

HOT DOCS 2025 WORLD SHOWCASE PROGRAM PRESENTS A DIVERSITY OF COMPELLING GLOBAL STORIES FROM 24 COUNTRIES

Toronto, March 25, 2025 – Hot Docs will present a rich tapestry of compelling stories from around the world as part of the Festival's **World Showcase** program—featuring 14 feature, four mid-length, and six short documentaries from 24 countries, including Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Chile, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Germany, India, Iran, Italy, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Sweden, Taiwan, UK and USA. The 2025 Hot Docs Festival will take place April 24 to May 4 in Toronto.

This year's World Showcase will bring to Hot Docs the world premieres of ***Aisha's Story***, in which a Palestinian grain miller in a Jordanian refugee camp safeguards her culture and shares her people's history through food; ***Betrayal***, following the brother-in-law of Liberian dictator Charles Taylor as he becomes a courageous whistleblower against the dictator's regime; ***The Gardener and the Dictator***, offering a unique glimpse into China's tumultuous last century through memories of the filmmaker's elderly grandparents and their quirky love story; ***Marriage Cops***, in which an all-women police unit in northern India tackles troubled marriages with unexpected wisdom and authority; and ***Spare My Bones, Coyote!***, the story of a Mexican American couple who, for 12 years, have organized biweekly search and rescue missions along the desert border.

International premieres include ***Mundurukuyü – The Forest of the Fish Women***, in which three women lovingly record their Mundurucu traditions and use the camera as a weapon to defend their ancestral land in Brazil, and ***My Boyfriend the Fascist***, offering a candid portrait of the turmoil and transformation that can arise when love mixes with politics.

North American premieres include ***Always***, about a young boy growing up in rural China, separated from his mother since infancy and using poetry to reflect on his family's hardships; ***Circusboy***, a dive into a world of whimsy and wonder as one of Germany's last great circus men tells his great grandson stories of magic and entertainment; ***Climate in Therapy***, bringing together seven climate scientists as they gather to discuss a taboo subject in their field: emotions; ***Higher than Acidic Clouds***, in which a filmmaker defies Iran's travel ban and chronicles his confinement in smog-choked Tehran after authorities raid his home and seize his work; ***Lichens Are the Way***, a lush, hypnotic dive into the oft overlooked world of lichens, the "most abstract art among living beings;" ***Supernatural***, about a physician grappling with this father's legacy as a famous shaman, after crossing paths with a devout believer claiming his father saved her life; ***The Tree of Authenticity***, a cinematic essay looking into the soul of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's forests to expose the repercussions of the country's colonial past; ***Voyage Along the War***, in which, a month after the Russian invasion, a Ukrainian French filmmaker travels to Lviv accompanied by his friend, a Ukrainian refugee; and ***We Live Here***, in which, on a desolate steppe in Kazakhstan, generational trauma looms over inhabitants of a former nuclear test site as they confront the haunting legacy of the past.

Canadian premieres include ***Cutting Through Rocks*** (اوزاک یوللار), following Sara Shahverdi's battle against strict patriarchal traditions after being elected the first councilwoman of her Iranian village, and ***How Deep Is Your Love***, a visually stunning look at the Earth's last unexplored wilderness, under the looming threat of deep-sea mining.

The full lineup of 2025 World Showcase films appear below with screening information. 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.

AISHA'S STORY

D: Elizabeth Vibert, Chen Wang (co-director) | P: Elizabeth Vibert, Salam Barakat Guenette | Canada | 2025 | 62 min | World Premiere

A Palestinian grain miller in a Jordanian refugee camp safeguards her culture and shares her people's history through food prepared with love, longing and sumud—the Palestinian spirit of steadfastness.

Screening with

THE FLOWERS STAND SILENTLY, WITNESSING

D: Theo Panagopoulos | UK | 17 min

Saturday, April 26, 2:45 PM - TLB3

Monday, April 28, 2:30 PM - TLB4

ALWAYS

D: Deming Chen | P: Hansen Lin | USA, France, China | 2025 | 84 min | North American Premiere

In this emotional coming of age story, a young boy growing up in rural China who's been separated from his mother since infancy uses poetry to reflect on his family's hardships, all the while facing the approaching realities of adulthood.

Saturday, April 26, 1:45 PM - TLB4

Tuesday, April 29, 5:15 PM - TLB3

BETRAYAL

D: Lena Macdonald | P: Lena Macdonald, Noah Bingham | Canada | 2025 | 90 min | World Premiere

The brother-in-law of Liberian dictator Charles Taylor becomes a courageous whistleblower against the dictator's regime. Risking everything, including his own family, he fights to bring Taylor to justice, confronting the legacy of fear and corruption that has shaped his life.

Tuesday, April 29, 8:45 PM - TLB1

Thursday, May 1, 11:00 AM - TLB3

CIRCUSBOY

D: Julia Lemke, Anna Koch | P: Katharina Bergfeld, Martin Heisler | Germany | 2025 | 86 min | North American Premiere

Dive into a world of whimsy and wonder as one of the last great circus men tells his great grandson stories of magic and entertainment in this vibrant look at a generational tradition of circus life in Germany.

Friday, May 2, 5:00 PM - TLB2
Sunday, May 4, 10:30 AM - TLB2

CLIMATE IN THERAPY

D: Nathan Grossman | P: Cecilia Nessen | Sweden, Norway | 2025 | 64 min | North American Premiere
Seven climate scientists gather to discuss a taboo subject in their field: emotions. What emerges is a transformational discussion that humanizes the enormity of the climate crisis, powerfully voicing the unspeakable.

Screening with

INTO THE DARK

D: Fiona Otway | USA | 18 min

Saturday, April 26, 4:45 PM - TLB4
Monday, April 28, 12:00 PM - TLB3

CUTTING THROUGH ROCKS (اوزاک یوللار)

D: Sara Khaki, Mohammadreza Eyni | P: Mohammadreza Eyni, Sara Khaki | Iran, USA, Netherlands, Germany, Canada, Qatar, Chile | 2025 | 95 min | Canadian Premiere

As the first elected councilwoman of her Iranian village, Sara Shahverdi battles strict patriarchal traditions by halting child marriages and training young women to ride motorcycles—in the process, becoming a powerful symbol inspiring others to rise up.

Friday, May 2, 5:45 PM - TLB1
Saturday, May 3, 8:15 PM - TLB2

THE GARDENER AND THE DICTATOR

D: Hui Wang | P: Jun Zhang, Hui Wang | Canada | 2025 | 98 min | World Premiere

This profoundly intimate and quirky love story features the filmmaker's elderly grandparents as they care for each other in their final years while revisiting both joyous and painful memories that offer a unique glimpse into China's tumultuous last century.

Sunday, April 27, 2:30 PM - Hot Docs Cinema
Friday, May 2, 8:00 PM - TLB2

HIGHER THAN ACIDIC CLOUDS

D: Ali Asgari | P: Milad Khosravi, Ali Asgari, Yann Tonnar, Shawkat Amin Korki, Alireza Khatami | Iran, Luxembourg | 2024 | 70 min | North American Premiere

Defying Iran's travel ban, a filmmaker chronicles his confinement in smog-choked Tehran after authorities raid his home and seize his work. Through dreams and memories, he imagines soaring above a city where everyone is equal in this boundary pushing, hybrid film.

Screening with

CITIZEN-INMATE

D: Hesam Eslami | Iran | 15 min

Thursday, May 1, 4:45 PM - TLB3

Saturday, May 3, 5:30 PM - TLB4

HOW DEEP IS YOUR LOVE

D: Eleanor Mortimer | P: Jacob Thomas | UK | 2025 | 100 min | Canadian Premiere

In this visually stunning look at the Earth's last unexplored wilderness, scientists dive into the ocean's mysteries, discovering mesmerizing creatures and complex ecosystems as they race to collect and name species while under the looming threat of deep-sea mining.

Sunday, April 27, 2:15 PM - TLB2

Tuesday, April 29, 8:15 PM - TLB3

LICHENS ARE THE WAY

D: Ondřej Vavrečka | P: Vít Janeček | Czech Republic, Slovakia | 2024 | 43 min | North American Premiere

A lush, hypnotic dive into the oft overlooked world of lichens, the "most abstract art among living beings," and the lessons they can impart on humans about existing in relationship with nature to ensure our survival as a species.

Screening with

THE CONSCIENCE FILES

D: Brian Bolster | USA | 14 min

and

LIFE INVISIBLE

D: Bettina Perut, Iván Osnovikoff | UK, Chile, Sweden | 20 min

Tuesday, April 29, 8:30 PM - TLB4

Friday, May 2, 11:15 AM - TLB3

MARRIAGE COPS

D: Shashwati Talukdar, Cheryl Hess | P: Diana Chiawen Lee | India, Taiwan, USA | 2025 | 90 min | World Premiere

In northern India's Dehradun, an all-women police unit tackles troubled marriages with unexpected wisdom and authority. Inside the bustling station, couples confront domestic turmoil while the officers balance tough love with surprising moments of humour.

Sunday, April 27, 5:45 PM - TLB3

Tuesday, April 29, 11:00 AM - TLB2

MUNDURUKUYÜ – THE FOREST OF THE FISH WOMEN

D: Aldira Akay, Beka Munduruku, Rilcélia Akay | P: Estêvão Ciavatta | Brazil | 2025 | 72 min |

International Premiere

Using the camera as a weapon to defend their ancestral land in Brazil, three women of the Daje Kapap Eypi audiovisual collective lovingly record their Munduruku traditions and their mythology of humans transforming into forest plants and animals.

Thursday, May 1, 2:00 PM - TLB3

Sunday, May 4, 5:30 PM - TLB4

MY BOYFRIEND THE FASCIST

D: Matthias Lintner | P: Martin Rattini | Italy | 2025 | 95 min | International Premiere

Set against the Alps's astonishing beauty, the left-wing director's evolving relationship with his Cuban activist boyfriend, whose disillusionment has shifted his politics to the right, offers a candid portrait of the turmoil and transformation that can arise when love mixes with politics.

Thursday, May 1, 7:45 PM - TLB3

Saturday, May 3, 10:45 AM - TLB2

SPARE MY BONES, COYOTE!

D: Jonah Malak | P: Dominique Dussault | Canada | 2025 | 84 min | World Premiere

For 12 years, a Mexican American couple have organized biweekly search and rescue missions along the desert border to find and return the bodies of migrants who died while trying to cross on foot to their families. Despite exhaustion, burnout and post-traumatic stress, they continue to bring closure to those who have lost loved ones in the pursuit of a better life.

Sunday, April 27, 7:30 PM - TLB4

Tuesday, April 29, 2:00 PM - TLB3

SUPERNATURAL

D: Ventura Durall | P: Ventura Durall, Sergi Cameron, Charlotte Guénin, Kristian Van der Heyden | Spain, France, Belgium | 2025 | 81 min | North American Premiere

A physician grapples with family trauma and his father's legacy as a famous shaman and spiritual healer when he crosses paths with a devout believer who claims his father saved her life.

Wednesday, April 30, 2:30 PM - TLB4

Friday, May 2, 11:30 AM - TLB4

THE TREE OF AUTHENTICITY

D: Sammy Baloji | P: Rosa Spaliviero | Belgium, Democratic Republic of the Congo | 2025 | 89 min | North American Premiere

Imaginatively constructed, this cinematic essay looks into the soul of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's forests to expose the repercussions of the country's colonial past. A stunning ode to nature, the film is above all a warning about human greed.

Friday, May 2, 5:30 PM - TLB4

Sunday, May 4, 2:30 PM - TLB4

VOYAGE ALONG THE WAR

D: Antonin Peretjatko | P: Nicolas Anthomé | France | 2024 | 62 min | North American Premiere

A month after the Russian invasion, a Ukrainian French filmmaker travels to Lviv accompanied by his friend, a Ukrainian refugee. Camera in hand, he captures a poignant and poetic road trip that vividly reflects the heartache and resilience of living amidst war.

Screening with

SIMPLY DIVINE

D: Mélody Boulissière, Bogdan Stamatina (co-director) | France, Romania | 14 min

Wednesday, April 30, 1:45 PM - TLB3

Saturday, May 3, 8:45 PM - TLB4

WE LIVE HERE

D: Zhanana Kurmasheva | P: Banu Ramazanova | Kazakhstan | 2024 | 80 min | North American Premiere

On a desolate steppe in Kazakhstan, generational trauma looms over inhabitants of a former nuclear test site as they confront the haunting legacy of the past while fighting for hope and survival in a world on the brink of ruin.

Friday, May 2, 5:15 PM - TLB3

Sunday, May 4, 2:15 PM - TLB3

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[Hot Docs \(www.hotdocs.ca\)](http://www.hotdocs.ca), North America's leading 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 32nd annual edition from April 24 to May 4, 2025, in cinemas across Toronto. 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 Deal Maker and Works-in-Progress screenings. Year-round, Hot Docs supports the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar film fund portfolio. Additionally, it fosters education through documentaries with its popular free program Docs For Schools. Hot Docs owns and

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

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.

Starting Tuesday, March 25, Festival ticket package holders, including Doc Soup subscribers, can redeem their ticket packages, and Hot Docs Members can purchase single tickets. Starting Tuesday, April 1, single tickets will be available to the public. Tickets and ticket packages can be purchased and/or redeemed [online](#) at 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 cinema screenings). Single tickets are \$20 to regular Festival screenings and \$23 to Special Presentations screenings (\$18-\$20 members). Special events vary in price. A Festival 12-Pack is \$209 and a Festival 20-Pack is \$299. Hot Docs offers free tickets for all screenings before 4:00 p.m. to seniors and students with valid photo I.D., available online the day of the screening, subject to availability.

Hot Docs is proud to include Rogers as its Founding Partner; Netflix as its Presenting Partner; and Telefilm Canada, the Government of Ontario, and the Canada Media Fund as its Major Supporters. Full list of sponsors and partners: <https://hotdocs.ca/about/partners>

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