OPEN CITY DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL

THE ART OF NON-FICTION

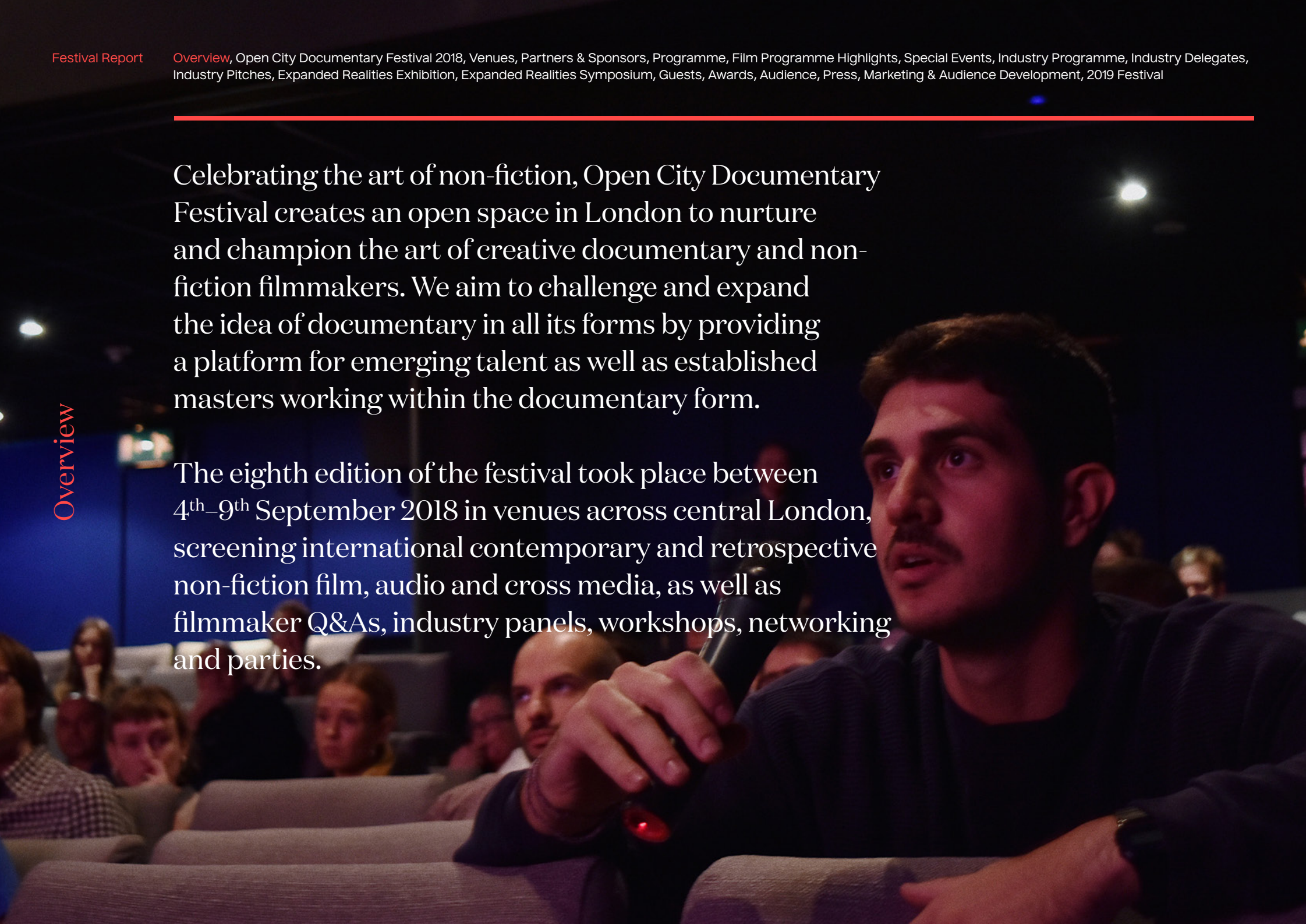
2018 Festival Report

UCL

Overview

Celebrating the art of non-fiction, Open City Documentary Festival creates an open space in London to nurture and champion the art of creative documentary and non-fiction filmmakers. We aim to challenge and expand the idea of documentary in all its forms by providing a platform for emerging talent as well as established masters working within the documentary form.

The eighth edition of the festival took place between 4th–9th September 2018 in venues across central London, screening international contemporary and retrospective non-fiction film, audio and cross media, as well as filmmaker Q&As, industry panels, workshops, networking and parties.



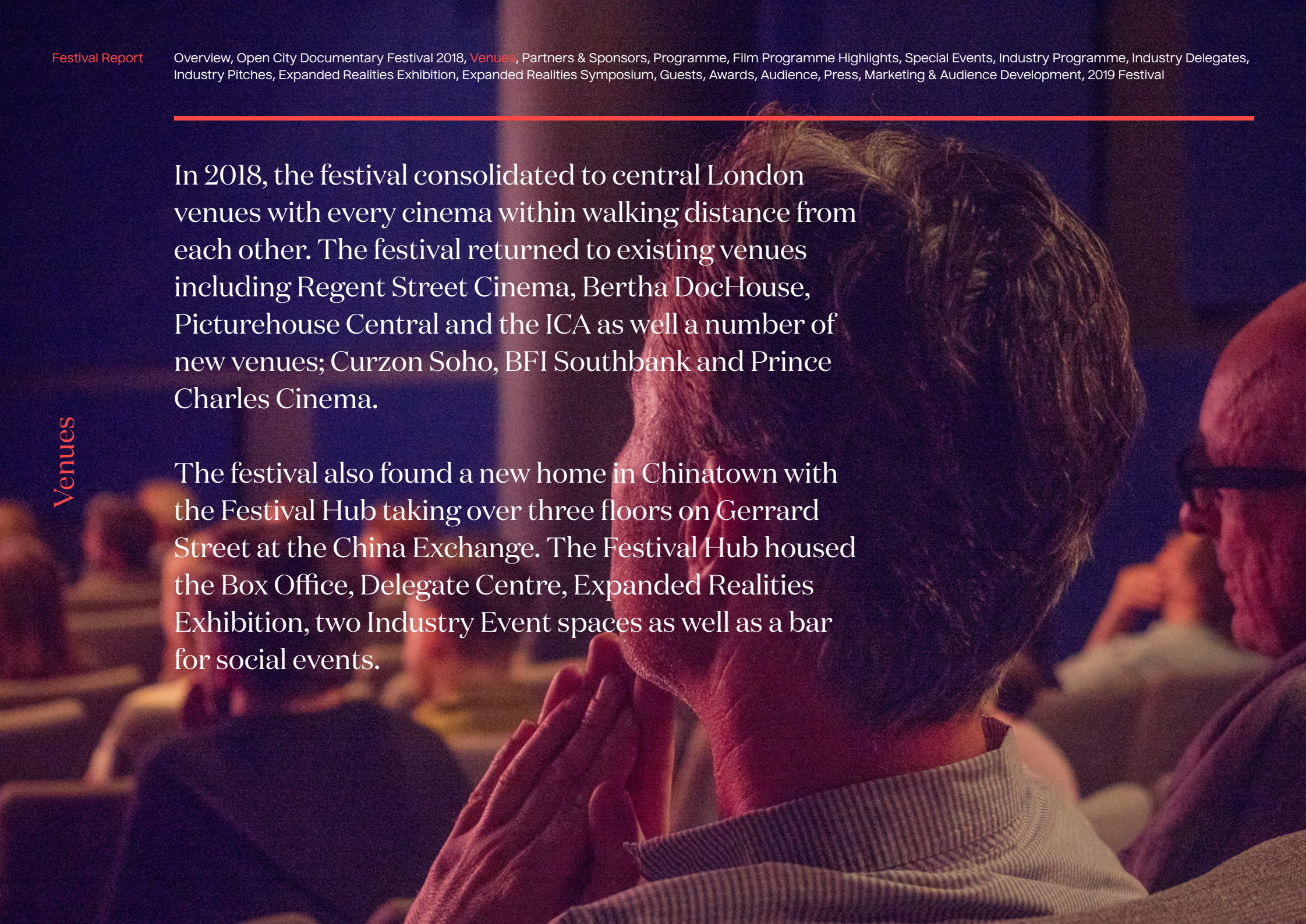
Open City Documentary Festival 2018

6 Days
8 Venues
81 films
3 World Premieres
2 International Premieres
3 European Premieres
28 UK Premieres
5 Audio Docs
17 Cross-Media Projects
4600+ Attendees
50 Visiting Filmmakers
32 Industry Events
78 Industry Speakers
327 Industry Delegates

Venues

In 2018, the festival consolidated to central London venues with every cinema within walking distance from each other. The festival returned to existing venues including Regent Street Cinema, Bertha DocHouse, Picturehouse Central and the ICA as well a number of new venues; Curzon Soho, BFI Southbank and Prince Charles Cinema.

The festival also found a new home in Chinatown with the Festival Hub taking over three floors on Gerrard Street at the China Exchange. The Festival Hub housed the Box Office, Delegate Centre, Expanded Realities Exhibition, two Industry Event spaces as well as a bar for social events.



Venues

OPEN CITY
DOCUMENTARY
FESTIVAL
THE ART OF
NON-FICTION
4th – 9th September 2018
Share your thoughts:
#opencitydocs
opencitylondon.com
@opencitydocs
/opencitylondon
@opencitydocs

Partners & Sponsors

Sponsors & Cultural Partners

Programme Partners

Venue Partners

Programme

This year's programme saw a continuation of a curated programme of non-fiction works across three forms; film, audio and cross-media. Within the programme, there was an increased commitment to presenting authored work as well as maintaining the focus on showcasing exciting new voices as well as established makers.

The film programme consisted of 81 films in total including 25 new features/mid-length works, 30 new shorts and 26 retrospective titles (features and shorts). It also featured four short audio works which played before feature films. The inclusion of retrospective work was encouraged through special event screenings as well as a new initiative inviting film-makers presenting features to select a film which influenced their work.

The 2018 festival featured two filmmaker focuses on Japanese auteur Kazuo Hara and American experimental filmmaker Penny Lane. The programme also included two shorts retrospectives of Polish maverick filmmaker Bogdan Dziworski and French-Colombian filmmaker and artist Laura Huertas Millán.

In audience feedback, over 87% of attendees rated the film screenings they attended as a 4 or 5 rating out of 5.

Film Programme Highlights

Opening Night:
UK Premiere of Baronesa

"Baronesa was one of the best documentaries I have ever seen and the answers given during the Q&A were wonderful."

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

"I found it really inspirational listening to a female director talk about the process and her experiences. A truly amazing first film."

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

"Brilliant opening film! Viva La Open City!"

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

Closing Night:
UK Premiere of The Swing

"Had a great time at the @opencitydocs in London, screening The Swing to a full house at the beautiful Regent Street Cinema, the first movie theater ever in England. Thank you for a wonderful Q&A with the audience"

– CYRIL ARIS, DIRECTOR

"The film touched me very deeply, great to hear from a new director after such an intimate film"

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

"This film broke me. Incredibly moving. Strongly recommended"

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

Film Programme Highlights

"Interesting and adventurous programming, excellent choices of venue."

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

"Highly sensitive, subtle and poetic film, which could hardly be seen outside festivals like Open City Docs."

– AUDIENCE MEMBER
(AT SELF PORTRAIT: SPHINX IN 47KM)

"It was wonderful, very moving. I look forward to coming back next year."

– AUDIENCE MEMBER
(AT VOICES OF THE SEA)

"This was a phenomenal film and the chance hear from the director themselves at a Q&A after gave an even deeper insight into her filmmaking process."

– AUDIENCE MEMBER
(AT JAMILIA)

"Really enjoyed it, new favourite filmmaker."

– AUDIENCE MEMBER
(AT THE SHORT FILMS OF PENNY LANE)

Special Events

Nabihah Iqbal presents Winter Soldier followed by party

Marc Isaacs presents Wadi, 10 Years Later

In The Dark & Radio Atlas Present: Words from Inside (St Maur Prison) by René Farabet

Tomorrow's Thoughts Today: Hello, City!

"The Saturday night party had great energy, music and everyone was talking about the films they'd seen."

– INDUSTRY DELEGATE

"Winter Soldier at Open CIty Docs was mindblowing. What an indictment of a culture of too much respect for military and masculinity. Nothing has changed in 47 years!"

– CHARLIE PHILLIPS

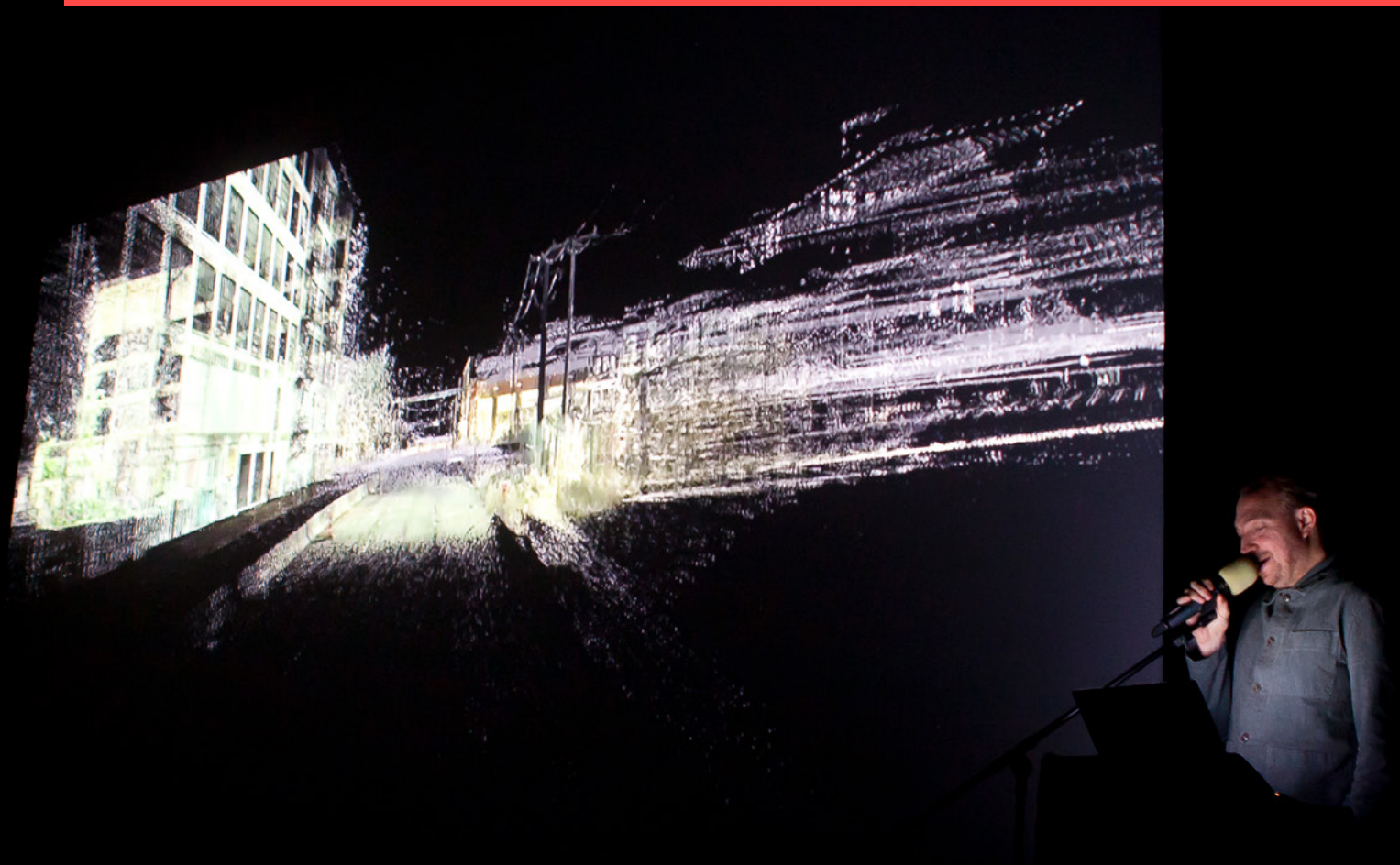
"A ride in an autonomous taxi through a speculative future city via a lecture-cum-film performance, Hello, City! is surely one of the more immediately eye-catching prospects at this year's Open City Documentary Festival."

– MUBI NOTEBOOK

"Winter Soldier was among the most affecting works of political cinema I've ever seen. I'm still thinking about it weeks after the screening."

– PATRICK HURLEY

Special Events



Industry Programme

Continuing to build from previous years, the festival's industry programme offered 32 events across five days including masterclasses, panel discussions and workshops exploring storytelling across all documentary forms.

Masterclasses were presented by Kazuo Hara on his unique approach to 'action documentary', Sierra Pettengill on reinvigorating archival filmmaking, Tadhg O'Sullivan on working across disciplines and Iris Ng on her work as a cinematographer.

Other sessions included discussions of The Ethics of Seeing, The Reality of the Market, The Personal Lens, The Trajectory of Memory and Film in Place. The festival also featured a day of talks focused on audio documentary and an Expanded Realities Symposium exploring the relationship between art and tech. The Industry Bootcamp sessions returned with three sessions aimed at new graduates and film students covering How to Get Commissioned, Working in Production and Surviving as a Freelance Filmmaker.

Across the programme there were nearly 80 speakers from the UK and international industry sharing their insights and experience.

Industry Programme

Industry Delegates

The eighth edition of the festival saw a 30% increase in Industry Delegates attending the festival with over 54% of delegates working in independent film production and a third of delegates attending as students.

Alongside the film and industry programmes, delegates were given access to a number of networking opportunities including surgeries with industry decision makers and daily happy hour networking.

55% of delegates had not attended the festival before but over 90% would attend again in the future.

"Impressive, a good mix of old and new ideas of how to work across the industry."

– INDUSTRY DELEGATE

"The talk by Iris Ng was a highlight for me, getting to see how a cinematographer gets engaged with film making process beyond the technical aspects."

– INDUSTRY DELEGATE

"I really enjoyed the atmosphere this year and the location of events. Thanks for all of your hard work."

– INDUSTRY DELEGATE

"Had some fantastic Happy Hour conversations as it was much easier to speak to the filmmakers than at larger festivals. Masterclasses were all inspiring with excellent panels."

– INDUSTRY DELEGATE

Industry Delegates

Industry Pitches

As part of the industry programme, Open City Documentary Festival hosted two live pitches in 2018 at the Festival Hub.

Border Crossings

A combined £7.5k development funding initiative aimed at bringing together filmmakers and academic researchers to support new and innovative documentary projects. Six shortlisted teams pitched to a panel of judges with two final winners - £5,000 for first prize and £2,500 for runner up).

The Whickers RAFA Pitch

The Whickers Radio and Audio Funding Award (RAFA) provided a crucial opportunity for emerging producers to secure the funding they need to make their projects a reality with £7,000 for first prize and £3,000 for runner up. Finalists travelled from Chicago, New Delhi, Toronto and the UK to pitch to the expert judging panel.

Expanded Realities Exhibition

This year's cross-media programme, Expanded Realities, included both a symposium and exhibition of works. The exhibition was free and open to the public for the duration of the festival offering a chance to engage with the three thematic strands; Sonic, Motion and a New Lens. There were 17 projects included in the exhibition reimagining the idea of non-fiction with a focus on experimentation.

"Amazing selection and quality - really diverse, some very unexpected programmes - Manic VR, and the Utopian Future House in particular"

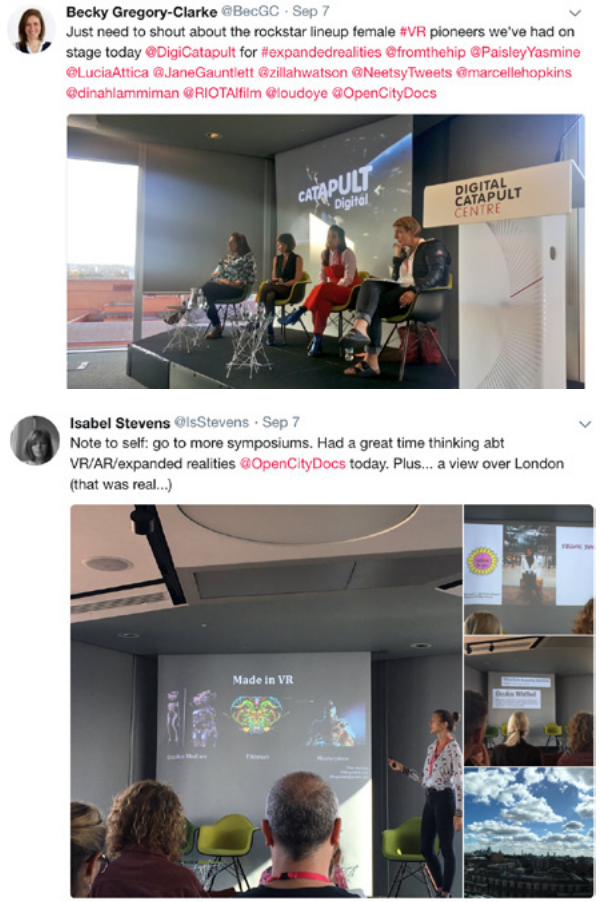
– AUDIENCE MEMBER

"Can't stop thinking about Paula Strunden's amazing #MicroUtopia from @OpenCityDocs. Unfolding gigantic places from tiny places is definitely something #VR is good for (+ petting virtual cats)."

– DAVID GREEN

89 likes

virtuallyfifer Thank you @opencitydocs for expanding my reality 🚀 loved this location based VR experience Micro-Utopia matching sensual real world textures with ethereal virtual architecture with a splash of pass through magic at the end. #virtualreality #htcvive #opencitydocs



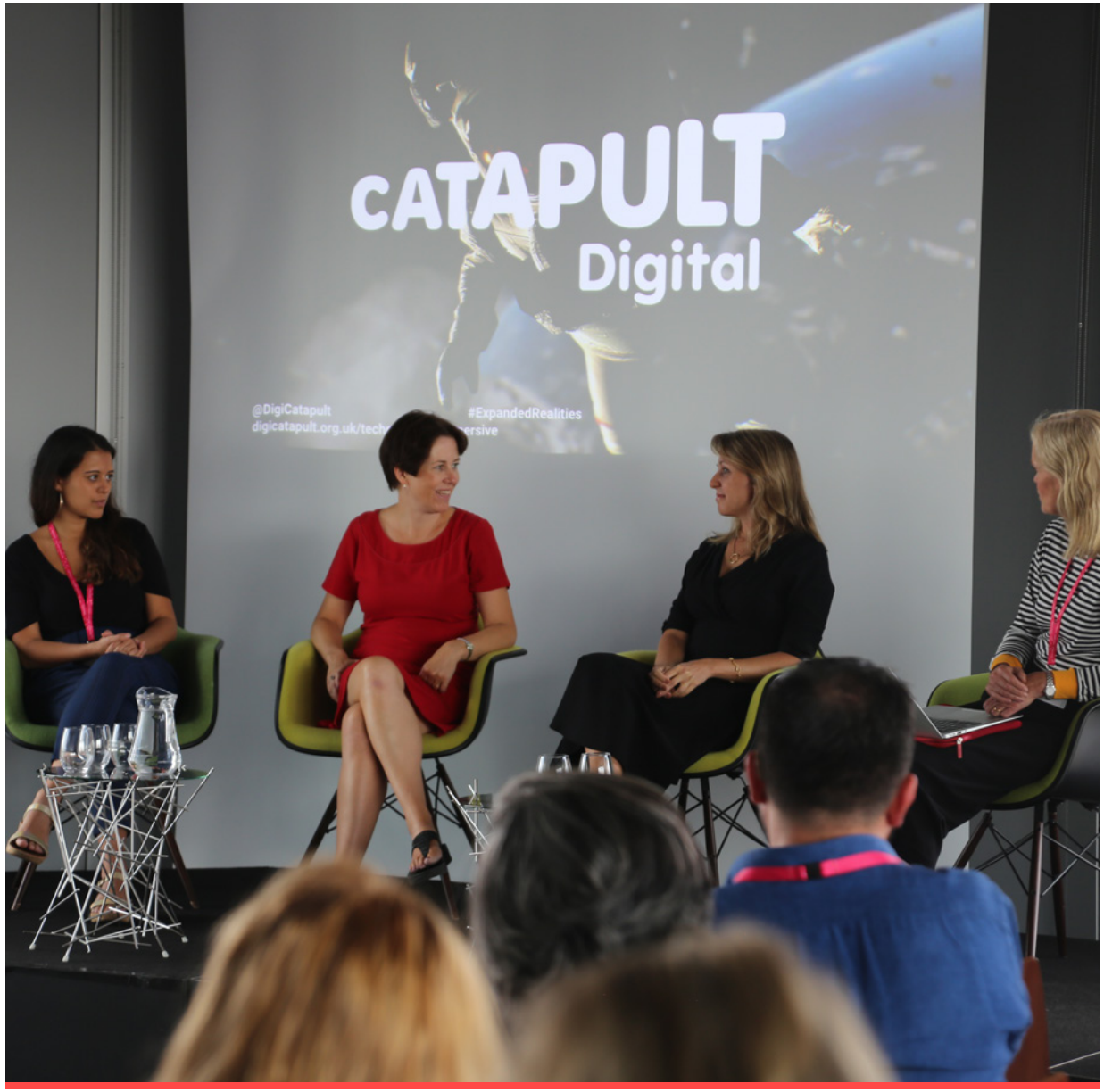
Expanded Realities Exhibition

Expanded Realities Symposium

The Expanded Realities Symposium took place at Digital Catapult and was sold out weeks in advance of the event. Sessions included a masterclass from Fifer Garbesi on the future of VR tools, presentations from creators and researchers and discussions on the Future of Journalism and Accessibility in XR. Speakers came from around the world including the US, Canada and South Africa.

"Note to self: go to more symposiums. Had a great time thinking abt VR/AR/expanded realities @OpenCityDocs today"

– ISABEL STEVENS



Guests

In 2018, the festival committed to bringing as many filmmakers as possible to present their work to audiences in London. This resulted in over 93% of screenings at the festival having a filmmaker present for a Q&A. We also supported seven international shorts filmmakers to attend their screenings at the festival alongside the UK filmmakers. Filmmakers visited the festival from 15 countries including Russia, China, Brazil, Japan, Croatia, Kenya and Canada.

"Congrats for putting up this great, growing but still intimate festival and for having me being part of it!"

- VINCENT FORSTER

Guests
Peter Mettler
Robin Asher
Chase Whiteside
Luciano Barisone
Neary Adeline Hay
Beata Bubenec
Gustavo Vinagre
Jaime Taylor
Yosa Boerman

Awards

Each year, the festival presents three awards; the Open City Award, the Emerging International Filmmaker Award and Best UK Short Award (supported by British Council). Each award is decided by a jury of key figures in the world of documentary.

Open City Jury

Sophie Fiennes (Chair) – Filmmaker
Nelly Ben Hayoun – Designer & Filmmaker
Beatrice Gibson – Artist & Filmmaker
Mehelli Modi – Second Run DVD
May Adadol Ingawanij – Moving Image Theorist, Teacher & Curator.

Emerging International Filmmaker Jury

Tessa Boerman (Chair) – Filmmaker, Curator & Cultural Advisor
Luciano Barisone – Curator
Tadhg O'Sullivan – Filmmaker
Chiara Marañón – MUBI
Cecile Emeke – Filmmaker

UK Short Award Jury

Stephanie Spray (Chair) – Filmmaker
Laure Bonville – Programmer
Amar Ediriwira – Boiler Room
Lynn Nwokorie – DocSociety
Julia Nottingham – Producer

Awards

2018 Winners

Open City Award:

Flight of a Bullet
(Dir. Beata Bubenec)

Emerging International Filmmaker Award:

Angkar
(Dir. Neary Adeline Hay)

Best UK Short Award:

The Mess
(Dir. Dorothy Allen-Pickard)

Press

The 2018 festival received press coverage in outlets including: BFI Sight & Sound, Filmmaker Magazine, MUBI Notebook, The Economist, The Guardian, The Times Literary Supplement, Politico, Huck Magazine and Hero Magazine, as well as features on BBC Radio London, BBC World Service, London Live and more.

"This year's OCDF did not disappoint when it came to showcasing a nonfiction lineup filled with under-the-radar artistry and long lost gems."

– FILMMAKER MAGAZINE

"Documentaries that transport you across the world, from Brazil to Greece to the UK,exploring stories that are heartbreaking, gripping and empowering, the Open City Documentary Festival has it all."

– 5 THINGS TO DO TODAY

"Open City holds a unique space in the festival calendar, celebrating "the art of non-fiction" and challenging preconceived ideas of what a documentary can look and feel like."

– HUCK MAGAZINE

"From the favelas of Brazil to political upheaval in Greece, the eighth Open City Documentary Festival in London shines a critical spotlight on untold stories from around the world"

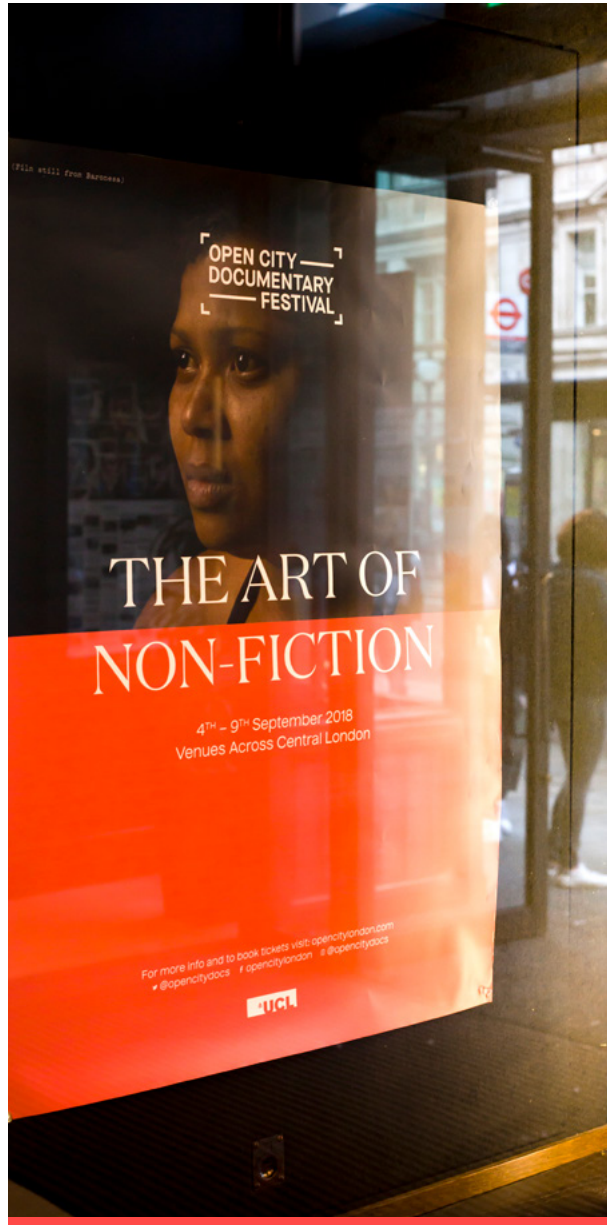
– THE CULTURE TRIP

"The excellent Open City documentary festival runs in early September in London and is well worth a visit."

– THE GUARDIAN

Open City Documentary Festival "is a celebration of emerging directors, global voices and bodies of work deservedly resurrected from archives"

– DISPATCH FEMINIST MOVING IMAGE



2019 Festival

The 2019 edition of Open City Documentary Festival will take place between 4th - 10th September at Central London venues.

If you would like to get involved, please contact Chloe Trayner at: chloe@opencitylondon.com