

PERSISTER PROGRAM TO FEATURE FRESH AND EXCITING STORIES OF REVOLUTIONARY WOMEN AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

Toronto, March 23, 2021 – Hot Docs is pleased to announce that the popular theme program Persister returns to this year's Festival, featuring films that shine a light on the voices of strong, inspirational women who are speaking up and being heard. With rousing stories of women going against the grain to pursue their passions, forging their paths in male-dominated arenas, and risking everything to fight for change and justice, the program consists of nine feature films and 13 shorts.

"The outspoken and outstanding subjects featured in this year's Persister program refused to be defined by limitations, whether societal, personal or patriarchal," said **Shane Smith**, director of programming for Hot Docs. "Featuring powerful, creative portraits of women working to make a difference—for themselves, their communities, their world—this collection of female-driven and directed films will leave you energized, inspired and, possibly, outraged."

The Persister program will feature the world premieres of: the Crave Original documentary **FANNY: The Right to Rock**, an epic rock doc about fierce female 1970s rockers Fanny, who collected fans like David Bowie in their heyday, who reunite 50-years later with a new record deal and a chance to rewrite history; **Lady Buds**, a revealing look inside the cannabis trade through the stories of six small businesswomen in California hoping to break into the business; **Bangla Surf Girls**, an inspiring film about three spirited working-class teenagers in Bangladesh who escape their daily hardships by surfing waves and chasing a thrilling sense of freedom; and **Only the Ocean Between Us**, a lyrical exploration of growing into adulthood amidst the uncertainty of displacement told through video letters between two Indigenous filmmakers in Lima, Peru, and two Syrian refugee filmmakers in Za'atari Camp, Jordan.

The program will also feature the international premieres of: **La Madrina: The Savage Life of Lorine Padilla**, in which the former 'First Lady' of the Savage Skulls gang emerges as a healer and matriarch, fiercely leading her South Bronx community through the perils of gentrification and gun violence; **Fruits of Labor**, a coming-of-age story about a California teenager who takes on multiple jobs after ICE raids in her community threaten to separate her family and force her to become the breadwinner; and **The Spokeswoman**, which tells the captivating story of Maria de Jesus Patricio, the first Indigenous woman aspiring for the presidency in Mexico whose revolutionary platform for unity is mired by structural racism.

Persister will also include the North American premiere of **Dying to Divorce**, a doc filmed over five years that takes viewers into the heart of Turkey's gender-based violence crisis, and a lawyer and her clients who bravely risk everything to put violent men behind bars; and the Canadian premiere of **Fly So Far**, about an El Salvadorian woman, once imprisoned for homicide for having a late-term miscarriage, who is now advocating for the rights of all such victims of the country's cruel anti-abortion laws.

The Persister program is presented in Partnership with OXFAM Canada.

All films in the Persister program are listed below. For more information about the program please visit www.hotdocs.ca/persister.

[BANGLA SURF GIRLS](#)

D: Elizabeth D. Costa | P: Lalita Krishna | Canada | 2021 | 86 min | World Premiere

[DYING TO DIVORCE](#)

D: Chloe Fairweather | P: Sinead Kirwan, Seda Gokci, Özge Sebzeci, Elisabeth Kleppe | UK, Norway, Germany | 2020 | 81 min | North American Premiere

[FANNY: THE RIGHT TO ROCK](#)

D: Bobbi Jo Hart | P: Bobbi Jo Hart, Robbie Hart | Canada | 2021 | 92 min | World Premiere

[FLY SO FAR](#)

D: Celina Escher | P: Mónica Hernández Rejón, Maria Åkesson, Saúl Callejas | Sweden, El Salvador | 2021 | 89 min | Canadian Premiere

[FRUITS OF LABOR](#)

D: Emily Cohen Ibañez | P: Emily Cohen Ibañez | USA | 2021 | 76 min | International Premiere

[LA MADRINA: THE SAVAGE LIFE OF LORINE PADILLA](#)

D: Raquel Cepeda | P: Raquel Cepeda | USA | 2020 | 82 min | International Premiere

[LADY BUDS](#)

D: Chris J. Russo | P: Michael J. Katz, Christian Bruno | USA | 2021 | 96 min | World Premiere

[ONLY THE OCEAN BETWEEN US](#)

D: Khaldiya Amer Ali, Marah Mohammad Alkhateeb, Karoli Bautista Pizarro, Christy Cauper Silvano | P: Laura Doggett, EB Landesberg, Lali Madueño Medina, Tasneem Toghoj | USA, Peru, Jordan | 2021 | 82 min | World Premiere

[THE SPOKESWOMAN](#)

D: Luciana Kaplan | P: Carolina Coppel, Mónica Lozano, Eamon O'Farrill | Mexico | 2020 | 82 min | International Premiere

SHORTS PROGRAM: WORKFORCE

Women's work has always been ignored, underpaid and taken for granted. Domestic workers, farmers, artists, hairdressers, reindeer herders and strippers remind us that their labour is essential and that as taxpayers, voters and bosses, appreciation of their efforts may come by force.

[AIN'T NO TIME FOR WOMEN](#)

D: Sarra El Abed | P: Isabelle Grignon-Francke | Canada | 2020 | 19 min | Toronto Premiere

[LAST NIGHT AT THE STRIP CLUB](#)

D: Nicole Bazuin | P: Nicole Bazuin, Andrea Werhun | Canada | 2020 | 12 min | Toronto Premiere

[A MOTHER'S BODY](#)

D: Jonelle Twum | P: Hawa Sanneh | Sweden | 2020 | 9 min | International Premiere

[MY GRANDMOTHER IS AN EGG](#)

D: Wu-Ching Chang | P: Wu-Ching Chang | Taiwan, UK | 2021 | 8 min | World Premiere

[SVONNI VS THE SWEDISH TAX AGENCY](#)

D: Maria Fredriksson | P: Ina Holmqvist | Sweden | 2020 | 5 min | North American Premiere

[TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

D: Amelie Befeldt | P: Peter Zorn, Marcie K. Jost | Germany | 2020 | 20 min | International Premiere

[WEARABLE TRACY](#)

D: Emily McAllister | P: Emily McAllister | USA | 2020 | 13 min | International Premiere

[PERSISTER SHORTS PROGRAM](#)

[ALE LIBRE](#)

D: Maya Cueva | P: Mayra Amaya, Melissa Bueno-Woerner | USA | 2020 | 17 min | International Premiere

[GIRLSBOYSMIX](#)

D: Lara Aerts, Els van Driel | P: Laura Verduijn, Lara Aerts | Netherlands | 2020 | 7 min | Toronto Premiere

[MY UNCLE TUDOR](#)

D: Olga Lucovnicova | P: Olga Lucovnicova | Belgium, Portugal, Hungary | 2020 | 20 min | North American Premiere

[THE RITUAL TO BEAUTY](#)

D: Shenny De Los Angeles, Maria Marrone | P: Shenny De Los Angeles | USA | 2020 | 14 min | International Premiere

[TELL ME MORE](#)

D: Martyna Peszko | P: Natalia Grzegorzek | Poland | 2020 | 29 min | North American Premiere

[THIS IS THE WAY WE RISE](#)

D: Ciara Lacy | P: Ciara Lacy, Chapin Hall | USA | 2020 | 12 min | Canadian Premiere

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[Hot Docs](#), 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

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

renowned Hot Docs Forum, Hot Docs Deal Maker, Distribution Rendezvous and The Doc Shop. Year-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>

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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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