

**HOT DOCS WRAPS 25th EDITION WITH RECORD-BREAKING AUDIENCES OF 223,000 AND OVER \$272,000 IN CASH AND PRIZES AWARDED TO FESTIVAL FILMS AND FILMMAKERS**

*TRANSFORMER* WINS 50K ROGERS AUDIENCE AWARD FOR BEST CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY AND TOPS THE RANKINGS TO WIN HOT DOCS AUDIENCE AWARD

Toronto, May 7, 2018 – Hot Docs has wrapped its 25<sup>th</sup> edition with record-breaking audience numbers reaching an estimated 223,000. The 11-day event featured 471 public screenings of 247 films on 16 screens across Toronto, an internationally renowned conference and market for documentary professionals, and Docs For Schools, a phenomenally popular education program for youth. The Festival welcomed more than 300 guest filmmakers and subjects from across Canada and around the world to present their films and take part in special post-screening Q&A sessions with audiences. Official film selections were chosen from a record number of 3060 films submitted to the Festival.

“Thank you to all of the exceptionally talented filmmakers who helped us celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Festival this year,” said Brett Hendrie, Hot Docs’ executive director. “The stories you told captivated and inspired Festival audiences, further demonstrating the importance of documentary film and its ability to strengthen our connection to the people and world that surrounds us.”

At the Festival, Hot Docs presented the seventh edition of the Big Ideas Series, presented by Scotia Wealth Management, which featured screenings and live onstage discussions with prominent documentary subjects. DocX, an interdisciplinary section of the Festival celebrating documentary work that lives outside of the traditional format, ran an expanded program that featured 14 virtual reality and interactive exhibits, a video installation presented in partnership with the Goethe-Institut Toronto, and a special live performance. And the second edition of the Food & Film series, which provided in-depth conversations with special Festival guests and partners, was extremely popular with several sold-out events.

Last night at a special encore screening it was announced that the Rogers Audience Award for Best Canadian Documentary went to *Transformer*, with a \$50,000 cash prize, courtesy of Rogers Group of Funds, being given to director Michael Del Monte. And when audience votes were tallied after the final screening yesterday, it was determined that *Transformer* was also the winner of the Hot Docs Audience Award. The film tells the story of a father, ex-marine and world-record powerlifter facing a singular feat of strength: transitioning from male to female. With the Rogers Audience Award for Best Canadian Documentary, Hot Docs has awarded over \$272,000 in cash and prizes to films and filmmakers at this year’s Festival.

Also, in the audience poll, the top short documentary was *Prince’s Tale* (D: Jamie Miller; Canada), and the top mid-length was *Dreaming Murakami* (D: Nitesh Anjaan; Denmark). The top DocX project went to *Tree* (D: Milica Zec, Winslow Turner Porter III; USA).

The top 20 audience favourites as determined by audience vote are:

1. TRANSFORMER (D: Michael Del Monte; Canada)
2. THE ACCOUNTANT OF AUSCHWITZ (D: Matthew Shoychet; Canada)
3. WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR? (D: Morgan Neville; USA)
4. THE GAME CHANGERS (D: Louie Psihoyos; USA, Canada)
5. ON HER SHOULDERS (D: Alexandria Bombach; USA)

Hot Docs is a charitable, not-for-profit organization committed to advancing the art of documentary and supporting opportunities for independent filmmakers.

6. BATHTUBS OVER BROADWAY (D: Dava Whisenant; USA)
7. THE SILVER BRANCH (D: Katrina Costello; Ireland)
8. THE OSLO DIARIES (D: Mor Loushy, Daniel Sivan; Canada, Israel)
9. PICK OF THE LITTER (D: Dana Nachman, Don Hardy; USA)
10. THE SILENCE OF OTHERS (D: Almudena Carracedo, Robert Bahar; Spain)
11. UNITED SKATES (D: Dyana Winkler, Tina Brown; USA)
12. PRIMAS (D: Laura Bari; Canada, Argentina)
13. LETTER FROM MASANJIA (D: Leon Lee; Canada)
14. THIS MOUNTAIN LIFE (D: Grant Baldwin; Canada)
15. MR. SOUL! (D: Sam Pollard, Melissa Haizlip; USA)
16. LAILA AT THE BRIDGE (D: Elizabeth Mirzaei, Gulistan Mirzaei; Canada, Afghanistan)
17. THE GUARDIANS (D: Billie Mintz; Canada)
18. WARRIOR WOMEN (D: Christina D. King, Elizabeth A. Castle; USA)
19. PRINCE'S TALE (D: Jamie Miller; Canada)
20. GURRUMUL (D: Paul Damien Williams; Australia)

A full week of industry programming was attended by over 2698 delegates from around the world. Hot Docs mounted a roster of six workshops, 20 conference sessions, close to 15 networking events and parties, three Kickstart panels for emerging filmmakers, five micro-meetings, 18 Close Up With... sessions with broadcasters, the Doc Summit, and the Hot Docs Awards Presentation. Hot Docs also hosted 12 official delegations from Atlantic Canada, Bermuda, Chile, Europe, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, The Nordic Region, Northern Ireland, South Africa and the USA.

The Hot Docs Forum, Hot Docs' key international co-financing market event, Hot Docs Deal Maker, Hot Docs' one-on-one curated pitch event, and Distribution Rendezvous, Hot Docs' tailored meeting service for completed films seeking distribution, saw brisk pitching, networking and deal-making. In total, 21 projects— for which half of the producers and more than half of the directors attached were women—representing 20 countries were presented to a room of over 475 industry delegates including 220 key commissioning editors and funders at the Hot Docs Forum, and a total of 65 projects were pitched at approximately 800 meetings during Hot Docs Deal Maker.

Doc For Schools, Hot Docs' education program that runs during the Festival and offers free in-theatre and in-school screenings of select Festival films, saw an estimated 101,086 students participate in the program in 2018 from schools in Toronto and throughout Ontario.

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Hot Docs ([www.hotdocs.ca](http://www.hotdocs.ca)), North America's largest documentary festival, conference and market, presented its 25<sup>th</sup> annual edition from April 26-May 6, 2018. An outstanding selection of over 200 documentaries from Canada and around the world were presented to Toronto audiences and international delegates. Hot Docs also mounted a full roster of conference sessions and market events and services for documentary practitioners, including the renowned Hot Docs Forum, Hot Docs Deal Maker and the Doc Shop. Hot Docs owns the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, a century-old landmark located in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood.

**FILM STILLS AVAILABLE**

**Media Download Site:** <https://www.hotdocs.ca/download>

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

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