

Sunny Side of the Doc 2020: The Connected Edition

In response to the health crisis brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and the importance of keeping the documentary community's activities alive, the 31st edition of the international marketplace for documentary and narrative experiences will move to an exclusively online format for the very first time, taking place on 22nd to 25th June.

La Rochelle, 9th April 2020 – The 31st edition of Sunny Side of the Doc, the international marketplace for documentary and narrative experiences, and the 4th edition of PiXii Festival, the international festival for digital cultures, have been entirely reworked into an online format in order to provide viable opportunities on 22nd to 25th June.

This unique platform will enable all major industry stakeholders to connect for a series of tailor-made activities including pitch sessions, one-to-one meetings and also a significant programming of video resources and topical webinars (livestreamed Q&A, hands-on workshops, case studies) designed by top-level experts to foster extensive interactions with professional peers. What's more, the new digital format allows for some of the online offerings to remain accessible beyond 25th June 2020.

Sunny Side's DNA goes digital: content, trends and networking

The Sunny Side of the Doc Connected Edition is structured around three elements that are the foundation of this international marketplace's DNA: showcasing quality-driven projects and programmes; having a finger on the pulse for industry trends; and developing an international network for collaboration between producers, distributors and broadcasters. The accreditation for this alternative event will be available at a flat-rate fee of €200 (excl. tax) for the entire offering.

"Faced with the brutal reality of the Coronavirus pandemic and the ensuing strict measures imposed to control the virus, we wanted to help the whole documentary community see it through the crisis. That means redefining our original outline and setting, as going ahead with a physical event at L'Espace Encan in La Rochelle would represent too much of a risk to our attendees, partners, friends and our team," explains Mathieu Béjot, Director of Strategy and Development of Sunny Side of the Doc.

"With this in mind, cancelling the marketplace was never an option, especially during a time when the sector's economy needs support from cultural operators, needs commitment to carrying on developing productions, acquiring original programmes, maintaining professional relationships and fostering innovative creative partnerships. Furthermore, we would like to thank the industry and those institutions who have shown their full support since the onset of this crisis."

Original, innovative content via a connected resource hub

True to its mission statement in helping develop projects, foster international co-productions and distribute factual content, the marketplace has decided to rework its six themed Pitch Sessions online (History, Science, Arts & Culture, Social and Human Interest, Wildlife and Digital Experiences). In order to reach a larger audience of buyers and commissioning editors throughout the world, there will be two daily pitch presentations. Taking into account the global impact of the pandemic, the deadline for project submissions has been extended to Thursday 23rd April 2020 and visual support materials are no longer restricted to a video trailer.



Sunny Side of the Doc will also host an online screening library where buyers can watch programmes from international distributors and find projects currently in development. The library will remain running until the end of 2020. A new Rough Cuts section for documentaries in production from Central and Eastern Europe will be launched, in preparation of its country focus in 2021. The screening room will also host a selection of documentaries from peer festivals which have gone digital, in order to increase the exposure of their top programs.

As a physical showroom is no longer possible, the PiXii Festival 2020 official selection will receive digital visibility enabling creators from around the globe to showcase their immersive experiences and installations via short video clips.

A connected platform showcasing the latest trends and practices

Sunny Side of the Doc continues to provide a platform for exchanging crucial information to help navigate the international marketplace and anticipate developments during this current streaming age. History is this year's theme of choice, running throughout the programme's range of events from coproduction case studies, archives workshops and channel lineups, which have all been restructured and adapted for online viewing.

Furthermore, the new online format means there will be more 30-minute *Meet The Execs* interactive sessions, enabling decision-makers from channels, platforms and cultural stakeholders to share their programming, acquisitions and co-productions strategies, as well as their projects for the season to come.

As for PiXii Festival, a series of digital culture kickstarters will help boost professional development and enhance collaborative partnerships. There will also be a panel answering the most pressing issues on distribution and operating models for digital works made for cultural centres and museums.

Beat the crisis and stay connected via e-meetings

As numerous projects in production have been postponed due to the pandemic, Sunny Side of the Doc will put particular focus on supporting independent producers during this time. All selected pitches will benefit from mentoring sessions and tailor-made one-to-one meetings. The marketplace event has also planned to have experts on hand to provide advice, plus speed-meeting sessions and match-made activities with several foreign delegations (Italy, Canada, China).

The successful 30th anniversary edition in June 2019 helped the Sunny Side of the Doc team deal with the sudden loss of Sunny Side CEO, Yves Jeanneau, in November 2019. The staff remains true to his commitment and dedication to the documentary genre. And so, despite the change in format, this year's Connected Edition stands up as a positive and unifying force and is sure to go down in History in more ways than one...

The 2020 programme will be specified in the coming weeks on our website www.sunnysideofthedoc.com.

Aurélie REMAN

Head of Communications & Partnerships // +33 (0)6 69 28 68 33

Stéphane MALAGNAC

Media Relations & PiXii Development Executive // +33 (0)6 11 83 83 74