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HOT DOCS WELCOMES 2026 FESTIVAL PROGRAMMING TEAM AND NEW CINEMA PROGRAMMER

2026 HOT DOCS FESTIVAL TO TAKE PLACE APRIL 23 TO MAY 3, PACKAGES NOW ON SALE

Toronto, Canada – Hot Docs is excited to share the team of programmers that will shape the 33rd edition of the Hot Docs Festival, taking place April 23 to May 3, 2026, in Toronto. In addition, Hot Docs is delighted to welcome its new lead programmer for year-round programming at Hot Docs Cinema. Festival Packages for the 2026 Hot Docs Festival are now on sale. For more information and to purchase, visit hotdocs.ca

In August, **Gabor Pertic** was named **Lead Programmer for Hot Docs Festival**. A long-standing member of the Hot Docs programming department, Pertic brings a strong curatorial instinct, most recently demonstrated with the Doc Soup opening night selection of *The Librarians* (D: Kim A. Snyder, USA, 2025), which sold out the 650-seat Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. He will guide the curation of the annual Festival, as well as the organization's long-running Doc Soup monthly screening series.

In addition to her role as International Features Programmer for the 2026 Hot Docs Festival, **Vivian Belik** leads year-round programming as **Lead Programmer, Hot Docs Cinema**.

The 2026 Hot Docs Festival programming team includes International Features Programmers Vivian Belik, Simone Estrin, Gugi Gumilang and Carmen Thompson. Alex Rogalski will serve as Senior Canadian Programmer, and Aisha Jamal as both International Features Programmer and Canadian Programmer. Mariam Zaidi will serve as Senior International Shorts Programmer and Canadian Programmer, and Rolla Tahir as International Shorts Programmer.

"With our festival programming team in place and a strong programming vision in action for our cinema, Hot Docs is thoughtfully preparing to give Toronto audiences something truly special," says Diana Sanchez, Executive Director, Hot Docs. "The community here in Toronto is full of film lovers and professionals, many of whom have supported this organization over the years, and many who have not yet experienced what we have to offer. I'm excited by the potential for us to reach both, and today, we have a passionate team leading the way to help us do just that."

Gabor Pertic is a Toronto-based film programmer and University of Toronto Cinema Studies alumnus. He began his career as a film critic before moving into festival programming, later joining the programming department at TIFF and serving as Executive Director of the Breakthroughs Film Festival. He further adds international perspective through his programming work with the Reykjavík International Film Festival.

Vivian Belik is a programmer, writer and producer, who has curated and juried works for film institutions across Canada and abroad including TIFF, the National Screen Institute, DA Films, Available Light Film Festival and Gimli Film Festival.

Film submissions are still being accepted for the 2026 Festival. The regular deadline for submissions is December 4, 2025, and the late deadline is January 6, 2026.

Hot Docs Industry Registration will open on November 26, 2025.

For more information on Hot Docs, visit hotdocs.ca

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Hot Docs (www.hotdocs.ca), North America's leading documentary festival, conference and market, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing and celebrating the art of documentary and to creating production opportunities for documentary filmmakers. Hot Docs will present its 33rd Hot Docs Festival April 23 to May 3, 2026, in Toronto. Festival Packages are now on sale at hotdocs.ca. Since its inception in 1993, Hot Docs has supported the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and production fund portfolio, including the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund, CrossCurrents Doc Funds, Hot Docs-Slaight Family Fund, Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund and Hot Docs Partners, and valuable professional development programs, including Doc Ignite and Hot Docs Incubator.

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