

## HOT DOCS 2023 INTERNATIONAL SPECTRUM COMPETITIVE PROGRAM REFLECTS A CHANGED NEW WORLD

Toronto, March 28, 2023 – Hot Docs is pleased to present 10 feature films and one short that will screen at this year’s Festival as part of the 2023 **International Spectrum**, a program showcasing captivating stories told through unique perspectives from around the world. The 2023 Hot Docs Festival, this year celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, will take place April 27 to May 7 in Toronto.

“Hot Docs’ International Spectrum program is always the place for doc lovers to discover exciting new voices and compelling works by outstanding filmmakers from around the world, and this year is certainly no exception,” said **Shane Smith**, Hot Docs artistic director. “Thirteen countries are represented in this year’s program, and our audiences will be amongst the first see these films, one of which will receive the Best International Feature Documentary Award in this, the Festival’s 30<sup>th</sup> year.”

The 2023 edition of the International Spectrum program includes the world premieres of ***The Last Relic***, a darkly compelling portrait of Putin’s “modern” Russia shot over the course of four years, and ***A Wolfpack Called Ernesto***, in which world-renowned Mexican filmmaker Everardo González brings us inside the chilling world of an amalgam of various teenage boys who have chosen a life of organized crime.

International premieres include ***Angel Applicant***, an exploration of Swiss-German artist Paul Klee, who died from a rare autoimmune disease, systemic scleroderma, a diagnosis shared by the filmmaker; ***Hong Kong Mixtape***, in which the filmmaker joins an underground movement of Asian artists following the Chinese government’s imposition of laws that silence freedom of expression; ***The Mountains***, which uses 75,000 photos and 30 years of home videos to weave a tender and humorous autobiographical portrait of the men in a Scandinavian family struck by devastating tragedy; ***Name Me Lawand***, in which a young deaf Kurdish boy joyfully hones his communication skills at a UK school after a treacherous journey from Iraq, only to later face deportation from his new home; ***Pure Unknown***, the story of a doctor who makes it her life’s work to identify and reunite deceased refugees with their families amidst a seemingly endless stream of bodies pouring into autopsy rooms along the Mediterranean; ***Revir – Everything You Hold Dear***, a portrait of taxidermist siblings Susie and Sune who live together in a tense still life of co-dependency following a neglectful upbringing; and ***You Were My First Boyfriend***, a hybrid documentary in which the director meticulously re-stages some of her most traumatic high school memories using actors and elaborate sets in an effort to make peace with her present.

International Spectrum will also see the North American premiere of ***Al Djanat, The Original Paradise***, in which the death of a Burkinabé family’s patriarch and the division of his estate unearths conflict between his heirs and communal customs of West Africa versus Westernized courts. The full lineup of 2023 International Spectrum films appear below with screening information.

The International Spectrum program is supported by the Donner Canadian Foundation.

All feature-length titles in the program are eligible for the Best International Feature Documentary Award and the Special Jury Prize – International Feature Documentary. Emerging directors in the International Spectrum with two or fewer previous feature film credits are also eligible for the Emerging International Filmmaker Award.

Hot Docs is an Academy Award® qualifying festival for feature documentaries. The recipient of Hot Docs' Best International Feature Documentary Award will qualify for consideration in the Documentary Feature Subject category of the Annual Academy Awards® without the standard theatrical run, provided the film otherwise complies with the Academy rules.

Screening times and descriptions for films in the International 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).

#### **AL DJANAT, THE ORIGINAL PARADISE**

D: Chloé Aïcha Boro | P: Frédéric Féraud, Chloé Aïcha Boro, Faissol Gnonlonfin, Bärbel Mauch | France, Burkina Faso, Benin, Germany | 2023 | 83 min | North American Premiere

The death of a Burkinabé family's patriarch and the division of his estate unearths conflict between his heirs and larger questions about inheritance, belonging and the communal customs of West Africa versus Westernized courts.

Monday, May 1, 5:15 PM - SCOTIA 6

Sunday, May 7, 12:15 PM - TBLB4

#### **ANGEL APPLICANT**

D: Ken A. Meyer | P: Ken A. Meyer, Jason Roark | USA | 2023 | 74 min | International Premiere  
Swiss-German artist Paul Klee died from a rare autoimmune disease, systemic scleroderma, a diagnosis shared by the filmmaker. Through Klee's expressive work, the filmmaker finds unexpected parallels and powerful messages about mortality, creativity and making the most out of life.

*Screening with*

#### **THE BLAKE**

D: Courtney Sposato, Mark Sposato | P: Courtney Sposato | USA | 2022 | 15 min | International Premiere

Sunday, April 30, 3:30 PM - TBLB1

Friday, May 5, 5:45 PM - SCOTIA 7

#### **HONG KONG MIXTAPE**

D: San San F Young | P: Nikki Parrott, San San F Young | UK | 2023 | 87 min | International Premiere

When the Chinese government imposes a law on Hong Kong that silences freedom of expression, a filmmaker joins with underground Asian artists to preserve and celebrate their culture, life and creativity amidst authoritarian rule.

Monday, May 1, 9:15 PM - TBLB1

Friday, May 5, 8:30 PM - SCOTIA 7

## **THE LAST RELIC**

D: Marianna Kaat | P: Marianna Kaat, Mette Cheng Munthe-Kaas, Tobin Auber | Estonia, Norway | 2023  
| 104 min | World Premiere

Yekaterinburg, Russia, is a microcosm of absurdity: debutante balls and Tsar Nicholas tributes cling to an imperial past, while a handful of dissidents try to revive communist and constitutional myths. Shot over four years, careful cameras reveal Putin's "modern" Russia.

Saturday, April 29, 5:00 PM - SCOTIA 6

Tuesday, May 2, 11:45 AM - TBLB2

## **THE MOUNTAINS**

D: Christian Einshøj | P: Mathilde Hvid Lippmann | Denmark | 2023 | 87 min | International Premiere

In this tender and humorous autobiographical portrait, 75,000 photographs, 30 years of home videos and a 1,000-mile Arctic Circle superhero road trip bridge the distance between the men in a Scandinavian family struck by devastating tragedy.

Thursday, April 27, 6:00 PM - TBLB4

Sunday, April 30, 12:00 PM - SCOTIA 5

## **NAME ME LAWAND**

D: Edward Lovelace | P: Fleur Nieddu, Sam Arnold, Beyan Taher, Neil Andrews, Marisa Clifford | UK | 2022 | 84 min | International Premiere

After a treacherous journey from Iraq, a young deaf Kurdish boy hones his communication skills at a UK school, joyfully discovering how to meaningfully express himself within his family and newfound community, only to later face deportation from his new home.

Monday, May 1, 5:45 PM - TBLB3

Thursday, May 4, 4:45 PM - TBLB3

## **PURE UNKNOWN**

D: Valentina Cicogna, Mattia Colombo | P: Sebastiano Luca Insinga, Chiara Nicoletti | Italy, Switzerland, Sweden | 2023 | 92 min | International Premiere

With bodies mounting in autopsy rooms along the Mediterranean, one doctor makes it her life's work to identify and reunite deceased refugees with their families, in this story of manufactured tragedy and our collective responsibility to human life.

Saturday, April 29, 8:00 PM - TBLB4

Wednesday, May 3, 11:00 AM - SCOTIA 6

## **REVIR – EVERYTHING YOU HOLD DEAR**

D: Peter Hammer | P: Vibeke Vogel | Denmark | 2023 | 83 min | International Premiere

After a neglectful upbringing, siblings Susie and Sune live together in a tense still life of co-dependency. Using taxidermy to make a living and move forward, can they work through their past and build a more forgiving and constructive relationship?

Monday, May 1, 8:30 PM - TBLB3

Thursday, May 4, 11:15 AM - SCOTIA 7

## **A WOLFPACK CALLED ERNESTO**

D: Everardo González | P: Roberto Garza, Inna Payán, Jean-Christophe Simon | Mexico, France | 2023 | 81 min | World Premiere

World-renowned Mexican filmmaker Everardo González brings us inside the chilling world of Ernesto, an amalgam of various teenage boys, who, in choosing a gun and a life of organized crime, becomes both victim and perpetrator.

Sunday, April 30, 5:30 PM - SCOTIA 7

Thursday, May 4, 2:15 PM - TBLB3

## **YOU WERE MY FIRST BOYFRIEND**

D: Cecilia Aldarondo, Sarah Enid Hagey | P: Ines Hofmann Kanna, Cecilia Aldarondo | USA | 2023 | 97 min | International Premiere

In this hybrid documentary, co-director Cecilia Aldarondo returns to her youth to meticulously re-stage some of her most traumatic high school memories. Through elaborate sets with actors, she relives the haunts of her past to make peace with her present.

Thursday, April 27, 6:15 PM - TBLB3

Sunday, April 30, 9:15 PM - TBLB1

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[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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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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