

HOT DOCS' INTERNATIONAL SPECTRUM COMPETITIVE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS STIRRING PERSONAL STORIES AND FASCINATING CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Toronto, March 23, 2021 – This year's International Spectrum program at Hot Docs features 10 feature films. Showcasing captivating stories told through unique perspectives from around the world, this year's slate of films represents themes that encompass mental health and care, human connection and resilience, hope for a better future, and shocking political intrigue and government corruption.

"New perspectives, surprising subjects and creative filmmaking are hallmarks of this year's International Spectrum program," said **Shane Smith**, director of programming for Hot Docs. "Featuring ten films and representing 13 countries, the stories presented are profound, poetic and insightful, and directed by remarkably talented filmmakers."

World premieres in the International Spectrum program include: *Any Given Day*, which looks at the stigma of mental illness through the stories of three defendants in a specialized mental health prison probation program; *Songs that Flood the River*, about a woman whose traditional chants she sang as a child have become a plea for peace in the brutal conflict along Colombia's Pacific coast; *Magaluf Ghost Town*, about a peaceful Spanish beach town that explodes with budget European holidaymakers every summer; *The Silence of the Mole*, a political thriller that unravels the mystery of a journalist who infiltrated Guatemala's government in the 1970s to expose the truths behind its violence and oppression; *Gaucha Americano*, a lighthearted tale of clashing cultures that see two Chilean gauchos pursuing their cowboy dreams on an Idaho ranch; and *Four Seasons in One Day*, where ferry passengers travelling between British-controlled Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland candidly express their opinions about Brexit and the border.

International premieres in the program include: *People We Come Across*, about good intentions gone awry when 700 Finnish volunteers travel to West Africa to help with a vaccine study; *Ostrov – Lost Island*, about the denizens of a once-vibrant fishing island in the Caspian Sea, whose elders await Russia's return to greatness while the younger generation hopes for a new future; *School of Hope*, in which Morocco's Oulad Boukais tribe, suffering from extended drought, sets up a school in a small clay building to ensure their children's futures; and *Threshold*, a compassionate look at the filmmaker's adolescent son's gender transition and search for identity over three years.

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 Filmmaker Award.

Hot Docs has been selected as 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.

Films in the International Spectrum program are listed below. For more information about the program please visit www.hotdocs.ca/internationalspectrum.

ANY GIVEN DAY

D: Margaret Byrne | P: Margaret Byrne | USA | 2021 | 93 min | World Premiere

FOUR SEASONS IN ONE DAY

D: Annabel Verbeke | P: Frederik Nicolai, Eric Goossens, Karl-Emil Rikardsen, Ljubo Zdjelarević, Lukas Trimonis | Belgium, Norway, Croatia | 2021 | 77 min | World Premiere

GAUCHO AMERICANO

D: Nicolás Molina | P: Joséphine Schroeder | Chile | 2021 | 75 min | World Premiere

MAGALUF GHOST TOWN

D: Miguel Ángel Blanca | P: Bernat Manzano, Valérie Montmartin, Miguel Eek | Spain, France | 2021 | 90 min | World Premiere

OSTROV – LOST ISLAND

D: Svetlana Rodina, Laurent Stoop | P: Corinna Dästner, Sonja Kilbertus, Urs Schnell | Switzerland | 2021 | 91 min | International Premiere

PEOPLE WE COME ACROSS

D: Mia Halme | P: Marianne Mäkelä | Finland | 2021 | 79 min | International Premiere

SCHOOL OF HOPE

D: Mohamed El Aboudi | P: Pertti Veijalainen | Finland, France, Morocco | 2020 | 78 min | International Premiere

THE SILENCE OF THE MOLE

D: Anaïs Taracena | P: Anaïs Taracena, Rafael González, Julio López | Guatemala | 2021 | 93 min | World Premiere

SONGS THAT FLOOD THE RIVER

D: Germán Arango | P: Ana María Muñoz Guzmán | Colombia | 2021 | 72 min | World Premiere

THRESHOLD

D: Coraci Ruiz | P: Julio Matos | Brazil | 2020 | 77 min | International Premiere

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[Hot Docs](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 28th annual edition online from April 29-May 9, 2021, during which a full roster of industry conference sessions, market programs and networking events will be held for Canadian and international delegates, including the renowned Hot Docs Forum, Hot Docs Deal Maker, Distribution Rendezvous and The Doc Shop. Year-

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

round, Hot Docs supports the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar production 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 23, Festival ticket package holders, including Doc Soup subscribers, can redeem their ticket packages, and Hot Docs Members can buy single tickets for screenings. Starting Tuesday, March 30 at 11:00 a.m. Festival tickets will be available to the public. Tickets can be purchased online at www.hotdocs.ca. Single tickets to screenings are \$13 each and \$11.50 for members. A Festival 5-pack is \$55 and \$49.50 for members, a Festival 12-pack \$125 and \$112.50 for members, and an Unlimited Festival Pass is \$259 and \$233.10 for members.

FILM STILLS AVAILABLE

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

Username: hotdocsmedia

Password: hdmedia21

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

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