

Dear filmmakers, dear guests,

there never were so many: this year we had more than 500 entries from 30 countries, on top of that we viewed many more films at other festivals of young film. We selected 79 films from 20 countries. While we are happy about the high number of entries, we painfully realize that it also means having to send off more negative answers. Reject many real good films.

Why are more and more films being entered? As much as we'd love to praise ourselves for good pr, there are really two other decisive reasons: more videofilms get produced, as the price for computer- and video equipment got lower over the years and youth know how to make use of it with smartphones, affordable video cameras and low priced software. Certainly the rapid growth of distribution channels like youtube has also added to the motivation. The production of films is still tied to the supervision by media pedagogues - and obviously the schools and recreational facilities lack the necessary funding. Just 100 out of 500 films were made by children aged 6-15, and not even half of them are from Germany. Other countries seem better off in this field.

Another reason for the growing number of entries is our networking: over the years a good network of youth film festivals and media workshops has developed, allowing an intense exchange of information as well as film programs. Two months ago we founded along with the other festivals and media workshops an umbrella organization – the "Youth Cinema Network". More about it on page 18 in this catalogue.

What else you will find at the festival: for the younger audience aged 6 to 15 we have compiled six international programs, accompanied by talks with the directors and about film perception, i.e. talks with the young guests on why a film is interesting and how film works. This can be deepened in a workshop: the young visitors can join, like in previous years, in a workshop from „studio DA“, in which an animation film is prepared, which will be shown on Saturday at the award ceremony. For the elders, aged 16 to 27 we also offer six film programs. What is special about it: after each film program the jury will come up on stage and give their feedback for each film, outright and honest, not just an exchange of pleasantries. In Saturday's family program we present Axel Ranisch's new film: "Reuber". Followed by a selection of films from the festival program, suitable for all ages. And then we'll have the big award ceremony!

One more thing: another year, that we work for the festival unpaid, in addition to our regular jobs. The budget, unfortunately, hasn't grown, but at least not shrunk either. So, this is the place to say thank you to our partners and sponsors! We hope to continue next year, as this is the real hard part for us: get the money from supporters and sponsors. The actual work, preparing and operating festival and workshops, we love to do and that we are competent in. But writing applications and looking for sponsors happens in a wildly sprawling jungle, under the rule of two-fisted competition. A support scheme, increasingly domineered by big organizers and "application-specialists", more and more going by „market economy“. This is not our competence - our "business" is media pedagogy! It would be great, if state and municipalities rediscovered more responsibility for youth, culture and media education. And we are happy about each and every support for that.

Your festival team