

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, March 26, 2024

**HOT DOCS FESTIVAL 2024 UNVEILS LINEUP:
168 FILMS FROM 64 COUNTRIES TO SCREEN
AT NORTH AMERICA'S LARGEST DOC FEST**

Toronto, Canada – The highly anticipated **Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival** returns to Toronto from **April 25 to May 5, 2024**, promising an unparalleled celebration of non-fiction storytelling on a global scale. From 2800 film submissions, this year's slate will present 168 documentaries representing 64 countries across 16 diverse programs and will feature 51 world and 32 international premieres. Hot Docs continues its commitment to gender parity with 54% female directors represented in the official selection. Furthermore, alongside the premieres of remarkable Canadian and international documentaries, the 2024 Festival will offer an extensive lineup of industry programs and events.

"I am excited to embark on my first Hot Docs Festival as President," shared **Marie Nelson**, Hot Docs' President. "There is something so extraordinary about what this Festival represents: the opportunity to unite with fellow documentary lovers to share in the collective experience of being amongst the first audiences to witness unforgettable stories of human power. We strive to continue bringing this experience to Toronto audiences for years to come, and hope that doc lovers—both seasoned and new—will come out to support us in this and take in the remarkable lineup of films showcased at this year's Festival."

The 2024 Hot Docs Festival will open with the international premiere of ***Luther: Never Too Much***, directed by award-winning filmmaker **Dawn Porter**, on Thursday, April 25 at 6:30 PM at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. This remarkable film delivers a stirring portrait of music sensation Luther Vandross, as the film charts his creative journey, his larger-than-life path to stardom, and the creation of his most memorable songs.

The **Big Ideas Series**, presented by Scotia Wealth Management, will once again spark engaging conversations with notable guests, including filmmaker **Barry Avrich** and subject **Sash Simpson** of *Born Hungry*; director **Pete Sillen** and subjects **Martine and Bina Rothblatt** of *Love Machina*; co-directors **Shaul Schwarz and Christina Clusiau** and subjects **Julia Botelho Morgan and Amber Forte** of *Fly*; director **Gary Hustwit** of *Eno*; and director **Lucy Lawless** of *Never Look Away*.

The **Special Presentations** program, showcasing high-profile films, festival circuit heavy hitters, and renowned subjects, includes the world premieres of ***Red Fever***, which sees Cree filmmaker Neil Diamond travel to the four corners of Turtle Island and across Europe to explore the world's fascination with Native Americans; ***American Cats: The Good, the Bad, and the Cuddly***, in which hilarious *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee* correspondent Amy Hoggart explores the controversial practice of declawing cats; ***The Ride Ahead***, an expansion of co-director Samuel Habib's short film *My Disability Roadmap* (Honourable Mention, Best International Short Documentary, Hot Docs Festival 2022), capturing a

typical 21-year-old itching to move out, start a career and find love—all while navigating life with a disability; *Lost in the Shuffle*, which follows world champion magician Shawn Farquhar as he simultaneously devises a new trick and delves into a medieval murder cold case; and *Le Mans 55: The Unauthorized Investigation*, which explores the tragic Le Mans race in 1955 where more than 80 spectators were killed.

Canadian Spectrum Competition, a competitive program showcasing bold new works by Canadian directors, includes the world premieres of *A French Youth*, following two young North African men in the South of France seeking to take life by the horns quite literally as they compete to survive in the traditional sport of Camargue races; *Curl Power*, following five high school girlfriends as they pursue their dreams of becoming Canadian National Curling Champions; *Karuara, People of the River*, in which a group of Indigenous women from Peru—facing cultural genocide—file a groundbreaking lawsuit demanding the government recognize the Marañón River as a person with human rights itself; *My Dad's Tapes*, in which a trove of home video tapes spurs a filmmaker to investigate his father's sudden suicide and come to terms with his own identity; *Fire Tower*, in which sentinels survey dramatic and awe-inspiring landscapes high above the boreal forest as a critical first line of defence in wildfire detection; and *Me, Michael and I*, in which an ambitious young Quebecois man sacrifices everything in his obsession to resurrect the King of Pop, Michael Jackson. The Canadian Spectrum Competition is presented in partnership with MUBI.

International Competition, a competitive program spotlighting engaging stories from around the globe, includes a compelling lineup of world premieres: *The Weavers' Songs* explores life in San Pedro Amuzgos, Oaxaca, where weaving transcends mere livelihood to become a vital economic backbone; *Standing Above the Clouds* chronicles the journey of three Native Hawaiian families as they risk it all to defend their sacred mountain where the Thirty Meter Telescope is set to be built on Mauna Kea; *Farming the Revolution* follows the protests of half a million of India's farmers as they rise up on an unprecedented scale against unjust new laws; *Streets Loud with Echoes* observes a society learning to raise its voice, despite decades of fear and oppression, after the murder of a young Olympic skater galvanizes Kazakhstan; *XiXi* explores themes of womanhood, autonomy and self-reinvention through video diaries and personal archive; *Devi* captures mother, rebel warrior, and sexual violence survivor, Devi, as she battles personal demons in her campaign against rape's erasure from the narrative of Nepal's civil war; and *The Fabulous Gold Harvesting Machine* follows Toto's quest for a better future after 40 years working in a mine, as his son Jorge attempts to build a gold harvesting machine to secure their retirement. The International Spectrum program is supported by the Donner Canadian Foundation.

The new Festival strand **Festival Favourites** is a specially curated selection of feature-length documentaries that have made their mark on the festival circuit, proving their mettle with festival audiences and critics alike. It will spotlight some of the most timely, topical and well-crafted docs from fellow global documentary film festivals. International premieres include *Daughter of Genghis*, chronicling seven years in the life of Gerel, a violent neo-nationalist struggling with motherhood and her role leading a gang of women in the underworld of Mongolia's capital city, and *Daughters* (Winner, Sundance Festival 2024 Audience Award in Documentary Competition), capturing the first physical touch four young girls will have with their incarcerated fathers as part of a special Daddy-Daughter Dance in a

Washington, D.C. prison. North American premieres include ***Son of the Mullah***, the story of a journalist risking life and limb in his reporting on Iran in order to expose corruption in the Islamic Regime, and ***This Is Going to Be Big***, a peek behind the curtain as a cast of neurodivergent teens prepare to hit the stage in their school's time-travelling, John Farnham-themed musical.

A showcase of recent works from **Spain** will make up the dynamic ***Made In*** program, offering Hot Docs audiences the opportunity to immerse themselves into a rich tapestry of captivating, uniquely Spanish stories and discover the talented voices emerging from Spain's vibrant documentary landscape. ***Made In Spain*** will include the world premieres of ***The Click Trap***, in which investigative journalists and online activists reveal the unsettling reach of the unregulated digital advertising industry; ***Flying Hands***, in which a Pakistani mother questions the custom that would have her hide her deaf child out of family shame; and ***Wild Gleaming Space***, in which a chilling encounter deep in Panama's untamed jungle triggers a personal exploration of life and death. *Made In Spain* is presented in collaboration with ICEX Spain Trade and Investment.

The **World Showcase** program features revelatory stories that span the globe, including the world premieres of ***Breaking the Cycle***, an exploration of Thailand's recent elections, where a group of young politicians campaigned against an authoritarian constitution; ***Helen and the Bear***, the story of the unlikely 40-year bond between a rebellious young hippie and a U.S. Congressman known for challenging his own Republican party; and ***The Sharp Edge of Peace***, in which four extraordinary women navigate the harsh reality of Afghanistan's new chapter—and its political impact on women's rights—while at the negotiating table with the Taliban.

The **Pop/Life** strand shares the artistry of impactful musical visionaries and events in music history that changed the artform forever, and will present the world premieres of ***Beethoven's Nine***, directed by Larry Weinstein and exploring how Beethoven's final completed symphony continues to resonate 200 years later; and ***Disco's Revenge***, the true story of disco music and the communities who hustled for their freedom on the dance floor.

The popular **Nightvision** program presents future cult classics, including the international premiere of ***Secret Mall Apartment***, the remarkable story of a group of Rhode Islanders who create a clandestine apartment inside the local mall in defiant protest of gentrification; the North American premiere of ***Invisible People***, an exploration of Japanese Butoh, the unique contemporary dance born from natural experience that represents a communion between the living and the dead; and the Canadian premiere of ***Grand Theft Hamlet***, in which two out-of-work-during-the-pandemic British actors attempt the impossible: mounting a full-scale production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* inside Grand Theft Auto Online.

The acclaimed **Persister** program will feature films that shine a light on the voices of strong, inspirational women who are speaking up and being heard, including the world premieres of ***The Day Iceland Stood Still***, the true story of how Iceland became a world leader in gender equality when, in 1975, 90% of Iceland's women walked off their jobs and out of their homes; ***A Mother Apart***, an emotional tale of healing and forgiveness that follows powerhouse Jamaican American poet and LGBTQ+ activist Staceyann Chin as she embarks on an international journey to re-imagine the art of mothering; and

Synchrony, in which, isolated on an island, an elderly woman embraces freedom by open-sea swimming with sea lions, while a champion swimmer tests her endurance in the world's iciest of waters.

Land|Sky|Sea Competition is a new thematic film program exploring nature and our relationship to it, and features the world premiere of **The Here Now Project**, which constructs an international diary of the impact of climate change using thousands of hours of in-the-moment footage, and the international premiere of **Family Tree**, which uses a cinema vérité approach in sharing the story of two Black families in North Carolina fighting to preserve their land and generational legacy of sustainable forestry. Receiving a North American premiere is **Once Upon a Time in a Forest**, in which 22-year-old Ida becomes the leader of the new Forest Movement and finds himself facing off with Finnish forest industry giants. Land|Sky|Sea is supported by the K.M. Hunter Charitable Foundation.

Emergence, a new programming slate that highlights stories of our complicated relationship with technology and AI, will include the world premiere of **Ari's Theme**, a Canadian documentary about an award-winning composer with type-2 spinal muscular atrophy, and in which a kaleidoscopic creative process leads him to question the meaning of legacy. The program will also feature the international premieres of **Love Machina**, which follows a couple's commissioning of an "AI mindfile" that uses cryopreservation, digital consciousness, xenotransplantation and space settlement, in order to extend their romance into infinity, and **Seeking Mavis Beacon**, in which two detectives seek out the Haitian-born cover model of *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing*—the software that taught millions globally how to type—who vanished decades ago.

Hot Docs will again partner with European Film Promotion (EFP) for the seventh edition of **The Changing Face of Europe**, a pan-European showcase of documentaries that explore the cultural, economic and political conditions affecting Europe today. The Changing Face of Europe will include the world premiere of **Kelly – Someone Else's Dream**, in which freestyle skier Kelly Sildaru—just 13 when she won gold at the 2016 Winter X Games—sets a new standard for sports bravery by breaking her silence on the abuse of her coach and father. International premieres include **Norwegian Democracy**, documenting the street-level battle for democracy after an anti-Islam racist publicly burns the Qu'ran and hides behind freedom of expression laws, and **Woman of God**, in which an underpaid and undermined Slovenian village pastor pours her heart and raw personal trauma into ministering to her parishioners.

The Art of Resistance program celebrates the intersection of protest and creativity, with films that illuminate the profound impact of collective voices rallying for change and offer a glimmer of hope. The Art of Resistance will include the world premieres of **Impasse**, in which a woman engages in conversations with her conservative family amidst the Women, Life, Freedom protesters in Tehran, in hopes of maintaining bonds across three generations under the pressures of a shifting society, and **The Strike**, which follows the psychological and emotional journeys of California prisoners as they organize the largest hunger strike in US history. The program will also include the international premiere of **Nice Ladies**, in which members of a 50+ women's cheerleading team chose to stay behind as Russia began bombing Kharkiv, Ukraine, using their sport they keep sane and connected even as cracks appear.

Hot Docs will present a specially curated selection of Canadian and international short films as part of the Festival's **Shorts Programs**. These shorts will screen as part of seven individual shorts programs, each one aiming to excite and inspire with its unique collection of fresh filmmaking talent. The Hot Docs 2024 Shorts Program brings 36 films from 20 countries.

Hot Docs Festival 2024 Special Events include a free commemorative screening of **Mighty Jerome** in memory of the work and legacy of one of Toronto's best loved filmmakers, **Charles Officer**, with some of Charles's closest collaborators and friends be in attendance to share interviews, personal stories and rarely seen footage of the acclaimed writer/director/producer; a **Keynote Session** featuring the highly regarded filmmaker, author and organizer **Astra Taylor**, engaging in an illuminating conversation hosted by **Brett Story**, renowned writer, geographer, and filmmaker behind the Sundance award-winning film *Union*; two Surprise Screenings, offering audiences the chance to be amongst the very first to experience a groundbreaking new feature-length documentary; and a free encore screening on the Festival's final night—Sunday, May 5—where the winner of this year's **Rogers Audience Award for Best Canadian Documentary** will be announced. The top Canadian feature film in the audience poll will receive a CAD 50,000 cash prize, courtesy of Rogers.

The 2024 **Outstanding Achievement Award** will honour visionary Haitian filmmaker **Raoul Peck**, whose unparalleled contributions to the world of documentary filmmaking have garnered widespread acclaim and numerous accolades. The Festival will feature a handpicked selection of films curated by Peck, showcasing both a personal favorite and a work that has influenced him. Peck will be in attendance at the Festival, engaging in Q&A sessions following the screenings of his films.

Hot Docs will honour Canadian cinematographer **Iris Ng** through its annual **Focus On** program, spotlighting the remarkable work of Canadian filmmakers and craftspeople who have left an indelible mark on the documentary landscape, showcasing their invaluable contributions to the art form. Iris Ng's notable work turns a critical lens on social justice, marginalised communities, and the process of filmmaking itself.

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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 31st annual edition from April 25 to May 5, 2024, 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 Forum and Hot Docs Deal Maker. 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.

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

Starting Tuesday, March 26, Festival ticket package holders, including Doc Soup subscribers, can redeem their ticket packages, and Hot Docs Members can purchase single tickets. Starting Tuesday, April 2, single tickets will be available to the public. Tickets and ticket packages can be purchased and/or redeemed [online](https://www.hotdocs.ca) 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 5:00 p.m. to seniors 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 as its Founding Partner; CBC as its Signature Partner; Netflix as its Presenting Partner; and Telefilm Canada, the Government of Ontario, and the Canada Media Fund as its Major Supporters.

FILM STILLS AVAILABLE

Media Download Site: <https://downloads.hotdocs.ca/downloads>

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Media Contact:

Juan M. Gonzalez-Calcano
Senior Media Relations Manager, Hot Docs
jgonzalezcalcano@hotdocs.ca