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#### **Queer stars straight from the Berlinale. Documentaries about Peaches and Jürgen Baldiga in two of the 64th Krakow Film Festival competitions**

##### **He'd be attending her concerts, and she'd probably end up being one of his muses. Strong, uncompromising artistic personalities, who have found their place to live, love, and create in Berlin's underground scene. The legendary, controversial vocalist Peaches and the provocative chronicler of Berlin's nooks and crannies, Jürgen Baldiga, are the subjects of two films showcased at the ongoing festival in Berlin, which will appear in two competitions at the Krakow Film Festival in late May.**

*We have two excellent German queer documentaries ahead of us, bringing unconventional artists closely associated with Berlin to the forefront. In the DocFilmMusic competition, we will present Teaches of Peaches, a dynamic portrait of the Canadian singer and performer, a feminist and LGBT+ icon, filmed during her anniversary tour of the same name. Meanwhile, in the film Baldiga – Unlocked Heart, Markus Stein tells the story of a young photographer and poet, a chronicler of the gay subculture in the AIDS era, using his rich body of work – comments* **Anita Piotrowska**, film critic, curator of the documentary section of the Krakow Film Festival.

Such bold, scandalous figures couldn't afford sanitized portraits. Both ***Teaches of Peaches*** (dir. Philipp Fussenegger, Judy Landkammer) – invited to the international DocFilmMusic competition – and a contender in the international documentary competition, ***Baldiga – Unlocked Heart*** (dir. Markus Stein), are strong, provocative propositions aimed at adult audiences. Both titles can be found in the prestigious Panorama Dokumente section at this year's Berlinale.

**Penises**

A 19-year-old Jürgen Baldiga, hailing from the industrial Essen, moved to Berlin in the late 1970s. As a young gay man, he took on various odd jobs to make a living in the capital, including prostitution, from which he derived the most pleasure. This way, he quickly gets into the artistic-queer community, where, thanks to his sensitivity, he easily finds his place not only as a muse and lover but also as a budding poet. The spirit of freedom and social liberation is soon clouded by the spectre of a deadly disease. The protagonist of ***Baldiga – Unlocked Heart***, like many of his friends, acquaintances, and lovers, becomes infected with HIV. The passing of loved ones, the shadow of his own death, and the daily struggles with the disease become an impetus for him to expand his creative activities. Baldiga becomes a chronicler of the nooks and crannies of West Berlin. He no longer just writes avant-garde poetry and journals but – first and foremost – he photographs. He's a liberated man of the streets, who eagerly ventures into places rarely visited by affluent residents of the capital. There are no taboos for him. He boldly portrays minorities, his queer friends, and drag stars, whom he affectionately calls queens. His camera accompanies him on a journey across the ocean with his beloved partner Ulf.

The director of the documentary opted to use uncensored materials. Artistic, yet quite vulgar photographs depicting numerous male members or stark images of diseased bodies, are complemented by subtle stagings that would make Derek Jarman proud. The voiceover, largely consisting of excerpts from Baldiga's journals, constitutes an important element of the film. Although Markus Stein focuses on the protagonist's transgressive output and sexual insatiability, this story is not devoid of longing and tenderness, especially in the words of his loved ones.

**Vaginas**

The musical documentary by Philipp Fussenegger and Judy Landkammer could carry the cheeky subtitle: From a young, committed preschool teacher with a guitar to a mature, liberated LGBTQIA+ icon with a microphone.

It's been over 20 years since the release of the cult album *The Teaches of Peaches*. The Canadian singer decides to embark on an anniversary tour. She is accompanied by her band, loving partner, and the creators of the documentary. However, just as Peaches' concerts are much more than ordinary performances, so does the film ***Teaches of Peaches*** go beyond just a recording of preparations for the event; it is more of an emancipatory journey through the years of the controversial protagonist's creative and activist path. An incredibly interesting portrait of a committed artist and stage provocateur emerges from the statements of Peaches, her close friends (the singer Feist was one of her roommates), as well as former and current collaborators. And thanks to numerous archival recordings, we get a unique documentary of a certain era in independent music.

The artist has been controversial from the very beginning, eluding simple genre and gender qualifications. Few people know that this feisty and sexually liberated performer started as a preschool teacher. Strumming the guitar to a group of little kids quickly became insufficient for her. Along with friends, she formed a band with the explicit name The Shit and began looking for a place for herself in the industry and the world (hence, among other things, her emigration to Berlin). Clad in skimpy costumes, she boldly presented her intimate hair while ambiguously thrusting in offbeat music videos. Deviating in image and beauty from the popular vocalists of the time, she quickly became a feminist star.

The titular concert tour confronts the image of a young provocateur with that of a 50-year-old mature woman who breaks further taboos, appearing on stage with a naked chest and only in panties or with a head covering resembling a vagina. And she does all of this in front of a passionate audience, chanting her powerful lyrics alongside much younger members of the rainbow band, thereby proving that the title of a queer icon still belongs to her

Passes for the 64th Krakow Film Festival [are on sale now!](https://www.krakowfilmfestival.pl/en/63rd-kff/gift-voucher-kff/)

The Krakow Film Festival is on the exclusive list of qualifying events for the Oscars® in the categories of short film (live action, animated, documentary) and documentary feature, as well as a recommending event for the [European Film Awards](https://europeanfilmawards.eu/?p=1) in the same categories.

The 64th Krakow Film Festival will be held in cinemas from 26 May to 2 June 2024 and on KFF VOD from 31 May to 16 June 2024.