by men in terms of production, distribution, programming, and commentary.¹⁵ Another significant aspect of A-list festivals is their central relationship to Hollywood as the power center of the global film industry; Wong calls out the similarity between these A-list festivals and the erudite salons of the 18th century.¹⁶

In contrast, Wong states about alternative festivals that

if the major A-list festivals should be seen primarily as embodying the bourgeois public sphere, then alternative film festivals, whether centred on women’s festivals, ethnic festivals, or any festivals that promote the voices of subordinated classes or issues should be examined as subaltern festivals.¹⁷

These alternative film festivals have additional, even dominant goals that entail furthering other agendas beyond cinematic arts. Many of them claim to better the world through programming around concrete goals, whether promoting transnational linkages, seeking intergroup understanding, advancing human rights, demanding equality for people of all sexual orientations, or promoting environmental agendas. Such specific goals give these festivals well-defined identities because they have narrower foci in terms of films and interpretation and

¹³ Wong, “Publics and Counterpublics,” 86.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

serve particular publics. While similar issues may be raised by individual films or by sections within more prominent festivals, focused festivals tend to distill essential questions about the social impact of film much more powerfully and structurally.¹⁸

Whether large or small, film festivals have often had a progressive connotation. Freedom of speech, human rights, and equality are usually represented and advocated at all major film festivals.²⁰ Nonetheless, as Wong additionally argues, the latter's central themes of national identity and international relationships echo a Habermasian public sphere.²¹ If festivals were to be regarded as public spheres, and public sphere theory would therefore apply to film festivals, it could be stated that smaller, niche festivals have risen because of how A-list festivals have treated marginalized discourse. Philosopher and critical theorist Nancy Fraser argues in "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" that subaltern or counter-publics emerged in discursive arenas *because* these publics felt excluded from the dominant public sphere.²² The same could apply to the emergence of smaller, niche film festivals: it is possible that they emerged because specific discourse was excluded from the A-list festivals.

Having discussed the range of film festivals and their respective public spheres, it becomes clear that IDFA does not necessarily match one definition of a film festival according to Wong's interpretation. The question remains as to whether IDFA should be considered an A-list festival or whether the description of the subaltern public sphere would be a better fit. I would argue that, with regards to its magnitude, IDFA could be considered an A-list festival among documentary festivals. Attracting 300,000 visitors each year, IDFA is the largest documentary festival in the world.²³ For comparison, Berlinale attracts around 485,000 visitors each year.²⁴ The Cannes Film Festival, which is known for being more selective, is home to 210,000 visitors each year.²⁵

¹⁸ Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong, *Film Festivals: Culture, People, and Power on the Global Screen* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 160.

²⁰ Wong, "Publics and Counterpublics," 86.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 66.

²³ *Het Parool*, "Hoe IDFA uitgroeide tot het grootste documentaire festival ter wereld." Accessed November 14, 2023, <https://www.parool.nl/podcasts/ho-idfa-uitgroeide-tot-het-grootste-documentairefestival-ter-wereld~be6d8fd6/>.

²⁴ Statista, "Berlinale: Number of visits." Accessed 14 November, 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/705110/berlinale-number-of-visits/>.

²⁵ Cote d'Azur France, "Cannes Film Festival." Accessed November 14, 2023, <https://cotedazurfrance.fr/en/discover/cities-on-the-cote-dazur/visit-cannes/focus-on-the-cannes-international-film-festival/>.

The differences are distinctive when drawing a comparison between IDFA and other documentary festivals; for instance, Hot Docs, a Canadian documentary festival located in Toronto, requires a Toronto-premiere status only, meaning that the film cannot have been screened publicly in Toronto prior to the festival.²⁶ The same applies to AFI Docs, America's premier film festival for documentaries, which requires a US-premiere status.²⁷ This is a rather important difference: by requiring a world-premiere status for its applicants, IDFA ensures that it has the first pick out of all documentaries submitted that year. These admission rules set by the festival add value in terms of international recognition as a major film festival within its genre.

With this context in mind, IDFA seems to be an A-list festival in its range. At the same time, its exclusive focus on the documentary genre ensures that IDFA is very emphatic and chiefly provides a stage for "the voices of subordinate classes" that Wong links to subaltern festivals and special "sections and awards" sections of A-list festivals. Documentaries often voice discourse that has been left below the surface or excluded altogether from mainstream commercial drama productions. The documentary genre provides insight into people's lives; usually, these documentary conventions result in marginalized opinions being voiced rather than conventional discourse.²⁸ It could therefore be argued that marginalized discourse articulation, oftentimes connected to subaltern or counter publics, could be expected to feature prominently at IDFA through the years, due to the simple fact that it identifies itself as a documentary festival.

Wong herself mentions in *Film Festivals: Culture, People, and Power on the Global Screen* that "the discussion on film festivals, nonetheless, must continue to recognize the variety of film festivals, their texts, their contexts, and their participants."²⁹ The majority of scholarship on film festivals (including Wong) may appreciate the variety of film festivals. However, the variety is hard to distinguish; they speak of either A-list festivals or smaller specialized festivals, and seldom is the broad spectrum in between considered.³⁰ It could be argued that precisely the festivals located in between A-list and niche have the potential to do

²⁶ Hot Docs, "Submit a Film." Accessed November 14, 2023, <https://hotdocs.ca/industry/conference/submit-a-film>.

²⁷ Film Freeway, "AFIDOCS." Accessed November 14, 2023, <https://filmfreeway.com/AFIDOCS>.

²⁸ Belinda Smaill, "Injured Identities: Pain, Politics and Documentary," *Studies in Documentary Film* 1, no. 2 (2007): 152, https://doi.org/10.1386/sdf.1.2.151_1.

²⁹ Wong, *Film Festivals*, 151.

³⁰ Wong, "Publics and Counterpublics," 86.

both.³¹ How each festival should be classified and what such a spectrum should look like are rather important questions that Wong does not necessarily elaborate on.

Its fixed or intermediate stance is therefore what makes IDFA an interesting case. Nonetheless, apart from its positioning, the more basic question arises as to how exactly the IDFA tends to vocalize marginalized discourse. A possible example of this vocalization is the IDFA's 2014 subcategory "The Female Gaze," in which films by and about women were programmed and scheduled. This thesis will therefore analyze how a public sphere for feminist discourse was constructed during the 2014 edition of IDFA. As this study relates public sphere theory to feminist discourse, the next section of this theoretical framework delves deeper into public sphere theory.

³¹ Wong tends to make a clear separation between A-list and niche festivals. Taking the above into account, the question arises as to how productive Wong's clear distinction between A-list and niche festivals is for research into film festivals. The world is simply not split into "Berlinale" and "de Roze Filmdagen"; there is a broad spectrum within which film festivals can choose to identify themselves. What can be said of other festivals that define themselves through genre; for instance, short film festivals such as GoShorts and Shortcuts? What about children's film festivals or festivals that promote films from certain regions in the world, such as the NFF (Northern Film Festival)?

PUBLIC SPHERE THEORY

As mentioned above, Wong has drawn a comparison between A-list festivals and the bourgeois public sphere and between smaller, niche festivals and subaltern or counter-public spheres. The theoretical concept of the bourgeois public sphere was first coined by German philosopher Jurgen Habermas in his *Habilitationsschrift* from 1962. This thesis shall, however, use the English translation of Habermas' work, which was first published in 1991. Habermas defines the public sphere as "made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state."³² Habermas mentions 18th-century coffeehouses and salons as arenas where this public sphere was first recognized, as private individuals came together and became a public. The similarity with film festivals seems obvious: a physical place where people can meet and "share experiences."³³

Habermas brings to light certain conditions for such a public sphere to arise. He names multiple criteria, four of which are most paramount:

- 1) The public sphere should be open and accessible to all members of society, regardless of their social or economic status. It should not be controlled or dominated by a particular elite or group.³⁴
- 2) Public debate within the public sphere should be characterized by rational and reasoned discussion. It should be a space where individuals engage in critical thinking, deliberation, and the exchange of ideas based on evidence and logic.³⁵
- 3) Participants in the public sphere should act autonomously, free from coercion or manipulation. Autonomy means that individuals are not unduly influenced or pressured by external forces, allowing them to express their opinions and make informed decisions.³⁶
- 4) The public sphere is a space for civic engagement where individuals come together to discuss matters of common concern, whether political, social, or cultural. It is a space for the public to form opinions and engage with the issues that affect society.³⁷

³² Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, 27.

³³ Wong, "Publics and Counterpublics," 101.

³⁴ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, 29.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 43.

Among the many scholars who have criticized and expanded Habermas' notion of the public sphere, one of the most prominent is the American philosopher and feminist Nancy Fraser. Her article "Rethinking the Public Sphere" is an influential essay that examines the concept of the public sphere as coined by Habermas and its limitations. Fraser proposes a series of adaptations to the theory, arguing that Habermas' conception of the bourgeois public sphere fails to recognize marginalized groups.³⁸ As this thesis examines precisely one of those marginalized groups (i.e., women) and the discourse that they articulate within the context of a particular film festival, Fraser's recontextualization of Habermas' notion will serve as the study's main theoretical framework.

Fraser argues that Habermas' depiction of the public sphere neglects to consider alternative, non-liberal, non-bourgeois public spheres, leading to an idealization of the liberal variant. In her work, she thus suggests methods to "rethink" the public sphere within Habermas' framework. Fraser deems the bourgeois conception of the public sphere not merely an unattained utopian concept but rather a masculinist ideological construct used to validate a new form of class hierarchy.³⁹ Fraser's engagement with the public sphere prioritizes issues of justice, representation, and inclusivity, focusing not just on counter or contesting public spheres but on the subaltern nature of a public sphere.⁴⁰

To support her argument, Fraser suggests four alterations to Habermas's conception. I will only use the first three of Fraser's alterations for this research, as the fourth alteration (regarding civic engagement) has little relation to the subject of this thesis.⁴¹ Fraser goes on to refute the aforementioned assumptions with the following arguments.

First, Habermas argues that it is possible for public sphere participants to bracket status differentials and to deliberate as if they were equals. Fraser argues the contrary, emphasizing that a recognition of social (in)equality is necessary for political democracy; she writes, "Under current conditions of massive inequality, the only way to reduce disparities in political voice is through social movement contestations that challenge some basic features of bourgeois

³⁸ Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 76.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁴¹ According to Habermas, a functioning democratic public sphere requires a sharp separation between civil society and the state. Fraser argues that the interpretation of this assumption is twofold, depending on how the expression of "civil society" is understood. She focuses on one interpretation: a sharp separation of civil society and the state is necessary for a working public sphere, one that warrants more extended examination. In this interpretation, civil society means the nexus of nongovernmental or secondary associations that are neither economic nor administrative.

society.”⁴² In other words, for inequality to be dismantled, this inequality must primarily be *recognized within* the public sphere instead of (supposedly) being bracketed.

Second, according to Habermas, a single, comprehensive public sphere is always preferable to a nexus of multiple publics and public spheres. Fraser’s refutation of this point aligns with her previous argument that it is not possible to insulate specific discursive arenas from the effects of societal inequalities; where societal inequality persists, deliberative processes in the public sphere will tend to operate to the advantage of dominant groups and to the disadvantage of subordinates.⁴³ Consequently, the single, comprehensive public sphere will always vocalize dominant, oftentimes hegemonic discourse and fail to include marginalized discourse; therefore, Fraser advocates a discursive arena in which people of subordinated groups have constituted alternative publics. She calls these spaces subaltern counter-publics to signal that they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs.⁴⁴

Third, Habermas argues that discourse in the public sphere should be restricted to deliberation about the common good instead of private interests and issues. Fraser considers there to be some ambiguity between what objectively affects everyone, as seen from an outsider’s perspective, on the one hand, and what is recognized as a matter of common concern by participants, on the other hand.⁴⁵ Although Fraser recognizes and appreciates that preferences, interests, and identities are given exogenously in advance of public deliberation (and are discursively constituted in and through it), she argues that this view conflates the ideas of deliberation and the common good by assuming that any deliberation must be deliberation about the common good.⁴⁶ According to Fraser, this perspective limits deliberation to talk framed from the standpoint of a single, all-encompassing “we,” thereby ruling claims of self-interest and group interest out of order. She quotes Jane Mansbridge on this aspect:

Ruling self-interest and group interest out of order makes it harder for participants to sort out what is happening. In particular, the less powerful may not always find ways to discover that the prevailing sense of “we” does not adequately include them.⁴⁷

⁴² Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” 63.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴⁷ Jane Mansbridge, “Feminism and Democracy,” *The American Prospect*, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 127.

Moreover, Fraser argues that what is part of the common good is decided precisely through discursive contestations.⁴⁸ Public and private can, according to Fraser, therefore not be separated from one another, since doing so further excludes people who do not feel included within the dominant discourse. She argues that, within the public sphere, deliberation over seemingly private components of private life must be recognized for marginalized discourse to be vocalized.⁴⁹ As an example, she cites the 20th-century feminist subaltern counter public:

Until quite recently, feminists were in the minority in thinking that domestic violence against women was a matter of common concern and, thus, a legitimate topic of public discourse. The great majority of people considered this issue to be a private matter between what was assumed to be a relatively small number of heterosexual couples (and perhaps the social and legal professionals who were supposed to deal with them). Then, feminists formed a subaltern counter-public from which we disseminated a view of domestic violence as a widespread systemic feature of male-dominated societies. Eventually, after sustained discursive contestation, we succeeded in making it a common concern.⁵⁰

Finally, throughout all the refutations presented by Fraser in her article, an underlying principle can be defined: she views the public sphere coined by Habermas to be inadequate for critiquing the limits of existing democracy in late capitalist societies.⁵¹ According to Fraser, the public sphere was never a utopian ideal; rather, it was a legitimization for high society rule and oppression of subordinates. Fraser's work encourages re-evaluating the ways in which inclusive public discourse and democratic participation are conceptualized and promoted. History demonstrates that members of subordinated social groups (e.g., women, people of color, queer people) have repeatedly found it advantageous to constitute alternative publics. She thus introduces the idea of a "subaltern counter public" to highlight the existence of alternative public spheres created by marginalized communities to address their specific concerns

Fraser's alterations to Habermas' original formulation will be used as the framework for this thesis to provide a theoretical foundation for interpretations of the empirical findings. Regarding Fraser's alteration of bracketing status, paying attention to the booklet's consideration of intersectional axis would add to the value of the subaltern public sphere. Women are never simply women; race, sexuality, and age (among other factors) also play a

⁴⁸ Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 71.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 77.

part in representational issues. Regarding the second alteration about the singularity of Habermas' public sphere, it can be expected that IDFA already meets this criterion for the simple fact that it is a documentary festival. As mentioned above, documentary conventions often dictate marginalized discourse to be vocalized, thus possibly creating multiple publics through their subcategories. Fraser's alteration of the private sphere could also provide insight into what is deemed "private" in women's lives; is individuality recognized in women's private lives, or are women represented as sharing the same [monolithic] experience in the private sphere?

Having introduced this research and provided a theoretical foundation to commence the analysis, this thesis seeks to answer the following main research question: How did IDFA compose a subaltern public sphere for feminist discourse in its 2014 subcategory, "The Female Gaze?"

METHOD AND CORPUS

To answer the main research question, a close reading of the 22-page booklet published by IDFA for its 2014 female gaze sub-category will be conducted. This analysis aims to provide information about the concept of “the female gaze,” the festival programming, interviews with its central directors, and other content related to the theme. “Close reading” is a term often associated with New Criticism.⁵² A close reading involves two aspects to reading a text: the first aspect is based solely on the text and involves exposing inconsistencies, contradictions, and flawed reasoning.⁵³ The second aspect involves some judgment based on external aspects, with the reader being expected to deploy external knowledge in order to grasp a deeper understanding of the text.⁵⁴ It should be noted that this method is not meant to undermine the text in general; rather, it enables a critical reflection on the text, considering both textual aspects (which are directly related to and recognizable within the text) and external aspects (where the reader is expected to deploy previously obtained knowledge).⁵⁵ To operationalize this method, I will proceed through the booklet reflecting critically upon inconsistencies and contradictions, as well as considering external factors, such as possible biases and expressions rooted within patriarchal society.

The operationalization of this method shall initially focus on elements that are immanent to the text; for instance, how does IDFA describe its sub-programming, what questions does IDFA ask its directors, what answers do the directors give, and (perhaps most fundamentally) how does IDFA define the female gaze? I shall pay attention to the use of language and the choice of certain headlines or subheadings. Second, I will analyze these elements based on external aspects. This analysis also involves reflecting theoretically on the elements immanent to the text. I will expose possible biases and focus on connotations associated with the immanent elements. The theoretical reflection will provide additional perspectives on how to operationalize Wong’s initial proposition (we should research film festivals as public spheres). Practice dictates that indicating both textual and external factors will probably expose certain ambiguities, which are central to the function of close reading. These ambiguities shall be connected to public sphere theory, as discussed in the previous

⁵² Andrew DuBois, "Close Reading: An Introduction," in *Close Reading: A Reader*, ed. Andrew DuBois and Frank Lentricchia (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 5.

⁵³ Barbara Herrnstein Smith, “What Was ‘Close Reading’?”, *The Minnesota Review* 2016, no. 87 (2016): 58, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00265667-3630844>.

⁵⁴ Smith, “What Was ‘Close Reading’?”, 58.

⁵⁵ Cleanth Brooks, “The New Criticism,” *The Sewanee Review* 87, no. 4 (1979): 601.

chapter. Once again, this method does not aim to undermine the text; it is equally valuable to critical reading to expose similarities and consistencies within the text.

Each year, IDFA's programming is categorized into competitions, non-competitions, and "theme programs." The competition and non-competition categories remain fairly consistent, with some programs like Kids & Docs and Doclab occasionally shifting between the two. The festival's annual tone and focus are primarily shaped by the themed categories, which vary yearly. In 2014, the themes were Secrets, The Female Gaze, Identity, Virtual Reality, and Love. "The Female Gaze" theme featured 26 films, and a central guest was selected to align with the theme. Each theme was accompanied by a booklet containing information about the selected films, interviews with directors, and related content that provides insight into the theme. The 2014 booklet on "The Female Gaze" will be the primary focus of my analysis.

First, I will establish how IDFA defines the female gaze. While the term generally has an inherent, straightforward meaning, this may differ from a definition that takes external factors into account. As it is also the title of the theme and booklet, all content will likely relate to the female gaze; it is therefore essential to expose the definition that IDFA uses for its theme before starting the contextual analyses of the booklet's contents.

Second, I will examine the interviews with directors of the programmed films, as well as additional interviews and descriptions of the films featured in the booklet. An interview with Dutch female directors Nelleke Koop and Mea Dols de Jong is featured on pages six and seven; I will consider both the questions asked by the interviewer and the answers provided by Dols de Jong and Koop, as this information will provide insights into how IDFA operationalizes its interpretation of the female gaze.

An article about central guest Heddy Honigmann is featured on pages nine and 10. As the central guest to this year's edition, it will be valuable to this analysis to determine what kind of questions Honigmann is asked and the answers that she provides; the interview's main topic can also illuminate how the festival seeks to entertain its main guest for this year's edition. On pages 11 to 17, multiple smaller pieces are featured, which either describe a film selected for the theme or discuss the role of women in film in general. As these pieces will provide information on why IDFA has selected said films, they are valuable assets to this analysis; the other themes that IDFA associates with the female gaze are similarly crucial to understanding its interpretation of the female gaze. On pages 16 and 17, IDFA reflects on its share in (numerical) female representation, providing numbers on how many female directors have

been programmed for IDFA in 2003–2013. I shall expose whether this analysis goes beyond simply reporting the female percentage of the programming.

It should be noted that I will not analyze the entire program of films, screenings, and other events presented in 2014 under the “Female Gaze” heading. I will instead limit my analysis to *The Female Gaze* booklet as a key expression and conveyor of IDFA’s interpretation of the “female gaze” concept and its positioning as a facilitator of a subaltern public sphere for feminist discourse. Additionally, I will not discuss the entire booklet in detail but will focus on the aspects relevant to this analysis; these aspects will include the definition of the female gaze, descriptions of films, and interviews with directors. This analysis also limits itself to the written parts of the booklet, leaving images or graphics aside. Based on these considerations, the research question should be modified to the following: How was a subaltern public sphere for feminist discourse formed in the context of IDFA’s 2014 subprogram “The Female Gaze,” as far as can be inferred from written texts in the accompanying festival booklet?

ANALYSIS

This analysis consists of four parts; the first section shall pay attention to IDFA's definition of the female gaze and how it corresponds to the interpretations available in the academic domain. The second section will analyze the interview with Dols de Jong and Koop, the third shall analyze the interview with Heddy Honigmann. Lastly, the final section will take multiple smaller articles, eventually analyzing how the private sphere for women is represented in these articles.

THE FEMALE GAZE

On the second page of the booklet, IDFA makes a brief statement on how it defines the female gaze, introducing the topic as follows:

The Gaze... a concept originating from feminist film studies in 1975, when Laura Mulvey wrote "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". She coined the male gaze, which basically means that men dominate cinema. Men finance, direct, star and direct the photography. As a result, these films have a male gaze. As a viewer, you watch men watching women. Men are the heroes; women are the object. Object of desire, of fear and of confusion. And above all, they should not object to this too often.

No male gaze without the female gaze, of course. Mulvey was convinced in 1975 that men and women view the world differently. But if this was correct then, does this mean it's still correct in 2014? And does it go for documentary as well? Do women make different films than men do? That is what the female gaze is about.⁵⁶

Although there is no single, objective definition of the female gaze, the statement from IDFA offers one possible, albeit limited, interpretation: a woman's perspective on the world and everyday life. This definition is connected to filmmaking practices, raising the question of whether women create films differently than men. Nonetheless, the text merely suggests this interpretation without providing a clear or explicit definition, despite the existence of academic discourse on the subject that could have helped clarify IDFA's understanding of the term.

In 1974, Laura Mulvey wrote "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in which she proposed "the male gaze" as an analytical concept.⁵⁷ Drawing on psychoanalysis, Mulvey

⁵⁶ IDFA, "The Female Gaze," in *IDFA Special 2014/1: Female Gaze*, March 16, 2015, 2. https://issuu.com/idfa/docs/idfa_special_01_nl_lr.

⁵⁷ Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975): 19.

argued that the male gaze dictates that "the pleasure in looking has been split into active/male and passive/female."⁵⁸ She posited that, in classical Hollywood films, women are often portrayed not only as passive but also in a way that caters to heterosexual male pleasure. Mulvey's essay sparked academic debate on whether this concept applied solely to Hollywood films or to all visual arts; it is widely accepted today, both in academia and popular culture, that the male gaze theory extends across all visual arts.⁵⁹ For example, in paintings and sculptures in renowned museums, women are frequently depicted as objects of the male gaze, created by male artists and viewed through a male lens. Notably, the women in these works often appear unaware of the viewer, focusing instead on how they are perceived by men — a concept John Berger referred to as the "inward gaze."⁶⁰ This portrayal reinforces a power imbalance between men and women, where women are depicted as being aware of and shaped by male perception rather than their own. In academic discourse, the concept of the gaze thus transcends mere observation; it is deeply connected to representation and agency, making it a powerful tool for understanding gender dynamics.

The female gaze emerged as a feminist film critique in response to the male gaze, aiming to challenge traditional gendered representations.⁶¹ In this thesis, I propose two interpretations of the female gaze. The first (albeit limited) interpretation aligns with how the female gaze is presented by IDFA: as a woman's perspective on the world. Nevertheless, this perspective fails to acknowledge the power dynamics embedded in the concept of the gaze. Given the persistence of patriarchal structures, a woman's perspective does not hold the same influence as a man's.⁶² Historically, the male gaze has been normalized, with men often depicting women, reinforcing the idea of the male perspective as default and the female perspective as "other."⁶³ This mindset has been ingrained over millennia, not out of malice but due to its long-standing presence, making it an unconscious bias rather than a conscious way of thinking.

A second, more comprehensive interpretation of the female gaze is rooted in academia. From this scholarly viewpoint, the female gaze involves representations that empower women

⁵⁸ Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure," 19.

⁵⁹ Kelly Oliver, "The male gaze is more relevant, and more dangerous, than ever," *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 15, no. 4 (2017): 453.

⁶⁰ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972), 47.

⁶¹ Ann E. Kaplan, *Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera* (London: Psychology Press, 1988), 165.

⁶² Caroline Criado-Perez, *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* (London: Vintage, 2020), 5.

⁶³ Simone de Beauvoir, *Le deuxième sexe 1: Les faits et les mythes*, trans. Jonathan Cape (Paris: Gallimard, 1953), 13.

and acknowledge their agency.⁶⁴ It seeks to portray women as subjects rather than objects, emphasizing their perspectives, desires, and experiences. This approach challenges stereotypes and presents diverse, authentic portrayals of women, incorporating the perspectives of women from various backgrounds, cultures, sexual orientations, and identities.⁶⁵ Within this academic framework, women are not seen as a monolithic group but as individuals, each with unique experiences. This broader interpretation of the female gaze emerged in feminist film studies as a response to Mulvey's critique.

In 2021, Lisa French wrote an article on the female gaze and documentary film. She defined and contextualized the female gaze as follows:

The aesthetic approaches, experiences and films of female directors are as diverse as their individual life situations and the cultures in which they live. The 'female gaze' is not intended here to denote a singular concept. There are many gazes. The reference to a female gaze is to how female directors have expressed themselves as humans who identify as female. Of specific interest is how they represent their experience and perspectives from that sex and gender.⁶⁶

French emphasizes that every director is an artist in her own right, and women are capable of making any kind of documentary. She further notes that

the key marker of the 'female gaze' is the communication or expression of female subjectivity—a gaze where female agency is privileged and which is shaped by a—not 'the'—female 'look,' voice, and perspective—in effect, the subjective experience or perspective of someone who lives in a female body.⁶⁷

Given this comprehensive understanding of the female gaze, IDFA's statement on page two of the booklet seems to adopt a rather simplistic view, focusing primarily on the question of whether women make different films than men. The text shows subtle hints of patriarchal bias by describing women as "different."⁶⁸ Additionally, the text primarily discusses the male gaze, introducing the female gaze only as its direct counterpart and derivative ("no male gaze without the female gaze"). Moreover, IDFA fails to provide a substantive definition of the female gaze, instead posing a handful of questions that fail to clarify the concept: "But if this was correct

⁶⁴ Lisa French, *The Female Gaze in Documentary Film: An International Perspective* (London: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 55.

⁶⁵ Kaplan, *Women in Film*, 161.

⁶⁶ French, *The Female Gaze*, 55.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ IDFA, "The Female Gaze," 2.

then, does this mean it's still correct in 2014? And does it go for documentary as well? Do women make different films than men do?" A more comprehensive exploration of the concept could have resulted in a more meaningful definition, thereby enriching the booklet and program for the subcategory.

Nonetheless, asking if women make different films than men do is, in essence, not very far removed from a more comprehensive description of the female gaze. French quotes French filmmaker Agnès Varda in "The Female Gaze" on this aspect, stating that

[t]o be a woman is to be born in a woman's body ... Simone de Beauvoir's view [that] we are nurtured into womanhood has to do with thoughts of the mind, [but] the fact remains we're born into a female body. How can that not be an essential fact whether you're a film director, cleaner, mother, whether you have children or not? We women inhabit a female body.⁶⁹

French elaborates that

while the argument that subjectivity relates to the sexed body could be critiqued as essentialist, it is not the contention here that women have the same experiences in their lives or their bodies, but rather that gender causes an inflection that might be described as an awareness of difference or being "othered," and that women share this and recognize it as a factor of the experience of patriarchal culture.⁷⁰

In other words, women may produce similar films because they often share similar experiences within patriarchal culture, which could lead to comparable creative expressions in their work. Men, on the other hand, do not experience patriarchal culture in the same way; thus, asking if women make different films than men acknowledges the different experiences of men and women within this cultural framework, aligning with a more nuanced understanding of the female gaze.

In summary, although IDFA's definition hints at a deeper understanding of the female gaze, this perspective demands significant academic knowledge that many of its audience members may lack. Consequently, the term "different" might be more commonly interpreted as a deviation from the norm, leading to a simpler and less informed reading that risks reinforcing male gaze theory rather than advancing the concept of the female gaze. By not explicitly defining the female gaze, IDFA inadvertently perpetuates the "othering" of women

⁶⁹ French, *The Female Gaze*, 55.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

in a context meant to celebrate them. As Lisa French highlights, there is a crucial distinction between saying "men and women tell stories differently," which treats both genders as equals, and asking "do women make different films than men?", which positions women in comparison to men.⁷¹ This distinction could have enriched IDFA's description. Furthermore, the absence of a clear definition leaves room for ambiguous interpretations, which tend to align with normative views that undermine the female gaze and its relevance to feminist film critique. This omission raises initial concerns about how the concept will be addressed throughout the booklet.

“IT DOES NOT MATTER WHETHER YOU ARE A MAN OR A WOMAN”

Pages six and seven of the booklet feature an interview with Dutch female directors Mea Dols de Jong and Nelleke Koop. In 2014, both women were young directors at the beginning of their careers, and both had their films (*If Mama Ain't Happy, Nobody's Happy* and *Floating Bodies*, respectively) screened at IDFA in 2014 as part of the female gaze theme.⁷² The interview relates to the role of women in documentary production and is titled, “It does not matter whether you are a man or a woman.”⁷³ This title presents an interesting choice of words; according to feminist film theory (a component of which is the notion of the female gaze), gender (and the representation thereof) does indeed matter. The female gaze recognizes the inequality between men and women; it addresses female agency, representation, and individuality within patriarchal society, a fundamental part of which is male dominance and female subordination. The suggestion that no inequality exists is therefore in direct contradiction with any interpretation of the female gaze.

In the first few paragraphs of the interview, author Sasja Koetsier states that both directors leave little space in their works for “typical generalizations about female documentaries.”⁷⁴ Nonetheless, neither in the interview nor anywhere else in the booklet is it specified what those generalizations are. The interview resumes with an outline of all the ways in which both directors work differently. Dols de Jong's *If Mama Ain't Happy, Nobody's Happy* is an intimate picture of her relationship with her mother, in which the director also

⁷¹ Ibid., 56.

⁷² *Floating Bodies*, directed by Nelleke Koop (Selfmade Films and HUMAN, 2014), 00:55:20; *If Mama Ain't Happy, Nobody's Happy*, directed by Mea Dols de Jong (Juul op den Kamp, 2014), 00:25:33.

⁷³ Sasja Koetsier, “Het maakt niet uit of je man of vrouw bent”, in *IDFA Special 2014/1: Female Gaze*, March 16, 2015, 7. https://issuu.com/idfa/docs/idfa_special_01_nl_lr.

⁷⁴ Koetsier, “Het maakt niet uit,” 7.

plays a major part. Koop's *Floating Bodies* differs in many ways, as it covers the process of dealing with people who died from drowning; Koop captures the entire process from police to experts, presenting a rather different story than an intimate family portrait. This difference in subject matter, as well as the differences in tone and voice of the directors, illustrates that women do not necessarily make different films from men; however, this argument could be considered cherry picking, as these films represent just two examples among many. The IDFA's "The Female Gaze" category consists of 26 films, and it would be interesting to see how many of these share similar subjects. Nevertheless, throughout the interview IDFA tries to advocate and emphasize the statement that women do not necessarily make different films from men, noting the variety both films have.

Later in the interview, Dols de Jong mentions that she wonders why women have repeatedly been asked to direct tampon commercials.⁷⁵ Perhaps this example represents one of the aforementioned typical generalizations about female work: are women expected to direct works that are related to femininity? Finally, Dols de Jong is asked whether she feels that having a male-dominated workforce within film production means that the audience is denied a female gaze on the world. She answers by stating that asking such a question is a tad risky: "It implies that women have a collective vision on the world, whereas I feel that women make very different films overall."⁷⁶ This comment aligns with French's statement through its premise that any woman can make any kind of documentary. Additionally, it is likely that the phrase "it does not matter if you are a man or a woman" was supposed to reflect on how gender should not matter when it comes to film direction; as mentioned in the previous chapter, every director is an artist in their own right, and every woman (and every man) can therefore make every kind of documentary. From that perspective, gender plays no role when it comes to creativity, and it does, in fact, not matter if you are a man or a woman.

Nonetheless, another interpretation of the titular phrase is possible. According to French, there is some kind of shared vision between women in general, due to all women being subject to patriarchal society. This does not mean that women have similar lives; it merely means that the core of societal injustice could create similar problems for women, and these similarities will likely find their way into film production or distribution. As men are not limited by the patriarchy in the way women are, their films will likely not reflect being limited by the patriarchy; thus, from that perspective, it does matter if you are a man or a woman.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Additionally, Nancy Fraser has argued in “Rethinking the Public Sphere” that recognizing different statuses among groups is important for equality to exist in the subaltern public sphere.⁷⁷ Consequently, according to Fraser, it is important to recognize gender in the pursuit of equality.

Altogether, the number of possible interpretations of this title reflect its ambiguity. This interview is the first large interview in the booklet, and I would have expected IDFA to be clearer when choosing its headline. A possible explanation for this title could be that IDFA wants to cause surprise or confusion from its reader before they start reading the actual interview. The title could also serve as a ‘teaser’ for the interview, suggesting that the festival wants its reader to keep the question in mind when reading the text. Furthermore, the interview itself is ambiguous in the sense that several statements could be interpreted in multiple ways; for instance, “typical generalizations about female documentaries” leaves the reader questioning what these generalizations are. The article later makes some suggestions about what the generalizations refer to as it spends two paragraphs outlining how women can make different films; this suggests that the “typical generalization” is the fact that women always make similar films. The booklet never explicitly confirms that it is referring to this stereotype. Later, when the author asks Dols de Jong if the world is denied a female gaze because women are underrepresented in the world of documentary, a suggestion of a definition of the female gaze can be discovered within the text. Dols de Jong corrects the author that asking such a question is risky, because it implies a collective vision and thus undermines individuality. Nonetheless, this shared vision could also be in compliance with Lisa French’s statement on the influence of patriarchal society on women’s lives and therefore not necessarily undermining feminist discourse; French’s argument explains how women’s similar life experiences under patriarchy could, in turn, be reflected in the films they make. Collectivity, in this case, displays women’s role in patriarchal society, and yet Dols de Jong’s view on the matter aligns with Nancy Fraser’s ideas on the value of individuality and personal experience in subaltern discourse; thus, both perspectives could also be true at the same time.

The article thus leaves significant room for interpretation on the reader’s part, as such interpretations are thoroughly based on the reader’s prior knowledge on the subject. The interview would have been less ambiguous if IDFA had provided a definition on the female gaze. Any recognition of agency and representation within the term would have left less room for interpretation within Dols de Jong and Koop’s interview. IDFA’s main question for the

⁷⁷ Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” 63.

female gaze (“Do women make different films than men do?”) seems to apply more to the concept of a gaze in general and not necessarily to the female gaze; asking whether people do something differently based on just one aspect of identity (i.e., gender) seems to have little to do with the female gaze. Perhaps, due to IDFA’s failure to provide a clear definition of the female gaze, the concept fails to provide a foundation based on which this sub-category can come into its own.

TRUST IN EXCHANGE FOR LOVE WITH HEDDY HONIGMANN

The article on pages eight and nine of the booklet features a short interview with Dutch director Heddy Honigmann, in which the techniques and methods she uses as a director are discussed.⁷⁸ Heddy Honigmann is a director who has been acknowledged and respected worldwide by men and women alike for decades. In an unsurprising and entirely fitting move, the IDFA 2014 edition thus invited Honigmann to be its central guest.

The title of the interview ("Trust in Exchange for Love with Heddy Honigmann") implies a transactional relationship, suggesting some sort of deal. The article later clarifies that Honigmann gives her documentary subjects considerable love, receiving trust in return—an essential element for any documentary filmmaker seeking to capture genuine emotion and intimacy on camera. It should, however, be noted that women are supposedly better at this transaction than men, and the transactional element can be related to emotion work. Reflecting on practices in another sector of the media industry, Laura Grindstaff wrote in "Self-Serve Celebrity. The Production of Ordinarity and the Ordinarity of Production in Reality Television" that "[t]he specific techniques and strategies that producers draw upon to produce the sort of ordinarity prized by reality television are quite ordinary in the sense that they rely on the everyday life skills of emotion management."⁷⁹ This practice is commonly understood as emotion work.⁸⁰ Grindstaff argues that emotion work has traditionally been better understood by dependent women of the middle classes as one of the offerings that they trade for male economic support. Emotion work has held high "secondary gains" for women outside as well as inside the home (consider female-dominated occupations such as nursing, social work, waitressing, or caregiving). Studies show that, generally speaking, women tend to be more adaptive and cooperative than men and, when women resist these behaviors, they risk being labelled "unfeminine."⁸¹ This is not to say men are immune to emotion work; however, among the middle classes, men are more likely to manage feelings in order to persuade, enforce rules, or secure compliance, while women manage feelings in the service of "making nice."⁸²

⁷⁸ IDFA, "Vertrouwen in ruil voor liefde met Heddy Honigmann," in *IDFA Special 2014/1: Female Gaze*, March 16, 2015, 9. https://issuu.com/idfa/docs/idfa_special_01_nl_lr.

⁷⁹ Laura Grindstaff, "Self-Serve Celebrity. The Production of Ordinarity and the Ordinarity of Production in Reality Television," in *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*, ed. Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks, and John T Caldwell (New York: Routledge, 2009), 76.

⁸⁰ Grindstaff, "Self-Serve Celebrity," 73.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁸² *Ibid.*

The transactional aspect of emotion work is important. Within the traditional concept of the heterosexual marriage, for example, men have often been responsible for providing for their families in the financial sense of the word, whereas women have been responsible for duties such as creating a home and comfort, raising children, and doing chores. Men provided for women and, in exchange, women took care of the household, thereby creating an ancient power dynamic within the relationship between men and women. The title of Honigmann's article relates to this aspect in the sense that the characters of her documentaries trust her, and she provides them with love in exchange.

Documentary ethics dictate that participants within the documentary cannot be paid for their services, because the integrity of the narrative would be jeopardized.⁸³ Directors thus have to provide something else for their characters to open up to them and allow them into (a small aspect of) their lives. Providing love in the sense that they spend time with their subjects, listen to them, take great interest in their lives, and make them feel comfortable shares common ground with the transactional aspect of male/female relationships. Even though the transactional aspect is most explicit, it should be emphasized that the basis of emotion work is the traditional power structure between men and women in patriarchal culture.

Consequently, even though emotion work is an experience that female directors would likely share (and is therefore in keeping with IDFA's suggestion of the female gaze), it remains a reference to the female stance within the patriarchy. Nonetheless, when reading the article, it becomes clear that Honigmann can be very assertive and forceful to achieve what she wants within her documentaries.⁸⁴ There seems to be little similarity with the kind, loving, warm tactics that emotion work tends to operate with; I would describe Honigmann (based on this article) as quite the opposite. If there was little substantive cause for choosing this title, then why was it chosen? Again, the title, in combination with the article, raises questions. It is rather unclear to me where to place this interview in perspective to the female gaze, apart from the fact that Honigmann, being the best-known female documentary director in the Netherlands, evidently needs to be featured within this subcategory and its corresponding booklet.

It can thus be said that a similarity is recognizable between Heddy Honigmann's interview and the aforementioned interview with Dols de Jong and Koop. Both interviews have

⁸³ The (often unspoken) rule is that producers and directors cannot pay their characters because they have to remain themselves throughout the process, being permitted to say what they want and to whom they want; otherwise, the "realness" of documentary is lost. If these individuals were to be paid, directors and producers would hold some kind of ownership over what is done and said throughout the process.

⁸⁴ The article mentions that Honigmann once fired a director of photography for choosing the wrong lens for a shot. Additionally, she was a member of forbidden societies at university when she was younger.

a title featuring a statement that could relate to the territory of the male gaze as well as the female gaze; the interpretation of the title depends on the prior knowledge of the reader. Additionally, in both articles, the interviewees contradict the statement in the title; in other words, IDFA leaves room for its female directors to contradict certain conservative ideas. In the article with Dols de Jong and Koop, both women are asked very directly if women make different films, which they explicitly contradict. In the article with Honigmann, this contradiction is slightly more implicit: the title implies one kind of behavior, and Honigmann provides anecdotes in which she acts in the exact opposite manner, thus contradicting the title. This way, the female directors are the vocalizers of a form of counter-argument against any kind of stereotyping within the booklet.

THE PRIVATE SPHERE

Pages 11 to 17 of the booklet feature several smaller pieces that very briefly promote a film selected for the female gaze subcategory. All the pieces seem to share a focus on the private life of women, which could represent a positive steppingstone towards individuality and agency. One of the articles is a smaller piece titled with “The ideal partner is not stingy.” The article promotes the film *Tristia – A Black Sea Odyssey*, a war portrait in which director Stanislaw Mucha follows (among others) a woman through former Soviet territory. According to the article, *Tristia* is a mosaic narrative, meaning that it features multiple people and does not revolve around any one person or plotline. The film follows multiple characters and communities living on the coastlines of the Black Sea, where tensions ran high after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990.

It is therefore puzzling why IDFA chose to frame this interview as it did and include it in the female gaze program. The film’s connection to women or feminist discourse seems tenuous, with the only apparent link offered by a brief monologue from a character named Madina about her ideal man. Although the title of the interview suggests a focus on love, the film that it discusses is actually about the aftermath of war. While love and war have historically been linked by writers and poets alike, this does not seem sufficient justification for including a war film (directed by a man) in a program meant to explore femininity, unless there is a deeper connection to feminist discourse that is not immediately apparent from the booklet.

This piece raises several questions: why was this particular headline chosen, what is the significance of discussing the “ideal mate” in a war film, and why feature this specific monologue? The film itself might offer answers, but the booklet does not clarify how it aligns with the theme of the female gaze. It also seems problematic if IDFA believes that appealing to women requires a reference to marriage or finding the perfect partner, relying on an outdated stereotype that reduces women’s identities to reproduction. The intent behind featuring this film remains unclear, leaving open the question of how it reflects the female gaze.

Page 10 presents a similar issue with a very small article featured at the bottom of the page. The title reads “From mother to daughter,” and the article describes a short film (*A Girl’s Day*) about a troublesome relationship between a mother and a daughter. The reference to any interpretation of the female gaze seems rather straightforward here, as the experience of being a mother or daughter is left solely for people who identify as female to experience; however, it does pose a potential issue. Similar to the previous article on finding the perfect mate, this reference to womanhood posits women in relation to the domestic sphere. Presenting women

in relation to a partner represents women as wives, while presenting women in relation to daughters represents women as mothers. Although the article includes some references that promote women's individuality, this individuality seems to exist solely within domesticity. A similar argument can be found in Grindstaff's article on emotion work: "Women are often linked, in the media and in everyday lived reality, both to discourses of personal experience and 'private' life, and to discourses of objectification by a putatively male gaze."⁸⁵ This argument suggests that, when women are not objectified by the male gaze, they are linked to "discourses of personal experiences and private life." Based on Grindstaff's argument: individuality seems to exist only in the private sphere; it is unlikely to exist anywhere else, because according to Grindstaff, "anywhere else" is subject to the male gaze. Within male gaze theory, women are seen as a collective and not as individuals.

These ideas are not readily evident from IDFA's discussion of the female gaze, but, but IDFA's view on the matter becomes harder to distinguish as I proceed through the booklet. As a reader, I start looking for aspects to hold on to in trying to determine what each article means for the female gaze. In the previous articles, which were interviews, IDFA let its directors contradict the statements made by the editors in the booklet. In contrast, this "From Mother to Daughter" article is relatively short and does not feature an interview. It thus becomes more difficult to find a relation to any interpretation of the female gaze, because it is still not clear what the female gaze means in the context of this booklet.

On page 17, the title of an article on the female gaze by film critic Maricke Nieuwdorp reads, "Can you tell from a love-scene whether it was filmed by a man or a woman?"⁸⁶ The subtitle goes on to state,

"Can you tell from a love scene whether it was directed by a man or a woman?"
Filmmaker Agnes Varda would argue in favor of this stance, as she has in *Filming Desire – a Journey through Women's Film*. But does this apply to documentary as well? Do women choose different subjects? Do they wield a different style? Do they really have a different gaze?⁸⁷

The title raises the question if one can watch a film and then determine whether it had a male or female director; Agnes Varda argues in favor. Subsequently, this is brought into question by

⁸⁵ Grindstaff, "Self-Serve Celebrity," 84.

⁸⁶ Maricke Nieuwdorp, "De Vrouwelijke Filmblik," in *IDFA Special 2014/1: Female Gaze*, March 16, 2015, 17. https://issuu.com/idfa/docs/idfa_special_01_nl_lr.

⁸⁷ Nieuwdorp, "De Vrouwelijke Filmblik," 17.

the four questions asked by IDFA (“Does this apply to documentary as well? Do women choose different subjects? Do they wield a different style? Do they really have a different gaze?”). This way, IDFA postpones answering the main question by dividing it into sub-questions, which also remain unanswered. In the article, the editor mentions that “in order to determine if women make different films than men do, we have to determine what is typically female and typically male.”⁸⁸ Intimate, personal stories, feelings, and soul-searching narratives are mentioned as typically female, whereas factual historiography, numbers, and subjects such as war, politics, and financial crises are listed as typically male. The article celebrates female directors being able to come close enough to people to tell the most intimate stories, naming multiple examples of films in which women are oppressed; this oppression is usually caused by unruly sons or aggressive husbands.

The interesting aspect of this observation is that, through emotion work, women are in some way able to come close enough to characters to tell stories of women oppressed by patriarchal society. Telling these stories highlights the agency of women and voices discourse that is otherwise not loud enough to be heard; therefore, in this article, emotion work is the very reason that marginalized discourse can be voiced. Emotion work, being a product of a traditional, hegemonic power structure between men and women, remarkably enough serves in favor of undermining hegemony by voicing marginalized discourse. The article emphasizes that women are significantly more likely to make these kinds of films, highlighting women’s portrayal of other oppressed women through a skillset that said women are more likely to have developed because of oppression within patriarchal culture. In the article about Honigmann, emotion work leans towards a more traditional stance towards female work; in this article, it does the complete opposite.

While the article celebrates female direction, it fails to explicitly answer the questions posed in its subheading; instead, it merely hints at answers by emphasizing what female directors can achieve, particularly in terms of emotional depth and nuance. For instance, the article mentions that “*Naziha’s Spring* shows what a woman can achieve that a man, particularly one from a different cultural background, cannot.”⁸⁹ Nonetheless, when addressing whether women can make “typically male” films, the author’s response is, “Of course not; far more telling than sex is what kind of director a person is.”⁹⁰ These statements suggest possible answers to the questions, particularly emphasizing the importance of a director's approach over

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

their gender; however, the article stops short of providing clear, definitive answers, leaving readers without a strong sense of IDFA's stance on these issues. The lack of explicit discussion makes it challenging to determine IDFA's exact position on the matters raised.

The nature of a documentary festival inherently suggests an understanding of representation and the emancipatory components of media theory, particularly given that documentaries often portray marginalized communities. Festivals organize talks and workshops to extend the program beyond simply watching a film; as a result, festival-goers come together and discuss views on the films programmed, thus leaving room for debate on larger media issues. It is therefore surprising and disappointing that IDFA consistently fails to move beyond a limited interpretation of the female gaze. It is concerning to find that critical elements such as agency and representation of women in the arts (which are key aspects of a more sophisticated and theoretically informed understanding of the female gaze) are largely overlooked in the booklet meant to explain this theme.

Moreover, within a subcategory ostensibly focused on feminist concerns, it is odd that IDFA continues to represent women predominantly in the private sphere—as mothers, wives, or daughters—thus confining them to traditional roles. While depicting women in these roles is not inherently problematic, it becomes so when it suggests that these roles define all women universally. Overemphasizing motherhood, marriage, and domestic life risks reinforcing the notion that women's private lives revolve solely around caregiving and family. This problematic representation is largely reflected in the language used throughout the booklet, indicating IDFA's struggle to break free from the patriarchal norms embedded in dominant hegemonic language. The editors appear trapped in a traditional, patriarchal mindset that contradicts the very theme they aim to promote. Although this may be an unconscious bias and is hardly something that the editors can be accused of, it is still disappointing that IDFA and the editors did not conduct more thorough research into the concept of the female gaze.

Despite IDFA's efforts to distance itself from the traditional, limited view of the female gaze, echoes of patriarchal perspectives persist. This suggests that even conscious attempts to challenge traditional female images struggle to break away from deeply ingrained norms. A more thorough handling of the current film-theoretical debate might have helped bring this complication to the attention of the booklet's readers in a more conscious manner.

Additionally, on page 16 of the booklet, IDFA examines the percentage of female directors selected for the festival over a specific timeframe. While this research is undoubtedly intended to highlight issues of representation within film festivals and the broader cultural

sector, it inadvertently underscores a more significant problem than just the underrepresentation of women. The era when equal representation in a numerical sense was the primary goal has long passed; equality now demands not just an equal share of women in the workforce but a focus on the roles in which they are represented. Even though IDFA highlights this by considering female directors and DOPs instead of simply women, the focus of the article is on the numbers. In the last paragraph, IDFA analyzes the ratio of men to women in the roles of editors and writers of the IDFA Special booklets through the years. This seems like a step in the right direction, for IDFA highlights the different roles men and women operate in. Yet again, the overall focus is on the numeral representation. One woman for each man does not guarantee equality. The core issue here is power. Although numerical equality provides a foundation for equality, the conversation has evolved beyond this basic concept. Marginalized groups indeed need numbers to amplify their voices—more so than dominant groups—but the discussion should also reflect a deeper understanding of representation in terms of power dynamics. Unfortunately, the article hardly address this crucial aspect. Once again, IDFA attempts to advocate feminism, but its argument is weakened by its own limited perspective on what “the female gaze” entails. Despite repeated efforts to promote women in the arts in the booklet, IDFA seems unable to break free from the patriarchal lens through which it views the world.

CONCLUSION

Through a close reading of IDFA's booklet for its 2014 subcategory "The Female Gaze," this research has attempted to answer the following main question: How was a subaltern public sphere for feminist discourse formed in the context of IDFA's 2014 subprogram "The Female Gaze," as far as can be inferred from the written texts in the accompanying festival booklet? First, this conclusion shall summarize the main findings from the close reading. Second, it shall return to the theoretical framework based on Fraser to reflect on said findings. Lastly, this conclusion finishes with discussing the limitations of the study and offer advice for further research.

In order to answer the main question, it is important to consider the definition of the female gaze provided in the booklet. IDFA provides a brief statement on the female gaze on the second page of the booklet; it traces the concept back to feminist film studies in 1975, particularly to Laura Mulvey's essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," which introduced the idea of the male gaze. IDFA then introduces the female gaze as a counterpoint to the male gaze. Mulvey was convinced in 1975 that men and women viewed the world differently; IDFA questions if this argument still holds true in 2014, and if it also applies to documentary filmmaking. It asks whether women make different films than men, suggesting that the female gaze involves a woman's perspective on the world and everyday life.

Nonetheless, IDFA does not provide an explicit definition or interpretation of the female gaze; instead, it merely poses a question ("Do women make different films than men do?"), leaving readers to infer the definition of the female gaze from comparisons to the male gaze and the posed questions. While contextually, the aforementioned question might imply a more comprehensive understanding, the phrasing could be seen as "othering" women. IDFA could have clarified that men and women tell stories differently without implying a comparison to men, thus avoiding marginalization. Explicitly acknowledging a more comprehensive interpretation of the female gaze would have better represented its relevance to feminist film critique.

The articles on Dols de Jong and Koop and on Heddy Honigmann illustrate a similar issue. Both interviews have a title featuring an ambiguous statement, the interpretation of which depends on the reader's prior knowledge. Additionally, in both articles, the interviewees contradict the statement in the title; in other words, IDFA leaves room for its guests to challenge certain conservative ideas by providing a stage for these directors to contradict possible

stereotypes about them, further adding to their agency as female directors. Nevertheless, the ambiguity of both articles is possibly fueled by the “definition” that IDFA provides for the female gaze; if the booklet had provided a more substantive definition, it is doubtful whether the content of the interviews would have been as open to interpretation as it currently stands.

On pages 11 to 17 of the booklet, there are several smaller pieces that very briefly promote a film selected for the female gaze subcategory. All the pieces seem to share a focus on the private life of women, with many similarities in their portrayal of women in the private sphere. It was striking that these descriptions seemed to describe women in relation to domesticity; women were predominately described as wives, mothers, or daughters, with this portrayal seemingly resonating throughout the entire booklet.

Nonetheless, page 14 notes that private “intimate” stories are usually told by female directors, as women are often able to come “closer” to intimacy on camera than men. This tactic is commonly referred to as emotion work. The article with Heddy Honigmann illustrates how women are sometimes expected to capture intimate scenes or apply “nicer” techniques simply because they are women; however, the article on page 14 illustrates that emotion work (which is a product of hegemonic culture) can also illustrate female agency. Another common denominator of the shorter articles is that they often feature women oppressed by hegemonic, patriarchal culture. Emotion work is the very reason that these stories of female oppression can be told to a greater audience, thus demonstrating its relevance to feminist discourse after all.

On the final pages, IDFA presents quantitative data on the male/female balance among film directors whose films have been screened at the festival over the years. The article concludes that the ratio of female to male directors has been 1:3 at IDFA, which has hardly changed over the years. While this self-reflection as a major film festival suggests an understanding of IDFA’s influence, the idea behind the presentation of data seems flawed in its conception. The time has long gone when mere numerical representation was sufficient to tackle injustices and underrepresentation; it is of greater significance to consider the roles in which women have been represented over the past years rather than asking if they were represented at all. The piece This conclusion supports the overall argument of this thesis: although the general idea of the overall subcategory supports feminism and feminist discourse, the deployment and result fail to achieve a public sphere for feminist discourse.

Having established the findings of this research, I shall now return to the theoretical framework. This research has taken Nancy Fraser’s alterations to Habermas’ original formulation of the public sphere as a framework for reflecting upon the empirical findings from

the close reading of the booklet. Within Fraser's first alteration, she argues that status should not be bracketed but recognized in order to promote equality. The booklet is, of course, highly outspoken about the fact that its sole focus is on women. By providing information about the (often female) characters in specific documentaries, the booklet informs the reader on other aspects that women can represent beyond simply womanhood; for instance, the article on *Tristia* highlights the geographical context of its female protagonist, who is depicted as a blonde, somewhat portly, Georgian woman searching for a husband in a post-war landscape. Similarly, "The Female Gaze" on pages 16 and 17 mentions mothers and wives of Arabic backgrounds, while *A Girl's Day* features a 19-year-old German woman with a strained relationship with her mother. Nonetheless, when it comes to female directors, the booklet provides minimal information beyond their gender, with little emphasis on their backgrounds apart from their education. Despite this limitation, the booklet does represent women from a wide geographical spectrum and emphasizes their differences. A recurring theme, however, is that the female characters in the documentaries are predominantly mothers or wives, or they are portrayed as seeking a role within traditional domestic life. It can therefore be said that the booklet does not bracket status but rather recognizes it, along with the inequalities that it entails. While this status often reflects women's roles within hegemonic culture, in certain cases (such as the articles on women of Arabic backgrounds), it contributes to a subaltern public sphere. By acknowledging these aspects of status, the booklet highlights both the diversity and the shared struggles of women across different contexts.

As for Fraser's second alteration (accepting a nexus of multiple, contesting publics is always preferable over one comprehensive public sphere), I would argue that this booklet predominantly promotes a feminist public sphere due to its significant emphasis on women in the cinematic workforce. This conclusion, however, comes with two caveats. First, the feminist core of the public sphere is somewhat undermined because of the hegemonic, normative phrasing that the booklet deploys to describe women. Women are consistently "othered" and confronted with stereotypes about them or their work. If IDFA had been more apprehensive of the undermining effect that this portrayal could have on the feminist aspects of the theme, this limitation could have easily been prevented. The second caveat is that, by recognizing women from different social standings, cultures, and marital statuses, this booklet represents a diverse range of women, thus leaving space for the existence of a diverse range of publics. I would consider this aspect to be rather important to the subaltern public sphere and would therefore

conclude that multiple publics of marginalized discourse have been promoted within the booklet.

Regarding Fraser's third alteration (namely, that private lives or personal experiences should be included in the public sphere), there is no denying that women's private lives are heavily featured in the booklet. Nonetheless, this conclusion is too simplistic, and the nuances are twofold. First, even though the private sphere is heavily featured in the booklet, this private sphere represents domesticity rather than agency or individuality; this seems to be the case for the majority of the articles about women. When the private sphere suggests the same experience for all women (namely, domesticity), it condemns women to a collective (in this case, a domestic collective), thereby failing to contribute to subaltern or feminist discourse. Nevertheless, in keeping with Fraser's alteration on status bracketing, the booklet demonstrates a more nuanced perspective by highlighting many films about women living under oppression caused by hegemonic culture. It is unlikely that these stories would be told if there were no (female) directors to tell them. The booklet thus raises awareness about the oppression and submissiveness that women are collectively experiencing; by heavily representing this oppression, it emphasizes the assumption that the majority of women are confronting similar issues. This representation adds to subaltern discourse after all, because it exposes negative experiences caused by decades, if not centuries, of hegemonic dominance.

I have already discussed the booklet's components in relation to Nancy Fraser's alterations to the concept of the public sphere; however, there are other aspects crucial to this research, particularly IDFA's approach to defining the female gaze. Centering an entire subcategory around this term is ambitious, yet the booklet distributed by IDFA (which is intended to enhance the program beyond just film screenings and discussions) falls short of its potential.

The booklet could have been a powerful tool for providing deeper insights into the program, especially given the academic significance of the female gaze. It offered IDFA an opportunity to clarify its interpretation of the term and establish a perspective from which the program and its directors could be understood. Unfortunately, the result has been mediocre: the booklet fails to provide a clear definition of the female gaze, instead posing a vague question ("Do women make different films than men?") that is never explicitly answered. Although the booklet hints at an answer through various articles (e.g., "Sex is unimportant when it comes to film direction"), this response is ambiguous and depends on one's perspective. From a simplistic point of view, it can be said that sex is relatively unimportant; however, scholarship

on these issues suggests that it does matter due to women having a very different experience in life than men, and these differences usually play out within creative processes. The films featured in the booklet seem to support this view: the majority of films in the booklet seem to relate to oppressed women of some sorts who are confronting difficulties in life. In this sense, IDFA's booklet editing does not align with the answer that it provides to the main question.

If the booklet had simply provided a definition for the female gaze, it could have aided IDFA and readers alike by providing a perspective to "think things through." Due to this lack of definition, the booklet merely poses more questions and creates confusion surrounding the meaning of the term, undermining the subcategory's overall aim of celebrating women in documentary. Even though the booklet (in extension of IDFA) tries hard to make a case for feminist discourse, the editors cannot seem to distance themselves from traditional assumptions about womanhood and female representation. Consequently, this thesis found it very difficult to imagine a full-blown feminist public sphere to arise from the booklet. As hegemony is embedded within patriarchal culture, it is rather difficult to weed it out altogether. The major issue identified by this thesis is the booklet's lack of clarity on many accounts; it disguises questions as definitions and makes little effort to answer them explicitly. It is difficult to see how a reader is supposed to transcend any simple, outdated ideas regarding feminism when a booklet that is supposed to provide guidance and clarity only evokes more questions and confusion.

The concluding discussion relates to Wong's concept of film festivals as public spheres. This research has used Nancy Fraser's modifications of the public sphere as part of its theoretical framework. While Fraser's alterations (such as the recognition of status, the coexistence of multiple publics, and the emphasis on the private sphere) are evident in IDFA's booklet, I still would not assert that IDFA has effectively provided a public sphere for feminist discourse. This does not mean that Wong's concept is flawed or that film festivals cannot be analyzed as public spheres. On the whole, the way in which this thesis has operationalized Wong's proposal seems fruitful. Fraser's alterations offered clear and fitting guidelines to examine corpus material. Additional theoretical exploration was necessary in order to provide a nuanced perspective.

Additionally, this study was limited to a small case study, focusing on only a section of articles from the booklet of "the female gaze." To determine if the findings of this research apply to the subcategory as a whole, Wong's notion should be applied to other aspects of the festival as well. Moreover, a comprehensive understanding of the representation of

marginalized discourse at IDFA could be achieved by further investigating the backgrounds of editors and programmers. Information about who assembled the booklets, wrote the articles, and programmed the subcategory was not readily available; however, exploring this aspect through interviews with the editors could reveal why a limited interpretation of the female gaze was deemed sufficient to introduce the subcategory in the booklet. Additionally, reviewing the entire programming and all related films would offer a broader understanding of how the female gaze is interpreted and represented within this context.

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Attachment

nr 1 thema

female

MET PROGRAMMA VAN
**DO 20 &
VR 21 NOV**

altijd actueel: idfa.nl/dagkrant & de idfa-app

gaze



idfa

2014

DON'T LOSE HEART
Verlies niet de moed
HEART

EEN FILM VAN HELLA DE JONGE

GESELECTEERD VOOR DE NEDERLANDSE COMPETITIE
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 2014
 idfa

vpro

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Op **zondag 23 november** presenteert Movies that Matter in samenwerking met IDFA in Pathé Tuschinski vier spraakmakende documentaires, gevolgd door nagesprekken met internationale gasten.

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 Opvolger van Joshua Oppenheims veelgeprezen *The Act of Killing* brengt de dappere confrontatie in beeld tussen de Indonesische Adi en de mannen die zijn broer vermoordden tijdens de grootschalige communistenjacht in de jaren '60.
Tuschinski 1, 10.00 - 12.15 uur

Those Who Said No
 Nima Sarvestani zoomt in op de zoektocht naar gerechtigheid door de nabestaanden van een meer dan 25 jaar geheim gehouden zwarte bladzijde uit de Iraanse geschiedenis.
Tuschinski 2, 12.30 - 14.25 uur

We Come as Friends
 Hubert Sauper, de maker van *Darwin's Nightmare*, trekt opnieuw naar Afrika om hedendaags kolonialisme in beeld te brengen.
Tuschinski 2, 15.00 - 17.10 uur

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 Wanneer eind 2001 Amerika Afghanistan binnenvalt, leidt dit tot de opmerkelijke gevangenzetting van 22 uit China afkomstige Oeigoeren in Guantanamo Bay. Een film van Patricio Henriquez.
Tuschinski 2, 17.45 - 19.45 uur

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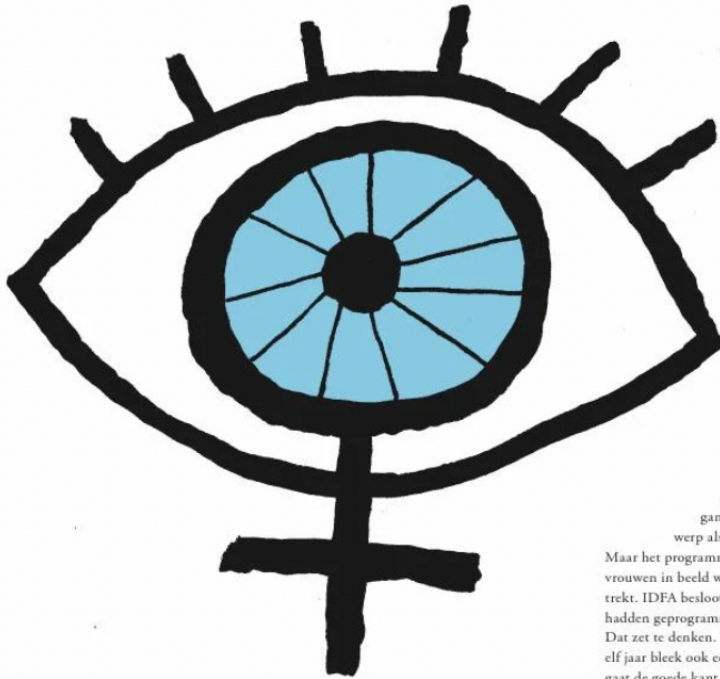
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the female gaze



The gaze... centraal begrip uit feministische filmstudies sinds 1975, toen Laura Mulvey haar invloedrijke artikel *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* publiceerde. Zij muntte de term 'male gaze'. Kort gezegd: mannen domineren de cinema. Mannen financieren, voeren de regie, spelen de hoofdrol en zijn de hoofdpersonen. En niet te vergeten: mannen hanteren de camera. Het gevolg is dat deze films een male gaze hebben – een mannelijke blik. Je kijkt met mannen naar vrouwen. Mannen zijn de held, vrouwen het object. Van verlangen, van vrees en van verwarring. En ze moeten vooral niet te veel zeggen.

Geen male gaze zonder female gaze, natuurlijk. Mulvey was in 1975 overtuigd: mannen kijken anders dan vrouwen. Maar als het al geldt, geldt het dan nog steeds in 2014? En geldt het bij documentaires in plaats van speelfilms? Maken vrouwelijke regisseurs andere films dan mannelijke? Daarover gaat *The Female Gaze*, waarvoor vijftien van de belangrijkste vrouwelijke regisseurs ter wereld zijn uitgenodigd. **5** Er zijn in elk geval onderwerpen die moeilijk door een man benaderd hadden kunnen worden. **12** Maar maakt het in andere gevallen uit of je man of vrouw bent? Of zijn de verschillen binnen de groepen mannen en vrouwen groter dan het verschil tussen de twee groepen? **6** Ander punt: zijn culturele verschillen niet bepalender dan seksverschillen? **15** Vinden vrouwen juist inspiratie bij vrouwelijke voorgangers? **9** En zijn er nog mensen die denken dat een politiek brisant onderwerp als fracking alleen door mannen wordt aangepakt? **11**

Maar het programma *The Female Gaze* gaat niet alleen over die blik. Het gaat ook over hoe vrouwen in beeld worden gebracht. En het gaat over wie er bij documentaires aan de touwtjes trekt. IDFA besloot te onderzoeken hoeveel films van vrouwen ze zelf tussen 2003 en 2013 hadden geprogrammeerd. De resultaten zijn schokkend: dat aantal stijgt niet en blijft eenderde. Dat zet te denken. Net als het eigen onderzoek dat uw lijfblad daaraan koppelde: de afgelopen elf jaar bleek ook eenderde van onze geïnterviewden vrouw – gemiddeld dan, want de trend gaat de goede kant op. **16**

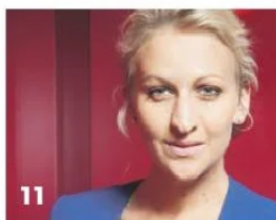
Inhoudsopgave

5 De eerste prijzen zijn binnen! En ook nog eens zo mooi verdeeld!

6/7 'Het maakt helemaal niet uit of je man of vrouw bent.' Nou breekt onze klomp! Maar de jonge (vrouwelijke) filmmakers Mea Dols de Jong en Nelleke Koop weten waar ze het over hebben.

9 Eregast Heddy Honigmann was ooit een links militant meisje, en is haar nooit helemaal kwijtgeraakt. 'Die politieke blik is er nog steeds.' En waarom ze ooit een cameraman ontloeg.

11 Jolynn Minnaar (what's in a name) maakte van een ontoegankelijk en onsexy verhaal over schaliegas een indringend verhaal over belangverstrengelingen en intimidatie.



12/13 Kijken vrouwen anders dan mannen? En bestaat er zoiets als een mannelijke documentaire? Een (vrouwelijke) redacteur werpt een blik op het IDFA-aanbod.

15 Groeten uit het Midden-Oosten, van onder andere filmmaker Nadine Salib.

16/17 Je kunt van alles beweren over *The Female Gaze*, maar dan moet je ook naar jezelf kijken. IDFA en de Dagkrant deden dat – het resultaat zal u schokken!

19 Elke documentaire is op zoek naar kijkers, en vice versa. Via de IDFINDER vindt u de perfecte match.

IDFA Daily Online

Tijdens het festival is de Dagkrant elke dag online te vinden, uitgebreid met reports en ander bewegend beeld, bijvoorbeeld van Ineke Smits.

Op de cover

Heddy Honigmann, eregast van het festival. Foto: Felix Kalkman.

première



Good things await

director Phie Ambo

VOLGEND JAAR OOK NOG VAN ONZE FILMS GENIETEN?

Door veranderingen in het omroepbestel wordt de BOS na 2015 wegbezuinigd. Met de steun van 10.000 vrienden kan de BOS doorgaan en films blijven maken. Jij maakt het verschil. Steun ons en breng de toekomst van de BOS in beeld. Word vriendvandebos.nl



28 docs

Around the World in 50 Concerts Atlas of Pentecostalism
 chellina / da Beast Crazy Floating Bodies Georgica
 Giovanni and the Water Ballet Good Husband, Dear Son
 Goodbye Hamartia - More or Less Louis van Gasteren
 The Invisible Friend Johan Losers - A Film About Loss
 Metal and Melancholy My Dearest F#cking Phone Home
 Pekka The Need to Dance The New Rijksmuseum - The Film
 Our Colonial Hangover Plaza Man Refugee Republic
 Solo - Out of a Dream Stand By Your President 4 Ever
 School Full of Fish The Underground Orchestra We Are 18

The Dutch Cultural Media Fund supports documentaries, drama, shorts, music videos, feature films, transmedia, radio, youth productions, games and more. Partner in IDFA DocLab Interactive conference, IDFA DocLab Live Event, IDFA Media Talks: Industry Talk The Female Gaze, master classes Hedy Honigmann and Ineke Smits, extended Q&As

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Photo: Around the World in 50 Concerts / Hedy Honigmann



want
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 dus

vpro
 documentaires

vpro.nl/idfa

Solo, out of a dream. Regie Jos de Putter, productie Dieptescherpte, Coproductie VPRO, Mediafonds



Opgezeefd door swingende live muziek haasten bezoekers zich naar binnen voor de openingsavond van deze 27^{ste} editie, om te kijken en luisteren naar *Around the World in 50 Concerts* van eregast Heddy Honigmann en de behartenswaardige woorden van directeur Ally Derks. photo: Nichon Glerum

■ Collectief herinneren

Ons collectieve geheugen staat online – op internet is alles te vinden wat het herinneren waard is, en nog veel meer. Wat houdt dat in voor ons eigen, fysieke geheugen? Kunnen we zelf nog dingen onthouden en/of vergeten? Daar gaat het over in DocLab Live: *Random Access Memory*, een live screening met Antoine Viviani's nieuwe interactieve film *In Limbo*, Kutimans *Thru You Too* en een digitaal reisverhaal van Zilla van der Born. Vr 21 20:00 Brakke Grond Rode Zaal.

■ Masterclass Ineke Smits

Wat fictie en werkelijkheid in documentaires door elkaar lopen is allang geen uitzondering meer. Film maker Ineke Smits heeft het in haar Masterclass over hybride film maken, technologie en het handschrift van de regisseur. Do 20 10:30 Tuschinski 2.



■ Uitgerokt praten

Dit jaar zijn er maar liefst 31 Extended Q&A's – goed Engels voor lekker lang npraten. Zo voelt Daphne Bunskoek donderdag regisseur *Dem on G am esu* aan de (engszins aangestaste) tand over zijn ervaringen bij het maken van *That Sugar Film* (19:45 Tuschinski 2). En over het JJ bespreekt de gerputeerd filmjournalist Nicolas Repold de bijzondere Nederlandse Urk-film *Episode of the Sea* met coregisseur Lonnie van Brummelen (vr 21 20:30 EYE Cinema 3).

■ Thuis gazen

U kunt een deel van The Female Gaze gewoon thuis bekijken. De vijftien internationale vrouwelijke regisseurs die het programma samenstellen, mochten elk drie films kiezen – één van hen zelf, één inspiratiebron en één van een jong talent. Een deel van die films draait op IDFA, een deel is online te zien op IDFA.tv – denk aan veelbesproken titels die al bijna klassiekerstatus hebben verworven als *Ukraine is not a Brothel* en *Jesus Camp*.

■ Hivos praat na

Na *The Storm Makers* presenteert Hivos het nagesprek over deze film van regisseur Guillaume Suon, over de wereld van de mensenhandel, een jong, vrouwelijk slachtoffer en twee recruiters die geld verdienen met ranselen. Do 20 20:00 Munt 9.

■ VPRO praat voor & na

Melchior Huurdeman (*VPRO Vrije Geluiden*) en jazz-journalist Bert Vuyjsje leiden Alan Hicks' *Keep on Keepin' On* in en uit op vr 21 20:00 in Tuschinski 4.

■ Kinderen

Uit IDFA's zelfonderzoek (pag 16) blijkt dat het grootste deel van de documentaires over kinderen wordt gemaakt door vrouwelijke regisseurs. Een aantal ervan is te zien in het kader van de internationale Kinderrechtendag op 20 november, zoals de premières *Under the Stars* en *Felt at Home* (21:45 in Munt 10).

Eerste prijswinnaars (m/v)

Voorafgaand aan de openingsfilm *Around the World in 50 Concerts* van Heddy Honigmann kreeg filmmaker Sjoerd Oostrik woensdagavond de Mediafondsprijs Documentaire 2014 van €125.000 uitgereikt uit handen van Jacob Kohnstamm, voorzitter van het Mediafonds. Oostrik kreeg de prijs voor de realisering van zijn filmplan *Hier is het nooit*

stil. Documentairemaakster Jessica Gorter ontving het Cultuurfonds Documentaire Stipendium voor haar oeuvre ter waarde van €50.000. Sjoerd Oostrik won met zijn afstudeerfilm *Destiny* een Wild Card voor de meest veelbelovende cindexamendocumentaire van 2011 en maakte daarna *Kleine Mo* en de documen-

taire *Jeugd van tegenwoordig*. Op IDFA gaat Oostriks nieuwste film in première, *Kook-aburra Love*. Jessica Gorter regisseerde en draaide onder meer de documentaires *Piter* (een intiem stadportret van St. Petersburg), *No Goods Today* en *Ferryman Across the Volga*. Haar laatste film *900 Dagen*, over het beleg van Leningrad, is meermaals bekroond.

Komedie vol Vrouwen



Drie dagen lang beheerst één vraag De Kleine Komedie: maken vrouwelijke documentairemakers andere films dan mannelijke? Als onderdeel van het programma The Female Gaze presenteert het theater veel Extended Q&A's – lange nagesprekken – na filmvertoningen. Met op donderdag om 11:30 uur een gesprek met de beroemde vrouwelijke documentaireregisseur Chris Hegedus, over de door haar bewonderde klassieker *Portrait of Jason* uit 1967, een psychologisch portret van een 40-jarige zwarte homoseksuele man, om 18:45 een smakelijke ondervraging van Phue Ambo over haar film *Good Things*

Avant, en om 21:30 uur een gesprek met regisseur Barbara Kopple over haar *Raising from Crazy*. Op vrijdag is er om 13:15 uur een gesprek met regisseur Joanna Hamilton en voormalig *Washington Post*-journalist Betty Medsger over 1971 – een Edward Snowden-achtig verhaal avant la lettre over openbaar gemaakte illegale surveillancepraktijken, om 19:00 uur wordt er met Jessica Yu nagepraat over *Misconception*. Muziekjournalist Constant Meijers sluit de avond swingend af, samen met Concerto-eigenaar Dick van Dijk, Kim Longinotto en regisseur Jeanie Friday over haar film *Sound it Out*.

Vrouwen in de prijzen

De Amerikaans/Canadees/Britse organisatie voor vrouwelijke filmjournalisten, de Alliance of Women Film Journalists (AWFJ), reikt dit jaar voor de eerste keer op IDFA een EDA Award uit voor Best Female-Directed Documentary. Vijf films zijn genomineerd, allemaal internationale premières die in het Female Gaze-programma draaien: *My Beautiful Broken Brain* (Sophie Robinson en Lotje Sodderland, Engeland), *The Queen of Silence* (Agnieszka Zwiefka, Duitsland/Polen), *Something Better to Come* (Hanna Polak, De-

nemarken/Polen), *Tea Time* (Maite Alberdi, Chili) en *Unearthed* (Jolynn Minnaar, Zuid-Afrika/Nigeria/VS). 'De AWFJ juicht de uitstekende IDFA-programmering, en in het bijzonder de speciale aandacht dit jaar voor vrouwen die werkzaam zijn in de documentairefilm, van harte toe', aldus Jennifer Merin, AWFJ-president en EDA-juryvoorzitter. 'We kijken ernaar uit om in innige samenwerking met IDFA ook in de toekomst vrouwen in de bloemetjes te zetten!'



'Ik geloof oprecht dat het in de Nederlandse documentairewereld als regisseur niet uitmaakt of je man of vrouw bent.' Aan het woord is Mea Dols de Jong, deze zomer afgestudeerd aan de Filmacademie met de egodocumentaire *If Mama Ain't Happy, Nobody's Happy*. 'Maar in de andere departementen zoals camera, montage, geluid of postproductie zie je wel dat vrouwen...' – hier valt Nelleke Koop haar bij: 'zuwar ondervertegenwoordigd zijn.' Koop debuteerde dit jaar op het Nederlands Film Festival (NFF) met *Floating Bodies (Waterlijken)*, waarvoor ze het idee ontwikkelde in de IDFA-Mediafonds Workshop. Op het NFF sleepte ze de Filmprijs van de Stad Utrecht voor het beste debuut in de wacht en de film is nu te zien op IDFA, net als Dols de Jong's film die meedingt naar de Student Documentary Award.

Patholoog

Een vergelijking van hun films laat in elk geval zien dat er weinig grond is voor generalisaties over de typische vrouwendocumentaire:

waar Mea Dols de Jong aan de hand van de familiegeschiedenis de relatie met haar eigen moeder in beeld brengt, koos Nelleke Koop een onderwerp dat op het moment dat ze aan de research begon nog ver van haar af stond – de omgang met te water geraakte lichamen. Alle beroepsmatig betrokkenen komen in beeld en aan het woord, van de waterpolitie die een lijk uit de rivier vist via de rechercheur, de schouwarts en de forensisch patholoog tot de obductie-assistenten die het lichaam toonbaar maken voor de opgespoorde nabestaanden. 'Ik was ontzettend nieuwsgierig naar het antwoord op de vraag "Hoe doen zij dit?" En dat vind ik zo prachtig aan het vak van documentairemaker: je krijgt in één leven heel veel levens te leven. Je verblijft heel intensief in een bepaalde wereld, je spreekt met de mensen en probeert crachter te komen hoe zij omgaan met bepaalde situaties. En voor een volgende film duik je weer een andere wereld in.'

Film-in-een-film

Mea Dols de Jong begaf zich op bekend

terrein: haar eigen familiegeschiedenis die al generaties lang wordt gekenmerkt door sterke, onafhankelijke, alleenstaande vrouwen. 'Ik was bezig met het onderwerp feminisme en ik kwam er al snel achter dat het heel moeilijk is daar iets generaliserends over te vertellen, en dat dat ook eigenlijk de verkeerde richting is. Ik wilde het dus klein houden, en na heel lang researchen kwam ik tot de conclusie: misschien moet ik niet proberen het bij iemand anders te leggen, maar vertellen wat ik zelf met dit onderwerp heb. En kijken of ik van daaruit iets kan vertellen waarin mensen zich kunnen herkennen.' Het mondde uit in een portret van een moeder-dochterrelatie, waarin het maken van de film een cruciale rol speelt. 'Het is eigenlijk een film-in-een-film. Er is de film over de familiegeschiedenis – de film die mijn moeder wilde maken – maar intussen wist ik dat de discussies die wij zouden krijgen over het filmmaken de rode draad zou vormen waaruit onze relatie duidelijk wordt. Dat is de eigenlijke film.' Voor Dols de Jong is het bij een zo persoonlijk verhaal haast onmogelijk om het



Nelleke Koop (links) en Mea Dols de Jong, foto: Felix Valkman

Mea Dols de Jong (*If Mama Ain't Happy, Nobody's Happy*) en Nelleke Koop (■) (*Floating Bodies*) over hun films en vrouwzijn in de documentairewereld

'Het maakt niet uit of je man of vrouw bent'

Ze staan aan het begin van een veelbelovende filmcarrière en, o ja, ze zijn vrouw. Maar kijk naar hun films en constateer dat de verschillen groter zijn dan de overeenkomsten. Wat een goed gesprek over de schoonheid van het vak niet in de weg staat: 'Je krijgt in één leven heel veel levens te leven.' door Sasja Koetsier



Floating Bodies



If Mama Ain't Happy, Nobody's Happy

niet te hebben over het documentaire maken zelf: 'Omdat je tegelijk filmmaker én personage bent en die dingen niet los van elkaar te trekken zijn, vind ik dat je ook je kwetsbaarheden als filmmaker moet laten zien.'

Toneelstukje

Zo'n uitgesproken rol heeft Nelleke Koop zichzelf in *Floating Bodies* niet toebedeeld: zij is juist een stille, onzichtbare toeschouwer. Ze interviewde haar hoofdpersonen *off camera* en laat hun ontboezemingen in voice-over klinken terwijl de camera hun werk registreert. 'We hebben uit de hand gefilmd zodat je als kijker het gevoel hebt dat je erbij aanwezig bent, en dat je dicht bij de mensen komt.' Dat gevoel van nabijheid wordt versterkt doordat hun verhalen klinken als een interne monoloog. 'Daar heb ik ook wel flink in geïnvesteerd', vertelt Koop. 'Ik had alle mensen geïnterviewd en terwijl hun antwoorden eigenlijk precies waren waarop ik had gehoopt, kwamen we er in de montage achter dat de toon niet paste bij de film en bij de

manier van draaien die we hadden gekozen. Soms kan iemand precies zeggen wat je wilt, maar dan komt het toch niet geloofwaardig over. Ik heb toen bijna iedereen nog een keer geïnterviewd en geprobeerd niet een andere toon te pakken te krijgen.' 'Wat was er dan mis met die toon?' wil Dols de Jong weten. 'Vertellerig, te veel vraag-en-antwoord, terwijl ik eigenlijk wilde dat het meer een gedachtegang werd. Je wilt voelen dat het uit zichzelf komt.' Door op een andere manier het gesprek in te gaan, beginnend vanuit persoonlijke vragen die niets met het werk te maken hadden, lukte het Koop de tweede keer wel het juiste gevoel te vangen.

Vragen

Dols de Jong kan erover meepraten: 'Helemaal als je mensen voor een camera zet moet je uitkijken dat het niet een toneelstukje wordt. Aan mijn moeder zie je bijvoorbeeld dat ze heel goed weet hoe ze zich wil presenteren, maar om daar doorheen te prikken is dan lastig. Ik heb haar uiteindelijk veertien uur

geïnterviewd; de eerste twee interviews die we hebben gedaan zijn er überhaupt niet eens in gekomen. Als mensen heel goed in hun eigen verhaal zitten horen ze ook niet meer wat je vraagt. Tijdens het monteren keek ik naar een episode waarin ik zeven keer dezelfde vraag stelde en nog steeds geen antwoord had gehad!' Koop: 'Het is zo belangrijk om het dan nog een keer te vragen, en nog een keer, tot je tevreden bent.' Dols de Jong: 'Ja, dat klopt! Want als ik denk: laten we maar doorgaan, ik knip het wel aan elkaar, dan komt dat meestal niet goed. Je moet door blijven vragen.'

Tricky

Terug naar het begin: Hoe komt het dat vrouwen terugdenken voor de meer technische kanten van het filmmaken? De Jong: 'Dat is net zoals: waarom studeren zo weinig meisjes natuurkunde? Daar is ook geen logische reden voor.' 'Dat vrouwen internationaal gezien nog steeds ondervertegenwoordigd zijn in de documentairewereld vinden ze jammer, al is het alleen al met het oog op keuzevrijheid:

'Vrouwen zouden zich niet gehinderd moeten voelen om dit vak te kiezen', vindt Koop. Of ons daardoor ook een specifieke kijk op de wereld wordt onthouden is voor Mea de Jong een *tricky* vraag: 'Want dat impliceert dat vrouwen een specifieke visie delen, en ik geloof juist dat vrouwen heel verschillende films kunnen en moeten kunnen maken. In de wereld van de commercials worden de weinige vrouwen die daar werkzaam zijn vooral op dromerige pasteleurige tamponreclames gezet. Ik ben na mijn afstuderen door een paar reclamebureaus benaderd, maar ik vraag me wel af of ik als vrouw dan ook een BMW-reclame mag maken?'

■ *Floating Bodies* – Nelleke Koop.

Do 20 11:00 Tuschinski 3; 22 21:15 Ketelhuis Zaal 1; 23 29 21:00 Munt 13.

■ *If Mama Ain't Happy, Nobody's Happy* –

Mea Dols de Jong. Za 22 10:30 Brakke Grond Expozaal; 20 23 17:00 EYE Cinema 1; ma 24 19:00 Ketelhuis Zaal 1; di 25 16:30 Munt 10.



De bezoekers van IDFA doen ook mee

Op het International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam worden 300 hoogstaande, creatieve documentaires gepresenteerd met daarnaast debatten, muziek en optredens. IDFA spant zich hiermee niet alleen in om een nieuw en breed publiek te bereiken, maar ook om het publiek een intense ervaring te bieden. Redenen voor VSBfonds om dit festival te steunen.

Heeft u een plan dat bijdraagt aan Kunst en Cultuur? Kijk dan op www.vsbfonds.nl

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Wat is de overeenkomst tussen het Vondelpark & de Hoge Veluwe?

Beide werden gesteund door een mecenas.

Word ook mecenas en lever een bijdrage aan de geschiedenis van morgen.

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De kunst van het geven

'Vertrouwen in ruil voor liefde'

► Hedy Honigmann is de centrale gast van IDFA 2014. Hoe lukt het haar zulke prachtige intieme gesprekken voor de camera te voeren?



foto: Felix Kalman

'Ik probeer een situatie te creëren waarin mensen zich op hun gemak voelen. Een domme journalist zou dat manipulatie noemen, maar het zijn fantastische regieoplossingen voor mensen die moeite hebben met praten. In *Dame la mano* zie je Cubaanse vluchtelingen elke zondag in een bar in New Jersey dansen op echte Afro-Cubaanse rumba. Alsof ze terug zijn in Cuba. Ik wilde per se een bepaalde vrouw spreken, maar de eerste keer dat ik haar zag, was ze aan het bellen en op een trampoline aan het springen. Moeilijk om met jou een gesprek achter een tafel te doen, dacht ik meteen. Dus ik vroeg of ze het fijn zou vinden stretchoefeningen te doen tijdens het interview. We hadden een fantastisch gesprek!'

Poppetje

'Toen ik *The Flat Jungle* van Johan van der Keuken zag, uit mijn toptien op IDFA, was

ik echt ontroerd. In een scène praat Johan, terwijl hij zelf aan het draaien is, met een vakbondsleider. Dat is slim, dacht ik, hij kan kijken en luisteren tegelijk. Dat vraag ik ook van mijn cameramensen. Soms fluister ik: 'Ik wil dat je nu naar links gaat met de camera, want daar zit een vrouw zó te luisteren naar haar man.' Ik heb ooit een cameraman ontslagen omdat hij een kleine Japanner in het park met een groothoeklens had gefilmd. Dan maak je een poppetje van zo iemand.' 'Als jong meisje moest ik knokken tegen mijn ouders. Als zij A zeiden, wilde ik B. Op de universiteit was ik een links militant meisje. Lid van een verboden groep. Bracht kranten rond in krottenwijken. Die politieke blik is er nog steeds. Ik weet nog dat mensen na de première van *Het ondergronds orkest* in Parijs zeiden: 'Konden de metroautoriteiten maar zien welke rijkdom die mensen uit het

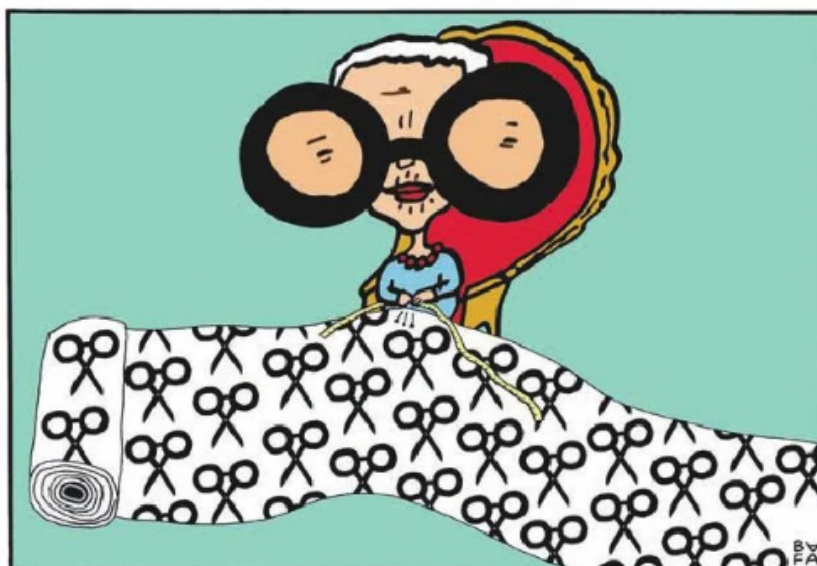
buitenland naar deze stad brengen.' Dat was precies een van de ideeën achter de film.'

Nare mensen

'Je krijgt vertrouwen in ruil voor grote nieuwsgierigheid en liefde. Ik hou van de mensen die ik film. Producent Pieter van Huystee zei me ooit dat ik moest leren nare mensen te filmen. 'Waarom zou ik', zei ik. 'Dat doen al genoeg filmmakers. Ik wil lieve mensen filmen.' Die gevoeligheid vind je in de meeste films in mijn toptien. Zeker in *The Gleaners and I*, waarmee ik me het meest verbonden voel. Het grote respect en de interesse voor de mensen zijn ongelooflijk voelbaar. En Agnès Varda maakt zichzelf zo mooi kwetsbaar. 'Ik word oud', zegt ze. 'Ik zie het aan mijn handen, die vertellen me dat ik niet zo lang meer heb.' Varda is net als de mensen die ze filmt een *glaneuse*.

een verzamelaar. Van oude stoelen, beelden, herinneringen. Ze is ontwapenend. Het zou mijn moeder kunnen zijn. De moeder die me heeft geleerd films te maken. Varda weet wat ze zoekt. Ze kan reageren op verrassingen omdat ze weet waar ze heen wil. Ik heb soms ook geen idee wat ik iemand ga vragen. Die radeloosheid van het niet weten en dan de opluchting: 'Laat maar los, Hedy. Het komt, of het komt niet.' (RR)

■ *Around the World in 50 Concerts* – Hedy Honigmann. Vr 21 15:15 Tuschinski 1; wo 26 19:30 Tuschinski 1; vr 28 23:00 Melkweg Rabozaal; za 29 16:00 Kettelhuis Zaal 1; zo 30 16:15 Munt 11. Zie de programmakrant of idfa.nl voor de topso, de Female Gaze-keuze en het retrospectief van Hedy Honigmann.



Iris Brakke Grond Expozaal Thu 20-11 15:15

KORT ► Van moeder naar dochter



Tijdens een lange op-de-rug-gefilmd opname van de Duitse Yasmin, lopend naar een uitgaansgelegenheid, is een telefoongesprek met haar moeder te horen. Dat geeft hun problematische relatie kernachtig weer: Yasmin's moeder is ex-drugsverslaafde en voelt zichzelf nog een onvolwassen zoeker. Ook de 19-jarige Yasmin is op zoek, naar liefde en begrip en een gelukkige toekomst.

A Girl's Day – Rosa Hannah Ziegler. Vr 21 11:15 Munt 9; ma 24 18:30 Munt 13; wo 26 18:30 Tuschinski 3.

NTR op IDFA

.....

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 Naziha's Lente
 Het nieuwe Rijksmuseum – de film
 De nood aan dansen
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TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Ervaar hoe elk onderdeel van de DS 5 is geperfectioneerd tot in het kleinste detail. Zoals het stijlvolle analoge klokwerk, prominent verwerkt in het stilistische dashboard. Geïnspireerd door de befaamde Zwitserse uurwerken en een ode aan de rijke DS historie.

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BEELD EN GELUID

HET ARCHIEF VOOR DE NEDERLANDSE DOCUMENTAIRE

Beeld en Geluid IDFA Award for Dutch Documentary 2014

'Ik moet problemen aanklaarten'



foto: Corinne de Korver

Zwart, stinkend of zelfs ontvlammend kraanwater, huid- en longklachten; het zijn slechts enkele neveneffecten van *fracking*, ofwel het boren naar schallegas. Al zeggen de oliemaatschappijen daar geen wetenschappelijk bewezen verband voor te hebben gevonden. De Zuid-Afrikaanse Jolynn Minnaar reisde naar Amerika om de zaak in de praktijk met eigen ogen te bekijken. Want ook in 'haar' regio, de Karoo, staat *fracking* op het programma.

Toen de filmmaker in 2011 vernam van lokale *fracking*plannen, was ze in eerste instantie enthousiast. Ze kon zo snel geen negatieve onderzoeken rondom deze gaswinning vinden en de oliemaatschappij beloofde vooral broodnodige werkgelegenheid. Ook van de negatieve verhalen die ze online vond was ze niet direct overtuigd. Tot de uit Pennsylvania afkomstige Jeremiah Gee haar benaderde. Hij woonde naast een boorinstallatie en had een pakket aan bewijzen verza-

meld over de negatieve effecten van *fracking*. Minnaar: 'Zijn gedetailleerde materiaal vormde voor mij een keerpunt.' Ze reisde met haar camera af naar Amerika en sprak met bewoners die direct last ondervonden van *fracking*. Maar ook met wetenschappers binnen en buiten de industrie. Daaruit destilleerde ze een voor de kijker bij vlagen schokkende inkijk in de dagelijkse praktijk van deze business. Hoe is het mogelijk dat deze explosieve informatie slechts mondjesmaat naar boven komt borrelen? Minnaar: 'Van Amerikaanse onderzoeksjournalistiek hoeven we weinig te verwachten. De meeste media zijn in *corporate* handen, het verhaal is toegankelijk noch sexy en men is, vanwege allerlei belangenverstrengelingen, niet geneigd erin te investeren.' In Zuid-Afrika zijn de mediaproblemen van een andere orde. Juist het gewone publiek wordt, zo stelt ze, totaal vergeten in de informatievoorziening: 'Kranten belanden in onze afgelegen gebieden nu eenmaal niet op de deurmat. Of het begrijpend lezen vormt het probleem. Ik hoop dat mijn film een oplossing biedt.' Ondanks haar bevindingen gaat het Minnaar vooral om discussie. 'Ik ben heus niet blind voor het feit dat we een ontwikkelingsland zijn en wel degelijk vooruitgang, werkgelegenheid en fossiele brandstoffen nodig hebben. Maar het is mijn verantwoordelijkheid als filmmaker om de problemen aan te kaarten. Juist omdat mijn regering slechts maanden verwijderd is van *fracking*beslissingen. Informatie en onderzoek zijn nu cruciaal.' (MN)

■ *Unearthed* - Jolynn Minnaar. Do 20 21:45 Tuschinski 4; di 25 15:30 Tuschinski 4; wo 26 16:30 Munt 11; do 27 12:00 Brakke Grond Expozaal; za 29 17:15 Munt 9.



foto: Michon Glerum

► De bezoeker - woensdag, 14.03 uur, Tuschinski 4

Keep on Keepin' On

Benita (21) uit Gent en Myrthe (22) uit Utrecht, studenten Filmacademie Amsterdam

Zaal 4 van Tuschinski zit goed vol, en niet alleen met fans van de hoogbejaarde jazzlegende Clark Terry die in deze muziekdocumentaire wordt geportretteerd: er zitten ook maar liefst 84 studenten van de Filmacademie in de zaal. Ze hebben een *passé-partout* ontvangen en moeten deze week een lijst aan films zien. 'Ja, echt heel erg, een hele week gratis naar IDFA', grijnst Benita. Beide dames waren onder de indruk van de biopic: 'Ik werd echt emotioneel meegenomen in het verhaal', zegt Benita, en Myrthe stemt in: 'De film sleepte me mee alsof het een speelfilm was.' De mooiste scène vond Myrthe de competitie waaraan de beoogde opvol-

ger en pupil van Terry, de jonge blinde pianist Justin, deelneemt: 'Je ziet hem in de coulissen wachten, de spanning loopt op. En dan volgt de telurstelling. Alleen in dat realisme onderscheidt deze documentaire zich van een speelfilm.' De studentes kijken ervan op dat dit de eerste film is van de maker, die bovendien autodidact is. Benita: 'Dat is vast de kracht, dat hij niet volgens een boekje werkt. Je kunt zien dat hij is beïnvloed door de stijl van speelfilms.' Des te beter, vindt het tweetal, dat zouden meer documentairemakers moeten doen. (OvD)

Keep on Keepin' On - Alan Hicks. Do 20 10:00 Munt 11; vr 21 20:00 Tuschinski 4; wo 26 20:15 Melkweg Rabozaal; do 27 14:15 Tuschinski 1; za 29 19:30 Podium Mozaiek.

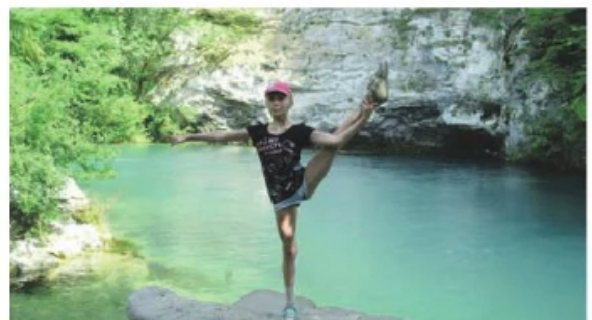
► Draait er nog wat leuks?

Een ideale echtgenoot is niet gierig

De blonde en mollige Madina, die voor ze van wal steekt zorgvuldig haar decolleté fatsoeneert, weet haarfijn aan welke eisen haar aanstaande man zou moeten voldoen: 'Mijn man moet volmaakt zijn', zegt ze beslist. 'Vooral aardig. Hij hoeft niet al te mooi te zijn, alleen niet te veel als een aap, ha ha...! Sympathiek, blauwe ogen, groot, goed en respectvol voor zijn vrouw.' 'Wat ze onder goed verstaat?' 'Hij mag niet gierig zijn, ik heb een hekel aan gierige mannen.' Alle nationaliteiten zijn welkom, behalve de Georgische. 'Ik kan in ieder geval geen Georgische man trouwen, want we waren in oorlog met elkaar. Alles tussen ons is nu kapot, dus dat zou een schande zijn.' We bevinden ons in Abchazië, aan de boorden

van de Zwarte Zee, waar de gemoeideren sinds het uiteenvallen van de Sovjet-Unie soms hoog oplaaen en niet alle volkeren even vreedzaam samenleven. De Duits-Poolse filmmaker Stanislaw Mucha, die eerder op zoek ging naar het middelpunt van Europa, treft op zijn reis rond de Zwarte Zee allerlei kleurrijke mensen, dieren, iconen, ansichtkaarten en gevonden voorwerpen. Hij rangschikt het materiaal zo geraffineerd dat er een ragfijn mozaiek ontstaat, dat afwisselend grappig en ontroerend is. (PvdG)

Tristia - A Black Sea Odyssey - Stanislaw Mucha. Do 20 14:45 Tuschinski 4; vr 21 10:30 Brakke Grond Expozaal; do 27 13:45 Munt 13; vr 28 23:00 Tuschinski 6.



De vrouwelijke filmblik



De Marokkaanse Naziha is een in Nederland opgegroeide moeder van maar liefst tien kinderen. Zij komt in het portret *Naziha's Spring* uitgebreid aan het woord over de onwaarschijnlijk moeilijke periode die vlak achter haar ligt. Een tijd waarin een deel van haar zonen het verkeerde pad opging, zij totaal de controle over hen verloor en het gezin was overgeleverd aan politie en kinderbescherming. Op eigen kracht – haar man was tegen die tijd al lang vertrokken naar Marokko – wist ze, samen met haar gezin, weer op te krabbelen. Nee, het zijn geen jaren waar ze trots op is. Sterker nog: gevoelens van schaamte overheersen.

Pannenkoekjes

Ook bij haar inmiddels volwassen zonen, die het verschrikkelijk vinden dat hun moeder – zonder hoofd-
doek en met make-up nota bene – alle ellende aan Gülsah Dogan en haar camera openbaart. Op straat gooit, zo voelen ze dat in feite. Dit zijn geen zaken die een Marokkaanse openbaar moet willen maken. IJzersterke Naziha denkt daar anders over. Er zijn nu eenmaal dingen fout gegaan, het is een moeilijke tijd geweest, maar ze werkt er voor de volle honderd procent aan. Dit moet een les zijn voor anderen, zo stelt ze in de film. In haar huis, liefdevol de haren van haar dochter kammend of aandachtig pannenkoekjes bereidend, spreekt ze steeds ongetemd. Zou ze zo'n gesprek met een man gevoerd kunnen hebben?

Over de feitelijke gebeurtenissen wellicht. Maar over haar diepste gevoelens van schaamte, dat is minder voor de hand liggend – hoe krachtig ze ook is. De vertrouwensband tussen Naziha en Dogan lijkt in de intieme huiskamersfeer steeds te groeien.

Dogan pakt haar niet met fluwelen handschoentjes aan: ze legt Naziha het vuur na aan de schenen over haar eigen verantwoordelijkheid. Dat resulteert niet in dichtklappen of defensieve antwoorden, maar maakt haar nog openhartiger en emotioneler. Het treffendst is misschien wel het shot waarin Naziha – die altijd zorgt, druk is, schoonmaakt, zaken regelt voor iedereen – een hazenslaapje doet op de bank in de woonkamer. Een heel persoonlijk en intiem moment dat ze vrijwel zeker nimmer door een man had laten filmen.

Onderscheid

Naziha's Spring laat zien wat een vrouw wel en een man niet voor elkaar kan krijgen, in deze situatie, met deze vrouw en deze culturele achtergrond. Maar filmen vrouwen in het algemeen anders? Dan moet je eerst vaststellen wat we ervaren als typisch mannelijk of typisch vrouwelijk. Bijvoorbeeld: feitelijke geschiedschrijving versus intieme, persoonlijk vertelde verhalen. Cijfers tegenover gevoelens. Onderwerpen als oorlog, politiek en financiële crisis, uitgelegd via *talking heads*, heldere animaties en diagrammen, tegenover de diepste zielenroerselen van

een kind van gescheiden ouders. Grasduinend door het IDFA-programma dit jaar, binnen de selectie *The Female Gaze*, maar ook in andere programma-onderdelen, kunnen we onderscheid maken tussen het mannelijke en vrouwelijke. Volledig op basis van onderbuikgevoelens.

No Lullaby is net als *Naziha's Spring* een film waarin een kleinschalige, intieme setting resulteert in openhartige verhalen. Helen Simon filmt de opgeruimd ogende, sterke Tina aan haar keukentafel. Een vrouw met, zo blijkt, een afschuwelijk verleden vol seksueel misbruik, die worstelt met een enorm verdriet, schaamte en schuldgevoelens. Niet de makkelijkste zaken om over te praten, maar ze voelt zich beschermd genoeg in deze film en bij deze maakster tijdens wat je een emotioneel gesprek van vrouw tot vrouw zou kunnen noemen. Al is de stem van de interviewster in de montagekamer weggesneden – ze is zelf dus geen personage. Ook Åsa Ekman is dat niet in *My Life My Lesson*. Zij en haar twee cameravrouwen zijn als *fly on the wall* aanwezig in het dagelijks leven van een achttienjarige tiener die, samen met haar moeder, zusjes en broertje, moet vluchten voor een gewelddadige stiefvader. Ekman is er op alledaagse momenten, maar ook als er paniek uitbreekt. Het is een optelsom van scènes die helder uitdragen onder welke spanning dit gezin leeft. Waarschijnlijk een kwestie van heel veel aanwezig zijn met de camera; 'rondhangen' in het

*Kun je aan een fictieve liefdesscène zien of hij door een vrouw gemaakt is? Filmmaker Agnès Varda betoogt van wel, in **Filming Desire - A Journey Through Women's Film**. Maar geldt dat ook voor de documentaire? Kiezen vrouwen andere onderwerpen? Hanteren ze een andere stijl? Hebben ze een wezenlijk andere blik? Maricke Nieuwdorp*



gezin. Had een man, juist in dit door een man geterroriseerde gezin hun vertrouwen kunnen winnen, met deze film als resultaat? Misschien. Maar erg waarschijnlijk is dat niet.

Actiebeelden

Onder typische 'mannenfilms' vallen wellicht documentaires zoals *Chameleon* (spannende undercoveractie van een onderzoeksjournalist), *The Green Prince* (psychologische real-life thriller rondom en met de zoon van een Hamas-kopstuk bij de Israëlische geheime dienst, met drone-opnames en archiefbeelden) en *Raiders* (over criminele groepen gelieerd aan het Kremlin, met actiebeelden, animaties en *zalking beads*). En inderdaad, ze zijn stuk voor stuk gemaakt door een man. Zou een vrouw deze films niet kunnen maken? Natuurlijk wel. Zwaarder dan seksie weegt wat voor soort maker de man of vrouw in kwestie is. Wat voor soort méns in feite. Andersom worden typische 'vrouwenfilms' ook door mannen gemaakt. *Iris* van Albert Maysles bijvoorbeeld, over het levende fashionicoon Iris Apfel (93). Het is dat Maysles even zelf in beeld komt, anders was het moeilijk uit de film te halen van welk geslacht de maker was. Ander voorbeeld: *Ida's Diary*. Een openhartig videodagboek van een jonge vrouw die kampt met borderline en een persoonlijkheidsstoornis. Veelal gefilmd door de protagoniste zelf, maar gemaakt door August B. Hanssen.

Maar er zijn ook films die buiten elk hokje vallen. Zoals *The House is Black*; een prachtige, Iraanse documentaireklassieker van Forough Farrokhzad uit 1962. Te zien binnen het The Female Gaze-programma – en dus gemaakt door een vrouw – maar zo vooruitstrevend, zo poëtisch, zo'n *work of art* dat het de man-vrouw-kwestie overstijgt. Mannelijk of vrouwelijk, deze documentaire raakt je diep in het hart; hij werkt, en dat is uiteindelijk wat telt.

Genoemde vrouwenfilms

- *Filming Desire - A Journey Through Women's Film* - Marlie Mandy.
Za 22 22:00 Munt 13; ma 24 11:00 Tuschinski 6.
- *The House is Black* - Forough Farrokhzad.
Vr 21 20:45 Tuschinski 6; zo 23 20:00 EYE Cinema 2.
- *My Life My Lesson* - Åsa Ekman. Zo 23 19:15 Tuschinski 5; di 25 22:15 Munt 9; wo 26 20:00 Munt 12; vr 28 16:00 Tuschinski 3.
- *Naziha's Spring* - Gülsah Dogan.
Za 22 17:30 Tuschinski 1; wo 26 13:30 Tuschinski 3; do 27 11:45 Munt 10; za 29 19:00 Ketelhuis Zaal 1.
- *No Lullaby* - Helen Simon. Wo 19 22:00 Munt 12; do 20 13:00 Tuschinski 5; ma 24 11:45 Tuschinski 5; di 25 20:15 Tuschinski 3.



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Ze durft te blijven dromen



foto: Felix Kalkman

Nadine Salib portretteerde Hanan, een opmerkelijk openhartige vrouw in een kleine, Egyptische dorpsgemeenschap, die al jaren hunkert naar het krijgen van een kind. Alles – van operaties tot oude rituelen – grijpt ze aan om moeder te kunnen worden.

Salib: 'Ik leerde Hanan zo'n vier jaar geleden kennen tijdens een reselectrip. Ik was op zoek naar een onvruchtbare vrouw die haar heil zocht in rituelen en die ik daarbij zou mogen filmen. Hanan werd mijn *fixer*; ze hielp me bij mijn onderzoek en was mijn ingang tot die kleine gemeenschappen. Al vanaf onze eerste ontmoeting was ze vriendelijk en behulpzaam en ze bekende me dat ze het idee had dat ik haar begreep. En ik had dat gevoel andersom net zo goed. We raakten bevriend in dat eerste jaar, toen ze me hielp met researchen en de camera nog afwezig was. In de loop der tijd realiseerde ik me dat haar

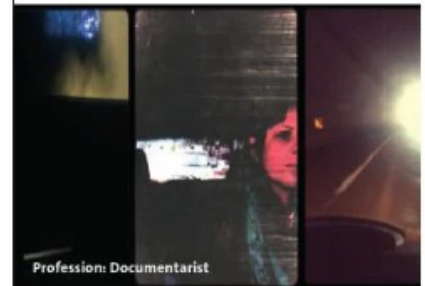
verhaal, net zoals haar persoonlijkheid, eigenlijk heel bijzonder en sterk was. Ze durft ondanks alles te blijven dromen en staat zeer spiritueel in het leven. Door haar ging ik dit verhaal in een veel breder, poëtischer perspectief zien.' 'Mijn film gaat, naast een ijdele kinderwens, ook over restricties die je als Egyptische vrouw ondervindt. Ik vermoed dat Hanans lijden juist zo groot is omdat haar als vrouw geen alternatief leven geboden kan worden. Daarbij komt nog een gevoel van vervreemding binnen haar gemeenschap. Misschien telt dat leed nog wel zwaarder dan het feit dat ze geen kinderen kan krijgen. Want wat is de waarde van haar leven? Bij wie hoort ze? Als dromer ziet ze gelukkig wel nieuwe levensbetekenissen die passen binnen haar geloof en haar kijk op het leven. Die zoektocht maakt haar in zekere zin kwetsbaar, maar tegelijkertijd heel open voor andere mensen. Daarom kon ik ook zo'n hechte band met haar ontwikkelen.'

Mother of the Unborn - Nadine Salib.

Do 20 19:30 Munt 10; di 25 19:30 Brakke Grond Expozaal; wo 26 12:15 Munt 9; do 27 20:00 Munt 9; za 29 14:30 Tuschinski 5.

► Groeten uit...

Het Midden-Oosten



Iran. Het eerste beeld dat u nu te binnen schiet is vast niet het trainen van jonge valken. Toch is dat waar Mazyar Moshtragh Gohari's *Cechanok* over gaat. Omdat er behalve politiek en religie ook nog andere dingen in het land gebeuren, lijkt de filmmaker te willen zeggen. Zoals de valkerij. Of het toerisme, Iranian style, zoals in Mehdi Ganji's *I Want To Be a King*. Niks politieke allegorie, gewoon WYSIWYG: het authentieke Iran bij een succesvolle bed and breakfast, die ooit van de grond kwam nadat twee Duitse toeristen voor wat eten op de deur klopten.

Toch raken de meeste films uit het Midden-Oosten op de een of andere manier aan de onrust en onderdrukking in die landen. Dat wil zeggen, voor zover die films het Westen bereiken. Het valt op dat het gros van de titels uit Iran komt. Misschien omdat de productie elders tot stilstand is gekomen. Er is niets uit Syrië. Niets uit Jordanië. En niets uit de rest van het Arabische schiereiland. Uit Egypte alleen *Mother of the Unborn*, over een vrouw die al twaalf jaar probeert zwanger te worden, maar een te smalle baarmoeder blijkt te hebben. Uit Israël komt het DocLab-project *Thru You Too*, van en over componist Kutiman, die nummers componeert uit wat hij op YouTube vindt. Wat vooral opvalt is de intimiteit van de films. De makers zochten zonder uitzondering individuen op om hun verhaal te vertellen. De massaprotesten waarvan de afgelopen jaren verslag werd gedaan zijn even niet te horen. In *Saken* staat de camera op het bed gericht van de Palestijnse Ibrahim, die verland in het ziekenhuis ligt en afhankelijk is van de verzorging door de Egyptische Walid. In *Profession: Documentarist* vertellen zeven vrouwelijke documentairemakers in dagboekstijl over hun strijd onder de Iraanse censuur.

Verslagen van massaprotesten waren na de Arabische Lente noodzakelijk. Wie ook de persoonlijke verhalen van mensen wil horen, terwijl ze worstelen met grote en kleine vragen, over overleven in een dictatuur maar ook over het bestieren van de beste keuken van Iran, moet dit jaar op IDFA op zoek gaan naar de titels uit het Midden-Oosten. (RR)



► Eten **I Want To Be a King**

Van heinde en ver komen bezoekers naar het huis van Abbas Barzegar, vanwege zijn reputatie de beste gerechten te serveren in heel Iran, puttend uit de rijke Perzische culinaire traditie.



► Muziek **The Dream Of Shahrazah**

Inwoners van conflictgebieden zoeken troost bij de schoonheid van de Arabische cultuur van Duizend-en-een-nacht, door muziek te maken en verhalen te vertellen.



► Crisis **Silvered Water, Syria Self-Portrait**

Vorig jaar opende IDFA met het verbijsterende *Return to Homs*. Dit jaar keren we terug naar Homs, waar de gevechten niet zijn gestopt. Veel bloed dus – en een ongebroken Syrisch jongetje.



► Vroeger **The House Is Black**

Mismaakt zijn en afgescheiden leven in armoede. Een zwaar bestaan dat toch zo prachtig, kunstzinnig en poëtisch werd verfilmd door de Iraanse Forough Farrokhzad in 1962.



► Dieren **Cechanok**

Vrij als een vogel? Die Iraanse vlieger gaat niet op voor de valken in dit mooi geobserveerde portret van een wrede sport: de valkerij.

Twee mannen voor elke vrouw

IDFA onderzocht het aandeel vrouwelijke regisseurs in zijn programmering van de afgelopen elf jaar. Conclusie: dat is ongeveer eenderde. En dat percentage stijgt niet.



Dit jaar neemt IDFA in het programma The Female Gaze de rol van vrouwen in de internationale documentairewereld onder de loep. Hoe worden ze afgebeeld in documentaires? Hoe filmen ze zelf, als ze aan de andere kant van de camera staan? En hoe zit het met degenen die beslissen tot financiering, distributie en vertoning? Zijn vrouwen evenredig vertegenwoordigd op de machtsposities in de documentairewereld? Op IDFA zelf zit dat laatste wel snor, zou je zeggen, met directeur (of toch: directrice!) Ally Derks vanaf de oprichting aan het roer. Overhaupt bekleden vrouwen in de Nederlandse filmwereld enkele sleutelposities: ook het Nederlands Film Festival, het Filmfonds en het EYE Filmmuseum worden bestierd door vrouwen. Maar betekent dat ook dat die instellingen meer films van vrouwen programmeren en financieren? IDFA besloot zichzelf tegen het licht te houden met een onderzoek naar door vrouwen geregisseerde festivalfilms uit de periode 2003-2013. Elf jaar, waarin elk jaar zo'n drieduizend films aan het festival werden aangeboden, waarvan er zo'n driehonderd werden geselecteerd.

Figuur 1: vrouwelijk aanbod en selectie

Het ging tussen 2003 en 2013 om 40.581 regisseurs, die een of meerdere documentaires bij IDFA hebben ingediend. Onder hen 15.006 vrouwen. Van tiende daarvan, 4068 regisseurs, werden documentaires vertoond – onder wie 1389 vrouwen. Relatief werden vrouwen dus iets minder gemakkelijk geselecteerd. Anders geformuleerd, in de cirkel rechts: van alle aangeboden documentaires heeft 37,1 procent een vrouwelijke regisseur (waarbij een film die bijvoorbeeld door een man en een vrouw samen is geregisseerd aan beide zijden voor de helft meetelt) en van de vertoonde 33,2 procent. Kort gezegd is eenderde van de films op IDFA geregisseerd door een vrouw.

Figuur 2: het aanbod blijft hetzelfde

En dat is in al die jaren niet veranderd. Het gemiddelde aanbod van door vrouwen geregisseerde documentaires ligt iets boven eenderde – opvallend genoeg was dat percentage in 2013 exact even groot als in 2003.

Figuur 3: de selectie blijft nagenoeg hetzelfde

En ook het aandeel door vrouwen geregisseerde films dat daaruit wordt geselecteerd blijft ongeveer gelijk: gemiddeld eenderde. In 2003 was het aandeel een stuk lager, later is het ook wel eens hoger geweest. Maar dat lijken vrij willekeurige fluctuaties, geen stijgende lijn. Het deel dat in competitie belandt, wisselt sterker – maar ook daarin valt nauwelijks lijn te ontdekken.

Figuur 4: minder meesters, meer kinderen

Er bestaan wel flinke man-vrouwverschillen tussen de programmaonderdelen van IDFA. Die bevestigen de stereotypen: vrouwelijke regisseurs zijn sterk ondervertegenwoordigd in de Masters-selectie, met de gevestigde Grote Namen, en juist zwaar oververtegenwoordigd bij de jeugddocumentaires – in 2008 waren zelfs negen van de tien kids-docs door een vrouw ter wereld gebracht.

Ook opvallend: de documentaires in het Nederlandse competitieprogramma zijn voor ruim de helft van vrouwen; van vrouwen draaien beduidend meer halflange dan lange documentaires; en vrouwen zijn zwaar ondervertegenwoordigd in de toptien, die elk jaar wordt gekozen door een belangwekkend documentairemaker. Komt dat misschien omdat dat alleen maar mannen zijn? Nee: ook de vrouwelijke toptien-samenstellers kiezen mannen. Jannie Langbroek selecteerde in 2004 één vrouw, net als Pirjo Honkasalo in 2010. Ook Heddy Honigmann vertoont dit jaar in haar toptien maar één vrouw: Agnès Varda.

Figuur 5: steeds meer debutantes

De enige positieve lijn die de onderzoekers van IDFA konden ontdekken was in de First Appearance Competitie (met eerste en tweede films). Hoewel het percentage films van vrouwen flink fluctueert is de trend stijgende, van ongeveer een kwart in 2003 naar ongeveer – conservatief geschat – de helft nu. Hoopvol, als deze talenten hun succes voortzetten.

IDFA Dagkrant onderzoekt zichzelf

Nu IDFA de moed heeft gehad zijn eigen vrouwvriendelijkheid te toetsen, kan de IDFA Dagkrant / Daily / Special / OmdeDagkrant / Themakrant (de naam is in de loop der jaren meermalen veranderd) niet achterblijven. Bovendien: datajournalistiek is hot. Daarom hebben we ook onze eigen redacteuren, zowel tekstschrijvers als beeldmakers, in de periode 2003 t/m 2013 geturfd.

weer een overwicht aan mannen in de IDFA Dagkrant-redactie: 56 procent. (figuur 3) En dat is niet aan het veranderen.

Zijn er nog interessante details te bespeuren? Er komen steeds meer beeldmakers en steeds minder tekstschrijvers bij de Dagkrant – een trend die ook in landelijke media valt te bespeuren. Daarnaast zijn vrouwen in opkomst onder de fotografen en verliezen ze iets van hun voor-sprong onder de tekstschrijvers.

En dan: de geïnterviewden. Wie laten de IDFA Dagkrant-redacteuren in hun publicatie aan het woord? Beduidend meer mannen dan vrouwen: twee keer zo veel om precies te zijn. Een typisch interview voor de Dagkrant bestaat dus uit een man die een foto maakt van een vrouw die een man interviewt.

Toch is de man-vrouwverhouding onder geïnterviewden niet zo scheef als het lijkt: aangezien er op IDFA de afgelopen elf jaar gemiddeld twee keer zo veel films van mannelijke dan van vrouwelijke regisseurs vertoond zijn, is die verhouding representatief. Bovendien: terwijl de percentages door mannen en vrouwen geregisseerde films op IDFA in die jaren niet is veranderd, interviewt de Dagkrant procentueel gezien steeds meer vrouwen – of beter gezegd, aangezien het totale aantal interviews langzaam afneemt, vooral minder mannen. (figuur 4) (KD)



Figuur 6: geselecteerde vrouwen redelijke kans op winnen

Aangezien films van vrouwelijke regisseurs maar cenderde uitmaken van het totaal, valt het aantal gewonnen prijzen niet tegen: bijna cenderde. De belangrijkste prijs van het festival ging in deze periode echter maar één keer naar een vrouw: in 2006 won *The Monastery: Mr. Vig & the Nun* van Pernille Rose Grønkrjær de prijs voor beste documentaire.

Figuur 7: mannen kiezen mannen

Elke jury heeft een oneven aantal leden, zodat de stemmen niet kunnen staken. Maakt het uit of mannen of vrouwen in de meerderheid zijn? Ja: mannen laten vrouwen veel minder vaak winnen. Het suggereert dat er inderdaad een *male gaze* en een *female gaze* bestaan – een van de vragen waarover dit jaar op IDFA wordt geëbatterd. Anders gevraagd: houden vrouwen en mannen meer van documentaires die op dezelfde manier naar de wereld kijken als zijzelf? Het percentage mannen en vrouwen onder het publiek is onbekend – in elk geval gaat de publieksprijs ongeveer even vaak naar vrouwen als je gezien het percentage vertoonde films zou verwachten.

Figuur 8: voorwaarts

IDFA had het gevoel dat het aantal vrouwelijke regisseurs gestaag toenam. Het was dan ook geschokt toen dat in de eigen programmering niet bleek te kloppen. Hoe kan dat? Daarop hopen ze op dit festival het begin van een antwoord te vinden. Het goede nieuws is, dat dit jaar het percentage films van vrouwen boven het gemiddelde uitkomt. Het slechte nieuws, dat daar het speciale vrouwenprogramma *The Female Gaze* voor nodig was. De vraag is: zien we in 2015 ook meer dan cenderde vrouwelijke regisseurs?

Welke conclusies vallen daaruit te trekken? De hoofdredactie is al die jaren gelijkelijk vevuld door man en vrouw. Bij de tekstschrijvers waren de vrouwen in de meerderheid: gemiddeld 57 procent. (figuur 1) Bij de beeldmakers (fotografen, illustratoren, lay-out en videomakers) daarentegen de mannen: gemiddeld 70 procent. (figuur 2) Interessant: beeld gedomineerd door mannen, tekst door vrouwen – dat volgt niet het cliché. Die twee groepen bij elkaar opgeteld is er toch



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Festival Trailer

Cape Rock, Jean Mineur Mediavision

IDFA bedankt alle Vrienden van het festival.

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