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**HOT DOCS FESTIVAL IS BACK FOR 2026 EDITION APRIL 23-MAY 3 WITH 115 FILMS FROM 51 COUNTRIES THAT AMPLIFY VITAL HUMAN STORIES, EXPAND URGENT GLOBAL ISSUES AND SHOWCASE THE ENDURING TALENT OF THE DOCUMENTARY COMMUNITY IN CANADA AND AROUND THE WORLD**

**Toronto, Canada** – The highly anticipated **Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival** returns to Toronto for its 33<sup>rd</sup> edition **April 23 to May 3, 2026**, sharing the finest in global non-fiction storytelling. From 2820 film submissions, this year’s slate will present 115 documentaries representing 51 countries across nine diverse programs and will feature 52 world and international premieres. Furthermore, alongside the premieres of remarkable Canadian and international documentaries, the 2026 Festival will offer an extensive lineup of industry programs and events, including the return of the popular Hot Docs Forum international industry pitch event.

“Documentary filmmaking offers a way to engage more deeply with the world around us—through stories that are thoughtful, complex and deeply human,” said Diana Sanchez, Executive Director of Hot Docs. “This year’s Hot Docs Festival celebrates documentary filmmaking through 115 globe-spanning films, connecting this important work to audiences and bringing us together in ways that deepen our understanding of the world we share.”

This year’s lineup of 80 features and 35 shorts will share stories of humanity’s struggles, courage, and ambition, as well as the increasingly evolving world of technology. A total of 30 Canadian films will screen as official selections, and 14 films received support from Hot Docs’ film funds and market programs, including the Hot Docs Forum and Deal Maker. Hot Docs will welcome several filmmakers and guests to the Festival to participate in post-screening Q&As.

The 2026 Hot Docs Festival will open with the world premiere of ***Antidiva: The Carole Pope Confessions***, directed by Canadian filmmaker **Michelle Mama**, on **Thursday, April 23** at **Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema**. The Canadian film spotlights queer rock icon Carole Pope as she reclaims her rightful place in music history and received funding in 2023 from the Hot Docs-Slaight Family Fund to support the project in its development stage.

The **Big Ideas** series will once again spark insightful conversations with notable guests, including *Love Aptually* director **Shalini Kantayya**, *Myspace* director **Tommy Avallone**, *A War on Women* director **Raha Shirazi**, and *Steal This Story, Please!* director **Tia Lessin**.

The **Special Presentations** program, showcasing high-profile films, festival circuit heavy hitters, and renowned subjects, includes the world premieres of director Shalini Kantayya’s ***Love Aptually***, about a journalist’s exploration of dating app algorithms; director Dori Berinstein’s ***Kenny Loggins: Conviction of the Heart***, which traces the life and career of the multi-award-winning singer-songwriter who soundtracked some of Hollywood’s most unforgettable movie moments; director Tommy Avallone’s

**Myspace**, a portrait of the pioneering social networking platform; director Mark Myers's **The Tower That Built a City**, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Toronto's skyline-defining CN Tower; and director Raha Shirazi's **A War on Women**, which traces 40 years of feminist resistance by Iranian women against the Islamic Republic.

**Canadian Spectrum Competition**, a competitive program showcasing bold new works by Canadian directors, includes the world premieres of director Sébastien Trahan's **Code of Misconduct**, in which an investigative journalist's duty to follow the facts leads to the trial of five Canadian professional hockey players charged with sexual assault; Ryan Ermacora and Jessica Johnson's **Concrete Turned to Sand**, in which local oyster farmers ply their trade amidst a rapidly changing environment; Ree Wright and Meaghan Wright's **The Last Days of April**, the courageous journey of a determined disabled advocate living with a tethered spinal cord and chronic pain; director Rico King's **Nekai Walks**, in which Nekai Foster defies all medical odds and relearns to walk after being shot while walking home in Toronto's Jane and Finch neighbourhood; Oscar-nominated director Kim Nguyen's **Saigon Story: Two Shootings in the Forest Kingdom**, which reveals the elusive connection between two families and photojournalist Eddie Adams's iconic photo in the wake of the Vietnam War; and Evan Adams and Eileen Francis's **təm kʷaθ nan Namesake**, in which a request from the Tla'amin Nation to change the name of Powell River, B.C ignites a heated debate about whose history is told and respected. The Canadian Spectrum Competition is sponsored by DGC National and DGC Ontario.

**International Spectrum Competition**, a competitive program spotlighting engaging stories from around the globe, includes a compelling lineup of world premieres: **The 49th Year** directed by Heidrun Holzfeind tells the story of an anarchist incarcerated since 1980 as he reflects on his radical past; **A Distant Call** directed by Andrea Suwito captures a rare, meditative struggle between local tradition and modern faith in a remote Indonesian community with ancient traditions; **LandStone** directed by Faraz Fadaian takes viewers into the Iranian desert where an elderly man and his wife face mortality and fading bonds while seeking solace in a handmade cave; **Parasisi** directed by Zaïde Bil and Sébastien Segers traces how mining, missionaries and medicine ripple through daily life along the Lawa River; **Stories for Sandro** directed by Giacomo Boeri brings to life the memories of the filmmaker's father after he is diagnosed with Alzheimer's; **Vanishing Tracks** directed by Hamed Zolfaghari follows a family in Iran's remote nomadic landscape as they navigate their traditional existence in a modern world, and **Vegapolis** directed by Micha Barban Dangerfield brings audiences inside a Montpellier rink where teens gather each week, forging friendships, dissecting crushes and dreaming amidst laser lights and thumping bass. The International Spectrum Competition program is supported by the Donner Canadian Foundation.

The **World Showcase** program features revelatory stories that span the globe, including the world premieres of Simon Ennis and Brad Abrahams's **Gimme Truth**, which follows truth-seekers and ex-believers into the gravitational pull of conspiracy culture; Jevan Crittenden and Nate Slaco's **In Tye Country**, in which a century-old fishing club on Canada's west coast faces an existential crisis as salmon populations dwindle; and Alisher Balfanbayev's **Searching for Drug Peace**, in which a daring activist risks everything to fund a non-profit drug testing centre and provide life-saving harm reduction amidst a deadly overdose crisis in Vancouver.

**Made In Brazil** will showcase new documentaries from Brazil including the world premiere of *Solar Shadow* from directors Hugo Haddad and Isadora Canela, a beautiful exploration of ancestral Indigenous astronomy in Brazil, and the international premiere of *Dona Onete – This Tiny Piece of My Heart* from director Mini Kerti, a colour-filled and spirit-lifting portrait of singer and composer Dona Onete who, in her seventies, emerged as Brazil’s “Queen of Carimbó.”

**Persist** amplifies the voices of strong, inspirational women who are speaking up and being heard, including the world premieres of director Nance Ackerman’s *The Delivery Line*, which brings into sharp focus the gravity of the extraordinary and lifesaving work of fearless midwives who risk everything to help mothers in dangerous circumstances, and director Katia Café-Fébrissy *INDIVISUM: Legacies Adrift*, in which a Canadian filmmaker returns to her ancestral home of Guadeloupe to discover families torn apart over land inheritance.

The new **Digital Witnesses** program features stories of tech and surveillance and includes the international premieres of *Ghost in the Machine* by director Valerie Veatch, an interrogation of who builds AI, who benefits from it and who bears the cost of a technology that continues to surround us, and *Virtual Girlfriends* by director Barbora Chalupová, in which three women—navigating careers as sexual-content creators on OnlyFans—reveal the tantalizing, transactional and ultimately fragile dynamics of digital intimacy.

**Artsapes** features creative minds, artistic pursuits and inventive filmmaking, and includes the world premiere of *This Above All: The Theatrical Life of Antoni Cimolino* from director Barry Avrich, in which the longest serving Artistic Director of the iconic Stratford Festival, Antoni Cimolino, prepares for his final season while reflecting on the 40 years he’s devoted to the theatrical repertory company. Receiving its international premiere is *Gealtra* from director Brendan Canty, in which teenagers on the north side of Cork grow from shy beginners into viral sensations as they write and perform infectious Irish-language rap. Artsapes is supported by the Kololian Family.

Hot Docs will present a selection of 35 Canadian and international short films from 21 countries across various programs and as part of the Festival’s four curated **Shorts Programs**.

The festival will close with a free encore screening where the winner of this year’s **Rogers Audience Award for Best Canadian Documentary** will be announced. The winner will receive a \$50,000 cash prize courtesy of Rogers.

For a complete list of 2026 Hot Docs Festival films, download the Festival Media Kit at [hotdocs.ca/news/media](https://hotdocs.ca/news/media)

For more information on Hot Docs, visit [hotdocs.ca](https://hotdocs.ca)

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Hot Docs ([hotdocs.ca](http://hotdocs.ca)) is North America's leading documentary festival, conference and market. 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 33<sup>rd</sup> annual edition in Toronto from April 23 to May 3, 2026. 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. Since its inception in 1993, Hot Docs has supported the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs, production fund portfolio, and valuable professional development programs. The organization fosters education through documentaries with its popular free program Docs For Schools. Hot Docs also operates 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 24, Festival ticket package holders, including Doc Soup subscribers, can use their ticket packages, and Hot Docs Members can purchase single tickets. Starting Tuesday, March 31, single tickets will be available to the public. Tickets and ticket packages can be purchased and used [online](http://www.hotdocs.ca) at [www.hotdocs.ca](http://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 \$22 (\$20 member) for regular screenings, and \$27 (\$24 member) for Opening Night and Big Ideas screenings. A Festival 12-Pack is \$228 and a Festival 20-Pack is \$340 (\$216 and \$320 members). Hot Docs offers free tickets for regular screenings before 4:00 p.m. to patrons 60+ and students with valid photo I.D., available in-person at the venue on the day of the screening, subject to availability.

Hot Docs is proud to include Rogers as its Founding Partner and Telefilm Canada, the Government of Ontario, and the Canada Media Fund as its Major Supporters.

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