

## HOT DOCS 2023 CANADIAN SPECTRUM TO PREMIERE NEW WORKS BY CANADIAN DIRECTORS FOR FEST'S 30TH EDITION

Toronto, March 28, 2023 – Hot Docs is pleased to present 12 feature documentaries, 1 mid-length, and 13 shorts that will screen at this year's Festival as part of the 2023 **Canadian Spectrum**, a competitive program showcasing the work of Canadian directors. The 2023 Hot Docs Festival, this year celebrating its 30th anniversary, will take place April 27 to May 7 in Toronto.

This year's 30<sup>th</sup>-anniversary edition of the Canadian Spectrum program includes the world premieres of ***Cynara***, the gripping story of Canada's justice system on trial; ***I'm Just Here for The Riot***, a look into the world's "first smartphone riot" after the Vancouver Canucks lost the 2011 Stanley Cup final; ***July Talk: Love Lives Here***, in which the hard-touring band aims to bounce back from live music shutdowns caused by the global pandemic by booking a drive-in theatre; ***Silvicola***, exploring the human impact on forests through breathtaking vistas and poignant vignettes set in Canada's Pacific Northwest; ***Someone Lives Here***, the story of a young Toronto carpenter building life-saving shelters for unhoused people facing the winter outside during the pandemic, while also facing staunch opposition from the city government; ***Subterranean***, in which two gritty teams of hobbyist cavers are poised to discover the longest and deepest caves in Canada; and ***Upstream***, a hybrid meditation on homecoming in which the filmmaker revisits childhood friends in Northern China's rustbelt.

North American premieres include ***Caiti Blues***, in which an ex-New Yorker now living in a remote hippie town in New Mexico struggles to revive her dreams of singing on Broadway; and ***Má Sàì Gòn (Mother Saigon)***, a mosaic of intimate portraits of the city's diverse LGBTQ+ community and its dynamic character.

Receiving their Ontario premiere are ***I Lost My Mom***, an empathetic and intimate doc in which filmmaker Denys Desjardins captures his elderly mother's experience of neglect in Quebec's healthcare system; ***Undertaker for Life!***, a philosophical journey through our inevitable mortality and a behind the scenes look at the daily work of morticians and funeral directors; and ***Veranada***, in which a tenacious gaucho travels the Andes by horseback seeking greener grasslands to feed his herd.

The full lineup of 2023 Canadian Spectrum films appear below with screening information.

The Canadian Spectrum is sponsored by TVO.

All feature-length titles in this program are eligible to win the Best Canadian Feature Documentary Award, the DGC Special Jury Prize - Canadian Feature Documentary Award, and the two new awards introduced this year—the Bill Nemtin Award for Best Social Impact Documentary and the John Kastner Award. Directors in the Canadian Spectrum program with fewer than two previous feature film credits are also eligible to win the Earl A. Glick Emerging Canadian Filmmaker Award.

Screening times and descriptions for the Canadian Spectrum program appear below. In many cases, filmmakers will be in attendance for post-screening discussions. For more information on the program please visit [www.hotdocs.ca/whats-on](http://www.hotdocs.ca/whats-on).

**AITAMAAKO'TAMISSKAPI NATOSI: BEFORE THE SUN**

D: Banchi Hanuse | P: Mike Wavrecan | Canada | 2022 | 89 min | Canadian Premiere  
A young Siksika woman vaults between horses as an Indian Relay rider in North America's original extreme sport. With family support, she's a champion in the making, but victory is an uphill battle in this male-dominated arena.

*Screening with*

**THE SCISSORS**

D: Katia Kurtness | P: Wapikoni mobile | Canada | 2022 | 3 min | Ontario Premiere

Saturday, April 29, 2:30 PM - SCOTIA 7

Wednesday, May 3, 3:00 PM - TBLB2

**CAITI BLUES**

D: Justine Harbonnier | P: Nellie Carrier, Julie Paratian | Canada, France | 2023 | 84 min  
| North American Premiere

Thirty-year-old Caiti spent her childhood in New York dreaming of singing on Broadway. Having been on the cusp of success, she now finds herself living in a remote hippie town in New Mexico struggling to revive her American Dream.

Monday, May 1, 5:30 PM - SCOTIA 5

Friday, May 5, 12:00 PM - SCOTIA 7

**CYNARA**

D: Sherien Barsoum | P: Bryn Hughes, Sherien Barsoum | Canada | 2022 | 88 min | World  
Premiere

After a break-in, a mother calls 911 seeking help for her disabled daughter, Cynara. Hours later, Cynara is dead, and her mother is the prime suspect in this gripping story of Canada's justice system on trial.

Sunday, April 30, 1:45 PM - Isabel Bader

Thursday, May 4, 5:00 PM - SCOTIA 7

**I'M JUST HERE FOR THE RIOT**

D: Kathleen Jayme, Asia Youngman | P: Michael Grand, James Brown | Canada | 2023 | 78 min  
| World Premiere

When the Vancouver Canucks lost the 2011 Stanley Cup final it incited the world's "first smartphone riot." Key participants confront the aftermath of what was the beginning of the toxic social media mob mentality that continues to resonate today.

*Screening with*

**SKYLINE**

D: JR Reid | P: Ivy Knight, JR Reid, Yvonne Tsui | Canada | 2022 | 7 min | World Premiere

Sunday, April 30, 6:30 PM - TBLB1

Thursday, May 4, 2:00 PM - SCOTIA 7

**I LOST MY MOM**

D: Denys Desjardins | P: Denys Desjardins | Canada | 2022 | 75 min | Ontario Premiere

With an empathetic and intimate lens, veteran filmmaker Denys Desjardins captures his elderly mother's experience of neglect in Quebec's healthcare system and his sister's fight to secure her an acceptable long-term care solution.

*Screening with*

**MADELEINE**

D: Raquel Sancinetti | P: Raquel Sancinetti | Canada | 2023 | 15 min | Ontario Premiere

Tuesday, May 2, 5:15 PM - TBLB4

Friday, May 5, 2:30 PM - SCOTIA 5

**JULY TALK: LOVE LIVES HERE**

D: Brittany Farhat | P: Peter Dreimanis, Leah Fay Goldstein | Canada | 2023 | 83 min | World Premiere

Grappling with a global pandemic and a live music shutdown, hard-touring band July Talk books a drive-in theatre and prepares for a massive concert brimming with professional and personal risks. Out of the crisis comes magic.

Wednesday, May 3, 8:30 PM - Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

Friday, May 5, 9:00 PM - TBLB2

**MÁ SÀI GÒN (MOTHER SAIGON)**

D: Khoa Lê | P: Khoa Lê | Canada | 2023 | 100 min | North American Premiere

A city as liberating as it is oppressive for its diverse LGBTQ+ community, this ode to Saigon interweaves a mosaic of intimate portraits while exploring the city's dynamic character.

Tuesday, May 2, 8:45 PM - TBLB3

Friday, May 5, 2:45 PM - TBLB4

## **SILVICOLA**

D: Jean-Philippe Marquis | P: Jean-Philippe Marquis | Canada | 2023 | 80 min | World Premiere  
The human impact on forests is explored through breathtaking vistas and poignant vignettes set in Canada's Pacific Northwest. Those who rely on this precious resource highlight the tensions and dilemmas between commodification and conservation.

*Screening with*

## **POMOLOGICAL**

D: Sebastian Ko | P: Sebastian Ko | Canada | 2022 | 6 min | World Premiere

Friday, April 28, 5:45 PM - SCOTIA 7

Wednesday, May 3, 12:15 PM - TBLB2

## **SOMEONE LIVES HERE**

D: Zack Russell | P: Matt King, Andrew Ferguson | Canada | 2022 | 75 min | World Premiere  
During the pandemic, a young Toronto carpenter builds life-saving shelters for unhoused people facing the winter outside. His actions attract international acclaim but also staunch opposition from the city government.

Saturday, April 29, 5:30 PM - Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

Thursday, May 4, 4:15 PM - TBLB1

## **SUBTERRANEAN**

D: Francois-Xavier De Ruydts | P: Jenny Rustemeyer | Canada | 2023 | 90 min | World Premiere  
Digging far below the surface, two gritty teams of hobbyist cavers are poised to discover the longest and deepest caves in Canada. Risking life and limb, their curiosity is matched only by their courage to chart the unknown.

Saturday, April 29, 3:30 PM - TBLB1

Wednesday, May 3, 8:45 PM - TBLB2

## **UNDERTAKER FOR LIFE!**

D: Georges Hannan | P: Christine Aubé | Canada | 2022 | 52 min | Ontario Premiere  
With candour, compassion and a healthy dose of humour, an insightful group of morticians and funeral directors take us on a philosophical journey through our inevitable mortality and behind the scenes of their industry's daily routines.

*Screening with*

## **NICOLE**

D: Chadi Bennani | P: Romane Gagnon | Canada | 2023 | 23 min | Ontario Premiere

*and*

## **LAST RESPECTS**

D: Megan Durnford | P: Megan Durnford | Canada | 2023 | 7 min | World Premiere

*and*

## **ABOUT MEMORY AND LOSS**

D: Amélie Hardy | P: Isabelle Grignon-Francke | Canada | 2022 | 8 min | Ontario Premiere

Friday, April 28, 8:30 PM - SCOTIA 7

Monday, May 1, 2:30 PM - TBLB2

## **UPSTREAM**

D: Xin Liu | P: Tianyuan Jiang | Canada | 2022 | 71 min | World Premiere

In this hybrid meditation on homecoming, the filmmaker revisits childhood friends in Northern China's rustbelt, where dreams freeze like the river. Playing fictional versions of themselves, the camera captures them as they explore facets of their real lives.

Sunday, April 30, 5:30 PM - TBLB4

Friday, May 5, 12:00 PM - TBLB4

## **VERANADA**

D: Dominique Chaumont | P: Dominique Chaumont | Canada, Argentina | 2022 | 75 min | Ontario Premiere

Don Arturo is a tenacious gaucho who travels the Andes by horseback seeking greener grasslands to feed his herd while witnessing his community's fascinating, nomadic way of life starting to erode at the hands of climate change.

*Screening with*

## **FIELD NOTES**

D: Aisha Jamal | P: Aisha Jamal | Canada | 2023 | 10 min | World Premiere

Thursday, April 27, 8:45 PM - TBLB4

Sunday, April 30, 11:45 AM - SCOTIA 7

## **SHORTS PROGRAM: TIES THAT BIND**

Navigating uncertain times, resilient families use their courage, faith and defiance to face powerful and undermining forces in their lives.

## **WITNESS**

D: Yasmine Mathurin | P: Amar Wala, Soko Negash | Canada | 2023 | 17 min | World Premiere

## **FINDING ALAA**

D: Myriam Francois | P: Myriam Francois | Canada, UK | 2023 | 25 min | World Premiere

## **GRAPE SODA IN THE PARKING LOT**

D: Megan Kyak-Monteith, Taqralik Partridge | P: Christa Couture, Michelle St. John | Canada | 2023 | 8 min | North American Premiere

## **THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT**

D: Kelly O'Brien | P: Kelly O'Brien | Canada | 2022 | 8 min | World Premiere

## **CABBAGE**

D: Holly Marie Parnell | P: Holly Marie Parnell | Canada, Ireland, UK | 2023 | 28 min | Canadian Premiere

Tuesday, May 2, 1:15 PM - Isabel Bader

-30-

[Hot Docs \(www.hotdocs.ca\)](http://www.hotdocs.ca), North America's largest 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 30th annual edition from April 27 to May 7, 2023, in cinemas across Toronto, with a selection of films available online to audiences throughout Canada. Hot Docs will also mount a dynamic series of knowledge sessions, networking opportunities and market programs for documentary practitioners and industry delegates, including the renowned Hot Docs Forum, Hot Docs Deal Maker and The Doc Shop. In celebration of its 30th anniversary and a dedication to excellence in non-fiction storytelling, Hot Docs will present the Podcast Festival Showcase, featuring a slate of today's hottest podcasts live on stage; along with a dynamic line-up of industry panels and master classes featuring podcast game-changers. Year-round, Hot Docs supports the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar film fund portfolio, and fosters education through documentaries with its popular free program Docs For Schools. Hot Docs owns and programs the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, a century-old landmark located in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood and the world's first and largest documentary cinema, and operates Hot Docs at Home streaming platform.

Starting Tuesday, March 28, Festival ticket package holders, including Doc Soup subscribers, can redeem their ticket packages, and Hot Docs Members can purchase single tickets. Starting Tuesday, April 4, single tickets will be available to the public. Tickets and ticket packages can be purchased and/or redeemed online at [www.hotdocs.ca](http://www.hotdocs.ca) or in person at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema Box Office, located at 506 Bloor Street West (hours vary daily in accordance with screenings). Single tickets are \$19 to regular Festival screenings and \$22 to Special Presentations screenings (\$17-19 members). Special events vary in price. A Festival 12-Pack is \$199 and a Festival 20-Pack is \$279. Hot Docs offers free tickets for all

screenings before 5:00 p.m. to those 60+ and students with valid photo I.D., available online the day of the screening, subject to availability. Free screenings for students courtesy of CBC and CBC Gem.

Hot Docs is proud to include Scotia Wealth Management as its Presenting Platinum Partner; Rogers Group of Funds as its Founding Partner; CBC as its Signature Partner; Netflix as its Presenting Partner; and Telefilm Canada, the City of Toronto and the Government of Ontario as its Major Supporters.

**FILM STILLS AVAILABLE**

Media Download Site: <https://downloads.hotdocs.ca/downloads>

Password: HD23Media

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