



Press Release

9. QueerScope-Debut Film Award 2024 goes to documentary about Lesbos

»Lesvia« by Tzeli Hadjidimitriou is the winning film

QueerScope e.V. is the umbrella organisation for independent queer film festivals in German-speaking countries. More than 20 queer film festivals are represented by QueerScope and together they reach around 40,000 visitors every year. Since 2015, QueerScope has awarded an annual debut film prize for the best feature film debut on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, asexual and other queer topics.

This year, the QueerScope festival programme managers chose the documentary »Lesvia« (77 min, Greece, 2023), the first feature-length film by director Tzeli Hadjidimitriou.

This year's QueerScope Debut Film Award will be presented at a ceremony in Hamburg on 20 October as part of the 35th Hamburg International Queer Film Festival, with a discussion with director Tzeli Hadjidimitriou planned after the screening. The director will also be visiting other QueerScope festivals, including in Hanover and Weiterstadt, as well as the Pornfilmfestival in Berlin on 23 October. She will be available there for an audience discussion and press interviews.

ABOUT THE FILM

»Lesvia« chronicles 40+ years of lesbian identity and conflict between the locals of a small village on the Greek island of Lesbos and lesbians who arrived searching for love, freedom and community.

Since the 1970s, lesbians from around the world have been drawn to the island of Lesbos, birthplace of the ancient Greek poet Sappho. When they find paradise in a local village and carve out their own lesbian community, tensions simmer with the local residents. With both groups claiming ownership of lesbian identity, filmmaker Tzeli Hadjidimitriou—a native and lesbian herself—is caught in the middle and chronicles 40+ years of love, community, conflict, and what it means to feel accepted.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT (extract)

»With this documentary I try to discover what happened in the last 40 years in Eressos, where unexpected interactions changed the lives of inhabitants and visitors. Eressos itself, this stunning volcanic landscape with a three-kilometer beach, blue sea and unique light that inspired the poet Sappho, is one of the main characters in the film. It exists in the film in all four seasons and is intertwined with my own personal narrative and story. In this sense, the film takes the form of a personal essay film that documents not only my personal journey but also that of the village and the community.

This is a personal film as much as it is a collective film. It also documents the history of hundreds of lesbians who carved out a space for themselves and the history of the only lesbian community which continues to exist today, evolving and accepting new forms of gender diversities and offering a safe space for self-expression.«



Photo von Bea Uhart

DIRECTOR'S CV

Tzeli Hadjidimitriou was born and raised on the island of Lesbos, Greece and is an award-winning filmmaker, fine art photographer, and writer. Her photographs, which capture liminal atmospheres, places and people, have been exhibited in solo and group shows in Australia, China, Italy, Turkey and Greece and have been published in ten books. Recent short films focus on gender, including "Sappho's Granddaughters", where the older women of Eressos tell their stories; 'Mr Dimitris and Dimitroula', a record of a gender-nonconforming person on Sykamia Lesbos, who tragically lost his/her life after being unjustly detained in a mental asylum; and ›Sappho singing‹, a joyful ode to Sappho, who revisits contemporary Lesbos. ›Lesvia‹ is her first feature documentary.

lesviafilm.com