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culture360.ASEF.org is featuring a series of articles on the topic of #peripheries. The #peripheries have been regarded as being in the geographical margin, distant from the capital cities and cultural centres of countries. With an ongoing decentralisation trend, through this series of articles, we will look at various arts endeavours by artists, cultural professionals and art organisations who operate or occupy the peripheries in an urban society and the role that the arts play. In this article, Parul Wadhwa looks at the European Social Documentary network, an organisation which has been silently populating the film scene between Europe and Asia, with fellows from remote corners of the world and bringing films to the peripheries.

[ESoDoc – European Social Documentary](#) is a training initiative for media professionals and cross-thinkers who want to increase the impact and outreach of their documentary films and trans-media projects by developing new storytelling skills, networking over different platforms, discovering new forms of team building, of producing and financing and new distribution strategies.

ESoDoc as a training initiative is offered by [ZeLIG School for Documentary, Television and New Media](#) in Italy and supported by the European Union's MEDIA Programme. Most of its training workshops happen all over Europe, some internationally in Asia while ESoDoc's staff works on the initiative from Italy.

ESoDoc as an organisation, has been silently populating the film, documentary and transmedia market between Europe and Asia for over a decade now, with fellows and trainers from all over the world from remote corners and bringing films to and from the peripheries to the mainstream. ESoDoc is conceived as a “lab for ideas”, where participants are encouraged to experiment with their projects by exploring new creative development opportunities.

ZeLIG School for Documentary, Television and New Media founded in 1988, is a non-profit educational center specialised in training in the documentary field in Italy and is the organisation behind this brilliant training initiative which is international in its reach and scope.

An important part of ZeLIG's and therefore ESoDoc's mission is its creative focus on this multi-lingual, multi-cultural tradition. With this vision in mind, ZeLIG developed ESoDoc – European Social Documentary and various other training initiatives related to social themes, like LINCT in 2009, ESoDoc India in 2010 and ESoDoc International in 2011/2012.



ESoDoc India 2010

ESoDoc as a training initiative is committed to bringing storytellers together from all over the world including peripheral towns and organisations, with the aim of encouraging independent filmmakers and supporting them with resources.

ESoDoc teaches filmmakers to:

- think about the audience from the beginning of the story
- assist ground-breaking and inspiring lectures from acclaimed worldwide professionals and discover what is new, controversial and seminal in the documentary film making world
- work co-creatively in big and small groups with the other participants and experts to develop documentary projects
- expand your project on more platforms through different formats
- design outreach strategies to increase the impact of the project
- take various practical masterclasses about storytelling/writing techniques, new-media production, participatory media
- get trained in pitching skills and present projects in front of renowned experts at the final public pitching session
- have a “pitching package” at the end of the workshop, composed by a refined 2-pager, visual material and presentation

ESoDoc offers three intense one-week residential sessions held over a period of six months, combined with Extended Online Sessions (EOS) for market-related topics, project tutoring and networking with film festivals and other market events, along with one-to-one tutoring by international experts.

With the support of top-rated professionals, participants improve their storytelling skills, master the art of project developing, prototyping and pitching. They also discover new forms of team building and networking and gain an insight in international co-production, financing, and distribution strategies.

During the workshops, participants are tutored by a network of international experts on the development of their projects. Emphasis is placed on building up strong storytelling along with new production possibilities (collaborative media) and communication tools. Filmmakers, especially from towns with little access to training and resources, can explore new funding and distribution strategies, both on traditional channels and new media channels, such as the web and new crowdfunding platforms.

ESoDoc participants are committed to social issues and are eager to explore new creative forms and communication strategies to face the challenges of the changing media world. As a training organisation, they invite **documentarians, producers, journalists, web-designers, programmers, game designers**, and **NGO-communication representatives** who are willing to extend their production possibilities to new sectors, new forms and new platforms.

The workshop is open for professionals **with or without an independent project**. They also accept up to **four participants from non-EU countries** and have often in the past had

international chapters to attract participants from Asia and other parts of the world.

ESoDoc has become a meeting point for filmmakers, new media professionals and NGO film practitioners who want to develop projects about particular social themes. It is now one of the most popular Media training initiatives that focuses exclusively on independent documentary filmmakers and producers, non-government and non-profit-making organisations (NGOs and NPOs), television broadcasters and the growing range of New Media professionals, creating both web-documentaries and cross-media productions from both mainstream hubs of media production and remote corners of the world.

ESoDoc is the training initiative for media professionals who are eager to develop their documentary project and elaborate on the values of diversity and co-creation in their linear and non-linear communication with people, through their stories and projects in various formats and platforms.

ESoDoc aims to increase the ability of filmmakers in innovative documentary storytelling, to give creative impulses to the evolving market dynamics and to respond to its trends in flexible, collaborative and interdisciplinary ways.

ESoDoc promotes the idea of collaboration in order to encourage open-minded and politically engaged media-makers to develop their multi-media projects in a co-creative environment to increase synergies, which will allow them to profit more from the opportunities offered by the changing media landscape.

ESoDoc is conceived as a “lab for ideas”, where participants are encouraged to “experiment” with their project by exploring new creative development opportunities.



ESoDoc training in progress

To participate in ESoDoc, participants should be dynamic and should be ready for change – both in their attitude and mindset – in order to be a pro-active player able to bring original inputs to the group and to elaborate an innovative project in line with the new trends of the audiovisual industry.

There is a fee to participate in ESoDoc but often general scholarships are available for eligible participants. To encourage an inter-disciplinary approach, participants can attend with or without a project.

ESoDoc chooses a selective pool of about 18-20 participants each cycle on the basis of interest and attitudes towards social issues, level of technical and social skills, willingness and motivation to learn.

The selection is based on their sensibility to social issues, professional competences and social skills, attitude to team-work, interest in innovation, cross-thinking and strategic vision, orientation and attitude towards the audience, motivation and willingness to change and professional quality and working experience. Their selection of the final list of participants will also take into account the balance of gender and countries. In this way, ESoDoc makes sure that it has the ability to attract unconventional projects from unconventional centers rather than film hubs.

ESoDoc has an impressive list of trainers from all over the world including Europe, India, and the United Kingdom and has successfully trained filmmakers to have completed production on

several documentaries and cross media projects since its genesis. ESoDoc Tube is a collection of short clips cut from the interviews they shot at every sessions with all its experts, talking about the most seminal topics related to today's industry.

EsoDoc presents itself as a training initiative of excellence, quite unique in its approach to bring the world together by six degrees of separation by way of encouraging dynamic storytelling from far flung corners of the world and its commitment to bringing powerful unheard stories to the world market. Building bridges, one film at a time.

This article is written by Parul Wadhwa, who has had extensive experience as a new-media artist, filmmaker, game designer and educator and researcher across Asia, Europe and the US. She holds a terminal degree, MFA in Digital Arts and New Media from University of California Santa Cruz and has worked and taught with 5+ years of research experience. She was awarded the Regents Scholarship from University of California Regents, the highest honor awarded at the UC and Art Dean's Award for Excellence in Arts amongst several other departmental fellowships in film, games and arts.

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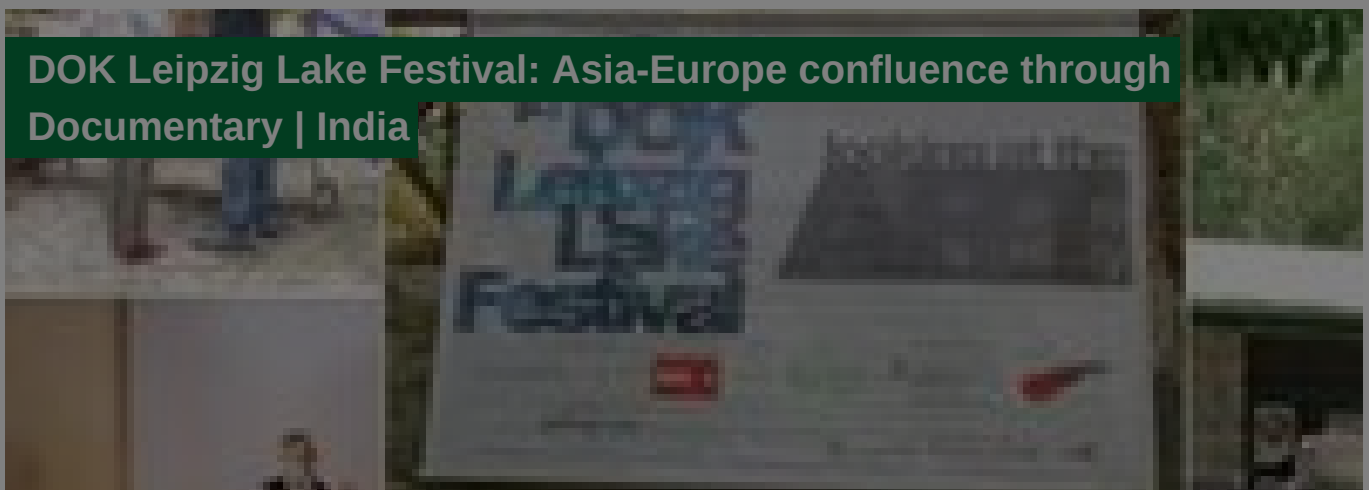
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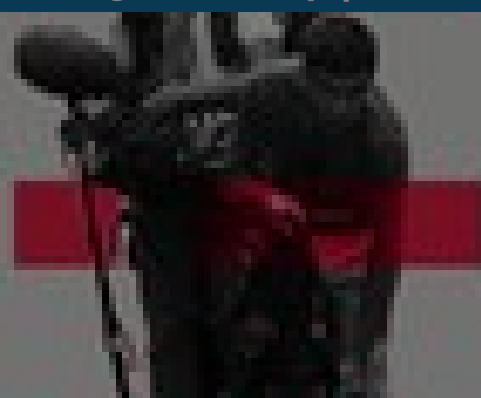
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